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Ani A. Pezeshkian

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Pepperdine University  
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

GIVING VOICE TO STRENGTHS: MIGRATION STORIES OF ARMENIAN  
IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

A clinical dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Psychology

by

Ani A. Pezeshkian

June, 2011

Shelly Harrell, Ph.D. – Dissertation Chairperson

This clinical dissertation, written by

Ani A. Pezeshkian

under the guidance of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PSYCHOLOGY

Doctoral Committee:

Shelly Harrell, Ph.D., Chairperson

Thema Bryant-Davis, Ph.D.

Emma Oshagan, Ph.D.

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## DEDICATION

To all those moving silently and courageously across borders, may your spirits be filled with hope and your lives with peace. But most of all, may your stories be heard.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My deepest gratitude to the resilient men and women who participated in this project and projected their triumphant stories. A million thanks for your support and wisdom.

I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to Dr. Shelly Harrell who has been a true inspiration and mentor over the last six years. Your steadfast belief in my process has propelled me to heights I never imagined. Thank you.

My sincere gratitude for the feedback and guidance of Dr. Thema Bryant-Davis and Dr. Emma Oshagan, who were instrumental in the completion of this research endeavor.

To friends, who have undoubtedly become family: Cynthia, Suzy, Erica, Karina, Laurie, and Kasey. Thank you for your sisterhood and faith in me.

To my parents, Vahan and Anahid, and grandparents, Hakob and Rosa: the immigrants who inspired this project. I am immensely indebted to you for your countless sacrifices in raising me to be the strong, Armenian-American woman I am today.

And, of course, my Al(s). To my brother, Alec, whose brilliance and resilience inspires me everyday. To my life partner, Allen, whose unconditional love, patience, and partnership revitalizes my soul. Endless thanks for your endless support.

## VITA

**EDUCATION****PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY, GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION & PSYCHOLOGY**

- *Doctor of Psychology (Psy.D.) in Clinical Psychology*, May 2011
- Clinical Competency Examination: Passed with Distinction

**PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY, GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION & PSYCHOLOGY**

- *Master of Arts in Clinical Psychology, with an emphasis in Marriage and Family Therapy*, 2007

**UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY**

- *Bachelor of Arts in Psychology*, 2005

**HONORS & AWARDS**

- Psy.D. Student Leadership & Advocacy Award, Pepperdine University, 2010
- Student Speaker, Pepperdine University Celebration of Excellence, 2009
- Glen and Gloria Holden GSEP Scholarship, Pepperdine University, 2005-2009
- Colleagues Grant, Pepperdine University, 2005-2009
- University Medal Semi-Finalist, UC Berkeley, 2005
- Highest Distinction in General Scholarship, UC Berkeley, 2005
- Inductee, Phi Beta Kappa, 2004
- Inductee, Golden Key International Honor Society, 2003
- Inductee, National Society of Collegiate Scholars, 2003
- Regents' and Chancellors' Scholar, UC Berkeley, 2001
- National Merit Scholar, 2000

**CLINICAL TRAINING EXPERIENCE****UCLA COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES**

July 2010 – Present

*Predoctoral Intern, APA-accredited Internship Program*

*Supervised by Melissa Magaro, Ph.D., Bonnie Zucker, Ph.D., Peter Kassel, Psy.D., Tanya Brown, Ph.D., & Nicole Green, Ph.D.*

- Provide short-term, evidence-based individual therapy to a culturally diverse population of undergraduate and graduate students presenting with a wide range of disorders, including OCD, PTSD, and MDD
- Co-lead various groups, including a Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) group for students with bipolar disorder, a skills group for students with anxiety management difficulties, a CBT group for students with eating disorders, a support group for student veterans, and an interpersonal process group
- Lead a CBT group for students with ADHD, learning disorders, and other academic challenges

- Provide crisis intervention and respond to urgent concerns by conducting assessments on walk-in emergency shifts
- Conduct comprehensive psychodiagnostic assessments and participate in a weekly assessment seminar
- Deliver on-campus outreach & prevention programming for student veterans and provide workshops on wellness
- Participate in a weekly CBT and third wave behavioral therapies supervision group and various seminars, including CBT seminar, psychodynamic seminar, multicultural competencies seminar, and training seminar
- Serve on the peer review committee and provide consultation regarding clinically and ethically challenging cases
- Serve as the intern representative on the staff training committee and contribute to decisions relevant to training
- Attend weekly, psychiatry grand rounds at the UCLA Semel Institute for Neuroscience & Human Behavior
- Participate in bi-weekly staff meetings and in-service trainings on various clinical topics

### **VA SEPULVEDA AMBULATORY CARE CENTER**

August 2009 – July 2010

#### Pre-Intern

*Supervised by Frederick Martin, Psy.D., David Schafer, Psy.D., Steven Ganzell, Ph.D., Alexis Kulick, Ph.D., & Sylvia Boris, Ph.D.*

- In the *Partial Hospitalization Program*, conducted individual therapy with veterans with serious and chronic mental illness using the Seeking Safety Model and Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT) and co-led a short-term therapy process group, long-term therapy process group, and social skills training group based on Alan Bellack's model, in order to provide skills to patients with Schizophrenia and other Axis I disorders
- In the *Assessment rotation*, attended a weekly, year-long neuropsychological seminar, administered comprehensive neuropsychological batteries, and prepared comprehensive integrated reports that facilitated diagnostic clarity and treatment planning. Also attended a weekly, year-long psychodiagnostic assessment seminar, received intensive training on administering and interpreting the MMPI-2, MCMI-III, Rorschach, and other objective and projective measures, and prepared integrated reports of findings
- In the *Chemical Dependency Treatment Unit*, co-led various abstinence-centered groups, including a relapse prevention group, for dually diagnosed veterans; in the *Outpatient Mental Health rotation*, co-led Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), CPT, and a couples groups for veterans with PTSD and comorbid disorders
- Conducted weekly, intensive initial diagnostic interviews and assessments in a primary care setting with veterans referred for mental health services
- Participated in weekly, interdisciplinary staff meetings in order to review cases and receive feedback from other psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers; attended weekly didactic seminars on veteran mental health

## **UCLA SEMEL INSTITUTE FOR NEUROSCIENCE & HUMAN BEHAVIOR**

July 2009 - July 2010

Childhood OCD, Anxiety, and Tic Disorders Program and ADHD Clinic

*Predoctoral Practicum Assessment Interviewer and Independent Evaluator*

*Supervised by Susanna Chang, Ph.D. & Tara Peris, Ph.D.*

- Conducted semi-structured psychodiagnostic assessments with children and adolescents with externalizing and internalizing disorders, and their parents, in order to formulate diagnoses and evaluate treatment progress
- Administered empirically validated instruments such as the Kiddie Schedule for Affective Disorders and Schizophrenia (K-SADS), Children's Yale-Brown Obsessive Compulsive Scale (CY-BOCS), and Yale Global Tic Severity Scale (YGTSS) to children with suspected Tic Disorders, ADHD, OCD, and their parents, in order to assess symptomatology and monitor the progression of treatment
- Routinely scored and interpreted findings in weekly individual supervision and case review meetings

## **CEDARS-SINAI MEDICAL CENTER**

September 2008 - August 2009

Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Neurosciences

*Predoctoral Practicum Therapist*

*Supervised by Jennice Vilhauer, Ph.D.*

- Provided CBT on an individual basis to a culturally diverse population with a range of disorders in the Adult Outpatient Program in order to help resolve various presenting problems
- Co-led a weekly Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) skills group for patients with borderline personality disorder and comorbid Axis I disorders and a CBT group for patients with moderate to severe anxiety and/or mood disorders in the Adult Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP)
- Co-led a weekly skills-based group on the Inpatient unit in order to support and stabilize patients
- Conducted weekly intensive diagnostic assessments using the Structured Clinical Interview for DSM Disorders (SCID) behind a one-way mirror and presented clinical cases to attending psychiatrists and other staff
- Administered and scored a full neuropsychological battery to an adolescent with learning and emotional challenges, wrote an integrated report, and conducted a comprehensive feedback session
- Participated in weekly, interdisciplinary, diagnosis-specific treatment clinic meetings in order to review cases and receive feedback from psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, marriage and family therapists, and trainees
- Analyzed audiotaped sessions and regularly presented clinical cases in weekly individual and group supervision
- Attended weekly Grand Round lectures and didactic seminars on evidence-based practice
- Regularly consulted with other treating physicians in order to provide comprehensive and coordinated care
- Participated in monthly staff meetings and provided feedback regarding

## **PEPPERDINE COMMUNITY COUNSELING CENTER**

September 2007 - August 2009

### Psy.D. Trainee

*Supervised by Anat Cohen, Ph.D. and Gitu Bhatia, Psy.D.*

- Provided brief and long-term individual therapy to adolescents and adults with a range of Axis I and II disorders to help resolve various presenting problems
- Through a partnership with the organization, "Children of the Night", treated adolescent girls grappling with a history of prostitution, homelessness, and sexual victimization, as well as various other psychosocial stressors
- Conducted intake interviews, prepared intake evaluation reports, formulated treatment plans, and engaged in case management to ensure that clients were properly diagnosed and treated
- Administered and routinely scored the Outcome Questionnaire (OQ 45.2), Brief Multidimensional Measure of Religiousness/Spirituality, Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support, Working Alliance Inventory, and Clinic Experience Scale in order to assess client needs and monitor the progression of treatment
- Analyzed videotaped sessions and regularly presented clinical cases in weekly group and peer supervision in order to assess treatment progress and design appropriate interventions

## **SAN FERNANDO VALLEY COUNSELING CENTER**

January 2006 - June 2007

### MFT Trainee

*Supervised by Linda Block, Ph.D. and Niles Willits-Spolin, MFT*

- Provided 150 hours of individual therapy to children, adolescents, and adults with a range of presenting problems using cognitive-behavioral and psychodynamic interventions
- Engaged in treatment planning and intensive case management and presented cases in weekly group supervision
- Participated in 30 hours of didactic training on various topics including suicide prevention, brief marital therapy, legal and ethical issues, and mindfulness

## **PARKHILL SCHOOL**

January 2006 - August 2006

### MFT Trainee

*Supervised by Gil Freitag, Ph.D. and Marcie Kullback, LCSW*

- Provided 70 hours of group therapy in a non-public school setting to children and adolescents with moderate to severe Conduct Disorder, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Pervasive Developmental Disorders, and ADHD on various topics, including anger management, social skills, female empowerment, and life skills
- Created and conducted psychoeducational outreach activities to foster improved student functioning
- Assessed students' psychological functioning in weekly group supervision and staff meetings
- Collaborated with a team of teachers, administrators, and counselors to develop comprehensive treatment plans during Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings

## **CLINICAL WORK EXPERIENCE**

### **VERDUGO MENTAL HEALTH**

April 2008 - September 2008

#### **On-Call Therapist & Crisis Interventionist**

- Provided crisis intervention in-person and via telephone for adults with serious and chronic mental illness in the Adult Outpatient program of this agency, which is contracted with the Los Angeles Department of Mental Health
- Conducted initial diagnostic assessments to determine severity and urgency of presenting problems and eligibility for services
- Facilitated voluntary and involuntary hospitalizations regularly by working collaboratively with other mental health professionals, agencies, and law enforcement personnel
- Completed coordination plans and other Department of Mental Health paperwork in order to direct patient care
- Provided assessment and therapy services in Armenian in order to offer culturally responsive treatment to a diverse immigrant and refugee population
- Collaborated with an interdisciplinary teams of psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, and marriage and family therapists in order to handle crises effectively and plan patient care

### **CENTER FOR AUTISM AND RELATED DISORDERS (CARD)**

June 2005 - January 2006

#### **Therapist**

- Delivered individual behavior therapy in home and school settings to promote social and emotional development in children with Autism, Asperger's Disorder, Mental Retardation, Pervasive Developmental Disorder, and/or speech delays
- Administered discrete trial training and natural environment training to ten children with Autism to foster life skills
- Served as the lead of a multi-modal treatment team comprised of speech therapists, occupational therapists, teachers, and parents of children receiving early intervention

## **SUPERVISORY EXPERIENCE**

### **UCLA COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES**

July 2010 – Present

#### **Intern Supervisor**

*Supervised by Peter Kassel, Psy.D.*

- Serve as primary clinical supervisor of a third-year UCLA clinical psychology doctoral student by providing weekly, individual supervision
- Regularly review clinical notes and session videotapes in order to monitor progress and provide feedback
- Attend weekly supervision for intern supervisors to enhance supervisory skills
- Collaborate closely with other licensed staff supervisors in preparing and delivering quarterly written evaluations regarding supervisee's progress

## **PEPPERDINE COMMUNITY COUNSELING CENTER**

September 2009 – July 2010

Predoctoral Peer Supervisor

Supervised by Anat Cohen, Ph.D.

- Provided weekly, individual supervision to two, first-year Pepperdine clinical psychology doctoral students in order to further their training experience at the counseling center
- Conducted monthly chart audits and regularly reviewed clinical notes, intake reports, and session videotapes with students in order to monitor progress and provide feedback
- Attended weekly supervision for peer supervisors to enhance supervisory skills

## **RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**

### **PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY**

September 2008 - Present

Dissertation Lab Member

*Dissertation - Giving Voice to Strengths: The Stories of Armenian Immigrants and Refugees*

Advisor: Shelly P. Harrell, Ph.D.

- Conduct research utilizing narrative methodology on the strengths of Armenian immigrants and refugees in order to contribute to the field's understanding of this underrepresented cultural group
- Attend semimonthly dissertation lab meetings and present research questions, methodology, and findings in order to receive feedback and make necessary refinement to the study
- Assist lab members in preparing research questions and hypotheses

### **PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY**

April 2006 - August 2008

Research Assistant

Project Director: Shelly P. Harrell, Ph.D.

- Reviewed literature on the development of a positive sense of self in women of color in order to identify themes and specific variables that promote positive identity development in this population
- Co-authored an entry in the *Encyclopedia of Counseling* on Critical Race Theory
- Conducted data entry in order to establish and maintain a database of relevant research information
- Facilitated communication with graduate students across the country by preparing and disseminating packages of research on the Racism and Life Experience Scale

### **JONAS LANGER DEVELOPMENTAL LAB AT UC BERKELEY**

January 2004 - May 2005

Research Assistant

Project Director: Jonas Langer, Ph.D.

- Ran weekly experiments at the Child Study Center at UC Berkeley with three-year-old subjects in order to study their cognitive abilities related to adding and subtracting objects



- Coded and analyzed data by reviewing videotapes of the administered experiments
- Oversaw all aspects of the study, including phone screening, subject assignment, scheduling, and data entry

### **INSTITUTE OF PERSONALITY AND SOCIAL RESEARCH AT UC BERKELEY**

January 2003 - August 2003

#### Research Assistant

Project Director: Serena Chen, Ph.D.

- Conducted data entry using SPSS for a research study on relationship satisfaction and the impact of interpersonal relationships on self definition
- Collaborated with Professor Serena Chen of the Psychology department in the analysis of self-report questionnaires and other data
- Executed administrative tasks for the Institute, including scheduling subjects and preparing study questionnaires

### **VA SEPULVEDA AMBULATORY CARE CENTER**

May 2002 - August 2002

#### Research Assistant

- Coordinated the computer entry of research data documenting the progression of Alzheimer's patients' treatment
- Worked in conjunction with a UCLA psychology graduate student in the analysis of collected data
- Translated questionnaires, forms, and reports from English to Armenian to expand the focus of the project

### **PUBLICATIONS**

- Harrell, S.P., & Pezeshkian, A. (2008). Critical race theory. In F. Leong (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Counseling: Vol. 3* (pp. 1071-1078). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

### **PRESENTATIONS**

- Pezeshkian, A. (October 2010). *Giving voice to strengths: The stories of Armenian immigrants and refugees*. Presentation conducted at the biennial conference of the Multicultural Research and Training Lab at Pepperdine University, Los Angeles, CA.
- Pezeshkian, A. (October 2009). *Giving voice to strengths: Conducting research with diverse populations*. Presentation conducted for a master's level multicultural counseling course at Pepperdine University, Malibu, CA.
- Pezeshkian, A. (February 2009). *Giving voice to strengths: The stories of Armenian immigrants and refugees*. Presentation conducted for a meeting of the Multicultural Research and Training Lab at Pepperdine University, Los Angeles, CA.
- Pezeshkian, A., Campos, K., & Davidoff, L. (May 2008). *Empowerment and self-esteem: Embracing our strengths*. Presentation conducted at Viewpoint School, Calabasas, CA.

## **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

### **PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY**

#### *Graduate Teaching Assistant*

Instructor: Susan Himmelstein, Ph.D.

#### ***Psychology 711: Personality Assessment***

Spring 2009, Spring 2010

- Regularly checked the scoring of MMPI-2's, Rorschach's, and other personality and psychodiagnostic tests administered by doctoral and master's level graduate students
- Conducted testing labs and simulated mock testing sessions to monitor students' understanding of course material
- Collaborated with other teaching assistants to ensure that course materials were prepared in a timely manner

#### ***Psychology 710: Cognitive Assessment***

Fall 2008, Fall 2009

- Regularly checked the scoring of WAIS-IV's, WISC-IV's, Bender-II's and other cognitive and neuropsychological tests administered by doctoral and master's level graduate students
- Conducted testing labs and simulated mock testing sessions to monitor students' understanding of course material
- Collaborated with other teaching assistants to ensure that course materials were prepared in a timely manner
- Graded exams and quizzes and completed relevant administrative tasks

## **PROFESSIONAL SERVICE & UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP**

### **CPA DIVISION II – EDUCATION & TRAINING**

April 2010 – Present

#### *Intern Representative*

- Serve on the board of the division and represent the intern constituency's interests at monthly meetings
- Work collaboratively with other board members to help identify and facilitate change on issues related to graduate education, practicum, internship, and postdoctoral training of psychologists in California
- Assist with planning an annual conference regarding issues relevant to education and training, and participate in conference panel sessions

### **PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY PSY.D. STUDENT GOVERNMENT**

September 2009 – June 2010

#### *President*

- Served as leader of the doctoral program's student government association and operated as the liaison between faculty members and doctoral students
- Organized monthly meetings with cabinet members, class representatives, and steering committee members in order to effect change in the doctoral program
- Spearheaded various projects, including student evaluation of the clinical competency exam

## **MULTICULTURAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING LAB**

September 2009 – June 2010

### Communications Coordinator

- As the lab's student leader, organized a lecture series and maintained communication between faculty advisors and doctoral students
- As a member since 2007, attended monthly meetings, engaged in discussion about multicultural research conducted by doctoral students at Pepperdine University, and presented dissertation findings
- Assisted lab members in preparing research questions and hypotheses for their dissertations
- Evaluated the university's effectiveness in fostering students' cultural awareness and competence

## **PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY PSY.D. STEERING COMMITTEE**

September 2007 - June 2009

### Student Representative

- Actively collaborated with faculty members and other doctoral students in making curriculum changes, discussing program goals, and addressing student concerns
- Served as a member of the student government body and relayed steering committee decisions and considerations to other student representatives at monthly meetings

## **CPA LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY DAY**

March 2009

### Graduate Student Delegate

- Lobbied at the state capitol on behalf of the California Psychological Association and its members in order to advance legislation that positively impacts the practice of psychology in California
- Conducted office meetings with senators and assembly members in order to educate them about issues relevant to psychologists and to gather their support for the profession

## **EXISTENTIAL-HUMANISTIC LAB**

September 2007 - December 2008

### Member

- Attended semimonthly meetings, engaged in discussions about the theoretical foundations of existential and humanistic therapy, and presented clinical cases
- Engaged in case conceptualization from an E-H perspective and provided feedback to other doctoral students

## **PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS**

- American Psychological Association, Division 56, Trauma Psychology - Graduate Student Affiliate
- Anxiety Disorders Association of America - Graduate Student Affiliate
- Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies - Graduate Student Affiliate
- California Psychological Association, Division II, Education and Training - Graduate Student Affiliate
- Los Angeles Psychological Association - Graduate Student Affiliate
- Psi Chi National Honor Society in Psychology - Member

## **LANGUAGES**

- Fluent in Armenian, Western and Eastern dialects

## ABSTRACT

In recent decades, the primary theoretical approach in immigrant and refugee mental health research has been a trauma-centered, medical model (Ryan, Dooley, & Benson, 2008). Additionally, the limited research that has been conducted has largely examined the experiences of South and Central American and Asian immigrants; a paucity of literature exists on the mental health of Armenian immigrants. In line with the recent movement in the field towards examining the optimal conditions and characteristics that promote well-being in people and communities, the purpose of this study was to give voice to the strengths and virtues that Armenian immigrants and refugees possess that enable them to thrive in the face of adversity in order to gain a greater understanding of the strengths in this community. Qualitative data were gathered via semi-structured interviews, and findings were examined in the context of existing literature related to immigrant and refugee mental health and well-being. Major themes that emerged from the data included: pre-immigration character strengths, immigration-related challenges, emergent and expanded strengths, empowerment through sharing stories, and culturally-rooted processes. Overall, the results indicated that the migration process for Armenian immigrants and refugees is multidimensional and modulated by stressors, character strengths, and communal resources. Potential contributions of this study include broadening the field's understanding of the immigration experiences of Armenian immigrants and refugees, as well as affirming the value of qualitative inquiry as an important methodology in psychological research through which the lived experience of diverse people can be represented.

## Introduction

Over the past 3 decades, war, famine, and political strife have resulted in a rise of forced migrations across the world (Pumariega, Rothe, & Pumariega, 2005). As a consequence of increases in immigrant and refugee populations, the ethnic landscape of the United States has undergone a significant transformation. Recent statistics reveal that the foreign-born population is 28 million to 31 million (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002). Essentially, 1 out of every 10 people in the United States is from an immigrant or refugee background, with 1 in 5 born in another nation or with at least one parent born in another country (Chung, Bemak, Ortiz, & Sandoval-Perez, 2008; U.S. Census Bureau, 2002). Over the past 40 years, immigration to the United States from Europe and Canada has steadily declined, while the influx of non-European immigrants, including Armenians, has dramatically increased (Pumariega et al., 2005). Despite these significant shifts, the field of psychology's understanding of immigrant groups has remained stagnant (Silka, 2007). Specifically, a great deal of the research on the psychological well-being of immigrants and refugees has focused on deficiencies and pathology and largely ignored the construct of strength (Ryan et al., 2008). Additionally, the limited research that has been conducted has largely examined the experiences of South and Central American and Asian immigrants; a paucity of literature exists on the mental health of Armenian immigrants. In keeping with the field's current shift towards examining the optimal conditions and characteristics that promote well-being in people and communities, this research endeavor gives voice to the strengths and virtues that Armenian immigrants and refugees possess, which enable them to thrive in the face of adversity.

## **Immigrants & Refugees: Statistics, Acculturation, & Mental Health**

Individuals who migrate do so under various circumstances, and these conditions heavily color their experience of migration. According to Chung et al. (2008), immigrants are defined as individuals who primarily migrate voluntarily. Within this broad category fall undocumented immigrants, who are considered individuals who do not have legal permanent status in their country of residence (Chung et al., 2008). Contrarily, the term refugee is reserved for individuals who migrate involuntarily. Asylum seekers are defined as individuals who seek protection under the Convention on Refugees upon entering another country, either on a temporary visa or without documentation, and are awaiting a decision regarding whether they have been granted refugee status (Silove, Steel, & Watters, 2000; Tribe, 2005). Internally displaced persons are individuals who have been forced to flee their communities, largely due to civil war or persecution, but have not left their own country (Tribe, 2005). Victims of human trafficking are individuals enslaved illicitly into labor or commercial sex via force, fraud, or other coercive tactics (Farrell & Fahy, 2009).

Recent statistics reveal that immigrant and refugee populations in the United States are speedily growing. Over the course of the 1990s in the United States, the immigrant population increased by more than 50% (Silka, 2007). According to Chung et al. (2008), nearly 75% of all current immigrants in the United States have legal status; of the 25% who are undocumented, 40 percent have overstayed their temporary visas. In terms of asylum seekers in the United States, the numbers have increased from fewer than 3,000 per year before 1980 to as high as 281,219 in 2007 (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2008). As a result of this influx, first and second generation

immigrant children are the most quickly growing segment of the United States population, estimated to comprise 40% of the population under the age of 18 by 2020 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002).

The past 3 decades have witnessed a significant increase in immigrants and refugees from Mexico, Latin America, and South America, resulting in Latinos becoming the largest ethnic minority population in the United States (Takeuchi, Alegria, Jackson, & Williams, 2007). Additionally, current statistics reveal that Asian Americans comprise nearly 4% of the U.S. population and have grown at a rate faster than any other major racial category in the United States (Takeuchi et al., 2007). These trends are consistent with a documented decrease in immigration from Europe and Canada since 1965, and an increase in non-European immigration (Pumariega et al., 2005); the largest migration of ethnic Armenians also took place after 1960. This influx was a result of the U.S. Immigration Act of 1965, which ended a discriminatory quota system, as well as the various crises in Egypt, Turkey, Lebanon, and Iran, which resulted in an exodus of the once large and stable Armenian communities in those countries (Mirak, 1997). According to Mirak, several hundred Armenians left Soviet Armenia for the United States annually after 1975, reaching a peak in 1988; 11,000 migrated in that year alone.

Whether legal or illegal, research studies demonstrate that the process of immigration is fraught with various stressors, which affect the mental health and quality of life of immigrant populations (Chung et al., 2008). According to Pumariega et al. (2005), the experience of pre-migration trauma among immigrants and refugees in their countries of origin is common (e.g., war, torture, terrorism, natural disasters, famine), and often comprises the reason for the emigration. Furthermore, many migrants experience



separation from extended family and kinship networks during the process of immigration, with some individuals experiencing trauma during the journey itself as a result of being forced to live in crowded and unsanitary refugee camps (Chung et al., 2008).

Post-migration, immigrants and refugees encounter a host of other stressors that increase their risk of developing mental health problems. Language difficulties prevent many immigrants from securing employment and, therefore, impede their ability to avoid the poverty they were hoping to escape by migrating (Chung et al., 2008; Pumariega et al., 2005). Others who were qualified professionals in their country of origin learn that their degrees and qualifications are not accepted by places of employment in the United States. These factors keep the unemployment rate of immigrants and refugees high and often leave them with the ability to only afford housing in inner city neighborhoods, which are often crime-ridden (Pumariega et al., 2005). Prejudice, discrimination, and racism are other significant stressors that many immigrants and refugees encounter upon interaction with the host culture (Chung et al., 2005; Esses, Davidio, Jackson, & Armstrong, 2001). According to Pumariega et al., these negative sentiments are also conveyed by earlier-arriving immigrants, even those from the same country of origin, who feel that their access to resources is threatened as a result of new migrants. Other researchers note that these various experiences of loss - loss of country, way of life, sense of familiarity, and status - are often disorienting and disruptive to a person's sense of identity (Espin, 1997). In light of these stressors, some studies report that immigrants and refugees have increased morbidity, decreased life expectancy, and an increased vulnerability to medical illness and poor health habits (Hollifield et al., 2002).

As previously mentioned, the post-migration period is often fraught with various challenges for immigrants and refugees. One such stressor that has received substantial attention from researchers is acculturative stress. Acculturation refers to a process individuals undergo in response to the influence of the mainstream culture (Chung et al., 2008). According to Chung et al., immigrants acculturate into a different culture by “learning a new set of rules and beliefs that they are challenged to integrate into their own traditional cultural worldview” (p. 312). Berry (2001) notes that the process of acculturation involves changes in both cultural groups, although a much greater impact is made on the nondominant group and its members. He elaborates on the four main outcomes of the acculturation process for individuals in the nondominant group: assimilation, separation, marginalization, and integration. Assimilation occurs when individuals do not highly value the maintenance of their cultural heritage and, rather, look for daily interaction with other cultures, whereas separation takes place when individuals retain their original culture while attempting to avoid contact with the mainstream culture (Berry, 2001). According to Berry, marginalization occurs when an individual has little interest in both cultural maintenance and in forming relationships with others in the dominant culture. The last route according to this model, integration, occurs when immigrants maintain a degree of cultural identification, while also participating as a member of mainstream society. According to Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind, and Vedder (2001) an integrated identity is associated with the greatest level of overall well-being. Some theorists, such as Falicov (2005), describe a more recent acculturation phenomenon known as transnationalism. Transnationals retain extensive ties with their home culture and country, while also embracing the culture of their host country; globalization is cited

as the mechanism by which such an outcome is possible (Falicov, 2005). According to Phinney et al., a given immigrant's acculturation strategy is complexly determined by an interaction between the attitudes and characteristics of the individual and the responses of the receiving society; this interaction is moderated by the unique circumstances of the immigrant's group within the host society.

According to Tribe (2005), published studies have reported conflicting findings about the frequency and type of mental health problems most often reported by immigrants and refugees. Some note the inconsistent methods and instruments used for data collection, analyses, and reporting as common culprits, whereas others cite translation difficulties, cultural differences, and poor resources for comprehensively assessing symptoms as critical problems (Hollifield et al., 2002; Tribe, 2005). Others note that studies on these populations are often exploratory in nature, therefore, rendering findings unsuitable for generalization (Porter & Haslam, 2005).

Additional issues arise when considering the ways in which cultural context shapes one's understanding of mental health or psychological well-being (Tribe, 2005). A Western approach to mental health prioritizes the role of individual intrapsychic experiences, whereas other cultures base their conceptualization of mental health on community or familial processes. As such, many have questioned the utility of Western diagnoses, particularly that of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) with individuals, particularly immigrant and refugees, from non-Western cultures who have experienced war or displacement (Gozdziak, 2004; Tribe, 2005; Watters, 2001). It is imperative to remain cognizant of these issues when reviewing the results of findings from major reviews, some of which indicate a high prevalence and variability of PTSD symptoms,

ranging from 4% to 86%, and depression symptoms, ranging from 5% to 31% in refugee populations (Hollifield et al., 2002).

It is important to examine the conflicting findings in this area of research, with some studies actually illustrating better mental health among immigrants (Escobar, 1998). Escobar notes that in one study, the prevalence of most disorders considered was significantly lower in Mexican immigrants than in people of Mexican descent born in the United States. Specifically, compared with patients born in the United States, immigrants had a significantly lower prevalence of depression and PTSD and better physical functioning scores, despite lower socioeconomic status (Escobar, 1998). While the authors point to the potential contribution of the optimism and hope that some immigrant possess soon after migration, these studies also illustrate the importance of examining the protective factors and strengths immigrants and refugees possess.

Various studies have also revealed gender differences in the levels of distress of immigrants and refugees. Porter and Haslam (2005) found that female refugees had slightly worse mental health outcomes than male refugees. In a study in which the rates of psychological distress among immigrant women and men from the former Soviet Union were compared, results indicate that women were generally more distressed than men, with the only exception being men who were married and retired: these men were just as distressed as the women in the study (Aroian, Norris, & Chiang, 2003). Additionally, women who were employed reported a lowered level of distress, regardless of their marital status, indicating that work is a source of self-esteem for these women (Aroian et al., 2003). For both genders, age, length of time in the United States, and type of sponsorship had a significant impact on levels of distress, with older individuals, those

recently arrived, and those sponsored by family members experiencing higher levels of distress (Aroian et al., 2003). In other studies, gender has been related to parental expectation and behavior. Some findings indicate greater attempts to control daughters' behavior compared to sons' across immigrant families from diverse backgrounds (Dion & Dion, 2001). Additionally, evidence is mounting that women experience increased rates of sexual violence as a consequence of migration (Khan, 2005). The significant impact of sex trafficking and involuntary prostitution on the psyche of women in various parts of the world is noteworthy of attention. Post-migration, women often grapple with gendered racism as they find themselves caught between the racism of the new host society and the sexist expectations of their community of origin (Espin, 1997). These physical and psychological assaults highlight aspects of the migration experience that are unique to women.

Numerous authors have noted the challenges that immigrant parents face following the migration process. Immigrants who are in a parenting role straddle the challenges of their acculturation process with that of raising children in a novel cultural environment (Costigan & Koryzma, 2010). Additionally, most groups of minority immigrant parents, compared to their native-born white counterparts, report lower levels of perceived social support; this discrepancy persists even when demographic and socioeconomic characteristics are held constant (Turney & Kao, 2009). In keeping with a transformative paradigm, a few recent qualitative studies have examined the resilience and strengths that immigrant parents note have emerged from their experiences of migration and adaptation (Perreira, Chapman, & Stein, 2006; Usita & Blieszner, 2002).

Nevertheless, the majority of available literature focuses on the strife and tragedy in the migration and acculturation accounts of these parents.

In recent decades, the primary theoretical approach in immigrant and refugee mental health research has been the medical model (Ryan et al., 2008). As such, an emphasis has been placed on mental disorders, trauma, and loss in these populations, with scant attention paid to strengths. According to Ryan et al. (2008) and Usita and Blieszner (2002), in this trauma-based medical model, immigrants and refugees who have demonstrated considerable resiliency are conceptualized in terms of their deficiencies. Although pre-migration trauma is a common component of the refugee experience, it is not central, and has hitherto been treated as a defining characteristic of these individuals from this model. Moreover, this approach overlooks the various social, political, and economic factors that play a role in the migration experiences for this population (Watters, 2001).

In response to the shortcomings of other models, Ryan et al. (2008) proposed a more holistic theoretical approach in which various levels of resources, including personal, material, cultural, and social, are examined and accounted for. These authors purported that the level of resources available to a given refugee must be understood in the context of the individual's needs, goals, and demands. Furthermore, a complete understanding of the migration process for an immigrant or refugee necessitates an examination of the individual's level of resources during the pre-migration, migration, and post-migration phases and the ways in which the host society places limits on access to important resources (Ryan et al., 2008). While this proposed model moves the field a step closer in the direction of understanding the refugee experience in a multidimensional

way, there is a dearth of research on the actual strengths and resources immigrants and refugees possess that contribute to positive outcomes post-migration (Usita & Blieszner, 2002). Additionally, the actual voices of immigrants and refugees are largely absent from the current literature base on this population, leading various researchers to call for studies that create an opportunity for these individuals to speak to their strengths (Ryan et al., 2008).

### **Armenian Culture and Immigration to the United States**

Various cataclysmic historical events led to the displacement of the Armenian populations of the Middle East and their subsequent establishment in the United States. The single largest number of Armenians fled to the United States from the Ottoman Empire in the 1890s as a result of the first wave of massacres of the Armenian people perpetrated by the Turkish government. One hundred thousand (100,000) individuals came to the United States before immigration was restricted in the 1920s (Mirak, 1997). The majority of these individuals were survivors of the aforementioned massacres that culminated in the Genocide of 1915, in which the government of the Young Turks orchestrated the slaughter of 1.5 million Armenians for the purpose of ethnic cleansing (Dagirmanjian, 2005). This historical tragedy has deeply impacted the psyche of the Armenian people and contributed to the formation of a cultural narrative of survival. Additionally, the genocide has contributed to feelings of solidarity and unity among broadly disparate groups of Armenians (Dagirmanjian, 2005). It is also important to note that Turkey's denial of responsibility and the general inattention of the world community to recognize the crimes as genocide has further mobilized the diaspora to seek justice and recognition (Mirak, 1997).

While colored by struggle and tragedy, the stories of these initial Armenian immigrants also reveal significant strengths that have hitherto been largely ignored. Upon arrival in the United States, the majority of these individuals were faced with the intolerance for differences that was widespread at the time. Nevertheless, most Armenian immigrants were grateful for their host country and demonstrated appreciation through hard work and loyal citizenship (Dagirmanjian, 2005).

The second significant wave of Armenian immigrants arrived just after World War II, with a few thousand Armenians relocating under the Displaced Persons Act of 1948 (Mirak, 1997). This influx was followed by the 1950s migration of nearly 8,500 Armenians displaced by the Arab-Israeli conflict in Palestine. The largest numbers of Armenians migrated after the mid-1960s when the U.S. Immigration Act of 1965 put an end to a discriminatory quota system and various conflicts in the Middle East erupted, undermining the stable Armenian communities in those countries (Mirak, 1997). Unlike those who had migrated earlier, these immigrants were neither survivors of the Genocide nor from the ancestral homeland. Rather, they emigrated from other diaspora communities in Iran, Syria, and Lebanon, and were generally better prepared to face the demands of adapting to life in the United States than earlier immigrants (Dagirmanjian, 2005). Additionally, these individuals were accustomed to preserving their ethnic identity while coexisting with different cultures; they, therefore, quickly established schools, churches, and other cultural organizations in the United States. The strong and stable Armenian community is a testament to Armenian cultural pride, as well as a resource for sustaining it (Dagirmanjian, 2005).



The most recent groups of Armenians to arrive in the United States came following the devastating earthquake in Soviet Armenia in 1988 and the conflict between Soviet Armenia and Azerbaijan over the Nagorno-Karabakh region in 1990. Many of these individuals had refugee status and lost their upper-middle-class status upon relocating to the United States. According to Dagirmanjian (2005), they also faced the disapproval of the established Armenian American community who found the newcomers' behavior to be "pushy" (p. 443). Despite these points of tension, the Armenian American community remains relatively well integrated and prosperous. While earlier immigrants settled mostly in urban areas in the Northwest and Midwest, the now 600,000-800,000 Armenians are more widely distributed throughout the United States, with Los Angeles being the metropolitan area with the largest Armenian population; nearly 125,000 live in the greater Los Angeles area (Dekmejian, 1997; U.S Census Bureau, 2007).

### **The History and Application of a Strengths-Based Approach**

Positive psychology is considered the scientific study of the processes and conditions that promote the optimal functioning of people, groups, and institutions (Gable & Haidt, 2005). Specifically, positive psychology is conceptualized as the study of three areas: positive subjective experience (e.g., well-being and joy), positive individual traits (e.g., courage and self-determination), and positive social contexts and institutions (e.g., civic responsibilities); (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Sheldon and King (2001) purport that this subset of psychology seeks to uncover the reasons why most individuals thrive and lead lives of purpose and dignity in spite of various challenges. While an interest in strengths and virtues is not entirely new to the field of psychology, particularly

in light of the theoretical underpinnings of community and multicultural psychology and feminist therapy, an imbalanced focus on pathology and problems has dominated research and practice since World War II (Gable & Haidt, 2005; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Over this past decade, a small group of clinical psychologists highlighted this disparity and ignited a movement towards a strength-based perspective in both philosophy and practice (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Sheldon & King, 2001; Wong, 2006). A review of this dynamic evolution will elucidate the key players and factors that contributed to the birth of positive psychology and the reemergence of a focus on human strengths.

According to Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000), prior to World War II, psychology had three central aims: finding a cure for mental ailments, increasing productivity and fulfillment in people's lives, and recognizing and promoting strength and talent. The attention paid during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to the conditions that support the flourishing of people is evident in the writings of William James in 1902 on healthy mindedness, in John Watson's writings in the 1920s on effective parenting, in Lewis Terman's studies of giftedness in the 1930s, and in Carl Jung's work in the 1930s regarding the exploration and discovery of life's meaning (Gable & Haidt, 2005; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). It was also during the 1930s that Carl Rogers began to develop his phenomenological, client-centered approach to counseling, which attended chiefly to the expression of human potential and assets (Lopez et al., 2006).

The creation of two organizations immediately after World War II, the Veterans Administration (VA) and the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), dramatically transformed the face of the field by providing psychologists with careers in treating and

researching pathology (Lopez et al., 2006; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). As a result, psychology transformed into a “victimology” (p. 6) and individuals were quickly conceptualized as passive beings needing repair (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). While a much better understanding of pathology resulted from this shift, the mission of nurturing strength and talent was largely disregarded (Lopez et al., 2006). Despite the dominance of this deficit centered approach, a few strong theoretical frameworks on healthy development and functioning, such as that put forth by Erik Erikson and humanistic psychologists in the 1960s, were produced contemporaneously and continue to influence research and practice today (Lopez et al., 2006; Smith, 2006a).

According to Lopez et al. (2006), a significant shift in the field’s dominant approach to mental health once again took place in the early 1970s when Leona Tyler, the president of the American Psychological Association at the time, addressed a need for a more “hopeful psychology” (p. 210); her words inspired a generation of psychologists to look for and examine the human strengths and resources to which they had been temporarily blind. In addition, the momentum generated in the 1970s was carried and amplified by theory and research done in community psychology, specifically on the topics of empowerment and wellness enhancement. Emory Cowen spearheaded research on wellness enhancement, a conceptual alternative to the medical model that emphasizes a proactive approach to mental health (Cowen, 1998). According to Cowen (2000), this paradigm is broader than disorder prevention and focuses on promoting wellness from childhood and fostering it across the lifespan. The concepts of wellness and well-being also garnered empirical attention, and culminated in the conceptualization of well-being as a “multilevel, interactive, and value dependent phenomenon” (Prilleltensky, 2008, p.

359). Furthermore, research on the identification of protective factors for the development of preventative interventions, as well as a growing attention to the concept of health promotion, constitute other important efforts that challenge the dominant medical model and its emphasis on illness and pathology.

Numerous additional research findings, including the conclusion that human strengths can function as buffers against mental illness, contributed to the field's reorientation towards positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). This movement was propelled into the 21<sup>st</sup> century by the former president of the American Psychological Association, Martin Seligman, who in 1998 addressed the field's longstanding focus on pathology and called for the systematic development of a subdiscipline to be called positive psychology (Smith, 2006a). Peterson and Seligman (2004), through the Values in Action (VIA) project, led by example by proposing a comprehensive, yet preliminary, list of 24 character strengths and virtues that contribute to positive well-being. Through his research over the past decade, Seligman has been integral in uniting various concepts under the umbrella of positive psychology and in inspiring researchers to propose strength-based approaches to counseling. Two approaches that have particular implications for informing a strength-based interview approach include those proposed by Smith (2006a) and Wong (2006).

Smith (2006a) described a therapeutic model termed the Strength-Based Counseling Model, which is intended to be used with individuals across the lifespan. This model uses the strengths and virtues developed by Peterson and Seligman as a guide for describing different categories of strengths, and calls on psychologists to help clients recognize their strengths so that they can build on their current competencies. While not

empirically tested, this model is one of the only meaningful and researchable propositions of a strength-centered counseling approach to date (Smith, 2006a). According to Smith (2006a), strengths are defined as that which enables individuals to cope with life or which helps make life more meaningful for oneself and others. Strengths can be culturally bound, contextually based, or developmental and lifespan-oriented. Smith (2006a) outlines 10 stages of counseling: (a) establishing therapeutic rapport; (b) identifying client strengths, by helping clients narrate their life stories from a strength perspective; (c) assessing presenting problems, by asking clients to reveal what they perceive their problems to be and why they exist; (d) encouraging and instilling hope, by helping clients uncover evidence that they have met life's challenges in the past and that they can do so again; (e) framing solutions, by helping clients formulate a plan of action; (f) building strength and competence; (g) empowering; (h) changing, by helping clients reframe their life circumstances; (i) building resilience; (j) and evaluating and terminating. In this model, recognizing clients' strengths comprises a basic therapeutic intervention (Smith, 2006a).

Wong (2006) proposed Strength-Centered Therapy (ST), a therapeutic approach to conceptualizing psychotherapy that integrates the positive psychology of character strengths and virtues with a social constructionist viewpoint. The theoretical assumptions of ST include emphasizing clients' resources and not simply alleviating symptoms, incorporating the perspectives of social constructionism and positive psychology, viewing the meaning generated in therapy to be a cocreation of the therapist and client, paying careful attention to how systematic, cultural, and political forces shape how

clients view their strengths, and recognizing the important connection between the therapist and client.

According to Wong (2006), ST consists of four nonlinear phases. During the explicitizing phase, various strategies, including reframing a weakness as a character strength, are employed to identify a given client's existing character strengths. Wong notes that the envisioning phase consists of clients imagining the character strengths they would like to develop, while the empowering phase entails clients experiencing empowerment as a result of developing their preferred character strengths. The phase most applicable to the termination stage of therapy, the evolving phase, continues after the completion of therapy and indicates that the processing of developing character strengths is lifelong. Like the Strength-Based Counseling Model, the development of ST is in its infancy. While both models propose rich theoretical frames, and may be particularly suitable for counseling immigrants and refugees, empirical research must be conducted to establish their efficacy.

In addition to interventions from a strength-based perspective, attention has also been paid to the assessment of strengths, as well as to the development of important psychological constructs. With respect to assessment, informal, qualitative methods for assessing strengths can be included in any assessment process. Researchers have also developed psychometrically sound scales that assess clients' strengths, including the Behavioral and Emotional Rating Scale, the Behavior Assessment System for Children, and the Teacher-Child Rating Scale (Tedeschi & Kilmer, 2005). The importance of assessing assets cannot be underestimated in light of the finding that when strengths and

risks are both assessed, clients are more likely to find the intervention to be empowering and motivating (McQuaide & Ehrenreich, 1997; Tedeschi & Kilmer, 2005).

The constructs of resilience and thriving from developmental psychology, and the work of Tedeschi and Calhoun (2008) on the construct of posttraumatic growth, are also noteworthy, and demonstrate the attention that strengths have been paid in recent empirical literature. Specifically, through their research, Tedeschi and Calhoun expound that the experience of loss and trauma may result in the experience of positive change for individuals who undergo them. While validating the presence of significant emotional distress that often accompanies the experience of trauma, Tedeschi and Calhoun have highlighted the notion of growth in the face of loss, in addition to the presence of personal and collective strengths that allows for such growth. Their work has contributed to a broadened understanding of these complex phenomena.

Despite the field's growing interest in a strength-based approach, many argue that adherence to the medical model has remained steadfast (Gerstein, 2006; Kaczmarek, 2006; Smith, 2006b). The findings of a study by Lopez et al. (2006) reveal that only 29% of the sample of scholarship in counseling psychology guild and theme journals is positive focused (i.e., addressing one or more positive constructs). Additionally, little has been done to measure and conceptualize a variety of positive psychological constructs and processes, including achievement, love, and motivation (Lopez et al., 2006). This is particularly concerning given that the subfield of counseling psychology has claimed to be unwaveringly committed to identifying and enhancing the positives in human existence (Linley, 2006). Others have criticized the disparity between the professional rhetoric that purports a strength-based model of human functioning and the reality of

training programs which focus principally on teaching students the deficit model (Gerstein, 2006). Also critiqued is the lack of a taxonomy of strengths and an evidence-based model for developing strengths in counseling (Smith, 2006b). The concern that not enough has been done to integrate positive psychology with other areas of psychology, and even across disciplines, has also been raised (Linley, 2006).

**Positive psychology and cultural diversity.** Constantine and Sue (2006) argue that definitions of optimal human functioning are culture bound and tied to the values of larger society. As such, recent attention has been paid to the factors that contribute to optimal functioning in people of color, and emphasis has been placed on considering cultural values, beliefs, and self presentation when making determinations about dimensions of optimal functioning across cultures (Constantine & Sue, 2006). To help in achieving this end, the role strain and adaptation approach has been put forth to address critical diversity, multilevel, and life-span issues in strength-based interventions (Bowman, 2006). In terms of cultural diversity specifically, Constantine and Sue argue that five issues must be taken into account when examining the psychological experiences of people of color: collectivism; racial and ethnic pride; spirituality and religion; interconnectedness of mind, body, and spirit; and the role of family and community. The consideration of such variables is crucial as subjective well-being has been found to correlate with different predictors across cultures (Diener & Diener, 1995). As previously alluded to, little attention has been paid to the strengths that enable people of color to overcome adversity in the face of racism and other injustice. Along with other disenfranchised groups, people of color, some of whom are also immigrants or refugees, develop important skills as a result of struggling with social and economic obstacles



(Constantine & Sue, 2006). Constantine and Sue describe three of these assets as heightened perceptual wisdom, nonverbal and contextualized accuracy, and bicultural flexibility. Since it is likely that some of these assets are possessed to varying degrees by Armenian immigrants and refugees, a closer examination of the strengths that contribute to positive outcomes in this population is warranted.

### **Research Aims**

The aim of this research study was to collect narrative accounts of Armenian immigrants and/or refugees in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the strengths these individuals possess both prior to migration, which contribute to positive outcomes post-migration, as well as strengths they deem to have emanated from the migration experience. Since a deficit focused, medical model has dominated the field's approach to immigrant mental health over the past few decades, the voices and strengths of these resilient individuals have been largely ignored. Therefore, in keeping with a transformative approach, an additional objective of this study was to facilitate empowerment by providing the participants with a medium to tell their stories. Moreover, given that a paucity of literature exists on individuals of Armenian descent, an added aim of this study was to contribute to the field's understanding of this ethnic group. The results of this research endeavor are intended to provide education for individuals who find themselves in circumstances similar to the study participants, as well as for practitioners who work therapeutically with this population.

### **Research Questions**

1. What patterns and themes emerge in the immigration stories?
2. What are the strength-related themes in the immigration stories?

3. How do participants understand and make meaning of their immigration stories?
4. In what ways are cultural variables (e.g., values, customs, ethnic pride, social roles, etc.) shared and understood through the immigration narrative?
5. What relationships can be identified between the immigration story themes and psychological outcomes such as sense of well-being, identity, quality of interpersonal relationships, etc.?

## **Research Methodology**

### **Narrative Research**

In light of the dearth of research on Armenian immigrant and refugee strengths, utilizing methods that aim to uncover a broad range of occurrences in the lives of these individuals holds promise (Usita & Blieszner, 2002). Narrative inquiry, the qualitative approach utilized by the researcher, allows for the analysis of participants' personal experiences in order to elucidate, understand, and validate how participants construct meaning in their lives (Atkinson, 1998; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell, 2007). The emphasis in this form of inquiry is the participants' perceptions of their lives, and analysis provides detailed themes about the participants' life experiences. This inductive approach values human experience of the whole person, rather than focusing on certain traits or behaviors (Creswell, 2007). Nevertheless, narratives can also highlight significant aspects or experiences in a participant's life. Narrative inquiry provides a forum in which participants can articulate their stories and be heard by the researcher (Atkinson, 1998; Creswell, 2007).

In working from this approach, the researcher assists interviewees in their self-exploration and works collaboratively with the interviewees to create meaning from the stories that are told; the emphasis remains, however, on the interviewees' perceptions of their lives and experiences. In this way, the life story interview can serve a therapeutic function, as well as a research one (Atkinson, 1998). Furthermore, since one of the central tenets of the transformative paradigm is to highlight the lives and experiences of diverse groups that have been traditionally marginalized through research, the focus of the narrative approach lends itself well to accomplishing this objective.

## **Participants**

The participants for this study included six adults of Armenian heritage ranging in age from 35 to 68. Two males and four females were recruited from the parental body of a private Armenian School in Southern California. The school educates students, of predominantly Armenian ancestry, from preschool through 12<sup>th</sup> grade and Armenian studies are an integral part of the school curriculum. The parental body is largely comprised of Armenian immigrants and refugees who have migrated to the United States from various countries in the Middle East (e.g., Iran, Turkey, and Lebanon) over the past 30 years and possess a substantial degree of ethnic pride. All six participants in this study migrated directly, or lived for a time before migration to the United States, from the following countries: Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Canada, Australia, and Greece. Given that narrative inquiry research relies on the depth, not the breadth, of data collection to provide an account of an individual's lived experiences, the intent was to recruit six to eight individuals to participate in the interview protocol designed for the study (Creswell, 2007).

To be included in the investigation, the individuals must be ethnic Armenian immigrants or refugees who have resided in the United States for at least 5 years. Additionally, in remaining mindful of the stages of adult development and the formation of solid ego integrity and identity over the course of one's thirties, the participants must also be over the age of 35 (Whitbourne, Sneed, & Sayer, 2009). Participants must also have provided written consent to be audiorecorded. Individuals were excluded from participating in the study if they endorsed significant immigration-related distress and/or believed they had not adjusted well to living in the United States. This exclusionary

criterion ensured that individuals who were in current distress as a result of the consequences of their migration experience were protected. The first eight participants who met the inclusion criteria and who chose to participate following the detailed review of the consent form with the researcher were to be selected for the study and recruiting took place until there were at least two participants of each gender. Since eight participants were not successfully recruited within eight weeks of initial contact, the researcher discontinued data collection after the minimum of six participants were interviewed.

### **The Interview Protocol**

A semi-structured interview was developed by the researcher to elicit participant stories about their immigration experience (see Appendix A). Most questions included on the interview protocol were geared towards obtaining a more in-depth understanding of the participants' personal histories and experiences, with a focus on those stories directly related to the immigration experience (Questions 2, 3). Other questions explored the individuals' sense of inner and cultural strengths, particularly those they believe they drew upon to cope, persevere, and thrive both pre- and post-migration (Questions 4, 4a, 5, 5a). The final question focused on what other Armenian immigrants and refugees might learn and what insight they may glean from hearing the participant's story (Question 7). The order in which questions were asked expectedly varied; some questions sprung naturally from the interviewee's responses to the other questions. Responses to some of the questions were self-initiated; therefore, not all questions had to be directly posed.

## **Procedures**

**Recruitment procedures.** Upon obtaining the approval of the principal of the school and the Pepperdine University, Graduate and Professional Schools Institutional Review Board, the researcher scheduled a date to conduct the complimentary hour-long psychoeducational lecture at the school for parents. The topic, eating disorders among children and adolescents, was determined in collaboration with the school's principal and the Parent Teacher Organization chairperson. The lecture was advertised via flyers placed throughout the school; flyers were also mailed home to parents (see Appendix B). While detailing the lecture topic, the flyers also informed parents of the potential to participate in a study conducted by the lecturer. Interest forms and recruitment pamphlets were also mailed to parents in the case that individuals interested in participating in the study were not able to attend the lecture (see Appendix C and D). Following the lecture, an overview of the study was presented to the attendees that explained the purpose of the study, introduced the researcher, and detailed what study participation would entail (see Appendix E). The researcher also provided the attendees with a copy of the recruitment pamphlet at that time (see Appendix D).

Those individuals interested in participating contacted the researcher using one of the following methods: (a) completion of an interest form that was left with the pamphlet on which they indicated their interest and the dates and times they were available to meet, and mailed the form in a stamped envelope that was addressed to the researcher (Appendix C); or (b) a telephone call to the researcher by using a toll free number that was provided on the recruitment pamphlet to arrange a time to meet; or (c) an email sent

to the researcher at an address provided on the pamphlet in order to arrange a meeting time.

The researcher then returned the interested individuals' inquiries by phone, at which time the researcher conducted an initial screen in order to review inclusion/exclusion criteria and answer any questions based on a script developed by the researcher (see Appendix F). The screen included two evaluative questions aimed at gathering an individual's current opinion of his or her level of psychosocial adaptation to life in the United States (see Question 6). In order to not be excluded from the study, the individual must have "agreed" with the statement that he or she has adjusted positively to living in the United States as well as "disagreed" with the statement that he or she continues to experience significant distress related to immigrating and adjusting to life in the United States; individuals who could not endorse the desired responses were excluded from the study. Only one potential participant was excluded on the basis of this criterion. Those who met the inclusionary criteria, did not meet the exclusionary criterion, and demonstrated interest were mailed the consent form and were asked to review it prior to the interview. The researcher contacted the participants 24 hours before the interview to confirm the appointment. It is of note that of the six participants recruited, only one had attended the lecture; the other five were recruited through flyers mailed home.

**Consent procedures.** A meeting was scheduled with the individuals who responded to the researcher's recruiting efforts and met the study criteria in a meeting room on the school grounds. This meeting entailed a detailed review of the consent form (see Appendix G) with the participant, in English or Armenian, depending on the participant's language of choice. After each paragraph was read, a scripted set of

questions (see Appendix H) was asked to verify the individual's understanding of the content reviewed. In addition to standard concerns of the consent process, such as the voluntary nature of study participation and issues of confidentiality, the following elements that pertained to this study in particular were reviewed with the participants: (a) the need to audio tape the interviews; (b) the potential need for a post-interview phone meeting to clarify issues raised during the interview; and (c) the inability to ensure full anonymity due to the personal and specific nature of each narration, although pseudonyms were to be used.

In the event an interviewee desired to further process his or her feelings, thoughts, and insights that emerged from his or her study participation, the researcher provided referrals to relevant mental health resources to address the needs of the interviewee (see Appendix I). The availability of such referrals was indicated on the consent form.

After reviewing the consent form and answering all questions, if an individual chose to participate, his or her signature was obtained on the consent form and he or she received a copy of the form. All six participants were obtained in this manner.

**Research procedures.** Upon obtaining an individual's consent, the researcher conducted the interviews. All participants elected to conduct the interviews in a conference room at the school. While dependent on the complexity of the story, interviews were expected to last a total of two to three hours (Seidman, 1998). All six interviews lasted the maximum of 3 hours. Since none of the participants noted fatigue, all interviews were completed in one session. The researcher offered the participants breaks, as well as refreshments throughout the course of each session.



The researcher commenced the interview with an explanation of why the interviews were being conducted and the potential benefit to the interviewees (Atkinson, 1998). The researcher was attentive to responses that were vague, unclear, or needed more depth and detail in order to accurately capture the participant's intent. As needed, probes or follow-up questions such as "Why do you think that is the case?" or "Could you give an example of that?" (Murray, 2003, pp, 117-118) were asked.

The researcher ended the interview with closure questions, which informed the interviewee that the interview was coming to an end and allowed him or her to provide any further insights he or she deemed was important to share with the researcher (Atkinson, 1998). At that point, sociodemographic questions that were not addressed during the interview were posed. The researcher closed the interview by expressing appreciation for having the opportunity to hear the interviewee's story and also shared with the participant what was personally gained for the researcher from the experience. After each interview session, the researcher journaled about her feelings, reactions, and insights about the interviewee and the interview experience.

Although the possibility of follow-up phone calls was indicated on the consent form, in the case that findings that emerged during the data analysis process needed to be clarified, such clarification was not necessary. At the end of the interview, participants were provided research compensation in the form of a \$25 Starbucks gift certificate; this gift certificate was to be given regardless of whether or not participants completed the entire interview process. It is of note that all participants who began the interviews completed the interview process.

**Data management procedures.** Upon the completion of each interview, a randomly generated identification number was assigned to each audiotape, and these audiotapes were stored in a locked file cabinet, separate from the list of participant names and identification numbers and consent forms. In order to maintain the security of the materials, only the researcher had access to the data.

The researcher transcribed the interviews and each transcript was labeled with the same identification number assigned to its respective audiotape. The transcriptions were kept on a password protected computer, which only the researcher had access to. A copy of the transcripts was placed on a USB drive that is stored in a locked file cabinet with the audiotapes. Upon completion of the study and all dissertation requirements, the audiotapes will be destroyed. The transcribed and content analyzed data will be kept a minimum of 5 years. When data are no longer required for research purposes, they will be destroyed.

Given that the purpose of life-story interviews is to tell the narratives of the participants, it was critical that the transcript convey precisely what the interviewee spoke of during the taped interview. Upon completion of the initial transcription, the researcher reviewed the tape and the transcript in order to ensure accuracy. Following the initial transcription, a coding and data reduction process commenced. Key issues were highlighted in the narratives and narrative linkages that connect different parts were identified (Murray, 2003).

## Results

### Data Analysis Approach

Semi-structured interviews constituted the data collection method employed in this study. Upon completion and transcription of the interviews, an understanding of the subjective experience of each participant was garnered through multiple reads of the transcribed data. During the initial stage of the data review process, margin notes were made as a means to identify the ideas and concepts in the text. Descriptive labels were then given to the notes, which served as initial codes for potential patterns and themes. Multiple reads of the data were conducted until all coding possibilities were exhausted.

Upon establishing the codes and classifying the raw data, thematic analysis was conducted to distinguish the core meaning and significance from the data (Patton, 2002). Revisions and reductions of the codes allowed for classification of raw data around emerging themes. The set of themes were revised and reduced until a parsimonious set was developed that allowed for consistency within the data represented by the theme and divergence among themes. Through a similar process, subthemes were identified. The codes were applied to the data over the course of multiple read throughs; the themes continued to be revised until further reduction was not possible. Additionally, the data were carefully examined to detect deviant cases that did not support the hypothesized themes; the discovery of such themes led to the alteration of themes to account for this divergent data. Applying and revising the codes continued until all data were represented by one or more themes. Coded data were then grouped by appropriate thematic codes. Presentation of the themes has been done in a descriptive narrative of each participant by forming individual profiles. The profile contains a brief demographic profile as well as a

thick description of the individual through the narrative description of the emergent themes.

Within-case analysis was followed by between-case analysis. Between-case analysis was accomplished by conducting thematic analysis across the individual cases (Creswell, 2007). This method of analysis allows for systemic comparison of cases, highlighting similarities, differences, and uniqueness while also maintaining the strength of the individual cases (Patton, 2002). The process of between-case analysis began by compiling and reducing the data from individual participants; the data were color-coded to distinguish the individuals during the cross-case analysis. The thematic coding process and analysis was conducted using the same process as that for within-case analysis. The researcher analyzed the themes to uncover the researcher's experience and interpretation of the material and the conclusions that were drawn from the process and content. The dissertation chairperson, Dr. Shelly Harrell, served as auditor of the coding and data analysis process at every step. The aforementioned individual case narratives are followed by a rich narrative description of what was indicated by the cross-case thematic analysis.

According to Atkinson (1998), the process of analysis takes into account reliability and validity, which includes: (a) the internal coherence of the narrative (i.e., no apparent contradictions in the interviewee's account), (b) the corroboration of the narrative by the interviewee, and (c) the persuasiveness of the narrative (i.e., the plausibility of the narrative).

### **Interview Process Issues**

Throughout the process of analysis, the researcher not only considered the content

of the interview, but also the experience of it, including the relationship that emerged between the interviewee and researcher. Particular attention was paid to language switching and the language used when conveying information infused with heightened emotion. Prior to outlining identified themes, a brief discussion regarding language in the context of the narratives is relevant in order to enhance the analysis of the data and help illuminate underlying culturally and socially constructed meaning (Brown & Augusta-Scott, 2007). Participants were given the opportunity to conduct the interviews in their preferred language of either Armenian or English. While all participants chose to both receive written materials in English and conduct the interviews in English, language switching frequently took place. According to Santiago-Rivera, Altarriba, Poll, Gonzalez-Miller, and Cragun (2009), bilingual individuals may switch to their native language or the first language learned as it often facilitates the ability to remember and describe the experience, including emotions, in greater detail. In support of this observation, the participants in this study frequently switched to Armenian when discussing emotionally laden topics such as separation from family members, challenges in the adjustment process, and the impact that the interview process had on them. Available literature indicates that code switching between languages is also cognitively mediated by the extent to which certain words or phrases exist in one language or the other (Biever et al., 2002). As such, at several points over the course of the interview, one of the participants used phrases in her second language, Farsi, to describe a personal quality that helped her navigate the challenges she faced after arriving in the United States. While a comprehensive examination of the differences regarding language use and switching across cultures is beyond the scope of this dissertation, it remains an important

phenomenon to highlight.

### **Within-Case Analysis**

The sample consisted of six individuals, all of whom are parents of students attending the participating school. Tables 1 and 2 present the demographic characteristics of the participants. Each of the six participants is represented by a letter (A-F). A detailed profile of each participant is presented that provides a summary of their immigration story. All directly quoted material from this section is attributed to personal communications from participants in this study.

Table 1

#### *Participant Demographic Information*

Participant	Gender	Age	Migrant Status	Country of Birth	Other Countries Lived in	Number of Years in U.S.	Cities Lived in U.S.
A	F	45	Refugee	Iran	Greece	22	Los Angeles, CA
B	F	35	Immigrant	Syria	None	10	Los Angeles, CA
C	F	49	Immigrant	Israel	Canada	35	Chattanooga, TN and Los Angeles, CA
D	M	68	Immigrant	Lebanon	None	43	Los Angeles, CA
E	M	40	Immigrant	Iran	None	31	Queens, NY and Los Angeles, CA
F	F	42	Immigrant	Iran	Australia	16	Los Angeles, CA

Table 2

*Participant Demographic Information*

Participant	Marital Status	Number of Children	Occupation	Highest Level of Education	Religious Affiliation
A	Married	2	Accountant	A.A.	Christian, "Spiritual"
B	Married	2	Teacher	B.A.	Christian, Armenian Apostolic
C	Married	2	Teacher	B.A.	Christian, Protestant
D	Married	1	Principal	M.A.	Not Religious
E	Married	2	Teacher	B.S.	Christian, Armenian Apostolic
F	Married	3	Teacher	B.S.	Not religious

**Participant A: "I wouldn't change a thing."** Participant A is a 45-year-old married female who resides with her husband of 19 years and their children, a 16-year-old daughter and an 11-year-old son. She is an accountant and has an AA degree in accounting. She identifies as Christian and noted that she has been influenced by Buddhist "spiritual" practices.

Participant A migrated independently as a refugee to the United States from Tehran, Iran, her birth place, in 1988 at the age of 23, and has been living in Los Angeles for the last 22 years. She indicated that her emigration was prompted by the deterioration in living conditions following the Iranian revolution in 1978, which began when the participant was 13 years old. Participant A noted experiencing significant discrimination

as a Christian female living in the newly formed Muslim nation state, and reported that opportunities for higher education were nonexistent; war, both civil and with Iraq, was ever present. Despite strong cultural pressures to remain in the family home until marriage, her limited grasp of the English language, and her parent's reluctance to leave their home country, the participant decided to flee the country at the age of 20 independently. She attributed her decision to relocate, and the relative ease with which she was able to leave the country during a time of political upheaval and social constraint, to a combination of "guts", "destiny", and "connections in the travel industry." With the ultimate goal of migrating to the United States, the participant obtained a visa to enter Greece, where she struggled financially and socially. While characterizing her time in Greece as the "toughest experience of [her] life", Participant A also discussed the ways in which the experience contributed to personal growth and strengthened her sense of pride in herself:

It was pretty, pretty tough and I had very challenging days and nights. It was very interesting, but that helped me grow a lot, I became the person I am and sometimes I think at anytime that you drop me at any time or any place at any part of the world I'll survive. I'll have no problem.

Upon arriving in Los Angeles 1.5 years later in 1988, Participant A reported facing adversity in various forms, particularly significant financial hardship. Despite obtaining a job as a receptionist 10 days after her arrival, she "had to limit and budget every penny"; nearly 6 months after her arrival, she held four jobs in order to cover her expenses. Participant A indicated that not having the opportunity to pursue higher education because of financial burdens was "more devastating than anything else." She also reported that as a result of these challenges, she experienced "nervousness", which manifested in the form of a "painful locked jaw" for the first 6 months following her



arrival in the United States. Other challenges she encountered included a language barrier, social isolation, separation from family, discrimination in social circles on the basis of her accent, and feeling disconnected from the Armenian community in the United States. Namely, Participant A wrestled with her cultural identity in the U.S. in light of her prior minority status in Iran:

We were very much a minority and very much discriminated against so that already as a teenager gives you the feeling of do you even want to be Armenian? I'm living in America; I have to first become American. I have to figure the culture out, I have to figure the system out, me being an Armenian is not going to do any good. Been there done that.

Despite these significant challenges, the participant indicated that she did not reveal her struggles to her family members in Iran in order to “not worry them, because they had enough to deal with.” She indicated that following her parent’s and sisters’ relocation to the United States 5 years after her arrival, she grappled with protecting her newfound independence in the face of cultural expectations of unmarried daughters to live in the family home. Participant A was tearful when describing the challenges her younger sister faced in adjusting to the United States, challenges the participant believed were aggravated due to her decision to live apart from her family: “Ya, until this day, every time I remember those days the only thing that hurts me, my mom and dad they could survive ok, but she [her younger sister] was very broken hearted.”

In reflecting on how she coped with these various challenges, Participant A articulated various personal strengths that she possesses. She was also able to describe how she has thrived post-immigration. In terms of strengths, she highlighted self-respect, courage, self-motivation, willingness to take on challenges, “street smarts”, strong work ethic, persistence, positive outlook, forward thinking orientation, and patience as some of

the qualities that helped her cope with the transition. She also noted strengths by way of community, highlighting that she “owed [her success] to the people [she] met in life”, including employers, friends, and her husband. Additionally, she identified the Armenian community as a current source of strength, a resource that she did not access until 10 years ago; she connected with the community after having children, sorting through her internalized prejudice, and believing that she “finally had something to offer.”

Participant A reported that as a result of hard work, persistence, and “good people”, she and her husband started a successful mortgage company 10-15 years ago which employed over 100 people at its peak. Currently, she works as an accountant from home, serves on the parent-teacher organization at AGBU, and raises her adolescent children. While Participant A was able to demarcate her strengths, she also did not minimize her struggles: her narration indicates a rich integration of these processes and speaks to her reflective nature and substantial personal growth following her relocation to the United States. Her confidence in herself expanded as a result of migration process and she summarized her thoughts about the experience by noting, “I wouldn’t change a thing for the world.” Overall, her narrative account was progressive, and emphasized the various ways in which she transformed the challenges of immigration into an opportunity for self-growth and actualization.

**Participant B: “This is my character.”** Participant B is a 35-year-old married female who resides with her husband of 10 years and their children, a 9-year-old daughter and an 8-year-old son. She is an elementary school teacher and has a B.A. in English literature. She identifies as Christian and noted that her faith is an important aspect of her identity.

Participant B immigrated to Los Angeles from Damascus, Syria as a newlywed in late-December 1999 with her husband of 6 months; she was 3 months pregnant at the time. She noted that their relocation was not planned. Rather, they were extended an opportunity to visit Los Angeles by their godfather who resided there, which prompted a close consideration of whether to transplant their lives to the United States in an effort to expand their occupational and social opportunities. While Participant B noted that she had close ties with the Armenian community in Damascus, she indicated that there were significant economic challenges and a lack of political and religious freedom in her birth country, which left her and her husband concerned about the future of their growing family. The decision to relocate was a difficult one, however, primarily because of the separation from family that would be necessitated; Participant B is an only child and had concerns about starting a new life halfway across the globe without the immediate physical support of her parents. In reflecting on that decision, Participant B cited her openness to new experience and determination as qualities that guided her:

I wanted to try and this is my character – I always like to try, I don't say no, so this is part of a strength in my character, I never say no – I like to try. I said it's ok, we can manage the parent issue, I can manage the parent issue, it was hard for my parents too, it was hard for me, but I said I will manage this, I will overcome this.

Upon arriving in the United States, Participant B faced many challenges, including unfamiliarity with social customs, loneliness, and isolation. Additionally, in order to meet financial demands, her husband worked close to 70 hours a week, and Participant B quickly became acquainted with the challenge of raising children in a foreign land without the help of her parents or other close family members. Participant B was able to articulate various personal strengths upon which she relied to navigate those

challenging years, including patience, determination, persistence, openness to change, and a forward thinking mentality. She also noted that her faith in God gave her the “strength” to withstand various difficulties, including the death of her father a few years after her arrival in the United States. Moreover, Participant B took the initiative to establish social supports in her adoptive country and challenged the traditional gender roles with which she was raised by enrolling in a local Armenian college, obtaining employment part-time as a secretary for an Armenian church, and volunteering at the Armenian school her children attended. She noted that reconnecting with the community helped her find support among other immigrant women and a meaningful way in which to set roots in the United States.

In conquering her challenges, Participant B also noted that she was guided by the core values of hard work, honesty, and community that were transmitted by various “role models” in her life, including leading cultural Armenian figures in Syria:

So these are role models around us. In Damascus, the best tailor was Armenian, the best shoemaker was Armenian, the best doctor was Armenian, so these people were role models around us and we learned from them to try our best and to work hard...

These principles led Participant B to “seek opportunities” and obtain employment as a teacher; she represented her school at a conference in Armenia last summer. She is proud to be a working mother who is a “role model” for her children. In speaking about her migration specifically and life more generally, Participant B candidly relayed that she has grown keenly aware of both her strengths and weaknesses over the years. She has understood that strength results from facing and challenging weakness, and does not simply equate to the absence of it: “If you don’t feel that weakness, you don’t feel that strength. When you try to overcome weakness, that is your strength.” Her progressive

narrative was rich with examples of the various ways in which she has blossomed over the course of her life and the confidence she has gained in herself as a result of thriving in this country.

**Participant C: “That stays with you.”** Participant C is 49-year-old married female who resides with her husband of 24 years and their two sons, a 22-year-old and a 17-year-old. She is an elementary school teacher and has a B.A. degree. She identifies as Protestant and noted that she is “strong into faith.”

Participant C migrated to Chattanooga, Tennessee at the age of 14 from Jerusalem with her immediate family members, which include her parents, a sister 2 years her junior, and a brother 7 years her junior. Prior to arriving in the United States, her family immigrated to Toronto, Canada in 1967 where they lived for 1.5 years before returning to Jerusalem due to difficulties adjusting to the “harsh” Canadian climate. Their initial migration to Canada was prompted by the warfare between the Jewish and Jordanian factions in the area, which led to grave sociopolitical instability and the continuous threat of physical violence. The impact of the war on Participant C was substantial:

...because I witnessed deaths, I witnessed the soldiers coming in and basically pushing and shoving and putting their machine guns on your forehead and a lot of horrific experiences that I will not go into. But that stays with you, especially when you were a child, so the nightmares begin, especially when they, meaning the Israeli soldiers, come in at wee hours of the morning or any time of day to check whether you have any machine guns in your house or any sorts of things. So as a child when you see these huge figures with a machine gun attacking and coming in this wild way, you are petrified. So that stays with you...

Although her parents strongly desired to remain in Jerusalem given her father’s flourishing business and their strong ties to the local Armenian community, the endangerment of their safety ultimately culminated in their decision to relocate to Chattanooga, where a few family members resided. In describing her adjustment to the

southern United States, Participant C noted that she initially struggled to understand the southern dialect, despite her fluency in the English language. Additionally, she grappled with the reaction of her new, culturally homogeneous American community to her Armenian transplant family. In addition to educating her teachers and peers about her culture, Participant C also found herself to be somewhat of a “celebrity attraction” given her “God-fearing” community’s interest in her home country: the birthplace of Jesus Christ. Despite some consequent gains in social capital, she wrestled with her unfamiliarity of American cultural norms, including food and fashion, and “was always petrified of being an outcast.” She described this challenge in the following way:

Those were the challenges: trying to prove myself and trying to assert myself to try to be a part of a community that is worlds of difference, I mean night and day from where I came from. You had to learn what was acceptable and what was not - you had to learn how to act, what to wear.

The most substantial challenge that Participant C faced as an adolescent immigrant was the significant generational divide in her family’s adjustment to the United States; while she and her siblings acclimated rather quickly to their surroundings, her parents struggled to do so. Due to language barriers and limited cultural knowledge, Participant C noted that her parents were not able to help her with her schooling, which posed a marked challenge for her. Additionally, in light of the very small Armenian community in Tennessee and her parents’ fear of cultural assimilation, her father placed restrictions on Participant C’s social privileges; namely, she was not allowed to wear make-up, date non-Armenian boys, or speak English in the home. These discrepancies in receptiveness to the culture of their adoptive country led to frequent arguments and disagreements. An unintended consequence of this disagreement was Participant C’s

increasing awareness of her morphing identity as an American Armenian and the tension between adopting new customs while retaining those with which she was raised:

The challenge was trying to fit in without hurting my parents because you don't want to lose that identity of being Armenian – you want to be proud of the fact that now you are an American Armenian – but if you don't fit in...

In reflecting on how she coped with these challenges, Participant C cited various personal strengths, including her outgoing personality, persistence, perseverance, determination, and willingness to take initiative; she reported that the process of migration allowed her to realize her possession of the qualities. She also noted various community-based strengths, including the support of the small Armenian community in Tennessee and her church members, relationships that she will “always treasure.” Additionally, Participant C reported that her faith has helped her cope with various obstacles in her life:

I'm very strong into faith to the extent that four years later I was the leader of the youth group - basically the faith took me there and that's what kept me and until this day my faith in God and Christ and being who I am has helped me survive any kind of obstacles that have come my way.

An additional cultural shift that Participant C faced was moving to Los Angeles 24 years ago after marrying her husband; she noted that connecting with the Armenian community in the area and obtaining a job as a teacher at an Armenian school helped her navigate that transition and revitalized her American Armenian identity. Throughout her narrative, Participant C clearly articulated her strengths and consistently voiced an immense pride in her bicultural identity. She also expressed a fear of assimilation and the dissolution of this identity in future generations; she emphasized that the American Armenian community ought to vehemently protect its cultural resources through

storytelling. In reflection, Participant C emphasized the positive experience of her immigration experience, which best characterizes her narrative account as progressive.

**Participant D: “The stories I heard.”** Participant D is a 68-year-old married male who resides with his wife in Los Angeles. They have a 27-year-old daughter who is a graduate of the school. Participant A is a school principal and has an M.A. in History. He reported that he is not religious.

Participant D immigrated to Los Angeles from Beirut, Lebanon in 1968 to pursue his “ultimate goal” of obtaining a doctoral degree in History. In reflecting on his life in Beirut, Participant D initially noted that it was relatively “sheltered” in that he was raised within the bustling Armenian community and attended well-respected academic institutions where he developed a strong grasp of the English language. He noted that his family had limited financial means and that he was raised by his parents in a small, one-bedroom home with his four siblings. In describing his parents, he highlighted that they were survivors of the Armenian Genocide of 1915. His father’s brother, two sisters, and father were massacred during the deportations; his mother was orphaned. Tragedy struck their family once again when Participant D was involved in a bus accident at the age of 18 while on a field trip; 22 of his classmates died and he was one of 13 to survive. He noted that the memory of that event still haunts him.

In describing the challenges that characterized his early life experiences, Participant D noted that his migration to the United States was relatively effortless and that he adjusted to his adoptive country quickly. While he was not homesick and enjoyed the company of a sizable group of peers in his graduate program, he did mention that he faced financial difficulties a few months after arriving to the United States which



required him to juggle two full-time jobs; he obtained a job as a school teacher and also worked part-time at a home-goods store. In addition to these financial challenges, he was “shunned” by non-Armenian peers due to his unfamiliarity with dominant cultural norms. After regaining financial stability, he was able to continue his doctoral work, but ultimately did not complete his degree upon receiving an offer to be a principal at a fledgling school.

In discussing how he coped with the immigration process, Participant D highlighted his early life experiences and the broader context within which he was raised. Specifically, he noted that he had “role models all around” him: individuals who had struggled, survived, and thrived following adversity, including his own parents who were genocide survivors:

I remember another strength that I used to draw on - the stories I heard from people my father's age. The community we grew up in, people visited each other and we were at home when we were growing up, we heard stories of older people and we would sit down and listen to them and that was part of our education and gaining strength to really cope with difficult times.

He noted that various values and principles, including the importance of hard work, flexibility, and community were transmitted through these stories, which shaped Participant D’s life and helped him cope with challenges. Moreover, the humble socioeconomic context in which Participant D was raised prepared him to weather the financial limitations he faced a few months after arriving in the United States:

I mean we grew up in a one bedroom house, family of six, one father supporting the whole family. Financial stress, the basic situations we grew up in prepared us for the economic stress that we confronted here.

Participant D also noted various ways in which his involvement in the Armenian community in Los Angeles offered him a sense of fulfillment, achievement, and support

that enriched his life and aided him in the migration process. In reflecting on his narrative, particularly in light of his upcoming retirement, Participant D noted pride and a growing sense of his “legacy.”

Given the significant adversities Participant D experienced prior to immigrating to the United States, he conceptualized his migration as being a positive experience that allowed for substantial self-growth. In keeping with a progressive narrative account, he reframed the challenges that he encountered as “exciting times of change.” It is of note that Participant D did not reveal the most painful aspect of his life experience, his childhood bus accident, until the end of the interview and described it as the “true pain” in his life; leaving that past to forge a new life and career in the United States could be conceptualized as a powerful, new beginning.

**Participant E: “It was a big, big task.”** Participant E is a 40-year-old married male who resides with his wife and two young children. He is a teacher and has a B.A. in Sociology. He reported that he was baptized in the Christian church but is not religious.

Participant E immigrated to the United States in the summer of 1979 at the age of 9 with his parents and younger sister following the eruption of the Iranian revolution; his father was employed by the deposed government, which compromised his family’s safety in the aftermath of the shift in sociopolitical power. Participant E vividly described the upheaval of his birth country in the wake of the revolution:

Ya, during the revolution, it’s very clear – seeing military trucks in the streets, hearing military helicopters flying by and shooting and killing, and kids, young teenage kids walking around with AK47s or seeing people running around in the streets and demonstrating and then being shot at and killed, bodies in the trucks being collected. I mean it was just horrifying things. This was the revolution.

In light of the threats to their safety, the limited educational opportunities, and the newfound religious fundamentalism of the state, his parents decided to transplant their family to Queens, New York where two of Participant E's paternal aunts lived with their respective families. Participant E described a very difficult adjustment to the United States. He noted that during the ride home from the airport, his aunt informed him and his parents that they had to "change who [they] were because this is America, not Iran." Shortly thereafter, Participant E was told by his cousin that people will "treat [him] differently" if he has an accent, which left Participant E puzzled; it was later that he understood that his cousin had "basically encouraged [him] to assimilate." Participant E faced significant challenges in school, both on academic and social fronts. He reported that there "was no infrastructure" to accommodate students who did not speak English; in light of his parent's unfamiliarity with the language, he also did not have academic help at home. The language barrier left him socially isolated at school; he was frequently taunted by other students as a result. He also grappled with prejudice and discrimination on the basis of his cultural background:

That was the question they would ask me: what is Armenian? Is it Albanian? And the worst thing I could tell them is that I was from Iran. They would say, oh, you're a terrorist. Immediately they would label you.

At home, his parents struggled financially and socially, and conflict characterized their relationship with extended family members. Moreover, they were disconnected from the larger Armenian community in Manhattan. Despite these various challenges, Participant E completed high school and taught himself "proper grammar" through various community college courses; he ultimately graduated with a B.A. in Sociology.

Participant E candidly shared the emotional toll that the immigration process had on him and noted a prior struggle with depression. Although he initially displayed some difficulty articulating his strengths, over the course of the interview he was able to reveal various inner qualities that allowed him to cope with the challenges he encountered, including determination and self-motivation:

Mostly, I was determined to finish. I began something, let me finish it. It was a big, big task. Finally learned how to write, how to read, how I was supposed to read. I could sit down comfortably and read a novel, back then I wasn't able to.

He also noted that he developed a close group of friends in college who helped him weather the challenges he faced. After graduating from college he connected with the Armenian community in Manhattan, where he was employed for various cultural organizations before moving with his Bulgarian-Armenian wife to Los Angeles 4 years ago. At present, as a teacher, he encourages his students to examine their strengths and utilize those qualities in order to excel. While Participant E recognized that he is a “survivor” of this process, he also emphasized that he is still healing from the emotional wounds; as such his narrative is best described as stable.

**Participant F: “We grew up very fast.”** Participant F is a 42-year-old married female who resides with her husband and their three children. She is a teacher and has a B.S. degree in Mathematics. She noted that she was baptized in the Armenian Apostolic Church but is currently not religious.

Participant F is an “immigrant of two countries.” At the age of 16, she immigrated to Sydney, Australia with her parents and sister, who is 2 years her junior, from her birth country of Iran. She noted that living conditions in Iran for the Christian Armenian minority population had steadily declined following the Iranian revolution in

1979. Specifically, her parents were concerned about the physical safety of their daughters as well as the limited educational opportunities. As such, they immigrated to Sydney, where a few family members had relocated a few years prior. For a 16-year-old with a limited grasp of English, the adjustment to the adoptive country was fraught with various challenges. Namely, Participant F poignantly narrated the academic and social struggles she and her sister faced:

There would be days that I wouldn't understand a word that was being said to me in the classroom. So that was, language was obviously one of the difficulties. Friends, finding friends – I left a lot of friends behind. At school I couldn't make any friends because I couldn't communicate with them very well. My sister was at the same school and every lunch time and recess we were together, the school was right near a river, Sydney's a beautiful city and we would go down to the river, even though we weren't allowed, and sit on the grass at lunchtime and recess and just cry – pour our eyes out because we were so lonely.

Participant F noted that she coped with these challenges by “putting roots in things”; she and her sister joined an Armenian dance group and other youth groups, and eventually established their own scouting group. Through the support of her parents and the friendships she forged in these organizations, Participant F found herself settled in Sydney after 10 years. Nevertheless, she struggled with understanding her bicultural identity for many years and witnessed her parent's fear of cultural assimilation. Her life transformed drastically, once again, after meeting her husband while on vacation in Los Angeles; at the age of 26, she immigrated to Los Angeles to start a new life as a married woman, leaving her parents and sister behind in Sydney. As an immigrant for the second time, she faced new challenges including separation from family members, adjusting to American culture, and feeling disconnected from the Armenian community in Los Angeles:

I haven't found myself in the Armenian community here, I don't think I have. It's just because it's so big here and I can't fit in, I can't find myself fitting in. I got completely cut off from all of those things, I got completely cut off. I don't know, here I have become more isolated, a lot more than I used to be.

In reflecting on how she has coped with the challenges of immigrating to the United States, Participant F was able to articulate various personal strengths that she possesses, as well as describe how she has thrived post-immigration. Namely, she noted patience, self-reflection, goal-orientation, problem-solving ability, and maturity, the last of which she attributed to the challenges she faced as a young girl in Iran:

I believe that the youth of those days – we grew up very fast – we were very mature for our age, and the revolution had a lot to do with it because once you see something so significant, right before your eyes, the way you think is going to change and so that I'm sure had a lot to do with my inner strength, maturing very fast.

Participant F also noted that her previous immigration to Australia was a “huge leap in [her] life that, of course, gave [her] another source of strength.” Additionally, she drew strength from the collective narrative of the Armenian people, which she described in the following way:

I have to say it's a cultural thing also. Armenians are very determined people. As a culture we have lived through a lot and I think from the day you are born you are told about the genocide and what your people have had to go through and I think you are kind of indoctrinated through that from day one of your life - this is what you're about. You are from a culture that's a survivor. You survive.

In addition to the pride Participant F conveyed about having overcome the struggles she faced, she also noted an awareness of being engaged in a process of continuous adjustment and evolution - that her understanding of her identity as an Armenian immigrant in Los Angeles by way of Tehran and Sydney was in flux and impacted by various life events, such as becoming a mother and raising children in her adoptive country. In her narrative, Participant F straddled the reality of the difficulties of

the immigration process with the ways in which she has grown and benefited from the experience. Particularly, she has gained a closer understanding of her capabilities and strengths:

It's good to reflect back and be proud of your accomplishments. I know so many immigrants, I am not unique by any means, but it's always as a person nice to reflect back and say, hey, I'm not bad. I'm a pretty strong person; if I can go through those then I can go through pretty much anything else.

Overall, Participant F's narrative account was progressive, and emphasized the various ways in which she transformed the challenges of immigration into opportunities for self-growth and actualization.

### **Between-Case Analysis**

Five central themes emerged from the data when examining the patterns across and between the cases. These include: (a) pre-immigration character strengths, (b) immigration-related challenges, (c) emergent and expanded strengths, (d) empowerment through sharing stories, and (e) culturally-rooted processes. Supporting data from the interviews will be presented in order to illustrate each theme. Participants are quoted at length to allow for their voices to be heard. Table 3 presents the frequency of each theme across participants.

Table 3

*Frequency of Themes Across Participants*

Participant	Pre-immigration character strengths	Immigration-related challenges	Emergent and expanded strengths	Empowerment through sharing stories	Culturally-rooted processes
A	8	13	28	6	12
B	15	7	22	10	28
C	10	9	16	3	31
D	13	5	10	11	16
E	0	28	11	2	13
F	7	11	8	4	9

**Already strong: Pre-immigration character strengths.** A salient theme that arose was the identification of character strengths that participants noted helped them weather the challenges associated with the migration process. Namely, various participants noted a “maturity” that they possessed as a result of facing challenges in their home countries prior to migrating. Table 3 presents the frequency of expression of this theme for each participant. Participant B spoke most frequently to this theme (i.e., 15), whereas Participant E did not at all.

Participant F described the strengths that she possessed prior to migrating, including patience and maturity, which she believes had emerged from various life experiences in her home country:

I would say that number one is my own inner strength, that I have always had, is something that I rely on for everything. My own patience and I analyze things a lot in my head - this is the situation, what do I do about it, kind of thing. But I



think, also your experiences in life, you know. I was 11 when the Iranian revolution happened and I had to adjust to it just like everyone else in Iran and that was a big adjustment. I witnessed the revolution from our window and I believed that the youth of those days, we grew up very fast, we were very mature for our age, and the revolution had a lot to do with it because once you see something so significant, you know, right before your eyes, then whether you like it or not, the way you think is going to change and so that I'm sure had a lot to do with my own inner strength, maturing very fast.

Participant C also discussed her maturity, along with other strengths:

I was mature enough to be able to talk to anyone back and forth age difference wise. Also, I have a very strong character, very strong character. I don't allow things to get me down, so when I would see the teachers were having a hard time with my name, I'd say, that's me and that's [how you pronounce] my name. Again, it really did help that I was an outgoing person with a strong personality.

In discussing how he coped with the challenges of immigration, Participant D highlighted the values and principles that were instilled in him by role models during his childhood, and the familiarity of challenges:

These were good role models for me and there were lots of them around us – people who came and visited us, relatives and acquaintances and their stories impacted me and gave me strength to cope with my challenges in a more self-confident manner, gave me self-confidence to cope with difficult times. So difficult times were normal for me, I did not buckle under.

Participant A also noted that she has “always been a strong person” and described various attributes that enabled her to cope with the challenges of the migration experience:

I've just been a strong person I would say. I've always been a strong person. And I don't know. But I guess it's just my character. And self-respect. I've always had a lot of self-respect. There is a Persian word for it, *gheyrat oonee*. *Gheyrat* is like, you have so much self-respect for yourself that you do things on your own without much help. You don't let others pity you. That's one of the things I never wanted in my life; I never let others pity me in my life. I can do this, you know? And I guess I've always been a tough cookie. And there was not much entertainment as a kid. In the summertime, we had a lot of free time, we had play time but a lot of time cooking and doing this and that, and as a I said, I spent a lot of time as a handyman with my dad, I became like self-motivated in a way.

Participant B cited her openness to new experiences and willingness to learn from her mistakes as strengths that allowed her to cope and thrive in the face of significant adversities following her migration:

I wanted to try and this is my character. I always like to try, I don't say no. So this is part of a strength in my character, I never say no, I like to try. I was always talking to myself, saying you should continue, you should have patience, patience was the clue. Patience. And I recognized something – the weaknesses give you strength – strengths come from your weaknesses because if you want to survive, you learn from something bad that happened in your life and grow strong.

Given that Participant E immigrated at the age of nine, his sense of self was greatly shaped by the migration experience. As such, he was the only participant who did not note the possession of notable character strengths prior to immigrating. He did note that he “learned a lot” as a result of the challenges he faced during the migration process.

**Surviving: Immigration-related challenges.** An additional salient theme that emerged was in regards to the challenges inherent in the migration process. All of the participants in the study explicitly described the challenges they faced prior, during, and after the process of immigrating to the United States, and highlighted those experiences as being central to their understanding of what it means to be an immigrant. The frequency with which this theme was represented in the data ranged from five (Participant D) to 28 (Participant E) times.

Several participants, including Participant A, C, D, E, and F noted facing traumatic experiences in their home countries prior to their migration, including witnessing revolution and war; Participant D noted that he was involved in a serious bus accident that nearly cost him his life. Other participants noted challenges during the migration process. Participant A noted that her status as a refugee prohibited her from

entering the United States directly; she first temporarily migrated to Greece, where she encountered various financial and social challenges.

Participants also noted multiple challenges post-migration, including financial difficulties, lack of social capital, disconnection from family, loss of community, and discrimination on various social fronts. Unanimously, participants reported that overcoming these adversities and adjusting to their adoptive country economically and socially stood at the core of their conceptualization of their migration experience.

In describing the central challenges she faced following the immigration process, Participant C noted language challenges and the pressure to attain social capital without assimilating into the mainstream culture:

I was 14. The Southern dialect and drawl hit me like a ton of bricks! It was very heavy because it is the deep South and even when we went to the church, we went to the Church of the Nazarene, I remember the pastor coming up and I couldn't understand a word he said. But I started to mimic the southern dialect and slowly got it. And the other major challenge was, as a young girl, style of clothing. You want to fit in. Trying to prove myself and try to assert myself to be a part of a community that is a worlds of difference, I mean night and day where I came from. And fitting in without hurting my parents because you don't want to lose your identity, but if you don't fit in...

Participant F also reported facing various challenges, including separation from family, following her immigration process to the United States:

Well language wasn't a barrier this time, thank God, but moving away from my family was the biggest challenge. Something I still deal with everyday. I don't think I'll ever get over that one. Adjustment to the American lifestyle itself was a challenge - I found Californians very rude and unhelpful in a lot of ways. But in Sydney, I found Australians to be very friendly people and they make friends very quickly, they talk to you.

Additionally, Participant F noted the loss of her connection with the Armenian community in Sydney as well as her disconnection from the Armenian community in Los Angeles to be significant challenges for her. Participant B similarly reported that

separation from her family members was one of the most challenging aspects of the migration process, as well as isolation upon arriving in the United States:

My mom wasn't going to survive seeing me leave [from the airport]. It was just my dad at the airport sending us off. The poor thing, that was the first time I saw my father cry. I can't forget that. It was so hard (tearful). Speaking on the phone after our arrival in the U.S. wasn't that easy - I used calling cards. We didn't have a place of our own yet, we were staying with my husband's aunt. Now, we were newlyweds, we hardly know each other, in other people's house, and leaving my family and expecting a baby. It was hard to have all that change. I don't want to remember those days. I was so alone.

Among all of the participants, Participant E most frequently noted challenges following the migration process. He discussed various social and academic challenges he faced throughout his schooling, significant prejudice and discrimination, isolation, familial conflict, and financial difficulties.

In describing the language barrier he faced, Participant E also highlighted the additional struggles he encountered as a pre-teen immigrant:

My parents, the highest degree they had in Iran – my mom has a high school degree and my father a middle school degree. They didn't know the language either, at all. Ya, you can't talk to people. Who are you going to talk to? You can't make friends, who are you going to make friends with? It's not like SoCal, especially Glendale area where there's a huge Armenian community – this is NYC, Queens, an area where, what is Armenian? That was the question they would ask me, what is Armenian? Is it Albanian? And the worst thing I could tell them was that I was from Iran. They would say, oh, you're a terrorist. Oh you're a Persian, you're this, you're that. Immediately they would label you. It was tough, it wasn't easy. I mean it's just the system, the education system, parents not having the knowledge of ok, maybe we can get him a tutor, or not having the finances to be able to do that. Finances were a huge problem because my dad was bringing home so little back then and he couldn't get a managerial position because he didn't know the language well.

While Participant D encountered the fewest challenges associated with the migration process among the participant sample, he too noted significant financial challenges that he faced upon immigrating to the United States:

Let's talk about that, financial, because there was an interruption of two years I said. I came to America with \$2000 in my pocket and that was everything that we could scoop and put together and by the end of the first quarter I had run out of money. So I started teaching, I worked a very meager salary and began to work part-time at the Fedco, a place like Target, and worked hard, 20, 30, 40 hours a week along teaching, including Saturday and Sundays.

Participant A similarly noted financial challenges and described how she contended with those limitations:

Ten days after I moved to my cousin's house I found an apartment and with the 800 dollars, 700 dollars I had, I paid about 500 to moving, no 700 to moving in. 400 was the rent, 300 was deposit, so the whole thing was gone. I had a 100 or 200 left and the job I got. And since I went to work really quickly the government didn't pay me either. But then, that's how I started. And I used to work 3-4 jobs at a time, my travel job was from 6 am- 3 pm. At 3 I would go to the insurance company, and on Friday and Saturday I would do catering or whatever came up because I had so much to cover.

Participant A noted that the financial demands resulted in her having to delay her academic pursuits, which was "more devastating for [her] than anything else."

Additionally, she reported facing a language barrier, social isolation, separation from family, discrimination in social circles on the basis of her accent, and disconnection from the Armenian community in the United States.

**Becoming stronger: Emergent and expanded strengths.** All participants noted that the challenges they faced over the course of their immigration process contributed to their appreciation of existing character strengths, as well as the development of other strengths. The frequency of this theme ranged from eight (Participant E) to 28 (Participant A).

While reflecting on the ways in which the immigration process has impacted her life, Participant A noted that she has learned that she has "become a stronger person:"

I earned a lot of confidence. I learned that I can pull it off no matter what. I learned that I can do it. I can be on my own anytime, anywhere. I am so proud of

how I started and where I ended up. So I am proud of myself and the journey I took and what I learned through it. It was very interesting, but that helped me grow a lot. I became the person I am and sometimes I think at anytime that you drop me at any time or place at any part of the world I'll survive.

Participant F also poignantly described learning about the various strengths she possessed as a result of the migration process and purported that she became “stronger” as a result of wrestling with challenges, including separation from family members:

Well I never knew how patient I could be. I've learned that I'm a very patient woman and I actually never thought that I could live without my sister, everyday next to me. When I was about to get married, the night before my wedding, I said to my sister, how am I going to live without you? You are my strength. And we both started crying (tearful). So I've learned that I can do that without her. Very tough though, until this day, there are days that I just ache for her. But I've learned that I can do it by myself, if I want to. It's been tough to do things almost by myself. I can't say by myself, there is always my husband – but I've mostly relied on myself to make things work. And I think, I'm sure I've become a much stronger person, but I never thought I had it in me because I had been so pampered with love and a lot of affection from my parents and my sister. I think moving from one country to another and then to another, those are big adjustments in life and the bigger the adjustment the bigger changes in you, and I think the stronger the person. If you can survive it, you are much stronger for it and there is no question that I had to survive it.

In considering the impact of the migration process on his life, Participant D noted the following:

I have corrected myself, Ani, I have not shied away from correcting myself, and until this day I do. I'm not always successful, I make the same mistakes but correcting myself is something I've learned and it's not a weakness I say, it's a strength. Admitting to my weaknesses is a sign of strength, not one of weakness if I can do something about it. Those things probably come from my early years in America and adapting to this country – I have become a more flexible person, to adjust better and to learn from my mistakes and to better the next time around.

Participant E also noted flexibility and adaptability to be strengths that have emanated from his migration process:

Now I can get along with a lot of types of personalities, a lot of character backgrounds. I don't necessarily have to live in an Armenian community to

survive or a specific type of community to survive. I could get along with any type and adapt to situations easily.

In addition to learning about her strengths, Participant C noted that her conceptualization of her cultural identity shifted as a result of immigrating to the United States:

Overcoming challenges can be tough, it can be the most horrendous feeling – sometimes you become an outcast because of it – but you just have to persevere, you can't let it weight you down. Just keep pushing forward. As a person, I've learned I am a very strong American Armenian – with both cultures true to me – I've very proud of both cultures. I have learned that faith will guide me even though the challenges are unbelievable. I have learned that you got to be strong, you have be strong no matter what – fight and fight your way through it, that's how our ancestors survived.

Participant B shared the following similar sentiments and added that relocating to the States offered her family new economic opportunities:

I stepped over the problem, I just didn't even let it paralyze me. Because life is life, you can have a lot of issues even in your own country. And I can't imagine what was going to happen if I never came here. I don't think I was going to be as strong as I am. No, a lot of things would pull me back. For example, deciding and one day going to Mashdots College was never going to happen. I could find a job over there, but my husband would never be able to find a job that would help us live the way we are living right now.

**Empowered voices: Empowerment through sharing stories.** An additional strength-related theme is the empowerment that participants experienced upon sharing and reflecting on their strengths and the challenges they overcame in the migration process. The frequency with which this theme was represented ranged from one (Participant E) to 11 (Participant D).

Participant A described the importance of reflecting on one's life story and the impact that this process of reflection had on her:

I feel more proud. I get emotional, but sometimes you need to think about those things to appreciate what you have even more. You forget. Ya, I have had a

pretty fascinating life. When I think about it also and I compare it with the person I have become, I wouldn't change a thing for the world.

Similarly, Participant E noted the pride she experienced in telling her story and acknowledged the collective strength that immigrants possess:

Well I like sharing my story. I'm a talker, I love to talk. It's sometimes good to reflect back and be proud of your accomplishments. So, and I'm not, I don't think I'm a big deal when it comes to this because I know so many immigrants like me, there is so many things that people have in common, my story is not unique at all - it's unique to me, but when you talk to a lot of people you see, I'm sure you've seen the same kind of pattern and thoughts and challenges and strengths that have come across in all immigrants and I know so many immigrants. But it's always, as a person, nice to reflect back and say, hey, I'm a pretty strong person. If I can go through those things then I can go through pretty much anything else.

Participant B spontaneously articulated the impact that the experience of telling her story had on her perception of her strengths:

Even this experience [the interview] that I'm doing, it is a historical moment in my life actually. I wasn't going to be able to do this in Damascus and I feel important right now. I really feel important, that I'm doing something different.

Later in the interview, when posed the question of how she was impacted by engaging in a reflection of her immigration experience, Participant B noted the validation she experienced as a result of voicing her story, and expressed gratitude to the interviewer:

I evaluated myself, I went back 11 years. Again, you have made me feel proud of what I've done. Thank you for that. It's a good feeling. And today I was telling my colleague that I was going to have an interview and I told one of my friends, guess who is talking, me! I told her I'm going to talk about my experiences and I feel I am really strong.

Participant C also articulated her strengths as she reflected on the experience of narrating her story, and emphasized the importance of storytelling as a means of heritage preservation and collective empowerment.



I persevered. And I'm a very happy person as a result of it. There is no bitterness in my life and whatever challenge came my way I learned how to overcome it. Actually, I think one thing that we don't do – and I'm going back to the genocide for a minute. When the genocide occurred, our genocide survivors came to a different country to live, the genocide was a taboo, they did not want to talk about it and as a result a lot of things were lost. It's very important to share history – your children have to know where you came from, what you went through, because this is where they pick up their strengths – because history must be recorded.

Participant D, who was on the verge of retirement at the time of the interview, noted that the process of reflecting on his challenges and achievements helped him more fully integrate his narrative and, in turn, realize the impact of his “legacy:”

I feel psychologically very good, really. Looking back, I feel only satisfaction and a little pride maybe, personal pride. I think I have created a legacy through my work, and it will live after me and that gives me, although I am a very modest person and I don't look for that, not to be announced. Thank you, Ani, you made me feel really good. It was not only time well spent, but I will remember these two hours and the things I said that came from my heart.

The process of reflection was also transformative for Participant E, who experienced the most lasting challenges among the participants. He noted that telling his story was “healing” for him and elaborated in the following way:

It makes me reflect and think about a lot of things that have happened, looking at specific events and situations from a whole different perspective, as an adult now. Just accept it and let go of it. As I'm talking about it right now, certain chapters I'm concluding now, I'm finishing and closing now. Like ok, I went through it, it's finished. They'll be with me in my mind, but it's done.

While Participant E was the only participant who did not endorse a sense of pride as a result of telling his story, it is evident that the experience empowered him to synthesize, “accept and let go of” the various struggles he encountered as a result of the immigration process.

**Culturally-rooted processes: Identity, values, and community.** All participants revealed various cultural variables through their immigration narratives and

the frequency ranged from nine (Participant F) to 31 (Participant C). Emergent subthemes in this area included values, community, identity, pride, and cultural preservation/fear of assimilation.

*Values.* Several participants spoke to the various cultural values that had been transmitted to them through stories and the living example of role models. The value of hard work, particularly, was raised repeatedly through the narratives. Participant A noted:

In Damascus, the best tailor was Armenian, the best shoemaker was Armenian, the best doctor was Armenian, so these people were role models around us and we learned from them to try our best and to work hard. Armenians like to work hard so when I graduated high school I started working and studying in the university. When I came to the U.S., I started working in a church in 2004. Again, there were a lot of challenges, but as I told you, role models were all around me, Armenians work hard and do the best job. That was my slogan.

In reflecting on what strengths he drew upon to cope with the challenges of the migration experience, Participant D also noted various values that were passed down generationally through stories:

Well I am a firm believer in values, in principles, and I was raised like that. Hard work was one of them. I thought all of these things were normal and natural, they had to come my way, like my father used to talk about his childhood – he was born in 1900, he was 15 in 1915 and he was of course part of the deportations. He lost his father who was massacred, martyred I should say, in 1915 and his brothers – he lost a brother and two sisters during the deportations – these things really echoed so much. I remember another thing, strength that I used to draw on, the stories I heard from other people of my father's age, the community we grew up in, people visited each other and we were at home when we were growing up, we heard stories of older people and we would sit down and listen to them, and that was part of our education, and gaining strength to really cope with difficult times.

In addition to hard work and the expectation of struggle, determination was another value that participants articulated. Participant F spoke directly to that characteristic in the following way:

I think it's also, I have to say it's a cultural thing also. Armenians are very determined people. As a culture we have lived through a lot and I think from the day you are born you are told about the genocide and what your people have had to go through and I think you are kind of indoctrinated through that from day one of your life that this is what you're about. You are from a culture that's a survivor. You survive. You put up with things and you deal with what's given to you and you make yourself stronger and better through survival, so I'm sure culture has a lot to do with it.

Participant C articulated similar sentiments and referenced various cultural strengths when describing what she has learned about herself as a result of the immigration process:

I have learned that you got to be strong, you have to be strong no matter what – fight and fight your way through it. That's how our ancestors survived – we cannot even compare the horrors they went through, with the genocide, but it was the same mentality that kept them going and we need to teach this to our children so that they keep their American Armenianism alive.

**Community.** The impact of community on participants' well-being, both prior to and following the immigration process, was salient across all narratives. Uniformly, participants referred to their close involvement in the Armenian community in their respective home countries and the protective factor those communities served in cultural preservation and socialization. Several participants cited the positive role that the Armenian community in the United States played in their overall adjustment process.

Participant C noted the important role that the small Armenian community in Chattanooga had in vitalizing cultural tradition and providing emotional support for adjustment challenges:

So it boils down to what happened to the American culture when all of these immigrants came in for survival mode. They all stayed in one area together. So we would walk to each other's homes, every Christmas was together, every Easter it was together, every birthday it was together, so we kept our Armenian culture. And as years progressed, we found different Armenian communities, very small, but Armenian communities, very close by – Knoxville, Atlanta, and we started having at least three times a year, a huge gathering where all Armenians would

get together – even from Memphis they would come in. And at the time, about 100 people would gather together and we would take turns at each other’s houses and just celebrate being an American Armenian. And one thing that would help, too, is that when the kids got together at these parties, we commiserated or we shared all the things we had to go through and together – so how did you survive this? What did you do? And we would get strength from each other and talk to each other and because, you know, there is a cultural bond, and to see how we could both solve problems together.

Participant B similarly noted that her involvement in the Armenian community helped her “connect with others like [her],” in addition to assisting her secure employment and pursue higher education:

I went to Mashdots College, there I had some friends, I found friends. In Mashdots College, they found me a job in a church because I was doing good, better than the others. I was a secretary in a church for four years. And then my kids grew a little bit and they started going to an Armenian school – that’s a very good idea for an Armenian immigrant woman, because at that school, it’s an Armenian society, a place where a lot of women like you are. You find a lot of people like you.

It is of note that in comparison to the other participants, Participant E was the most vocal concerning the critical role that connection with a cultural community plays in the adjustment process. He largely attributed his challenges in acculturating to the United States to the absence of an Armenian community in Queens, New York at the time of his arrival:

If I was in Worcester, Massachusetts, it would be a different story – there is a huge Armenian community. If I was in Manhattan specifically, midtown or in that area where there is a huge Armenian community around that church, if I was living in that area, fine, they would know and connect me to the Armenian church. But later, when I got involved in the community, it helped me tremendously. Being a part of the community here is a big deal because I want to give them [his daughters] the same type of education, same everything that I had in Iran because that was a very positive experience for me.

Later, when offering advice to new immigrants, Participant E reiterated the assistance that a cultural community can provide in the adjustment process:

Go to a community that has a large Armenian center there. Get involved with the organizations, get involved with the community outlets that they have. Get involved with any of those organizations, churches, schools, small cultural organizations that can help you adjust, manage, and especially for your child, to go and get involved which is very important for them to slowly get into and know the American culture, slowly adjust.

Participant D noted that his involvement in the Armenian community in Los Angeles fulfilled him and offered him a place of belonging following the migration:

It was a small community and only a few of us were here – I was a little well-known person here. I remember I was invited to be a member of the organizing committee of a large cultural event, can you believe that? I had only been here 1.5 years. There weren't that many Armenians and I was a member of the organizing committee and being part of group endeavors gave me self-fulfillment, sense of achievement, and importance, which was fulfilling, and it made my life better as well as looking forward to better things in the future possible.

Similar to Participant E, he noted that new immigrants should “go be a part of something because becoming a part of a group is always a good way to be connected and becoming stronger in facing challenges.”

Participant F highlighted that her involvement in the Armenian community in Sydney following her migration to that country at the age of 16 contributed instrumentally to her adjustment process:

We both liked to dance, my sister and I, and we found a dance group, an Armenian dance group. It was every Friday night and we made friends through there. I made a lot of very close friends through the dance group. So that was a savior, the dance group. That's what we looked forward to every week, that's what we were going to do on Fridays and we would talk about it the next couple of days and then what are we wearing, you know, something that would keep us going, something that would take the mind off of not having friends at school and not understanding anything that goes on around you. So that gave us a lot of strength, a lot of push. We joined other Armenian groups, Armenians youth groups that were existing already. So that took us through the high school years, then we founded our own scouting group over there.

In the above statement, Participant F demonstrated how her involvement with cultural organizations offered her a sense of belonging and helped combat the social

isolation that she experienced as a result of the language barrier. She noted that upon immigrating to the United States, one of the significant challenges she faced was the loss of the Armenian community in Sydney; she “hasn’t found [herself]” in the Armenian community in Los Angeles due to its large size. While she is presently a teacher in an Armenian school, her involvement in the community in the States is far less than it was in Sydney or Tehran.

Unlike the other participants, Participant A purposefully distanced herself from the Armenian community in Los Angeles following her immigration; she reported that at the time, she believed that she “had to first become American” and that the ethnic Armenian community would not be of use to her in that regard. She noted that she reengaged with the community after her kids were born and she realized she had “something to offer.”

*Collective identity.* In describing their respective immigration experiences, many participants referenced the numerous waves of immigration that have occurred over the course of Armenian history. The impact of that historical reality and collective cultural experience on the meaning they have made of their own immigration experiences emerged as a salient theme.

Participant B described the impact of immigration on one’s sense of belonging and identity in the following way:

Armenians are all immigrants! I know an Armenian writer and I told him, I wish you could write something about belonging. Because I never felt that I belong to a piece of land. In Syria, I always knew that Syria is not my home country even though I carried that nationality and I was born there. I never thought that land belongs to me. I love that country. My memories of my childhood are there, but I never had patriotic feelings for that country. Armenia, I had those patriotic feelings for, but I never felt I belonged there. Even in the U.S. – I don’t belong to the U.S. I am not a person who grew up over here and I’m trying to live as the

people live over here but then again I'm different, totally different from a person born here. So I told him, where do I belong? I don't know. So for me, immigration was not immigration because I always felt like a stranger in my own country.

Participant E similarly noted that Armenians "...are constantly a moving group of people, [they] go from country to country throughout the centuries" and that as a result of these constant shifts and adaptations, the Armenian people have learned to "survive." Additionally, Participant D referenced the "many immigrations, emigrations from Armenia where Armenians came as immigrants in a new land and then became the rulers of that place." He used this example to convey his cultural pride and illustrate how he understands his own identity as an immigrant - a person who "accepted new ways, adapted to new situations, and had a dream."

**Pride.** Several participants discussed their pride in their cultural heritage explicitly, whereas the narratives of others revealed it implicitly. Participant C noted her pride in her American Armenian identity: "As I person I have learned that I am a very strong American Armenian, with both cultures true to me – I am very proud of both cultures." At other points in the discussion, she pridefully noted various ways in which the Armenian people have distinguished themselves:

Armenians owned the most beautiful sights in Jerusalem of the churches. You know, the world talks about Jerusalem, the world fights over Jerusalem, and Armenians own one-fourth of it. Imagine that.

Participant D relayed his cultural pride when he mentioned that the "many immigrations, emigrations from Armenia where Armenians came as immigrants in a new land and then became the rulers of that place." Participant B also emphasized her pride in her cultural background by stating:

I am really proud in our ancestors. In Armenia and all over the world, we are few but you can point us out because we do a good job in everything. So I am really proud of who I am. I am really proud of where I come from.

Participant C noted:

After all, we must be proud of our history and our people. We have come so far, through some much turmoil over the years. We are all immigrants in a sense. I suppose that is how we learn how to survive.

*Acculturation, cultural preservation and fear of assimilation.* Woven into the narratives of many participants were the emergent subthemes of acculturation, cultural preservation, and fear of assimilation. In response to the interview question regarding the advice the participants have for other immigrants and/or refugees, several described their acculturation process and the nuances of adapting to a new country.

Participant A described a process of initial, deliberate disconnection from her Armenian roots; she noted that this was her perceived road to becoming successful in her new country:

But for some reason the way I guess I was thinking is that I wanted to adopt myself comfortably into the new environment, so I took everything upon myself – I thought ok now that I came here, I'm living in America, I have to first become American. I have to figure this culture out, I have to figure this system out. Me being Armenian is not going to do any good, me being Persian is not going to do any good, been there done that. Now I had to adopt myself to a new way of living.

Later in the interview, when offering advice to other refugees, she reiterated the importance of respecting the customs of one's adoptive country while also acknowledging the strengths and offerings of one's cultural heritage:

It is, it's like when you go to a new place, it's not your place, you are the one that should adopt yourself to the rest of it and if you have something to offer to that new community, that's of course a plus, but you are a stranger and you have to respect that. I do very much feel that way, that whenever you go to a country that is not yours or somebody's house that's not yours, you respect that house, you



respect that home, and you go along with the situation. First try to settle down and then see what you can offer.

Participant C, whose family moved to Chattanooga, Tennessee from Jerusalem when she was an adolescent girl, also articulated the value in “embracing the culture” of one’s adoptive country:

Don't be afraid of it [the host culture]. Choose what you want to practice, respect everything, do not put down a culture just because you don't share or accept that culture. Never ever put it down, you must respect it, but you don't have to practice it.

Later, she described some of the challenges inherent in the acculturation process:

In order to survive, you have to play the game. If you decide that you are an entity out of that realm and not mesh and not try to incorporate yourself within that system, it’s a lost cause. You are there, you will fall and it is going to be a huge hardship and you will not be happy. So basically the key to survival is to incorporate the culture, to learn about the culture and to embrace it, but not to forget yours. And that is extremely tough...

For Participant C, maintaining ties with her ethnic heritage was made difficult because of the small Armenian community in Tennessee and the strong pull for assimilation in her new, homogeneous community. While she later described acclimating to “life as a Tennessean” through involvement in various school organizations and a local church choir, she did note generational differences in the acculturation process:

So the children, my brother, sister, and I, acclimated well, but the parents did not, especially my father. He was so scared of what he had done to this family – yes, he had brought us to a place that was safe and secure and yes, his children were doing awesome in the school systems....but what about being Armenian? The challenge was trying to fit in without hurting my parents because you don’t want to lose that identity of being Armenian – you want to be proud of the fact that now you are an American Armenian...

In reflecting on her identity as an American Armenian, Participant C also emphasized the value she places in cultural heritage preservation, a value that was echoed

through the narratives of the other participants as well. She spoke of her concern of assimilation and the future of Armenian communities in the United States:

Assimilation, that really scares me. We must try and strive with our students and that's why this school, AGBU MDS, is so important to me – it must survive and the Armenian language must survive along with it. Because that's where I would like to see my grandchildren go so that they can be as strong as I am because hey, we go back thousands of years and what culture and history we have must be cherished and not lost.

Participant E, the only other participant who did not directly immigrate to Los Angeles from his country of origin, also emphasized the strong pressures to assimilate in Queens, New York, and the large mediating role that community plays in the adaptation process:

Being an immigrant is assimilation. You have to assimilate into this world. You can bring your culture here, but you cannot bring your entire culture here. It's not going to work because there is a lot of friction. It's a different story in LA; I am talking about East Coast strictly. You cannot bring your complete Armenian culture to New York and say it's ok. It's not ok. In California it's a different story. You have a large Armenian community, it's easier to come on and live amongst the Armenians and talk in Armenian and have a billboard in Armenian.

In describing the challenges associated with the adaptation process, Participant D spoke to the threat of assimilation from his personal experience as an immigrant as well as a teacher who interfaced with many immigrant families:

The concerns primarily were cultural heritage preservation. Retaining, maintaining our national heritage, our Armenian heritage I should say. Language, culture because when immigrant parents come here, they have the anxiety of finding a job and settling down in a new country and then losing their children by way of sending them to an American school where they would be growing up very quickly as American Armenians.

Participant F also noted that her parents were similarly concerned of “full assimilation” when raising Participant F and her sister in Sydney shortly after their emigration from Tehran:

Well my parents are very liberal but they were still very afraid of letting us go in some ways. So as long as we were in the Armenian community they were fine. But as soon as we would talk about other friends that we made in college and wanting to socialize with people outside of the community, they would start to get scared because that was unknown to them, that was unfamiliar and that was one of the challenges also. They feared full cultural assimilation. That, what did we do? We brought them into this country and they are going to move away and become non-Armenians.

In reflecting on the her own experience of migration, Participant F highlighted the centrality of adjustment and the evolving nature of the acculturative process, particularly in light of becoming a parent of children born in the United States:

Adjusting. Becoming, it's adjusting. Adjustment. How much do you want to assimilate to the lifestyle? Picking up the good things of the culture you've entered and choosing what part of the culture you want and what part you do not want. And of course, a huge challenge is bringing up children - when they say we should be celebrating 4<sup>th</sup> of July when it doesn't mean much to you. It's a constantly evolving thing, how you see yourself within the culture you live in. How much you feel American and how much you don't.

Participant B also reflected on her role as a mother, and her concerns about her children retaining their Armenian cultural heritage in the United States: "How do we keep our generations speaking Armenian and keep them Armenian? I want my children to grow up Armenian and to get married to an Armenian because we should be proud of ourselves and our past." While emphasizing the importance of cultural preservation, she later discussed the responsibility she believes immigrant mothers have to adapt successfully to their new country for the well-being of their children:

For a lot of women over here, it is a challenge. And if you were going to ask me I was going to say I would tell every single woman, even if she has a child, to find a babysitter and go learn English. Because it is worth it for her child later – she's not going to be selfish when she does that because her child is going to need her at school, in life, at a doctor's appointment. Driving, finding directions, at the computer...I always think of the consequences – if I'm not going to be able to drive, I'm not going to be able to go anywhere, I'm not going to be able to work, I'm not going to be able to teach my children at home their homework, who's

going to teach them homework? You know, so this is it – I have to survive and adapt.

### **Informing the Research Questions**

The results of the within-case and between-case thematic analyses provide rich data to inform the primary research questions posed for this study.

**Research Question 1: What patterns and themes emerge in the immigration stories?** This question is informed by the themes presented in the previous between-case analysis section: pre-immigration character strengths, immigration-related challenges, emergent and expanded strengths, empowerment through sharing stories, and culturally-rooted processes.

**Research Question 2: What are the strength-related themes in the immigration stories?** Several themes emerged that elucidated the ways in which participants conceptualized their strengths. Specifically, participants highlighted pre-existing character strengths that enabled them to weather and overcome the challenges of the migration process, character strengths that arose as a result of encountering these challenges, and empowerment resulting from narrating their immigration stories.

**Research Question 3: How do participants understand and make meaning of their immigration stories?** All participants described their immigration experience as a challenging adaptation process. In discussing her thoughts about the meaning of her immigration experience, Participant F noted:

An immigrant. Here in the U.S.? Adjusting. Becoming. It's adjusting. Adjustment. How much do you assimilate to the lifestyle? Picking up the good things of the culture you've entered and choosing what part of the culture you want and what part you don't want. And it's hard, Ani. It's very hard.

Participant A similarly noted:

Starting a new life. That's the only way I can put it. Be strong enough to be challenged and start a new life. No matter where you go, if I had to immigrate now to a new country, I would look at it the same way. Very challenging and starting a new life separate from what you had until that day.

In reflecting on the meaning that being an immigrant holds for him, Participant D noted the key task of adjustment while also highlighting the inherent difficulties in that process:

For me, it is about being strong, accepting new ways, adapting to new situations, and really having a dream, a goal. Without that dream or goal one can just flounder. And I think being an immigrant requires that once you arrive in a new country, you should plan what to be, how to chart your course, your life in a new setting, in a new environment. But it is not easy, it is not easy. It's a complex thing, Ani. To be an immigrant is not an easy thing.

Participant C noted that her relocation to the United States has “enhanced [her] life in every single way”, but added that the process was “tough”; she used the words, “survival”, “acclimation”, and “adaptation” to describe what being an immigrant means to her.

Participant E, the participant who faced the strongest pull to assimilate upon immigrating to Queen, New York, reported that his immigration process was “chaotic”, and stated the following:

Being an immigrant is assimilation. You have to assimilate into this world. You can bring a part of your culture here, but you cannot bring your entire culture here. It's not going to work because there is a lot of friction especially in New York. It's a survival game. It's a survival game in New York. You have to survive in the environment. It wasn't come and sit and relax, here's a nice cushiony seat for you. No, you have to build the seat for yourself. You are on your own.

Additionally, several participants conceptualized their immigration experience as a challenge not unlike others that characterize life. Participant D noted that “...this is life. Difficult times are a part of it. Difficult times were normal for me.” Participant B

also mentioned that “life is filled with lots of challenges” when discussing the meaning that being an immigrant has for her. Additionally, in discussing how she coped with the challenges associated with migration, Participant F described a philosophy that she has cultivated throughout her life:

It’s like with anything you face in life, Ani. There’s a problem – either you deal with it or you don’t. Now what are the consequences of you not dealing with it? So you choose to cope with it, make the best out of it.

**Research Question 4: In what ways are cultural variables (e.g., values, customs, ethnic pride, social roles, etc.) shared and understood through the immigration narrative?** This question was informed by the rich stories shared by the participants. A prominent theme that emerged in the data was culturally rooted processes; various subthemes were delineated, including values, community, identity, pride, and cultural preservation/fear of assimilation. Several participants spoke to the various cultural values that had been transmitted to them through stories and the living example of role models. The value of hard work, particularly, was raised repeatedly through the narratives. Furthermore, participants uniformly referred to their close involvement in the Armenian community in their respective home countries and the protective factor those communities served in cultural preservation and socialization. The subthemes of collective identity and cultural pride were salient across the narratives, as were those of cultural preservation and fear of assimilation.

**Research question 5: What relationships can be identified between the immigration story themes and psychological outcomes such as sense of well-being, identity, quality of interpersonal relationships, etc.?** In reflecting on their challenges, strengths, and triumphs, several of the participants noted the pride and satisfaction they

experienced as a result of navigating the challenges of the migration process. Participant

A noted:

First of all I am so proud of how I started and where I ended up. So I am proud of myself and the journey I took and what I learned. I did this by myself and I am proud of it because I did it alone. I left home alone and I survived it alone. Everything was on my own.

Participant B expressed similar sentiments:

Ok, it's ok, I am not a doctor or a rich person, but did I accomplish something in my life by coming and struggling in the United States? And I thought, yes! Why not? Maybe I am a regular person but I have a lot of strength. Maybe others can learn from me. And in the end when I decided, I said I am proud of what I've done. And I think I'm lucky, I'm lucky to share my story. And I've been through a lot of things so if others are facing similar problems they can learn from me.

Other participants, including Participant C and D, referenced the pride they experienced as a result of overcoming the challenges inherent in their immigration experiences. Participant D noted, "I feel psychologically very good, really. Looking back, I feel only satisfaction and a little personal pride."

In reflecting on his challenges and strengths, Participant E noted what he has learned and how that has enabled him to construct a meaningful life:

I've learned a lot from the mistakes that were made throughout this growth process I went through. On my part, on my parent's part, on the community's part, on the school's part, of the mistakes that occurred over the course of my life. I thought about how to make things different, better. How I teach my kids right now in school, I tell them – look at your strengths because they always complain about what they're terrible at. I say that's great, but don't dwell on that. What are you good at? Teaching them that is important to me.

Various participants also noted the role that their interpersonal relationships played in their migration and adjustment process. For many, the individuals and communities they bonded with served as a significant source of strength; for others,

certain relationships, namely those with extended family members, were a source of conflict.

Participant C noted the significant support she received from various individuals upon arriving to the United States:

The church community helped a lot. They helped us out with everything. And that's the best thing that I try to teach my students – you have to be determined - and if you persevere and are persistent there are people who will guide you, there are people who will help you. And you just have to take it and grow from it. And that's what I did.

Participant A similarly noted:

Actually in so many ways I owe it [overcoming immigration challenges] to the people I met in my life and I am grateful for the people that I met in my life. As I told you I feel so blessed and lucky because in every stage of my life somebody came along at that moment that gave me the help I needed and pushed me forward a few steps. I was very receptive when it came to that. And when people see the interest in you, you take one step, they'll push you to take another. Just my first boss who hired me, for somebody who just got here, doesn't know left and right in the United States, doesn't know the streets, doesn't know anything about this country, and you take the chance to hire them? Those people all have had an amazing role in my life.

In reflecting on her interpersonal relationships, Participant F noted the integral role that her parents, sister, and husband played in her adjustment process, and the strength that she derives from those relationships:

What helped me do it, first of all - my parents are super human beings, they are so supportive. And then my sister – we were so lonely, so alone that we bonded. She became everything to me, we both became everything to each other, we were each others best friends, not only just sisters. My husband too has always been a sort of rock for me. My family still is, even though they live thousands of miles away, they are still just a phone call away.

While Participant E noted significant strife in his relationships with his parents, extended family members, teachers, and academic counselors, he did note that he had several close friends that helped him weather the challenges as he adjusted to life in the United States:



I had friends, especially in college. Just sit and talk and vent. All of my friendships, group therapy if you want to call them. That's where I created a lot of bonds, and a lot of bonds became just two, three, four people out of a lot of bonds, the rest just went their way. College, instead of class, I would sit and hang out with friends, play cards, play chess, hang out together. Looking back, that was so important to me.

Participant D also noted the central role that his friendships played in his cultural adaptation process:

I had very good Armenian friends too at the university. It was a good environment where we got together and socialized, especially those of us who didn't have families who ate there at the cafeteria. So much caring among those friends. It helped so much.

He and Participant B also noted the relationships that they formed with individuals within the Armenian community that helped them overcome various migration-related challenges and make meaningful connections in their adoptive country. In sum, the data suggests that the process of overcoming challenges inherent in the immigration experience is complexly interwoven with psychological outcomes such as well-being and quality of interpersonal relationships.

## Discussion

In keeping with the field's current shift towards examining the optimal conditions and characteristics that promote well-being in people and communities, this research endeavor gave voice to the strengths and virtues that Armenian immigrants and refugees possess (Gerstein, 2006; Kaczmarek, 2006; Smith, 2006b). These strengths have enabled them to thrive in the face of adversity related to immigration. A narrative approach was utilized in order to provide participants with a medium to tell their stories and be heard by the researcher. Six Armenian immigrant and refugee parents from an Armenian school in southern California volunteered to participate in audio-recorded, semi-structured interviews.

Analysis of the data focused on addressing the five research questions: (a) the patterns and themes that emerged in the immigration stories; (b) the strength-related themes in the immigration stories; (c) how participants understood and made meaning of their immigration stories; (d) ways in which cultural variables (e.g., values, customs, ethnic pride, social roles, etc.) were shared and understood through the immigration narrative; (e) identified relationships between the immigration story themes and psychological outcomes such as sense of well-being, identity, quality of interpersonal relationships, etc.

Themes that emerged included: (a) pre-immigration character strengths, (b) immigration-related challenges, (c) emergent and expanded strengths, (d) empowerment through sharing stories, and (e) culturally-rooted processes. A discussion of themes is presented in the current section. In addition, emerging hypotheses, methodological limitations, clinical implications, potential contributions, and directions for future

research are addressed.

Overall, the results indicate that the migration process for Armenian immigrants and refugees is multidimensional and modulated by stressors, character strengths, and communal resources. Additionally, the data support Prilleltensky's (2008) conceptualization of migrant well-being as a "multi-level, dynamic, and value dependent phenomenon" (p. 359). Participants highlighted various risk and protective factors that are present at multiple ecological planes, including traumas prior to migration, challenges during and following migration, pre-migration character strengths, and strengths that emerged as a result of the challenges encountered.

### **Risk Factors and Demands**

Numerous research studies have established that the process of immigration is fraught with stressors that affect the mental health and quality of life of immigrant populations (Chung et al., 2008; Miller, 1999). According to Pumariega et al. (2005), the experience of pre-migration trauma among immigrants and refugees in their countries of origin is common (e.g., war, torture, terrorism, natural disasters, famine), and often comprises the reason for the emigration. For Armenian immigrants and refugees specifically, war and sociopolitical conflict over the last several decades have principally spurred the departure from their respective countries of origin (Dagirmanjian, 2005). Consistent with this literature, four of the participants in this study cited war and sociopolitical revolution as the impetus for their migration. While all of these participants noted witnessing violence, two in particular graphically narrated instances when their lives were directly threatened. Moreover, traumas that occur during the process of migration itself are notable and have garnered attention in immigrant mental

health literature (Chung et al., 2008; Pumariega et al., 2005). As such, Participant A described a difficult separation from family members while temporarily residing in Greece, prior to gaining entry to the United States. It is of note that she was the only participant in the sample who identified as a refugee. This finding speaks to the unique challenges refugees face as a result of the circumstances under which they migrate (Porter, 2007). This is noteworthy for future research and the interpretation of this data.

Consistent with the literature, all participants discussed post-migration stressors that they contended with, including financial difficulties, lack of social capital, disconnection from family, loss of community, and discrimination on various social fronts. According to Finch, Kolody, and Vega (2000), discrimination and prejudice often come into prominence once an immigrant is better oriented to the mainstream culture, with generally adolescents experiencing the most intense expression of such prejudice in school and social settings. Congruently, several participants described being discriminated against on the basis of their accent several years after migrating. One of the participants described repeated, intense encounters with discrimination and prejudice as a teenager in Queens, NY. While his experience post-migration was significantly colored by his age at the time of migration, the broader context of community is also of note. That is, the general intolerance of difference in the participant's adoptive community and the lack of a sizable Armenian minority in Queens at the time of the participant's migration heavily impacted his reception by the broader community. Conversely, another participant who also immigrated to a community with a very small Armenian population, Chattanooga, TN, reported being widely received by the Christian host society because of the appeal of her native home, Jerusalem, to that community.

These findings highlight the important role that the host society's attitudes towards immigrants can play in an individual's adjustment experience post-migration (Miller et al., 2009; Phinney et al., 2001). While the participants described financial stress and language difficulties, they did not endorse contending with the loss of professional status; this finding is likely related to the age at which these individuals immigrated. That is, all participants arrived in the United States as children, adolescents, or pre-professional young adults.

An additional post-migration stressor that has received substantial attention from researchers is acculturative stress. Acculturation refers to a process individuals undergo in response to the influence of the mainstream culture (Chung et al., 2008; Miller et al., 2009). Woven into the narratives of many participants were the emergent subthemes of acculturation, adaptation, and a fear of assimilation. In response to the interview question regarding the advice the participants have for other immigrants and/or refugees, several narrated their experience of acculturation and their outlook on the nuances of adapting to a new country.

Consistent with the literature, several participants noted a pull to assimilate immediately upon settling in the United States as a way of responding to the demands of their host community. It is of note that age at time of migration appeared to play a significant role in modulating the adaptation process for participants, as available research supports the influence age has on level of ethnic identity solidification prior to migration (Pumariega et al., 2005). Consistent with the current literature base, those participants who migrated during their childhood or adolescence, namely Participant C and E, contended with strong pulls to assimilate in school and social settings, while also

facing familial pressure to stay loyal to the Armenian ethnic enclave. Other participants, such as Participant B and D, who immigrated as young adults with a more developed sense of their Armenian ethnic heritage, were better equipped to navigate the intercultural contact and develop an integrated, bicultural identity. Across participants, a strong sentiment was echoed regarding the complex and evolving nature of the acculturation process, particularly in reference to their roles as parents of children born in the United States.

Numerous authors have noted the challenges that immigrant parents face following the migration process. Immigrants who are in a parenting role straddle the challenges of their acculturation process with that of raising children in a novel cultural environment (Costigan & Koryzma, 2010). Similarly, participants in this study discussed the challenges inherent in fostering a sense of ethnic Armenian pride in their children while supporting their adoption of various American customs and traditions. The data suggest that the salience of cultural preservation and the fear of ethnic heritage assimilation were heightened for participants once they became parents themselves. According to Dagirmanjian (2005) and Dekmejian (1997), as a result of living among hostile majority cultures for centuries, Armenians developed a tendency towards social insularity and protected against forces of assimilation by developing strong prohibitions against marrying non-Armenians. While the participants did not raise concerns regarding cultural intermarriage per se during the course of the interviews, the fear of cultural and community dissolution was dominantly displayed in their narratives, which suggests the salience of this issue for this sample.

While the various challenges facing immigrant parents are notable, in keeping with a transformative paradigm, several recent qualitative studies have examined the resilience and strengths that immigrant parents note have emerged from their experiences of migration and adaptation (Perreira et al., 2006; Usita & Blieszner, 2002). The following section will detail how the findings of this study contribute to that literature base.

### **Protective Factors & Resources**

Various researchers have lamented the deficit-centered, trauma-focused approach to understanding the immigrant experience (Ryan et al., 2008; Seller, 1994; Usita & Blieszner, 2002). In response to the shortcomings of other models, Ryan et al. proposed a more holistic theoretical approach in which various levels of resources, including personal, material, cultural, and social, are examined and accounted for. These authors purport that the level of resources available to a given refugee must be understood in the context of the individual's needs, goals, and demands. Furthermore, a complete understanding of the migration process for an immigrant or refugee necessitates an examination of the individual's level of resources during the pre-migration, migration, and post-migration phases and the ways in which the host society places limits on access to important resources (Ryan et al., 2008).

Consistent with this theoretical frame, the experiences of the participants in this study support the proposition that when immigrants and refugees have the opportunity to satisfy basic needs, pursue valued goals and manage demands effectively post-migration, then they are more likely to enjoy psychological well-being. While this proposed model moves the field a step closer in the direction of understanding the refugee experience in a

multidimensional way, there is a dearth of research on the actual strengths immigrants and refugees possess that contribute to positive outcomes post-migration (Usita & Blieszner, 2002). Additionally, the actual voices of immigrants and refugees are largely absent from the current literature base on this population, leading various researchers to call for studies, such as the present one, that create an opportunity for these individuals to speak to their strengths (Ryan et al., 2008). The findings of this exploratory research endeavor reveal several of the personal resources and strengths that the participants possess that enabled them to survive and thrive in the face of significant strife. In terms of personal traits, all but one participant discussed character strengths that helped them weather the challenges associated with the migration process. These included maturity, patience, self-confidence, self-respect, openness to learning from new experiences, and a willingness to learn from mistakes. Additionally, several referenced social resources, which refer to the beneficial aspects of personal relationships. These included emotional, informational and tangible support, as well as the sense of identity and belonging that integration in a social network brings. Uniformly, participants referred to their close involvement in the Armenian community in their respective home countries and the protective factor those communities served in cultural preservation and socialization. Several participants cited the positive role that the Armenian community in the United States played in their overall adjustment process.

In keeping with the findings of Constantine and Sue (2006), various additional cultural variables revealed themselves in the narratives of these participants and demonstrated the importance of taking into account racial and ethnic pride, spirituality and religion, collectivism, and the role of family and community when examining the



psychological experiences of disenfranchised groups. The consideration of such variables is crucial as subjective well-being has been found to correlate with different predictors across cultures (Diener & Diener, 1995). While the work of Constantine and Sue focused on people of color, some of whom are also immigrants and refugees, the results of this study revealed several cultural variables that appeared to serve as protective factors in the immigration process of these Armenian participants. Specifically, these culturally rooted subthemes include values, community, collective identity, ethnic pride, and cultural preservation. In terms of values, participants articulated the importance of hard work, determination, and the expectation of struggle as having guided them in the immigration process. Additionally, a shared collective identity was expressed as participants referenced the numerous waves of immigration that have occurred over the course of Armenian history. The impact of that historical reality and collective experience on the meaning they have made of their own migration experiences was salient and underscored the importance of understanding this variable in relation to well-being post-immigration. Additionally, several participants highlighted their pride in their ethnic heritage and the Armenian cultural narrative of survival; these individuals also highlighted their pride in having navigated the challenges inherent in the immigration process. It can be hypothesized, therefore, that the ability to derive pride from one's cultural context and personal experience with adversity is associated with greater well-being outcomes. Additionally, the presence of pride in this subset of parents who are invested in an Armenian school underscores the strong role that the Armenian community plays in both being a testimony to Armenian cultural pride and in sustaining it (Dagirmanjian, 2005).

Tedeschi and Calhoun (1996) have expounded that the experience of loss and trauma may result in positive changes for individuals who undergo them. While validating the presence of significant emotional distress that often accompanies the experience of trauma, these authors have highlighted the notion of growth in the face of loss, in addition to the presence of personal and collective strength that allows for such growth, and contributed to a broadened understanding of these complex phenomena. The results of this study support the work of these authors and reveal the various strengths that the participants believe emerged from facing immigration-related challenges. Other participants noted an increased appreciation for their existing strengths which allowed them to thrive in the face of adversity. One adaptation trajectory seemed to include a honeymoon period for some participants where their pre-existing strengths eased initial transition but later had to manage challenges and increased distress by developing new strengths. Another trajectory present in the stories was one in which the participant experienced increased distress soon after immigration and developed the strengths and resources over time to thrive. Flexibility, adaptability, and confidence were the most salient emergent strengths among this sample. Others noted that the immigration process also afforded them access to financial resources that they could not attain in their countries of origin.

Since a deficit focused, medical model has dominated the field's approach to immigrant mental health over the past few decades, the voices and strengths of these resilient individuals have been largely ignored. Therefore, in keeping with a transformative approach, an objective of this study was to facilitate empowerment by providing the participants with a medium to tell their stories. The findings of this study

revealed an additional strength-related theme – the empowerment that participants experienced upon sharing and reflecting on the challenges they overcame in the migration process and the strengths that they possess. As such, the results support the body of research on the transformative paradigm and the empowering nature of the narrative approach to research (Atkinson, 1998; Creswell, 2007). Moreover, the data lends support to the potential utility of strength-centered frameworks to counseling proposed by Smith (2006a) and Wong (2008) with immigrant and refugee populations.

### **Role of the Researcher**

In qualitative research, the close interaction of the researcher with participants creates several quandaries in the interpretation and analysis of the data (Stein & Mankowski, 2004). Interpretative authority lies with the researcher, and a process of reflection on social values and personal agendas is necessitated in order to limit negative impact on data analysis and interpretation (Mertens, 2005). This practice is principally important given the researcher's socio-cultural similarities to the participants and her unique perspective in light of being an alumna and former summer school teacher at the school where data was collected. According to Morrow (2005), researcher reflexivity provides an opportunity for the researcher to understand how her own experiences and worldview impact the research process. This is a critical consideration as the researcher's intimate understanding of the culture of the school and the broader Armenian immigrant community inevitably impacted data analysis and interpretation. These factors will be expounded in the following section.

### **Methodological Limitations**

The limitations present in this study include the following. Due to the small

sample size and narrow geographical recruiting location, the ability to generalize the results to the larger population is limited. Specifically, the participants' experiences may not be reflective of the larger population of Armenian immigrants and refugees. Additionally, the recruitment of participants from the parental body of a private Armenian school may have created a sampling bias towards more affluent, well-adjusted immigrants and refugees. Immigrants and refugees of lower socioeconomic status were not well represented in this study. Additionally, as aforementioned, all participants in the study are parents. As such, the results cannot be generalized to the experiences of Armenian immigrants and refugees without children.

The ability to generalize the findings of this study is further narrowed by the following factors. While ethnicity was controlled for in the study, most other variables were not, including country of origin, number of years in the United States, and other countries lived in. Furthermore, while efforts were made to recruit an equal number of men and women, the final participant pool was comprised of four women and two men. Also, five of these participants identified as immigrants, whereas only one identified as a refugee.

It is of note that the subjectivity that is intrinsic to the narrative inquiry process may be considered a limitation according to a positivistic or post-positivistic paradigm. The life story of an interviewee is not a historical truth; rather it is a subjective reality that the researcher seeks to obtain (Atkinson, 1998). Narrative researchers are more concerned with the authenticity of the stories, rather than their accuracy. This sentiment about this approach is reflected consistently by other qualitative researchers (Creswell, 2007; Riessman, 1993). Nevertheless, the lack of anonymity inherent in the in-person

interview process may have introduced several limitations. Participants might have felt compelled to shape their responses based on what they perceived would be most helpful to the researcher. Additionally, since the researcher is also Armenian, the participants may have noticed verbal and nonverbal cues suggesting that the researcher could identify with their experience. However, the advantages of having access to participants' nonverbal communication and the ability to seek immediate clarification made the in-person interview process critical.

Furthermore, given the tight-knit nature of the Armenian community in Los Angeles, some individuals may not have volunteered as participants due to their familiarity with the investigator and their reluctance to share their story with someone in the community whom they know. This may have impacted the composition of the participant sample. Nevertheless, for other individuals, this familiarity and closeness may have actually led them to participate, which ultimately served as one of the benefits of having close connections with a community of interest (Miller, 2004). The low response rate is of note, as only seven individuals responded to the researcher's recruiting efforts; one of whom was not invited to participate in the study because he endorsed exclusionary criteria. This rate might be explained by the general unfamiliarity of the school community to research, as well as the various competing commitments of the parent population and relatively low levels of parent attendance at school meetings generally. Future studies might consider a more personal and individual approach to recruitment, which may be more culturally-congruent, so that potential participants are better informed of the intentions of the researcher.

As indicated earlier, the researcher's personal biases and assumptions, based on her experience as a daughter of Armenian immigrants and an alumna of the school, may have posed a limitation by impacting data categorization, construction of domains, and interpretation of themes, particularly since she was the only coder. These biases include the assumptions that the participants have strengths that have both emerged from the immigration experience, as well as strengths in place before migration. The researcher attempted to identify her biases and maintain an awareness of them through collection, coding, and interpretation of data. The auditor (i.e., dissertation chairperson) provided a process for checking the data analysis process in the context of the transcripts. However, it is possible that unconscious biases impacted the research process and it is recommended that future research include multiple coders (Creswell, 2007; Riessman, 1993).

Additionally, while all interviews were conducted in English, based on the preference of the interviewees, language switching took place at various times. While the researcher is fluent in Armenian, translation errors are possible, leading to the potential loss of some meaning. Therefore, it is important to note that language differences may have impacted the participants' understanding of the material being asked of them while conversely impacting the researcher's ability to understand and represent their narratives with verisimilitude.

### **Potential Contributions of the Present Study**

The central aim of this research study was to contribute to the field's understanding of the strengths Armenian immigrants and/or refugees possess both prior to migration, which contribute to positive outcomes post-migration, as well as strengths

they deem to have emanated from the migration experience. Given that a paucity of literature exists on individuals of Armenian descent, it is hoped that the results of this study will broaden the field's understanding of this ethnic group. Moreover, it is hoped that the results will continue to promote qualitative research as a valuable mechanism by which to represent the lived experience of people within the field of psychology. Finally, the results of this research endeavor will hopefully provide education for individuals who find themselves in circumstances similar to the study participants, as well as for practitioners who work therapeutically with this population.

### **Emerging Hypotheses and Implications for Future Research**

From this study, several hypotheses emerge that have implications for future studies:

**Hypothesis 1:** The ability to identify character strengths possessed prior to the migration process is related to greater well-being post-migration. With the exception of one participant, all others were able to clearly articulate character strengths that they possessed prior to migrating that helped them navigate the challenges associated with the process. These individuals also demonstrated a greater sense of well-being as evidenced by their progressive narratives. Future research might examine the relationship between these variables more closely and extensively.

**Hypothesis 2:** Age at time of migration is related to well-being outcomes. The results of this study suggest that age at time of migration might be a salient variable that influences one's sense of self and perception of the impact of the migration process. The only participant in this study who migrated to the United States as a child did not

delineate the possession of notable character strengths prior to immigration, ostensibly because his sense of self was largely shaped by the migration process itself.

**Hypothesis 3:** Challenges prior to migration better equip immigrants and refugees to manage the stressors inherent in the migration process. Several of the participants in this study described the ways in which they believed the struggles they faced pre-migration prepared them for the challenges they encountered upon arriving to the United States.

**Hypothesis 4:** Connection with a cultural community post-migration is associated with greater well-being. The impact of community on participants' well-being, both prior to and following the immigration process, was salient across all narratives. Uniformly, participants referred to their close involvement in the Armenian community in their respective home countries and the protective factor those communities served in cultural preservation and socialization. Several participants cited the positive role that the Armenian community in the United States played in their overall adjustment process.

While this study contributes to the field's understanding of the lived experience and strengths of Armenian immigrants and refugees, further qualitative and quantitative should be conducted in order to broaden and deepen the literature base on this population. Moreover, future research should examine the similarities and differences in the Armenian immigrant vs. refugee experience as the findings of this study suggest notable differences that are worthy of further examination. Additionally, empirical studies should be conducted on the strength-based models of counseling as these theoretical frameworks hold promise for Armenian immigrants and refugees. In terms of addressing the methodological limitations of this study, future research endeavors could minimize



researcher bias by triangulating the data via involving two coders, one of whom is of a different ethnic background.

### **Clinical Implications**

As the results of this study evidence, the strengths that immigrants and refugees possess that enable them to thrive in the face of adversity are numerous and notable. Additionally, it is evident that the process of engaging others in reflecting on their strengths can be transformative and empowering. As such, the assessment of individual and cultural strengths serves as an important contextual consideration in understanding a given client's worldview and psychological needs. Moreover, understanding wellness as it exists concomitantly with pathology is important for treatment conceptualization. A holistic understanding of an individual, her presenting concerns, and notions of well-being, will consequently help inform goals and interventions that are congruent with the client's worldview and instrumental in helping a client relieve distress and find fulfillment, meaning, and purpose. The importance of assessing assets cannot be underestimated in light of the finding that when strengths and risks are both assessed, clients are more likely to find the intervention to be empowering and motivating (Tedeschi & Kilmer, 2005). Like the Strength-Based Counseling Model proposed by Smith (2006a), the development of Strength-Centered Therapy put forth by Wong (2006) is in its infancy. Both models propose rich theoretical frames and may be particularly suitable for counseling immigrants and refugees. Therefore, it is recommended that empirical research be conducted to establish their efficacy.

Additionally, the use of community-based mental health services and a community systems of care approach is extremely valuable in addressing the mental

health needs of immigrant and refugee children, adults, and their families (Pumariega et al., 2005; Watters, 2001). Such an approach uses natural strengths and supports in the immigrant community along with community-based mental services to empower individuals and families in their adaptation process. The results of this study indicate that such an approach would likely also be beneficial for the mental health needs of the Armenian immigrant and refugee population as all participants spoke to the central role that community played in their adjustment to the United States.

### **Conclusion**

Despite the field's growing interest in a strength-based approach, many argue that adherence to the medical model has remained steadfast (Gerstein, 2006; Kaczmarek, 2006; Smith, 2006b). According to Ryan et al., 2008 and Usita and Blieszner (2002), in this trauma-based medical model, immigrants and refugees who have demonstrated considerable resiliency are conceptualized in terms of their deficiencies. Although pre-migration traumatic experiences are a common component of the refugee experience, they are not central, and have hitherto been treated as a defining characteristic of these individuals from this model. Moreover, this approach overlooks the various social, political, and economic factors that play a role in the migration experiences for this population (Watters, 2001). The aim of this research study was to collect narrative accounts of Armenian immigrants and/or refugees in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the strengths these individuals possess both prior to migration, which contribute to positive outcomes post-migration, as well as strengths they deem to have emanated from the migration experience. In keeping with a transformative approach, an

additional objective of this study was to facilitate empowerment by providing the participants with a medium to tell their stories.

This study presented rich descriptions of the study participants and used illustrative quotes to highlight the individuals' perceptions and experiences of their immigration and their strengths. The general themes in these data contribute to the existing literature on immigrant mental health by highlighting various strength-related themes that have important clinical implications. While this study contributes to the literature base on the lived experience of Armenian immigrants and refugees, it is the hope of this author that future qualitative inquiries examine and elaborate on the hypotheses set forth in this research endeavor.

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## APPENDIX A

## Interview Script

**1. Introduction to Interview and Setting the Stage**

**IA.** If interview begins immediately after reviewing the consent form with the participant, go to IB below. If interview commences on another day from obtaining consent or requires more than one session to complete, say

How are you today Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_? Please help yourself to the refreshments that I brought along. [*Briefly engage in small talk then go to IB*]

**IB.** Remind the participant: As you know by now, I am here to listen to and learn from the things that you share with me about your immigration experience. As you share things about your life with me, I also hope that you gain a new perspective on your strengths and what you have achieved during your lifetime.

We can talk for as long as you feel comfortable or desire to talk with me today. If you have a question that you wish to ask me along the way, don't hesitate to ask it. If you would like to take a break, just let me know, and we can take one.

If at any time you don't want to talk about something or answer a question that I may ask, just let me know and we will move on to something else.

As you know, I am going to tape the interview. I also want to remind you if at any time you would like to delete something on the tape, we can do so at any time.

Do you have any questions for me before we begin? [*Answer any questions then go to Section II*]

**II. Interview****IIA.** Grand tour questions

1. As you know, I'm interested in learning how you manage or have managed the challenging experiences of being an immigrant/refugee. I believe there is much I can learn from you. And I also feel other individuals can benefit from what you share during our talks. I am most grateful that you decided to help me with this project. And I am really looking forward to hearing about your life. But if it's okay with you, can you share why you decided to speak with me?
2. I'd like to hear your immigration story, starting with your life in your country of origin through your adjustment to life in the US. First, when did you immigrate to the United States, and under what circumstances?

3. What are some of the major challenges or adversities you have overcome in the immigration process? Think about the process of immigrating and adjusting to the US after immigrating.
4. Thinking about challenges or difficulties related to your immigration experience, how have you coped with them?
  - 4a. What personal and community strengths have you utilized to cope with the transition?
5. What have you learned about yourself and your strengths as a result of your immigration experience?
  - 5a. How has the immigration experience impacted your life, the person you have become?
6. What does being an immigrant mean to you?
7. What advice would you have for other immigrants/refugees who are going through some of the same things you have experienced?

**IIIB.** Structural/contrast/probing questions [*Ask as needed*]

1. What was that experience like for you?
2. Can you tell me more about that?
3. Can you give me an example of that?
4. Where do you think you learned about that?
5. Can you describe more about what that was like?
6. How did it make you feel at the time?
7. How does that make you feel now?
8. What comes to mind when you think about that situation?
9. What mattered most to you at that time?
10. What matters most to you now?

11. You seem to be saying \_\_\_\_\_, is that what you mean?
12. How did this period in your life compare to when \_\_\_\_\_?
13. What informed your decision at the time? Would you do anything different now?
14. That must have been a difficult time for you. How did you get through it?
15. How would you explain what was happening?
16. What were some of the things you did that impacted that person?
17. What do you remember about where you were when that happened?

### **III. Ending Interview**

#### **IIIA. Closure questions**

1. If you were to imagine someone writing about you and your life, what might they say?
2. What would you want to make certain that the person writing about you says about your life?
3. If it is okay with you, may I ask a few questions about your background? If you prefer not to answer a question, just let me know and I will skip it and move on to the next question.

*(Note: Only ask the demographic questions that have not already been discussed during the interview.)*

- a. What is your marital or relational status?
- b. Do you have any children? How many?
- c. What is your current age?
- d. What is your religious affiliation?
- e. What is the highest level of education that you completed?

- f. What was your most recent occupation? What other jobs did you have during your lifetime?
4. Is there anything else you feel it is important for me to know about your life that you didn't have a chance to share with me?
5. What impact, if any, has this experience had on you?

### **IIIB. Concluding the interview**

If you think of any questions after I leave, don't hesitate to contact me. My contact information is on the consent form.

Just as a reminder, I will likely be contacting you by phone after I have had a chance to transcribe the interview so that we can clarify any areas that may be unclear. I want to make sure that I have correctly understood what you have told me.

Again, thank you very much for your time and support of my research project. As a small token of my appreciation for helping me with my project, I want to give you this gift card that I hope you will enjoy.

## Interview Script in Armenian

### I. Հարցազրույցի նախաբանը

Ա. Եթե հարցազրույցը սկսում է մասնակցի հետ համաձայնութեան ձեւաթուղթը վերանայելուց անմիջապէս յետոյ, սկսել ներֆոյիւշեալ ԼԲ կէտից: Այն դէպքում երբ հարցազրույցը սկսում է համաձայնութիւնը ստանալուց յետոյ մէկ այլ օր կամ այն աւարտին հասցնելու համար պահանջում է մէկից աւելի այցելութիւն, հարցազրույցը պէտք է սկսել հետեւեալ կերպ՝

-Ինչպէ՞ս էք Ձեզ գգում այսօր պարոն/տիկին \_\_\_\_\_: Խնդրում եմ հյուրասիրուէք իմ բերած թարմացուցիչներով:

### ԼԲ. Յիշեցնել մասնակցին

Ինչպէս գիտէք, ես այստեղ եմ լսելու եւ սովորելու Ձեր գաղթական փորձառութիւնից, որի մասին Դուք ինձ կպատմէք: Յուսանք որ Ձեր կեանքի մասին պատմելիս Դուք ձեռք կբերէք նոր սպասելիքներ Ձեր ուժերից եւ կեանքի ընթացքում ունեցած նուաճումներից:

Մենք այսօր կը խօսենք այնքան, ինչքան որ Դուք ցանկանաք խօսել ինձ հետ: Եթէ ընթացքում որեւէ հարցեր առաջանան, մի երկմտէք հարցնել: Երբ ցանկանաք ընդմիջում ունենալ, ինձ տեղեակ պահէք:

Եթէ որեւիցէ պահի չցանկանաք խօսել ինչ-որ բանի մասին կամ պատասխանել իմ հարցին, ասացէք ինձ, որպէսզի առաջ անցնենք այլ թեմայի:

Ինչպէս գիտէք, ես ձայնագրելու եմ այս հարցազրույցը: Նոյնպէս ուզում եմ յիշեցնել, որ ցանկացած պահին կարող էք պահանջել ջնջել ձայնագրութեան միջից այն նիւթը, որը չէք ցանկանայ լուսաբանել:

Որեւէ հարց ունէ՞ք սկսելուց առաջ: (Պատասխանել իւրաքանչիւր հարցի եւ անցնել 2-րդ մասին):

## II. Հարցազրույց

### IIԱ. Հիմնական հարցեր

1. Ինչպես գիտե՞ք, ինձ հետաքրքրում է թե՛ ինչպես է՞ք յաջողացնում կամ յաջողացրել յաղթահարել գաղթական/փախստական լինելու մարտահրաւերները: Հավատացած եմ, որ շատ բան ունեն՞ք Ձեզնից սովորելու, եւ նոյնպէս գիտեմ որ շատերը կարող են դաս քաղել Ձեր փորձառութիւնից: Ես շատ շնորհակալ եմ, որ որոշեցիք օգնել ինձ իրականացնել այս նախագիծը: Անհամբեր սպասում եմ Ձեր կեանքի պատմութիւնը լսելուն: Եթէ դժուար չէ, կասե՛ք՝ ինչու՞ որոշեցիք խօսել ինձ հետ:
2. Կը ցանկանայի լսել Ձեր գաղթի կեանքի պատմութիւնը սկսած Ձեր ծագման վայրից մինչեւ ԱՄՆ-ի կեանքին հարմարուելը: Առաջին հերթին, ե՞րբ գաղթեցիք Միացյալ Նահանգներ եւ ի՞նչ հանգամանքներում:
3. Որո՞նք էին ամէնամեծ մարտահրաւերները եւ ձախորդութիւններն, որ յաղթահարել է՞ք գաղթի ընթացքում: Մտածե՛ք գաղթի ընթացքի եւ գաղթից յետոյ Միացյալ Նահանգների կեանքին յարմարուելու մասին:
4. Մտածե՛ք գաղթի փորձառութեան հետ կապուած մարտահրաւերների եւ դժուարութիւնների մասին, ինչպէս է՞ք յաղթահարել դրանք:
  - 4ա. Ինչպիսի՞ք անձնական եւ համայնքային ուժ է՞ք գործածել տեղափոխութիւնը յաղթահարելու համար:
5. Ի՞նչ սովորեցիք գաղթի փորձառութիւնից ինքներդ Ձեր եւ Ձեր ուժերի մասին:
  - 5ա. Ի՞նչ ազդեցութիւն է ունեցել գաղթի փորձառութիւնը Ձեր կեանքի վրայ, ինչքանո՞վ է փոխուել Ձեր անձը դրանից յետոյ:
6. Ի՞նչ նշանակութիւն ունի գաղթական լինելը Ձեզ համար:
7. Ի՞նչ խորհուրդ կը տաք այն գաղթականներին/փախստականներին, ովքեր վերապրում են Ձեր նույն փորձառութիւնները:

### IIԲ. Կառուցողական/հակադիր/պարզաբանող հարցեր (հարցնել ըստ պահանջի)

1. Ինչի՞նչ նման էք այդ փորձառութիւնը Ձեզ համար:

2. Կարո՞ղ է՞ աւելին պատմել դրայ մասին:
3. Կարո՞ղ է՞ մի օրինակ բերել դրանից:
4. Ի՞նչ է՞ կարծում, ի՞նչ սովորեցի՞ք դրանից:
5. Կարո՞ղ է՞ աւելի մանրամասն բացատրել, թէ ինչի նման էր այդ:
6. Ինչպիսի՞ զգացողութիւններ էր այն Ձեզ պատճառում այդ ժամանակ:
7. Ինչպիսի՞ զգացողոթյուններ է այն Ձեզ պատճառում հիմա:
8. Ի՞նչ է՞ ձեր մտքին գալիս, երբ մտածում է՞ այդ իրավիճակի մասին:
9. Ի՞նչն էր ամենակարեւորը Ձեզ համար այդ ժամանակ:
10. Ի՞նչն է՞ ամենակարեւորը Ձեզ համար հիմա:
11. Թու՞մ է՞ թէ ասում է՞ \_\_\_\_\_, դա այն է՞ ինչ ի նկատի՞ ունէ՞ք:
12. Ինչպէ՞ս է՞ Ձեր կեանքի այս հատուածը համեմատում այն ժամանակաշրջանին, երբ \_\_\_\_\_ ?
13. Ի՞նչը ստիպեց Ձեզ կայացնել այդպիսի որոշում այդ ժամանակ: Ի՞նչ կանէի՞ք նոյն պարագայում հիմա:
14. Դա պէ՞տք է՞ որ դժուար ժամանակահատուած լինէր Ձեզ համար: Ինչպէ՞ս յարթահարեցի՞ք այն:
15. Ինչպէ՞ս կբացատրէի՞ք պատահածը:
16. Որո՞նք էին Ձեր կողմից արուած այն քայլերն, որ ազդեցութիւն թողեցին այդ անձնաւորութեան վրայ:
17. Ի՞նչ է՞ յիշում Ձեր գտնուելու վայրի մասին երբ այդ պատահեց:

### III. Հարցազրոյցի աւարտը

#### IIIԱ. Եզրափակման հարցումներ

1. Եթէ ինչ-որ մէկը գրէր Ձեր եւ Ձեր կեանքի մասին, ի՞նչ կլինէր նրայ ասելիքը:
2. Ի՞նչ տեղեկութիւն Ձեր կեանքից կ'ուզէնայի՞ք, որ Ձեր մասին գրող անձը հաստատ լուսաբանի իր պատմութեան մէջ:
3. Եթէ դէմ չէ՞ք, կարող եմ մի քանի հարց տալ Ձեր ծագման վերաբերեալ:



*(Նշում՝ հարցնել միայն ժողովրդագրական հարցումներ, որոնք չեն ֆննարկուել հարցազրույցի ընթացքում:)*

(ա) Ինչպիսի՞ն է Ձեր ընտանեկան դրուժինը:

(բ) Երեխաներ ունե՞լ: Փանի՞սն են նրանք:

(գ) Փանի՞ տարեկան է:

(դ) Ի՞նչ կրօնի էք դաւանում:

(ե) Ի՞նչ կրթութիւն ունէք:

(զ) Ո՞րն էր Ձեր ամենավերջին աշխատանքը: Ի՞նչ այլ աշխատանքներ էք ունեցել Ձեր կեանքի ընթացքում:

4. Էլի ինչ-որ կարելու մի բան կայ Ձեր կեանքի մասին, որ կցանկանայիք ինձ պատմել:
5. Ի՞նչ ազդեցութիւն է թողել այս փորձառութիւնը Ձեզ վրայ:

### IIIԲ. Հարցազրույցի եզրափակումը

Եթէ մեր հանդիպման աւարտից յետոյ Ձեզ մօտ որեւէ հարց առաջանայ, մի՛ երկմտէք կապուել ինձ հետ: Իմ տուեալները կարող էք գտնել համաձայնութեան ձեւաթղթի վրայ:

Հարցազրույցը գրի առնելուց յետոյ հնարաւոր է ես կապուեմ Ձեզ հետ հեռախօսով, որպէսզի պարզաբանեմ ինձ համար ոչ այնքան պարզ դրուագները: Ուզում եմ համոզուած լինել, որ տակաւին ճիշտ եմ ըմբռնել Ձեր պատմութիւնը:

Կրկին, շնորհակալ եմ իմ հրաւերս չը մերժելու եւ իմ հետազոտական նախագծին աջակցելու համար: Իբրեւ իմ երախտագիտութեան խորհրդանիշ, խնդրում եմ, ընդունէք այս նուէր ֆարսը:

APPENDIX B

Flyer for Lecture

*The AGBU-MDS PTO Presents:*

# **THE CHANGING FACE OF EATING DISORDERS: WHAT EVERY PARENT SHOULD KNOW**

Wednesday, September 29, 2010



6:30 pm – 7:30 pm



Aghajanian Auditorium



Lecture Presented by:

*Ani A. Pezeshkian, M.A*

Clinical Psychology Doctoral Candidate

Pepperdine University

Following the lecture, you will learn more about an opportunity to participate in an exciting research project on the strengths of Armenian immigrants and refugees

## APPENDIX C

## Interest Form

Giving Voice to Strengths: The Stories of Armenian Immigrants and Refugees Project

Ani Pezeshkian, M.A.  
Pepperdine University, Graduate School of Education and Psychology

Thank you for your interest in my study. Please complete the following information so that I can schedule a meeting with you.

1. What is your name?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. At what number can you be reached? What would be the best time to reach you?

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_ Best time: \_\_\_\_\_

3. What dates and times in the next 4 weeks would you be available to meet? [Please provide five possible dates.](#)

Date

Preferred Time (please allow for at least 2 hours)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. May I meet with you in a conference room at AGBU MDS?  Yes  No

If you prefer that we not meet at AGBU MDS, I will arrange for us to meet in an office at the Pepperdine University Encino Campus.

5. Do you prefer to speak in  English or  Armenian?

6. Do you prefer to read in  English or  Armenian?

## APPENDIX D

### Recruitment Pamphlet

### WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

If you are interested in finding out more about the project or have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. The following is my contact information:

Ani Pezeshkian, M.A.  
Pepperdine University  
Graduate School of Education and  
Psychology  
6100 Center Drive  
Los Angeles, CA 90045  
(xxx) xxx-xxxx  
[ani.pezeshkian@pepperdine.edu](mailto:ani.pezeshkian@pepperdine.edu)

You may also contact Dr. Harrell who supervises my research project. Below is her contact information.

Shelly P. Harrell, Ph.D.  
Pepperdine University  
Graduate School of Education and  
Psychology  
6100 Center Drive  
Los Angeles, CA 90045  
(310) 258-2844  
[shelly.harrell@pepperdine.edu](mailto:shelly.harrell@pepperdine.edu)

### HOW DO I LET YOU KNOW IF I WANT TO PARTICIPATE?

If you are interested in participating in this research project, you may contact me in one of the following three ways:

- You can complete and drop the pre-stamped form in a mailbox
- You can call me using the following toll free number, (xxx) xxx-xxxx.
- You can email me at [ani.pezeshkian@pepperdine.edu](mailto:ani.pezeshkian@pepperdine.edu)

**PARTICIPATION IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT IS COMPLETELY VOLUNTARY.**

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## **Giving Voice to Strengths: The Stories of Armenian Immigrants & Refugees**



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VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED FOR A RESEARCH PROJECT ON THE LIVES & STRENGTHS OF ARMENIAN IMMIGRANTS & REFUGEES

## WHO IS CONDUCTING THE RESEARCH PROJECT?

My name is Ani Pezeshkian, and I am a doctoral student in clinical psychology at Pepperdine University, Graduate School of Education and Psychology. I am working on my dissertation, which is supervised by Shelly Harrell, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology.

## WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

So much of the research on immigrants and refugees focuses on loss, trauma, and difficulties in adjusting to their new country. Although it is important to understand these challenges and find ways to support these individuals during these difficult times, it is equally valuable to gain insight into the strengths of these individuals.

Also, since the literature on the experience of Armenian immigrants and refugees is currently very scarce, the aim of this study is to increase the field of psychology's understanding of this ethnic group.

Immigrants and refugees, like you, have valuable life stories to share with others and from which we can learn. The intent of this research project is to hear the stories of **Armenian immigrant and refugees** so those of us in the psychology field can better understand the **strengths** from which you drew to cope with the **migration experience**. It is also hoped that by sharing these stories with other immigrants and refugees who may face or have faced similar challenges, they may learn from your experiences and gain new insights into their own lives.



## WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

To participate in the study, you must be/have:

1. Of Armenian descent
2. An immigrant or refugee
3. 35 years of age or older
4. Resided in the U.S. for at least 5 years

**Only the FIRST 8 individuals who volunteer for the study and meet the above characteristics will be entered into the study.**

## WHAT IS INVOLVED?

If you decide to participate in this research project, it will involve completing an audiotaped interview.

The interview will ask about your immigration experience, how you coped with the experience, and what you learned from this period in your life.

The interview may take as long as 2-3 hours to complete and will take place either at a conference room at AGBU MDS or an office at the Pepperdine University Encino Campus, based on your preference.

You will receive a \$25 Starbucks gift card for your participation.

## APPENDIX E

## Script for Description of Study Following Lecture Presentation

Thank you for your attendance. I hope you enjoyed the lecture and found it to be informative.

As I mentioned earlier, I am a doctoral student in clinical psychology at Pepperdine University and I am in the process of conducting a study for my dissertation. The primary goal of the study is to gain an in-depth understanding of the strengths that Armenian immigrants and/or refugees possess both prior to migration, as well as strengths that arose from migration experience, through collecting stories of their immigration experiences.

I am looking for participants for my study who meet the following criteria: participants must be ethnic Armenian immigrants or refugees, must have resided in the United States for at least 5 years, participants must be over 35 years of age, must believe that they have adapted positively to living in the United States and must not continue to experience significant distress as a result of their migration, and must provide written consent to be audio-recorded. This study is completely voluntary.

The study will involve interviews, which will last between 2 and 3 hours and take place on the AGBU-MDS grounds, unless arranged otherwise. The interviews can be conducted in English or Armenian, depending on your preference.

Those who participate in the study will receive a \$25.00 gift certificate to Starbucks.

If you have any additional questions, please feel free to ask them now. *Answer questions*

For those with definite interest, please fill out this interest form and either turn it in to me before you leave tonight or drop it in the mail. For those who would still like to deliberate, I have informational pamphlets that include my contact information and interest forms so that you can contact me later with your questions and/or interest.

Thank you!

## APPENDIX F

## Brief Phone Screening Interview

Hello, thank you for your interest in my research project. Let me tell you a little more about it and then we can determine whether you are interested in participating and are eligible to participate. While research has been done on immigrant and refugee populations, almost all of the research has focused on the trauma these populations experience and the deficits they have as a result of their experience. Also, almost no studies have been conducted on Armenian immigrant and refugees. The primary goal of my study is to gain an in-depth understanding of the strengths that Armenian immigrants and/or refugees possess both prior to migration, as well as strengths that arose from migration experience, through collecting stories of their immigration experiences.

Let me start by asking you a few questions:

1. Are you an Armenian immigrant and/or refugee?
2. Have you resided in the United States for at least 5 years?
3. How old are you?
4. If selected for this study, would you allow the interview sessions to be audio-recorded?
5. Are you available to meet for 2-3 hours to complete the interview?
6. Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following two statements:
  - a. I believe I have adjusted positively to living in the United States following my migration (must agree to qualify)
  - b. I continue to experience significant distress related to immigrating to the United States and adjusting to life in the United States (must disagree to qualify)
7. You indicated that you are more comfortable speaking in \_\_\_\_language and reading in \_\_\_\_language. Is this correct?

For those who don't qualify based on the above: Actually, I need participant's who are \_\_\_\_\_in order to ensure that I have a pretty uniform subject group. Thank you so much for your interest in this topic. I apologize for the inconvenience and thank you for your time. Have a wonderful day.

As a token of my appreciation, I will provide you with a \$25 Starbucks giftcard.

Do you have any questions for me? (Answer any questions)

So, would you be willing to participate?

- If individual says no say: Thank you for your time and interest. If you change your mind, please do not hesitate to contact me. Goodbye)

If participant agrees, say: Thank you, I am really grateful. Could you give me your address so that I can send you a consent form? Thank you. Based on what you indicated

in the interest form, it seems like meeting at \_\_\_\_date/time works best for you. Is that correct? Remember, the meeting will last between 2 and 3 hours. Also, you indicated that you are comfortable with meeting in a room at AGBU-MDS, is this correct? (If not say: Would you prefer to meet at the Pepperdine Encino campus? I can either email or mail you the driving directions). I will send you the consent form today; please bring the form with you on the day of the interview. I will be calling you about a day before the interview to confirm that you are still interested.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call or email me.

Thank you again. I am excited to meet you and to learn about your experiences. Have a wonderful day. Goodbye.



## Brief Phone Screening Interview in Armenian

### Հակիրճ փորձնական հարցազրույց հեռախոսով

Ողջոյն, շնորհակալ եմ իմ հետազոտական նախագծում ցուցաբերած Ձեր հետաքրքրութեան համար: Թոյլ տուէ՛ք սկզբից պատմեն Ձեզ հակիրճ ձեռնով դրայ մասին, այնուհետեւ կը կողմնորոշուենք՝ արդեօք ցանկանում է՞ք եւ իրաւասու է՞ք մասնակցել դրան: Փանի որ հետազոտութիւնը կատարուել է գաղթական եւ փախստական հանրութեան վրայ, այն գրեթէ ամբողջութեամբ կենտրոնացած է այդ մարդկանց վերապրած խեղուածքների եւ այդ ապրումների պատճառով ձեռք բերած պակասորդների վրայ:

Գրեթէ ո՛չ մի հետազոտութիւն դեռեւս չի կատարուել Հայ գաղթականների եւ փախստականների վրայ: Իմ հետազոտութեան առաջնային խնդիրն այն է, որ ես ձեռք բերեմ խորը հասկացողութիւն Հայ գաղթականների եւ/կամ փախստականներ ունեցած ներուժի մասին մինչ գաղթը եւ այն ներուժի մասին, որը առաջացաւ գաղթի փորձառութիւնից դրդուած: Այս հետազոտութիւնը ես մտադրուած եմ կատարել հավաքելով պատմութիւններ նրանց գաղթական փորձառութեան մասին:

Թոյլ տվէ՛ք սկզբից Ձեզ մի քանի հարց տալ՝

Դուք Հայ Գաղթական եւ/կամ փախստական՞ է՞ք:

Դուք նուազագոյնը հինգ տարի ապրել է՞ք Միացյալ Նահանգներում:

Փանի՞ տարեկան է՞ք:

Համաձայն է՞ք, որ մեր հարցազրույցը ձայնագրուի:

Դուք կարո՞ղ է՞ք հանդիպել ինձ հետ երեքից հինգ ժամ հարցազրույցն աւարտին հասցնելու համար:

Հարցնել հոգեբանական իրավիճակը պարզաբանող հարց:

Դուք նշեցի՞ք, որ Ձեզ աւելի հարմար է խօսել \_\_\_\_\_ լեզուով եւ կարողա՞ւ  
\_\_\_\_\_ լեզուով, եւ ճի՞շտ եմ:

Այն անձանց համար, ովքեր չեն համապատասխանում վերոյիշեալ ցուցանիշներին՝ - Բանն այն է, որ ինձ պէտք են մասնակիցներ ովքեր \_\_\_\_\_ են, որպէսզի համոզուած լինեմ, որ ունեն միեւնոյն թեմայի շուրջ խոսող խումբ: Անչափ շնորհակալ եմ Ձեր՝ այս թեմայի շուրջ ցուցաբերած

հետաքրքրության համար: Ներողութիւն եմ խնդրում Ձեզ պատճառած անյարմարութեան համար: Հանելի օր եմ մաղթում Ձեզ:

Իբրեւ երախտագիտութեան խորհրդանիշ ես կը շնորհեմ Ձեզ ֆանհինգ դոլլարի չափով նուէր ֆարտ Սթարբաֆսից, ինչպէս նաեւ, Ձեր պատմութեան պատճէնը:

Որեւէ հարց ունէ՞ք ինձ տալու: (պատասխանել ցանկացած հարցի)

Այսպիսով, համաձայն է՞ք մասնակցել:

Եթէ անհատն ասում է ոչ` - Շնորհակալութիւն Ձեր ժամանակը եւ հետաքրքրութիւնը տրամադրելու համար: Մտափոխուելու դէպքում, խնդրում եմ կապուէք ինձ հետ: Յտեսութիւն:

Եթէ մասնակիցն համաձայնում է` - Շնորհակալ եմ: Խնդրում եմ տուէք ինձ Ձեր հասցէն, որպէսզի ուղարկեմ ձեզ համաձայնութեան ձեւաթուղթը: Շնորհակալութիւն: Ելնելով հետաքրքրութեան ձեւաթղթի վրայ Ձեր արած նշումներից, բունում է թէ ամենայարմար ժամանակը Ձեզ համար \_\_\_\_\_ ամսաթիւ/ժամ է: Ես ճիշտ եմ: Եւս մէկ անգամ նշեմ, որ հանդիպումը կը տեւի 2-3 ժամ: Դուք նոյնպէս նշեցիք, որ Դուք դէմ չէք հանդիպել Հ.Բ.Ն.Մ.Մանուկեան-Տեմիրբեան վարժարանի դահլիճում, ես ճիշտ եմ: (Եթէ ոչ` ասել` - Կը նախընտրէք Փեփփերդայնի ուսանողական աւանում: Ես կարող եմ ուղարկել Ձեզ համալսարանի ուղղութիւնը հասարակ կամ էլեկտրոնային փոստով:) Ես կուղարկեմ համաձայնութեան ձեւաթուղթն այսօր, խնդրում եմ հարցազրոյցի օրը Ձեզ հետ բերել այդ ձեւաթուղթը: Ես կը հեռաձայնեմ Ձեզ հարցազրոյցից մէկ օր առաջ հաստատելու համար Ձեր մասնակցութիւնը:

Ցանկացած հարց ունենալու դէպքում, խնդրում եմ, մի՛ երկմտէք հեռաձայնել կամ գրել ինձ: Կրկին շնորհակալ եմ: Ես անհամբեր սպասում եմ մեր հանդիպմանը: Մաղթում եմ Ձեզ հանելի օր: Յտեսութիւն:

## APPENDIX G

## Informed Consent Form

I give permission to Ani Pezeshkian, a doctoral student in clinical psychology at Pepperdine University, Graduate School of Education and Psychology, to include me in the dissertation research project entitled “Giving Voice to Strengths: The Stories of Armenian Immigrants and Refugees.” The project is under the supervision of Shelly P. Harrell, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology.

I understand my participation in this study is completely voluntary. I have the right to refuse to participate in the study or stop participating in the study at any time. I also have the right to refuse to answer any questions that I choose not to answer.

I have been invited to participate in this study because I am an Armenian immigrant or refugee, I am over the age of 35, and have resided in the United States for at least 5 years. The research project in which I have been invited to participate is interested in exploring and learning more about the inner strengths of Armenian immigrants and refugees, as well as their stories of their migration experience. I will also be asked about what I have learned from my life experiences and what sorts of advice I have for other Armenian immigrants and refugees who may face similar challenges.

For my convenience and with my permission, the interview will be conducted in a conference room at AGBU Manoogian-Demirdjian School. I understand that if I do not wish to be interviewed at the school that I will be offered an alternate location.

I understand that the interview will be audiotaped, will take about 2-3 hours to complete, and will be completed during one visit (or two visits, if necessary). The conversations that are taped will be written out word for word after the interview is over. I also understand that Ani may call me after the interview should she need to clarify questions about what was shared during the interview. I understand that I may require Ani to delete any information from the story that I wish to keep private.

I understand that participation in the study poses no more than minimal risk, similar to the risk experienced during the course of ordinary discussion of life experiences or during routine psychological testing. I understand that talking about my life and the challenges that I have faced may make me feel uncomfortable. For example, I may feel embarrassed, remorseful, or disappointed as I think back on my life. If I do begin to feel uncomfortable, I understand that I am encouraged to stop and discuss my discomfort with Ani. The choice of how much I wish to reveal about myself is strictly up to me, so I can always ask to not talk about something that I prefer not to discuss. I can even ask to stop the interview.

Sitting and talking for a long period of time may be tiring or even boring. If I feel a need to get up and stretch my legs or take a break, I should not hesitate to let Ani know about

my need. Ani will also provide light refreshments to make the interview experience more comfortable.

In the event I desire to further process my feelings, thoughts, and insights from participating in the interview, such as any feelings of embarrassment, remorse, and disappointment, Ani can provide referrals to appropriate professionals.

Although I may not directly benefit from participating in this study, it is hoped that the field of psychology will benefit from learning more about the inner and cultural strengths Armenian immigrants and refugees pull from in coping with life's challenges. Furthermore, other Armenian immigrants and refugees who are facing or have faced similar circumstances may also profit from hearing about my experiences and how I coped with these challenges. Finally, it is hoped that I will gain new insight into my own life and develop an appreciation for how I have carried on, despite life's challenges.

In order for others to learn from my experiences, I understand that my story will be made available for others to read. Individuals who may read or want to hear my story include professional audiences that want to learn more about Armenian immigrants and refugees. Although my name and other personally identifying information will not be included in the story, it is possible that others who know me will know whose story they are reading.

Although the story of my life may be read by or told to others, I understand that the audiotaped interviews and the written version of the interview that provided the information for the story will not be released to others without my permission, unless such a disclosure is required by law. Under California law, confidentiality does not apply if there is suspected or probable abuse of a child, abuse of an elder or dependent adult, or if I communicate a desire to inflict serious harm to myself, to someone else, or to someone's property. In these cases, Ani will be required to make a report to the proper authority.

The audiotapes of our conversation and the written version of the conversation will be kept in a locked file cabinet to which only Ani will have access. At the end of the study, the audiotapes will be destroyed. The written version of the conversation will be kept for at least 5 years in a locked file cabinet. When this material is no longer required for research purposes, it will also be destroyed.

As a token of Ani's gratitude for participating in this interview project, I understand that I will receive a \$25 Starbucks gift card, regardless of whether or not I complete the interview.

I understand that if I have any questions regarding the study procedures, I can contact Ani Pezeshkian at (xxx) xxx-xxxx or [ani.pezeshkian@pepperdine.edu](mailto:ani.pezeshkian@pepperdine.edu) to get answers to my questions. If I have further questions, I may contact Shelly P. Harrell, Ph.D., at Pepperdine University, Graduate School of Education and Psychology, 6100 Center Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90045, (310) 258-2844, [shelly.harrell@pepperdine.edu](mailto:shelly.harrell@pepperdine.edu). If I have further questions about my rights as a research participant, I may contact Doug Leigh,

Ph.D., Chairperson of the Graduate and Professional Schools Institutional Review Board,  
Pepperdine University, Graduate School of Education and Psychology; 6100 Center  
Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90045, (310) 568-2389, doug.leigh@pepperdine.edu.

I understand the information in the consent form regarding my participation in the  
research project. All of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I have  
received a copy of this informed consent form, which I have read and understand. I  
hereby consent to participate in the research described.

---

Name of Participant (please print)

---

Participant's Signature

---

Date

I have explained and defined in detail the research procedures in which the participant  
has consented to participate. Having explained this and answered questions, I am co-  
signing this form and accepting this person's consent.

---

Investigator's Signature

---

Date

## Informed Consent Form in Armenian

### Տեղեկացուած համաձայնութեան ձեւ/ձեւաթուղթ

Ես տալիս եմ իմ համաձայնութիւնը, որպէսզի Անի Բժշկեանը՝ Փեփփերդայն Համալսարանի կրթութեան եւ հոգեբանութեան մագիստրատուրայի **Pepperdine University, Graduate school of Education and Psychology** Կլինիկական հոգեբանութեան դոկտորի կոչման թեկնածու ուսանողուհին, ներառի ինձ 'Չայնը տալ անձանօթներին. Հայ գաղթականների եւ փախստականների պատմութիւնները' հետազոտական նախագծում: Նախագիծը գտնուում է հոգեբանութեան դոկտոր, պրոֆեսոր Շելլի Փ. Հարրելլի հսկողութեան տակ:

Ես գիտակցում եմ, որ իմ մասնակցութիւնը այս ուսումնասիրութեան մէջ ամբողջովին կամաւոր է: Ես իրավասու եմ հրաժարուել մասնակցել ուսումնասիրութեանը կամ դադարեցնել իմ մասնակցութիւնը ցանկացած պահին: Ես նոյնպէս իրաւունք ունեմ հրաժարուել պատասխանել ցանկացած հարցին:

Ինձ հրավիրել են մասնակցել այս ուսումնասիրութեանը քանի որ ես Հայ գաղթական կամ փախստական եմ, երեսունհինգն անց եմ եւ նուազագոյնը հինգ տարի ապրել եմ Միացյալ Նահանգներում: Ուսումնասիրական նախագիծը, որին հրաւէր ունեմ մասնակցելու հետաքրքրուած է հետազոտելու եւ սովորելու աւելին Հայ գաղթականների եւ փախստականների ներուժի, ինչպէս նաեւ գաղթի վերապրումներին վերաբերուող նրանց պատմութիւնների մասին: Ես կը պատմեմ, թէ ինչ է ինձ սովորեցրել իմ կեանքի փորձառութիւնը եւ կը տամ իմ խորհուրդը այլ Հայ գաղթականներին եւ փախստականներին, ովքեր հնարաւոր է հանդիպեն նոյնատիպի մարտահրաւէրների:

Իմ իսկ յարմարաւէտութեան համար եւ իմ թոյլատրութեամբ հարցազրոյցը կանցկացուի Հ.Բ.Լ.Մ.Մանուկեան-Տեմիրճեան վարժարանի դահլիճում:

Ես հասկանում եմ, որ հարցազրոյցը ձայնագրուելու է, որ այն կտեւի 2-3 ժամ եւ աւարտին հասցնելու համար կպահնջուի մէկ կամ աւելի այցելութիւն: Հարցազրոյցից յետոյ ձայնագրուած

նիւթը բառ առ բառ գրի կառնուի եւ Անին հիմնուելով այդ նիւթի վրայ կը գրի իմ գաղթական փորձառութեան պատմութիւնը:

Անին կարող է զանգահարել ինձ հարցազրոյցից յետոյ, եթէ նա ցանկանայ պարզաբանել հարցազրոյցի ժամանակ ամփոփուած հարցերը: Ես իրաւասու եմ պահանջել Անիից ջնջել պատմութեան միջից ցանկացած տեղեկութիւն, որը չեմ ցանկայ լուսաբանել:

Ես գիտակցում եմ, որ իմ կեանքի եւ հանդիպած մարտահրաւէրների մասին խօսելը հնարաւոր է ինձ անհանգստութիւն պատճառեն: Օրինակ ես հնարաւոր է շփոթուած զգամ, զղջամ կամ յուսահատուեմ, երբ յիշեմ անցեալս:

Եթէ իսկապէս անյարմար զգացողութիւն ունենամ, պէտք է կանգ առնեմ եւ ֆննարկեմ իմ այն Անիի հետ: Այն թէ ինչքան պատմեմ իմ մասին որոշում եմ միայն ես: Ես ցանկացած պահին կարող եմ խնդրել չխօսել այն մասին, ինչ ես ցանկութիւն չունեմ ֆննարկել, նոյնիսկ կարող եմ պահանջել դադարեցնեմ հարցազրոյցը:

Երկար ժամանակ նստելն ու խօսելը կարող է յոգնեցուցիչ լինել: Եթէ ես ոտքի կանգնելու կամ ընդմիջման կարիք ունենամ, չպէտք է երկմտեմ Անիին տեղեակ պահել իմ կարիքների մասի: Անին նոյնիսկ կը հրամցնի թեթեւ թարմացուցիչներ հարցազրոյցն աւելի հաճելի դարձնելու նպատակով:

Այն դէպքում երբ ունենամ այնպիսի զգացումներ կամ մտքեր (օրինակ՝ շփոթուածութիւն, զղջում կամ յուսահատութիւն), որոնց պատճառով ես ի վիճակի չեմ լինի շարունակել հարցազրոյցը, Անին կարող է ինձ ուղղորդել դէպի համապատասխան մասնագետները:

Ես ինքս ուղիղ կերպով որեւէ շահ չունեմ այս ուսումնասիրութեանը մասնակցելէլուց, ակայն յուսանք որ հոգեբանութեան դաշտի համար շահաւէտ կլինի իմանալ աւելին այն ներքին եւ մշակութային ուժի մասին, որը Հայ գաղթականները եւ փախստականները ստանում են կեանքի մարտահրաւէրները յաղթահարելիս: Աւելին, այլ Հայ գաղթականներն ու փախստականները ովքեր ունեն կամ ունեցել են իրենց կեանքում նման հանգամանքներ, կարող են նոյնպէս օգտակար դաս քաղեն լսելով իմ փորձառութեան մասին եւ այն մասին, թէ ինչպէս ես յաղթահարեցի այդ

մարտահրաւերները: Վերջապէս, յուսանք որ ես աւելի լաւ (խորաթափանցօրէն) կը հասկանամ իմ սեփական կեանքը եւ կը գնահատեմ այն, թէ ինչպէս եմ դիմացել անկախ կեանքի մարտահրաւերներին:

Ես գիտակցում եմ, որ իմ կեանքի պատմութիւնը կ'ընթերցեն շատերը, որպէսզի դաս քաղեն դրանից: Իմ պատմութիւնը ընթերցողները կամ լսել ցանկացողները ներառում են պրոֆեսիոնալ ունկնդիրներ, որոնք ուզում են աւելի իմանալ Հայ գաղթականների կամ փախստականների մասին: Չնայած որ իմ անունը եւ այլ անձը հաստատող տեղեկատուութիւն չի ներառուի պատմութեան մէջ, սակայն հնարաւոր է որ ինձ ճանաչող մարդիկ իմանան թէ ում պատմութիւնն են կարդում:

Իմ կեանքի պատմութիւնը կ'ընթերցեն եւ կը պատմեն շատերին, սակայն հարցազրոյցի ձայնագրուած եւ գրաւոր տարբերակները չի լուսաբանուի որեւէ մէկին առանց իմ համաձայնութեան, բացառութեամբ եթէ դրանց լուսաբանումը պահանջում է օրէնքով: Համաձայն Փալիֆորնիայի օրէնքի գաղտնիութիւնը չի կիրառուում այն դէպքում, երբ առկայ է երեխայի, տարիքով կամ ոչ ինքնուրոյն չափահասի որեւէ կասկածելի չարաժառանգում, կամ եթէ ես ցանկութիւն եմ արտայայտում լուրջ վնաս հասցնել ինքս ինձ, այլ մէկին կամ այլ մէկի ունեցուածքին: Այս դէպքերում Աճին պէտք է զեկուցի պատճառ հեղինակութեանը:

Հարցազրոյցի ձայնագրուած եւ գրաւոր տարբերակները կ'պահուեն փակ պահարանում, որին միայն Աճին մուտքի իրաւունք կունենայ: Ուսումնասիրութեան վերջում ձայնագրութիւնները կը ոչնչացուեն: Եթէ ես ցանկանամ ձայնագրութիւնները կը ոչնչացուեն իմ ներկայութեամբ: Հարցազրոյցի գրաւոր տարբերակը կը պահուի առնվազն հինգ տարի փակուած պահարանում: Երբ այդ նիւթը այլեւս պէտք չի լինի ուսումնասիրութեան համար, այն նոյնպէս կը ոչնչացուի:

Այս նախագծին մասնակցելու համար իբրեւ Աճի երախտագիտութեան խորհրդանիշ ես կը ստանամ քանակազրկող դրամային չափով նուէր քարտ Սթարբաքսից:

Ուսումնասիրութեան գործընթացի վերաբերեալ որեւիցէ հարց ունենալու դէպքում ես կարող եմ կապուել Աճի Բժշկեանի հետ (XXX) XXX-XXXX հեռախօսահամարով կամ [ani.pezeshkian@pepperdine.edu](mailto:ani.pezeshkian@pepperdine.edu) էլեկտրոնային փոստի հասցեով իմ հարցերի



պատասխանները ստանալու համար: Այլ հարցեր ունենալու դեպքում ես կարող եմ կապուել դոկտոր Շելլի Փ. Հարրելլին՝ Pepperdine University, Graduate school of Education and Psychology, 6100 Center Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90045, (310) 258-2844, [shelly.harrell@pepperdine.edu](mailto:shelly.harrell@pepperdine.edu). Իբրեւ ուսումնասիրության մասնակից իմ իրաւունքների մասին հարցեր ունենալու դեպքում կարող եմ կապուել՝ Doug Leigh, Ph.D., Chairperson of the Graduate and Professional Schools Institutional Review Board, Pepperdine University, Graduate school of Education and Psychology; 6100 Center Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90045, (310) 568-2389

Ես լիովին հասկանում եմ համաձայնության ձեւաթղթի տեղեկատուութիւնը իմ՝ հետազոտական ծրագրի մասնակցութեան վերաբերեալ: Ես ստացել եմ իմ բոլոր հարցերի պատասխանները: Ես ստացել եմ այս տեղեկացուած համաձայնութեան ձեւաթղթի պատճէնը, որը ես ընթերցել եմ եւ հասկացել: Ստորեւ տալիս եմ իմ համաձայնութիւնը մասնակցելու նկարագրուած հետազոտութեանը:

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Մասնակցի Անունը (տպատառ)

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Մասնակցի ստորագրութիւնը

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Ամսաթիւ

Ես մանրամասն բացատրել եւ սահմանել եմ հետազոտման գործընթացը, որին մասնակիցը համաձայնել է մասնակցել: Բոլոր բացատրութիւնները տալուց եւ հարցերին պատասխանելուց յետոյ ես ստորագրում եմ այս ձեւաթուղթը եւ ընդունում եմ վերոյիշեալ անձի համաձայնութիւնը:

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Հետազոտողի ստորագրութիւնը

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Ամսաթիւ

## APPENDIX H

## Script for Reviewing Informed Consent Form

Thank you for being interested in participating in my project [*Engage in small talk as necessary*].

Before we can get started, I am required to review this form with you [*Hand copy of ICF to individual*]. If at any time while reviewing the form, you have questions, do not hesitate to ask your questions.

I will read through the form paragraph by paragraph, and you can follow along as I read. After I finish reading each paragraph, I will either highlight things that are important for you to remember or ask you questions about what we just read. I will also give you an opportunity to ask me any questions that you might have.

After we review the entire form, I will ask you if this is something you are still interested in doing. Just because we are meeting does not mean that you have to participate after hearing more about the project. Do you have any questions? Are you ready to begin?

1. Read Paragraph 1

2. Read paragraph 2

- ✓ It's important that you know the decision to participate in this project is completely under your control and no one can insist that you participate.
- ✓ You don't have to even answer any questions that you prefer not to answer.
- ✓ Do you have any questions so far?

3. Read Paragraphs 3 and 4

- ✓ Do you have any questions or concerns about why I am inviting you to participate in this project or where we will conduct the interview?

4. Read Paragraph 5

- ✓ Are you okay with the need to audiotape the interview?
- ✓ It's important that you know the interview may take some time to complete
- ✓ **It's also important you know that you can ask me to delete information from the story you wish to keep private.**

5. Read Paragraphs 6 and 7

- ✓ Do you have any questions about what you can do if you feel uncomfortable about what we are talking about or start feeling tired?

6. Read Paragraph 8

- ✓ Do you have any questions about the referral process?

7. Read Paragraph 9

- ✓ Do you have any questions about the benefits of the study?
8. Read Paragraph 10
- ✓ It's important for you to know that I **cannot** ensure your anonymity if you allow me share your story with others, even if I don't use your name in the story.
9. Read Paragraph 11
- ✓ Do you have any questions about when I may have to disclose information that you tell me?
10. Read Paragraph 12
- ✓ As you can see, I will be doing everything that I can to keep the information you provide me in a secure place.
  - ✓ Do you have any questions about the security of your interview?
11. Read Paragraphs 13-15
- ✓ Do you have any questions about what I just read?
  - ✓ Now that you know more about the project, are you still interested in participating?

[If **yes**, ask participant to sign/date **2 copies** of the consent form. Investigator should also sign/date the consent forms. Finally, give the participant one copy of the executed consent form for his or her personal files.]

[If **no**, say: Thank you for taking the time to meet with me and finding out more about my project. If you change your mind, please contact me. Do you have any further questions or concerns? Again, thank you very much for your interest. Good-bye.]

## Script for Reviewing Informed Consent Form in Armenian

Տեղեկացուած համաձայնութեան ձեւաթղթի ամփոփման (վերանայման) սցենար

Շնորհակալ եմ, որ ցուցաբերեցիք հետաքրքրութիւն մասնակցելու իմ նախագծին (անհրաժեշտ է երկու բառով նշել):

Մինչ սկսելը ես պէտք է վերանայեմ այս ձեւաթուղթը Ձեզ հետ (մասնակցին տալ տեղեկացուած համաձայնութեան ձեւաթղթի թղթային պատճենը): Եթէ վերանայման ընթացքում որեւէ հարցեր առաջանան, մի երկմտէք հարցնել:

Ես կ'ընթերցեմ հատուած առ հատուած, իսկ Դուք հետեւէք իմ ընթերցածին: Իւրաքանչիւր հատուած ընթերցելուց յետոյ ես կամ կ'ընդգծեմ այն ինչ կարեւոր է որ յիշէք կամ հարցեր կը տամ Ձեզ ընթերցածի մասին: Դուք նոյնպէս հնարաւորութիւն կունենաք տալու Ձեզ մօտ առաջացած հարցերը:

Ամբողջ ձեւաթուղթը վերանայելուց յետոյ ես կը հարցնեմ Ձեզ, թէ արդեօք Դուք դեռ հետաքրքրուած էք մասնակցել նախագծին: Այն, որ մենք հանդիպել ենք չի նշանակում որ Դուք պարտաւոր էք մասնակցել նախագծին դրայ մասին աւելին իմանալուց յետոյ: Դուք ունե՞ք որեւէ հարցեր: Պատրա՞ստ էք սկսել:

1. Ընթերցել առաջին հատուածը

2. Ընթերցել 2-րդ հատուածը

- Կարեւոր է որ իմանա՞ք՝ այս նախագծին մասնակցելու որոշումը ամբողջովին Ձեր հսկողութեան տակ է: Ոչ ոք չի կարող Ձեզ ստիպել մասնակցել:
- Դուք պարտաւոր չէք պատասխանել այն հարցերին, որոնց նախընտրում էք չպատասխանել:
- Որեւէ հարց ունե՞ք մինչ այժմ:

3. Ընթերցել 3-րդ եւ 4-րդ հատուածները

- Որեւէ հարց ունէ՛ք այն մասին, թէ ինչու՞ եմ Ձեզ հրավիրել այս մասնակցելու այս նախագծին կամ որտեղ տեղի կունենայ հարցազրոյցը:

#### 4. Ընթերցել 5-րդ հատուածը

- Դուք դէմ չէ՞ք հարցազրոյցը ձայնագրելու մտքին:
- Դուք պէտք է իմանա՞ք, որ հարցազրոյցը աւարտին հասցնելը կը տեւի մի որո՞շ ժամանակ, եւ ուսումնասիրութեանը մասնակցելու համար հնարաւոր է պահանջուի մէկից աւելի հանդիպում:
- Դուք կարող է՞ք խնդրել ինձ ջնջել պատմութեան միջից այն տեղեկատուութիւնը, որը Դուք չէ՛ք ցանկանայ լուսաբանել:

#### 5. Ընթերցել 6-րդ եւ 7-րդ հատուածները

- Որեւէ հարց ունէ՞ք այն մասին, թէ ինչ կարող է՞ք անել, եթէ անյարմար զգա՞ք մեր խօսակցութեան թեմայից կամ յոգնածութիւն զգա՞ք:

#### 6. Ընթերցել 8-րդ հատուածը

- Որեւէ հարց ունէ՞ք ուղղորդման ընթացքի վերաբերեալ:

#### 7. Ընթերցել 9-րդ հատուածը

- Որեւէ հարց ունէ՞ք ուսումնասիրութեան շահերի վերաբերեալ:

#### 8. Ընթերցել 10-րդ հատուածը

- Դուք պէտք է իմանա՞ք, որ Ձեր պատմութիւնը լուսաբանելուց յետոյ ես **չեմ կարող** ապահովել Ձեր անանունութիւնը, նոյնիսկ եթէ չը նշեմ Ձեր անունը պատմութեան մէջ:

### 9. Հնթերցել 11–րդ հատուածը

- Որեւէ հարց ունէ՞ք այն մասին, թէ ե՞րբ պէտք է լուսաբանեն Ձեր պատմած տեղեկատուութիւնը:

### 10. Հնթերցել 12–րդ հատուածը

- Ինչպէս տեսնում էք, ես կանեն ամեն հնարաւորին բան, որպէսզի պահեն Ձեր մատուցած տեղեկատուութիւնը ապահով վայրում:
- Որեւէ հարց ունէ՞ք Ձեր հարցազրոյցի ապահովութեան վերաբերեալ:

### 11. Հնթերցել 13–15–րդ հատուածները

- Որեւէ հարց ունէ՞ք իմ ընթերցածի վերաբերեալ:
- Հիմա, երբ աւելին գիտէք նախագծի մասին Ձեզ դեռ հետաքրքրու՞մ է Ձեր մասնակցութիւնը այդ նախագծում:

(Եթէ այո՝ ա. Խնդրել մասնակցին ստորագրել/թուագրել համաձայնութեան ձեւաթուղթը: Հետագոտողը նոյնպէս պէտք է ստորագրի/թուագրի համաձայնութեան ձեւաթուղթը: Վերջապէս, տալ մասնակցին իրազործուած համաձայնագրի սեփական պատճէնը:)

(Եթէ ոչ՝ շնորհակալութիւն յայտնել ինձ հետ հանդիպելու եւ իմ նախագծի մասին աւելին իմանալու համար: Խնդրել մասնակցին մտափոխուելու դէպքում կապուել ինձ հետ: Հարցնել՝ արդե՞՞ք մասնակցին ունի այլ հարցեր: Կրկին շնորհակալութիւն յայտնել իր հետաքրքրութեան համար:

## APPENDIX I

## Referral Services

**24-hour Suicide Prevention Hotline:** 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

**24-hour Crisis Intervention Hotline:** 1-800-854-7771

**Pepperdine University Counseling Clinic (2 locations)**

16830 Ventura Blvd. Ste. 216

Encino, CA 91436

(818)-501-1678

6100 Center Dr.

Los Angeles, CA 90045

West LA: (310) 568-5752

**USC Psychological Services Center**

1002 Childs Way

Los Angeles, CA, 90089

(213) 740-1600

**UCLA Psychology Clinic**

2191 Franz Hall

Los Angeles, California 90095

(310) 825-2305

**The Maple Counseling Center (TMCC)**

9107 Wilshire Boulevard, Lower Level,

Beverly Hills, CA 90210

(310) 271-9999

**The Wright Institute**

9911 West Pico Blvd, Suite 720

Los Angeles, CA, 90035

(310)-277-2796

**Pacific Clinics**

Multiple Sites in Glendale/Pasadena/San Gabriel Valley

For referral to specific sites: (877) 722-2737

**Fuller Theological Seminary**

180 North Oakland Ave

Pasadena, CA 91011

(626) 584-5555

APPENDIX J

Literature Tables

**I: Refugee/Immigrant Overview**

Author/ Year	Research Questions/ Objectives	Sample	Variables/ Instruments	Research Approach/Desi gn	Major Findings
Aroian, Norris, & Chiang, 2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To compare rates and correlates of psychological distress among immigrant women and men from the former Soviet Union</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ 935 female and 706 male former Soviet immigrants who resided in the Boston area.</li> <li>□ The average age of the men was 47.4 years and the average age of the women was 48.1 years.</li> <li>□ Length of time in the U.S. ranged from less than 1 year to almost 21 years.</li> <li>□ Majority of the study participants were Jewish (83.7%), identified Russian as their</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demographic, migration, and social network questionnaire (no other information provided)</li> <li>• SCL-90-R               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 90-minute, paper and pencil, self-report, multidimensional measure of psychological distress</li> <li>- Assesses psychological distress according to</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Descriptive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Findings indicate that there are gender-based patterns of distress for immigrants from the former Soviet Union. Former Soviet women were generally more distressed than former Soviet men, the only exception being former Soviet immigrant men who were married and retired: they were as distressed as women in general</li> <li>• Marital status itself was not associated with the level of distress</li> <li>• Women who were employed reported lower levels of distress, regardless of their marital status</li> <li>• Two social network aspects of migration – leaving relatives behind and sponsorship – were significantly associated with distress for women while it appeared to not have any effect on men’s reported level of distress</li> <li>• Being sponsored by family or relatives was associated with greater, rather than less, distress for women</li> </ul>



		<p>language of preference (90.3%), and had refugee status (93.7%) based on religious and ethnic persecution in the former Soviet Union.</p> <p>□ Majority of the study participants were highly educated - 73.9 and 67.7% of the men and women respectively, had a minimum of a college degree.</p>	<p>nine primary symptom dimensions (i.e. somatization , obsessive-compulsions , interpersonal sensitivity, depression, anxiety, hostility, phobic anxiety, paranoid ideation, and psychoticism)</p> <p>- Each item is rated along a 5-point scale of distress from 0 (not at all) to 4 (extremely) distressed</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education was significantly related to distress for women but not for men</li> <li>• Findings suggest that clinicians should be sensitive to the influence of traditional gender roles on immigrants from the former Soviet Union and that assessment and intervention strategies should be gender-specific.</li> </ul>
Berry, 2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A review of the research literature in anthropology and sociology on the</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A	Literature Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articles reviewed converge on the acculturation and identity strategies employed by immigrant groups and their counterparts in the receiving society.</li> <li>• A case is made for the benefits of integration as a strategy for immigrants and for multiculturalism as a policy for the larger</li> </ul>

	immigrant experience, particularly concerning the issues of acculturation and intergroup relations.				society.
Chung, Bemak, Ortiz, & Sandoval-Perez, 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides an overview of the characteristics and status of immigrants, refugees, and undocumented immigrants.</li> <li>• Problems of racism and discrimination, as they relate to immigrant populations and counselors, are presented along with the adverse</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A	Literature Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whether legal or illegal, the immigration process is characterized by a host of complex stressors (i.e. language barriers, loss of community and cultural identity, etc.) that affect the mental health and quality of life of immigrant populations.</li> <li>• Underlying many of these stressors is the challenge of coping with the unique demands that are linked to the highly individualistic, competitive culture that characterizes the dominant cultural group in the United States.</li> <li>• The challenges of adapting to a new culture require immigrants to develop new coping skills that enable them to successfully acculturate and adapt to their new situation.</li> <li>• Immigrants are subjected to acts of individual racism and microaggressions as well as institutional racism, which negatively affects their psychological well-being and undermines their human rights and guarantee for social justice in society.</li> <li>• Given the politically charged atmosphere that currently exists in the United States regarding immigrants, it is crucial that mental health</li> </ul>

	<p>impact of these complex problems on immigrants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Challenges counselors face, as well as practitioner intervention strategies when working with immigrant groups, is presented.</li> <li>A new helping model that is specifically designed to promote the mental health and psychological well being of immigrants is outlined.</li> </ul>				<p>professionals be aware of the impact that the current sociopolitical environment has on the mental health of immigrant and refugee clients.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The authors propose a new counseling model, MLM (Multi-Level Model of Psychotherapy, Social Justice, and Human Rights), and outline five levels of intervention: mental health education, culturally sensitive individual, group, and family counseling interventions, cultural empowerment, integration of traditional and Western healing practices, and addressing social justice and human rights issues.</li> </ul>
Costigan &	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examined parenting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>177 immigrant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acculturation Rating Scale for</li> </ul>	Quantitative; structural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The results suggest that higher involvement in Canadian culture is associated with stronger</li> </ul>

Koryzma, 2010	efficacy beliefs as a mediator of the association between adjustment and acculturation.	Chinese mothers and fathers with early adolescent children in Canada	Mexican Americans – Revised <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parenting Self-Agency Measure</li> <li>• Center for Epidemiological Studies – Depression Scale</li> <li>• Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale</li> </ul>	equation modeling	feelings of parenting efficacy, which in turn are associated with better psychological adjustment and more positive parenting practices. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents’ orientation toward Chinese culture is largely unrelated to their feelings of parenting efficacy or adjustment.</li> <li>• Level of involvement in Chinese culture was not significantly related to parenting efficacy or parenting practices for either parent, or to the psychological adjustment of fathers.</li> </ul>
Dion & Dion, 2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An examination of the importance of gender for understanding the different aspects of immigrant family functioning.</li> <li>• The two domains reviewed include the negotiation of expectations and responsibility</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A	Literature Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In some immigrant families, parents’ expectations for daughters and sons represent their desire to optimize the benefits anticipated from immigration while maintaining continuity in the transmission of important values and behaviors from the parents’ society of origin.</li> <li>• Different socialization demands on daughters compared to sons results, which in turn has potential implications for some aspects of ethnocultural identity among adolescents and young adults from immigrant families.</li> </ul>

	ies pertaining to family roles and socializing the next generation.				
Escobar, 1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reviews and examines research findings that demonstrate that Mexican immigrants in the United States have better mental health profiles.</li> </ul>	Mexican American immigrants (no other specification)	N/A	Critical Analysis of the Literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is rising evidence in support of a negative effect of “acculturation” on the mental health of Mexican Americans, and a positive effect of the retention of Mexican cultural traditions; these findings challenge longstanding tenets in psychiatry and psychology.</li> <li>While the possibility remains that some of these findings may be due to measurement error or response bias, the author purports that the real reason for the advantages that Mexican American families have may be due to a protective or buffering effect of traditional culture.</li> <li>Traditionally, Hispanic families have been described as close-knit, extended family networks that offer a great deal of support.</li> <li>Retention of cultural traditions may also contribute to healthier habits (e.g. better eating and less drug use) that may lead to better health and mental health outcomes.</li> <li>In terms of substance abuse, significantly lower rates among Mexican immigrants, than among people of Mexican descent born in the U.S., may be due to greater availability, easier access, and relative acceptability of recreational drug use in the U.S, and may in part explain the higher rates</li> </ul>

					also seen for mood and anxiety disorders among people of Mexican descent born in the U.S.
Espin, 1997	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To discuss the emotional impact of the migration process, particularly for women by reviewing various prior studies this author had conducted on this subject.</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A	Literature Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Migration opens different opportunities and consequences for men and women, especially in regards to gender roles and sexual behavior.</li> <li>Many women migrants have had little control over the decision to migrate, either due to sociopolitical events that have prompted their migration or traditional, patriarchal family structures.</li> <li>The experience of loss pervades migration and often involves a disruption in a person's sense of identity.</li> <li>Women immigrants of color experience degrees of gendered racism; these women find themselves caught between the racism of the dominant society and the sexist expectations of her culture of origin.</li> </ul>

<p>Esses, Dovidio, Jackson, &amp; Armstrong, 2001</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss the role of perceived competition for resources in determining negative attitudes toward immigrants and immigration in North American</li> </ul>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Literature Review</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attitudes toward immigrants and immigration are, to a large extent, shaped by perceptions that immigrants compete with members of the receiving society for resources</li> <li>• Immigrants who require social services are perceived negatively by members of the receiving society and immigrants who are economically successful are also perceived negatively by members of the receiving society.</li> <li>• Additionally, it was found that not just an unfavorable overall attitude toward an ethnic group drives attitudes toward the immigration of the group, but the specific component of the ethnic attitude that focuses on instrumental beliefs about competition with the group.</li> <li>• The visibility of particular ethnic immigrant groups may make them especially likely to be salient and, thus, to stand out as potential competitor outgroups</li> <li>• In addition to perceived group competition from immigrants for economic and power resources, it is likely that members of host populations see immigrant as competing with them for other, less tangible outcomes, such as cultural and value dominance.</li> </ul>
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Falicov, 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discusses the themes of (i) migration as encompassing a very large relationship system that often involves transnational connections (ii) consequences of new acculturation paths and intergenerational transformations.</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A	Theoretical Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Corresponding with new theories of acculturation, in transnational families children embrace the old culture instead of the parents adapting to the new – it is questionable whether this process is linearly reversed. It is important for therapists not to stereotype, but to ask about values and preferences with respectful curiosity.</li> <li>The preservation of empowering cultural narratives and the continued connection with the place of origin may have powerful protective effects for the second and perhaps the third generation.</li> <li>Transnational practices may provide a sense of narrative coherence that gives meaning to the experience of migration, maintains social capital, and expands hyphenated cultural identities for future generations.</li> </ul>
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<p>Farrell &amp; Fahy, 2009</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How has human trafficking been framed in the U.S. print media between 1990 and 2006?</li> </ul>	<p>2, 462 newspaper articles that dealt with the topic of human trafficking between 1990 and 2006.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Critical Analysis of the Literature</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Findings reveal the public framing of human trafficking has shifted over time corresponding with the adoption of policies focused on national security and the identification, apprehension, and criminal prosecution of trafficking perpetrators.</li> <li>• There was a shift in the view of human trafficking from a human rights problem to a criminal justice problem at the turn of the century; post September 11, 2001 it became a criminal problem with national security implications.</li> </ul>
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Gozdziak, 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To analyze whether existing Western training programs adequately prepare mental health professionals to serve diverse refugee populations as well as explore the contributions that anthropology can make to the field of refugee mental health.</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A	Theoretical Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training programs and the current approach to refugee mental health has been medicalization, which invalidates the broader life experience of refugees</li> <li>Ethnography offers a useful approach to the study of refugee mental health</li> </ul>
Hollifield, Warner, Lian, et al., 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To assess the characteristics of the literature on refugee trauma and health, to identify and</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A	Literature Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health problems of refugees have been widely documents, with a high prevalence of posttraumatic stress and depression symptoms</li> <li>Data about refugee trauma and health status are often conflicting and difficult to interpret because various methods and instruments are used for data collection, analyses, and reporting</li> <li>Other methodological differences, such as translation and cultural differences, and</li> </ul>

	<p>evaluate instruments used to measure refugee trauma and health status, and to recommend improvements</p>				<p>inadequate resources to fully assess symptoms, complicate accurate measurement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Harvard Trauma Questionnaire (HTQ), Vietnamese Depression Scale (VDS), and an unnamed scale developed by Bolton that assess mental health factors are reviewed, as well as underdeveloped potential instruments and nonrefugee instruments adapted for and tested with refugees.</li> <li>• Primary limitations to accurate measurement of trauma and health status in refugees are the lack of theory-based construct definitions to guide the development and design of instruments specifically in refugee populations and inattention to use and reporting of sound measurement principles.</li> <li>• The authors conclude that there is need for further study of what constitutes refugee trauma.</li> <li>• Specifically, instruments ought to be developed in community refugee populations using empirical approaches combining qualitative and quantitative methods in order to make more valid measures that are better representative of the experiences of refugees than methods where data are only obtained rationally via expert and consensus approaches.</li> <li>• Qualitative techniques, such as in-depth interviews and focus groups, help identify the range, depth, and meaning of possible responses in a population and allow for the development of culturally sensitive quantitative measures. These measures should also be linguistically and visually acceptable and understandable to various refugee groups.</li> </ul>
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Khan, 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of articles detailing various historical and current women's rights issues in Bangladesh</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A	Literature Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>While education, health programs, and the work of NGO's has significantly changed the quality life of women in Bangladesh, women face new forms of violence and torment, including sex trafficking.</li> </ul>
Perreira, Chapman, & Stein, 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aims to explore the ways in which Latino immigrants describe their migration and acculturation experiences in relation to their roles as parents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>18 first generation Latino immigrant parents living in North Carolina</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Semi-structured interviews</li> </ul>	Qualitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two primary themes emerged: overcoming new challenges and finding new strengths.</li> <li>Immigrant parents discussed the challenges of overcoming fears of the unknown; navigating unfamiliar work, school, and neighborhood environments; encountering and confronting racism; and losing family connections and other forms of social capital.</li> <li>In response to these challenges, immigrant parents discussed developing bicultural coping skills, increasing parent-child communication, empathizing with and respecting their adolescent children, and fostering social supports</li> </ul>
Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind, & Vedder, 2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reviews current theory and research regarding ethnic identity and</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A	Literature Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wide variations in the reported identity categories are observed, with integration not being necessarily the dominant identity pattern.</li> <li>Bicultural or integrated identity is generally associated with higher levels of overall well-being than are the other identity categories.</li> </ul>

	<p>immigration and the implications of ethnic identity for the adaptation of immigrants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focuses on the broad questions of how ethnic identity and identification with the new society are related to each other, how these identities are related to the adaptation of immigrants, and how these relationships vary across groups and national</li> </ul>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Best outcomes will result from providing real opportunities for immigrants to make choices as to the way and extent to which they retain their ethnic identity and develop a new identity as part of their country of settlement.</li> <li>• With the increasing number of immigrants throughout the world, further research must be conducted to identify the factors that account for variability among groups and settings and examine the generality of theories across contexts.</li> </ul>
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	contexts.				
Porter & Haslam, 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To establish the extent of compromised mental health among refugees, including internally displaced persons, asylum seekers, and stateless persons, using a worldwide study sample</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A	Meta-analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Postdisplacement conditions were associated with mental health outcomes.</li> <li>Materially secure conditions were associated with superior outcomes.</li> <li>Refugees were found to have much better outcomes when the conflict that displaced them had been resolved</li> <li>Acculturative stress, cultural dislocation, and bereavement were predicated to yield better outcomes for refugees who had unrestricted cultural access and were internally displaced and repatriated, but none of these predictions were supported.</li> <li>Female refugees had slightly worse mental health outcomes than male refugees.</li> <li>Children and adolescents were found to be less effected by the enduring stresses of displacement</li> <li>Higher levels of education and socioeconomic status before displacement, considered by some to have buffering functions, were associated with worse mental health outcomes</li> </ul>
Pumariega, Rothe, Pumariega, 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reviews the unique risk factors and mental health needs of new immigrant populations in the U.S.,</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A	Literature Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Immigrants and refugees are at a high risk for mental health problems as a result of the many traumas and stressors they face.</li> <li>Older adults face the greatest vulnerability for mental health problems amongst immigrants as a result of the interaction between their “traditionalism and cultural inflexibility, linguistic barriers, lack of family and social support, and physical infirmities.”</li> </ul>

	as well as treatment and service approaches to address their unique needs.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treatment interventions with large refugee groups should follow three phases: triage, debriefing, and emergency services.</li> <li>• Therapeutic interventions should be aimed at addressing feelings of impotence, emotional dyscontrol, and regressive behaviors.</li> <li>• Another key phase of intervention includes providing appropriate housing, employment and schooling for the members of the refugee family; the third phase involves helping the family maintain communication and liaison with the appropriate social services and mental health agencies that can help the refugee family.</li> <li>• Later therapeutic approaches should focus on the cultural divide between the child and their family.</li> <li>• A community systems of care approach uses “natural strengths and supports in the immigrant community along with community-based mental services to empower the family members as they adapt to the new society.”</li> </ul>
Ryan, Dooley, & Benson, 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critically examines some of the major theoretical approaches that have guided research on the psychologic</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A	Critical Analysis of the Literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Authors note that research on the psychological well-being of refugees has focused on deficiencies within individuals</li> <li>• They argue for a more holistic view of the life experiences of refugees</li> <li>• Authors propose a model in which resources are considered central to the migrant adaptation process.</li> <li>• Negative psychological outcomes arise when the host environment places constraints on or depletes the migrant’s existing resources, while</li> </ul>

	<p>al well-being of refugees: the medical model, the psychosocial stress model, and Berry's Acculturation framework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Authors also outline a conceptual framework for adaptation among refugees that is based on the concept of resources.</li> </ul>				<p>offering few opportunities for resource gain.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Argue that while quantitative research on refugees has been conducted, the actual human stories and the voices of the refugees themselves are absent in much of the literature in psychology and psychiatry.</li> </ul>
Silka, 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examines the immigrant and refugee experience at the community level, including a discussion</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A	Literature Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is concluded that because every system in communities is impacted by the arrival of immigrants, many disciplinary areas of expertise will be needed if a robust understanding of the experience of immigrants in communities is to be achieved.</li> <li>• Calls for more psychologists to contribute to the discussion on immigrant mental health.</li> </ul>



	of the various systems that comprise such communities.				
Silove, Steel, & Watters, 2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of the literature on policies of deterrence and its impact on the mental health of asylum seekers</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A	Literature Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Epidemiological studies across cultures and contexts have documented high levels of trauma exposure in displaced populations with the evidence showing that trauma exposure is a predictor of long-term poor mental health among these groups.</li> <li>It is only recently that the mental health of asylum seekers has attracted specific scientific attention, and research has been limited to only a few of the relevant recipient countries of the developed world.</li> <li>The potentially harmful effect of detention on the mental health of asylum seekers has been raised – broad indicators of distress among asylum seekers in detention include high rates of attempted suicide and hunger strikes.</li> <li>The authors state that it is imperative for researchers to attempt to evaluate the affect of policy changes on the mental health and well-being of asylum seekers</li> <li>Health professionals have a central role in the task of supporting asylum seeker by raising awareness of these issues, conducting further research, and ensuring that the health needs of asylum seekers are given higher priority</li> </ul>

Takeuchi, Alegria, Jackson, & Williams, 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of the diverse findings in Asian, Black, and Latino immigrant populations in the United States and the implications for future psychological research.</li> </ul>	Asian, Black, & Latino immigrant populations (no other specification)	N/A	Critical Analysis of the Literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Measures of immigration that are associated with mental health are not consistent across Asian, Black and Latino immigrant populations.</li> <li>Gender seems to play an important role in understanding how immigration is linked to mental health, although the findings vary across Blacks, Asians, and Latinos. These initial findings suggest that the processes of adaptation, adjustment, and incorporation into society are not uniform for different groups.</li> <li>For some immigrant groups, their mental health becomes worse as they become more integrated with American culture, values, and lifestyles.</li> <li>Future studies would do well to include multiple indicators that capture the immigration experience and to investigate more fully the heterogeneity within immigrant groups.</li> </ul>
Tribe, 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The authors review reasons refugees seek asylum, literature published on refugee mental health, and treatment recommendations for mental health</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A	Literature Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>While refugees often suffer tremendous losses, they often prove to be very resourceful and resilient, and it is these strengths that enable them to flee to a different country and face the associated challenges.</li> <li>Published studies have reported varying findings about the frequency and type of mental health problems most commonly presented by refugees to clinicians.</li> <li>Community-based mental health services may provide more accessible, acceptable, and relevant services which are in line with other types of community care.</li> <li>Some mental health services tend to focus on a refugee person's trauma story; while this may be helpful to some, it is necessary to recognize the</li> </ul>

	providers.				<p>totality of a refugee's life, including their strengths and level of resilience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpreters should be utilized when needed and certain guidelines should be followed (i.e. directing answers to the client, not the interpreter).</li> </ul>
Turney & Kao, 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do patterns of perceived social support among parents of elementary school children vary by race and immigrant status?</li> <li>• How does language ability and time spent in the United States mediate the disadvantages faced by minority immigrant parents?</li> <li>• How does</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early Childhood Longitudinal Study – Kindergarten Cohort</li> <li>• Data were collected from parents and schools of children who were enrolled in kindergarten in fall 1998, and families were followed longitudinally. The original sample included 17,490 students in approximat</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of archival data</li> </ul>	Quantitative, descriptive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Native-born white parents are most advantaged in their perceptions of social support</li> <li>• Among Hispanics, native-born parents report higher levels of social support than foreign-born parents.</li> <li>• Native-born white parents report more available social support than their minority immigrant counterparts.</li> <li>• Within race groups, native-born parents report more support than foreign-born parents. Foreign-born Hispanic and Asian parents appear to be most disadvantaged in the magnitude of perceived support they have available to them.</li> </ul>

	ethnicity predict perceptions of social support?	<p>ely 3,500 classrooms in 1,280 schools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>60% of parents native-born Whites, 14% Black, 11% Hispanic foreign born, 7% Hispanic native-born, 3% other</li> </ul>			
Uzita & Blieszner, 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do members of immigrant families, specifically mothers and their adult fathers, deal with communication challenges brought forth by language acculturation?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10 mother-daughter dyads (n = 20)</li> <li>Mothers were reared in Japan and adult daughters primarily reared in the United States</li> <li>Mothers ranged in age from 45 to 71 years, with a mean of 58. The daughters' ages ranged from 21 to 43 years, with an average age of 20.</li> <li>At time of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Semistructured interviews conducted separately for mothers and daughters that ranged from 1 to 3 hours long, with an average of 1.5 hours</li> <li>Sample questions include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inform me about your mother's (daughter's) use and your use of the Japanese and English</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Qualitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data showed that language acculturation has occurred within each mother-daughter dyad and that communication struggles were encountered. Mothers were aware of the communication challenges, and they were unhappy with the mother-daughter communication struggles that ensued.</li> <li>Communication difficulties placed emotional distance between mothers and daughters.</li> <li>The mother-daughter pairs had moved to communities with varying levels of ethnic group support for mothers' native language and for communication struggles and the dyads encountered.</li> <li>With time, daughters began to understand and appreciate their mothers' complex and difficult</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do their responses reflect family and personal strengths, as well as difficulties, associated with such challenges?</li> </ul>	<p>emigration from Japan, most mothers were in their mid-20s. Their education ranged from completion of junior high school to post-high school training.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All daughters were high school graduates and most had done college coursework, although only a few had completed degrees.</li> <li>Three daughters were born in Hawaii, three were born in Japan, and the remaining daughters were born on the mainland United States.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>language</li> <li>Have you ever thought about how language affects your relationship?</li> <li>People who speak and communicate differently may encounter difficulties in their relationship. Has this occurred in your relationship?</li> </ul>		<p>pasts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Four problem-solving strategies were identified: relying on helpful others, daughters' seeking clarification, using humor, and improving mothers' English.</li> <li>The data showed that immigrant families confront, rather than passively accept, communication challenges resulting from language acculturation.</li> <li>The data punctuate the need to continue to investigate immigrant family strengths.</li> </ul>
Watters, 2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discusses a range of issues concerning the mental health care of refugees,</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A	Critical Analysis of the Literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>While there is variability in findings reporting PTSD in refugee populations, it is pointed out that the construction and use of statistics suggesting high levels of PTSD is often used to argue for resources to develop programs of treatment.</li> <li>PTSD treatment rarely provides opportunities</li> </ul>

	including new paradigms of mental health care.				<p>for refugee service users to identify on a broader level what they want from mental health services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Without an opportunity to articulate their own experiences in their own terms and to identify their own priorities in terms of service provision, refugees may be the subject of institutional responses that are influenced by stereotypes and the grouping of refugees into a single pathologized identity. In doing so, there is a tendency to ignore the resilience of many refugees.</li> <li>• Broad social policy context of receiving societies in which asylum seekers and refugees find themselves may have a direct bearing on their mental health; policies that seek to rapidly integrate asylum seekers and refugees have poor mental health outcomes.</li> <li>• A holistic approach to treatment suggests that rather than impose a dualism which seeks to define whether the client has a physiological or a psychological problem, it may be more appropriate for clinicians to ask refugee patients for their own views regarding the etiology of their conditions.</li> <li>• An ideal approach would be the combination of advocacy services to ensure that refugees gain the maximum benefits from existing health and social services, combined with the provision of specific holistic services, which respond to the social care and mental health care needs of refugees.</li> </ul>
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## II: Armenian Culture & History of Immigration to the United States

Author/ Year	Research Questions/ Objectives	Sample	Instrument ation	Research Approach/ Design	Major Findings
Dagirmanjian, 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide an overview of the history of the Armenian people, responses to the Genocide, issues related to church and politics, immigration to the U.S., family structure, and issues to consider when working clinically with Armenian families.</li> </ul>	Armenian families	N/A	Literature Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Armenian Genocide discussed as the single most defining element of 20<sup>th</sup> century Armenian identity.</li> <li>A “survivor syndrome” is often experienced in which the survivor has an ongoing, if irrational, feeling that there is something irreparably wrong with him or her for having experienced such heinous crimes.</li> <li>Importance of church and family in the culture is emphasized.</li> <li>Great majority of immigrants to the U.S. were survivors, directly or indirectly, of the Genocide and the deportations; strong Armenian community became and remains testimony to Armenian cultural pride, as well as being a resource for sustaining it.</li> <li>The single most difficult obstacle to achieving a successful therapeutic experience with Armenian families is getting beyond their heightened wariness of outsiders, coupled with their reflexive self-reliance.</li> </ul>
Dekmejian, 1997	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide an overview of the formation of the worldwide Armenian</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A	Literature Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In regards to Armenian immigration to the United States, the authors describe the various waves of immigration and patterns of settlement.</li> <li>The evolution of job opportunities is also described; movement from factory jobs and agrarian labor to entrepreneurship and professional positions.</li> <li>The psychological differences between the different groups of</li> </ul>

	diaspora.				immigrants are also explored.
Mirak, 1997	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide an overview of the formation of the Armenian American diaspora; specifically, the patterns of settlement, economic life, family and society, religion and education, politics and the press, and culture and group maintenance.</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A	Literature Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Armenian community in the United States is the largest Armenian community outside of Armenia.</li> <li>The community is the product of events that uprooted the Armenian population of the Middle East: first, in the turbulent period from the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878 to the 1920s and then in the upheavals in Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Iran and Soviet Armenia in the twenty-five years after 1965.</li> <li>The family has served as an important vehicle of adjustment to the new society for Armenians.</li> <li>For most Armenians, the transition to American capitalism was easy; however some Armenians from Yerevan, who were poor but well-educated professionals and artists who had experienced a “cradle-to-grave socialist economic life”, found the transition difficult at first.</li> <li>The major social division facing Armenians came from within the community itself, from discord between older generation of Armenians and the newer immigrants from the Middle East.</li> <li>Despite assimilation and intermarriage, the church is still relied upon for the central rites of marriage, baptism, and death.</li> <li>Since the 1960s powerful efforts have been made to revive the Armenian American community’s cultural and political awareness. These efforts have emphasized maintenance of the language and heritage, aid to rebuild and assist independent Armenia, and international recognition of the Armenian Genocide at the hands of the Ottoman Empire.</li> <li>Armenian Americans are caught in a dilemma common to a diaspora community: a pull by forces and institutions inherited from the Old World and the simultaneous push for integration into the economic, social, and political fabric of the host nation.</li> </ul>



### III: Strengths-Based Model and Positive Psychology Overview

Author/ Year	Research Questions/ Objectives	Sample	Variables/Instru- ments	Research Approach/Design	Major Findings
Bowman, 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reviews the Strength-based model (SBM) put forth by Smith (2006) and calls for an extension to a role strain and adaptation (RSA) approach.</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A	Critical Analysis of the Literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RSA approach highlights the specific ways to extend the SBM to more clearly address critical diversity, multilevel, and life-span issues in “strength-based interventions.”</li> <li>Building on cross-cultural research, an RSA extension can go beyond the traditional focus on universal human (etic) strengths and can further clarify the operation of ethnic-specific (emic) strengths in the coping process</li> <li>African Americans as well as immigrants and refugees are at elevated risks for chronic role strains because of postindustrial dislocations, urban poverty, and racial/ethnic inequities.</li> <li>The RSA extension suggests that individual, group, and family counseling strategies focus on mobilizing both etic and emic cultural strengths to reduce distress and to promote resiliency and empowerment.</li> <li>The strategic mobilization of such multilevel cultural strengths can help reverse risky psychosocial patterns, support resiliency, and promote systemic change.</li> </ul>
Constantine & Sue, 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examine the role that cultural values, beliefs, and practices play in optimal human functioning and illustrate how overcoming adversity has led to the development of “adaptive assets” for</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A	Critical Analysis of the Literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Optimal human functioning has been defined on the basis of a Eurocentric framework</li> <li>Authors argue that it is important to consider five issues related to the health and psychological experiences of people of color: collectivism, racial and ethnic pride, spirituality and religion, interconnectedness of mind, body, and spirit, and family and community.</li> <li>For people of color, survival at the psychological and physical levels has required developing psychological mechanisms which the authors describe as heightened perceptual wisdom, nonverbal and contextualized accuracy,</li> </ul>

	people of color.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>and bicultural flexibility.</li> <li>• Call for an increase in research studies that explore the relevance of positive psychology variables to principle of color, as well as a consideration of cultural constructs that related to collective, spiritual, and familiar aspects of well-being</li> </ul>
Cowen, 1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of the early evolution and definitions of primary prevention in mental health and discussion of the factors that hindered the field's early development.</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A	Literature Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The authors argue that a wellness enhancement approach is justifiable and has more to contribute to disorder prevention as "specific risk-driven, disorder prevention approaches".</li> <li>• Key elements of a life-span-wellness-enhancement approach are outlined briefly.</li> </ul>
Cowen, 2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of recent evidence documenting the effectiveness of primary prevention approaches in mental health and notes a few different ways the concept has been used</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A	Literature Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The authors conclude that a disorder prevention approach is one aspect of a more comprehensive, life-span oriented, wellness enhancement approach, and argue for more focal roles and support for both models within a changing overall mental health system.</li> </ul>
Diener & Diener, 1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To determine if the correlates of life satisfaction vary across cultures and whether characteristics of the respective cultures and societies could</li> </ul>	□ 13,118 college students, 6,519 of whom were women and 6,590 were men	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demographic question naire</li> <li>• Satisfaction ratings on 12 life</li> </ul>	Complex Correlational ; Probit Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four variables were correlated with life satisfaction across all respondents in all nations. All correlations were moderately strong and highly significant: self esteem, <math>r = .47</math>; family satisfaction, <math>r = .36</math>; satisfaction with finances, <math>r = .37</math>; and satisfaction with friends, <math>r = .39</math></li> <li>• Self-esteem covaried significantly with each of the three other satisfaction domains across the entire sample: friend satisfaction, <math>r ( 12,848) = .31, p &lt; .001</math>; family satisfaction,</li> </ul>

	<p>predict these variations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Also aimed to determine whether the predictors of self-esteem differed across cultures.</li> </ul>	<p>(9 did not indicate gender)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The participants were from 49 universities in 31 countries on 5 continents : Africa (5), Asia (5), Europe (8), Latin America (3), Middle East (4), North America (3) the Pacific (3)</li> <li>80% of the sample were in the 17-25 year-old range, 90% were single, and 63%</li> </ul>	<p>domains (Likert scale)</p>		<p><math>r(12,816) = .28, p &lt; .001</math>; and financial satisfaction, <math>r(12,782) = .19, p &lt; .001</math></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At the individual level, the correlational patterns between life satisfaction and the predictors were similar for men and women, and this also was true in the case of self-esteem.</li> </ul>
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		<p>were not employed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Vast majority of respondents were native-born citizens in the nation where the data were collected; the respondents ranged from students at prestigious universities, to smaller private colleges, and one junior college</li> </ul>			
Gable & Haidt, 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To give examples of current work in positive psychology, to explain why the positive psychology</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A	Literature Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The recent movement in positive psychology strives toward an understanding of the complete human condition, an understanding that recognizes human strengths as clearly as it does human frailties, and that specifies how the two are linked.</li> </ul>

	<p>movement has grown so quickly in just 5 years, and to point to future directions for positive psychology.</p>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is little empirical justification for our predominantly negative view of human nature and the human condition, therefore it is not surprising that the positive psychology movement grew so rapidly from its beginnings.</li> <li>• The authors conclude that the future task of positive psychology is to understand the factors that build strengths, outline the contexts of resilience, ascertain the role of positive experiences, and delineate the function of positive relationships with others.</li> </ul>
Gerstein, 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyzes the articles in the March 2006 (volume 32, issue 2) edition of The Counseling Psychologist, discusses the omission of cultural factors, developmental concepts, and other strategies, and critiques the positive psychology framework presented.</li> <li>• Presents suggestions to overcome the obstacles that hinder the “genuine implementation” of a strength-based, developmental paradigm of</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A	Critical Analysis of the Literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While the founders of our field have endorsed and advocated a strength-based developmental model of conceptualizing human behavior and conducting therapy, the majority of psychology training programs focus mainly on teaching the deficit model of behavior and intervention</li> <li>• Omitted from the historical discussion of a strength-based framework in the articles are the contributions by Allen Ivey of developmental counseling and therapy (DCT) and solution-focused, brief therapy by Steve deShazer</li> <li>• Psychologists can empower their clients and help them expand on their strengths by assisting them to uncover their own specific and effective solutions to their dilemmas</li> <li>• Argues that Constantine &amp; Sue (2006) violate their premise of understanding culture-bound constructs and processes by not referring to the diversity within Buddhism</li> <li>• Authors suggest that ethnographic methodologies should be used in studying the strengths of people of color</li> <li>• Authors also argue that, for the most part, the articles do not explain how the principles and strategies described apply to couples, families, groups, organizations, institutions, and communities</li> <li>• Authors advocate for a modification of our accreditation standards and training programs to integrate a more positive perspective of human behavior</li> </ul>

	counseling				
Kaczmarek, 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides a reaction to the proposed strength-based counseling model for at-risk youth set forth by Smith (2006).</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A	Critical Analysis of the Literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Author notes that Smith's model initiates a dialogue that has previously been largely neglected, about how to define strengths and how to operationalize a strength-based model of counseling.</li> <li>The author argues that discussing how this model adapts to adolescents by capitalizing on this developmental stage's uniqueness would strengthen the model.</li> <li>In addition, the author notes that research is needed to test the model's efficacy.</li> <li>The author also states that there is overlap between several of the stages proposed by Smith, and that additional clarification is needed on how clinicians may implement the model.</li> <li>The author also purports that counseling psychology is in an excellent position to move the strength-based model of counseling forward.</li> </ul>
Linley, 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyzes the articles in the March 2006 (volume 32, issue 2) edition of The Counseling Psychologist</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A	Critical Analysis of the Literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raises concerns that not enough is being done to integrate positive psychology with other areas of psychology, as well as more broadly.</li> <li>Emphasizes that our assumptions are culture bound and that some strengths are more evident and valued in different countries</li> <li>Recognizes that a positive psychological perspective within counseling psychology should be an integrative one, accounting for the positive as well as the negative aspects of human experience and functioning</li> <li>Concludes that it is important for psychologists to explore the role of human strengths in successful work and life, a research question that develops an appropriate definition of strength, identifying strengths, and developing valid and reliable assessment tools for measuring strengths</li> </ul>
Lopez,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examine the</li> </ul>	Stratified		Literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>During the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, psychology was devoted to</li> </ul>

<p>Magyar-Moe, Petersen, Ryder, Krieshok, O'Byrne, et al., 2006</p>	<p>historical underpinnings of the positive in psychology, analyze the focus on the positive in counseling psychology scholarship through the decades via content analysis of a sample of articles, and review scholarship that has shaped the strength-based work of professionals throughout applied psychology</p>	<p>sample of 1,135 articles from the Journal of Counseling Psychology, The Counseling Psychologist, Journal of Career Assessment, and the Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development, from their inception</p>		<p>Review/Quantitative</p>	<p>identifying positive attributes of people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The founding of the VA and NIMH changes the landscape of psychology and shifted the focus to pathology.</li> <li>• The field turned around once again in the late 1990's when Martin Seligman became president of the APA and turned attention to positive psychology.</li> <li>• In sampling scholarship in counseling psychology, it was determined that 29% of articles (328 of 1,135) were positive focused.</li> <li>• Values and ethics was the most frequently addressed topic (in 9 articles) across the four journals.</li> <li>• Content analysis also suggests that little has been done to operationalize, measure, or foster at least positive psychological constructs/processes.</li> <li>• Additionally, topics that have received a great deal of attention in psychology journals and the media have not been well represented in counseling psychology journals</li> <li>• The hypotheses set forth by the authors regarding the lack of research in this area include: constructs/processes may not be as basic to the applied domain of practitioners, research may have not caught up with practice in terms of the constructs/processes highly relevant to applied work, researcher may not consider these publications as outlets for scholarship on such topics, and the obscurity of the constructs themselves.</li> <li>• Specific recommendations for becoming a more strength-focused scholar: develop or enhance a "strengths vocabulary", identify human strengths and environmental resources, work towards competency in strategies that marshal human strengths, produce empirically supported treatments emphasizing strengths.</li> <li>• Recommendations for becoming a more strength-focused scholar: develop and refine theoretical frameworks for</li> </ul>
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					positive constructs and processes, enhance skills associated with developing and validating theoretically grounded measures of human strengths, and work more closely with philosophers and researchers in other areas of psychology to facilitate the study of human strengths.
McQuaid & Ehrenreich, 1997	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aims to make the concept of strengths concrete and to provide clinicians with tools to assess strengths.</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A	Theoretical Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define strength as the capacity to cope with difficulties, to maintain functioning in the face of stress, to bounce back in the face of significant trauma, to use external challenges as a stimulus for growth, and to use social support as a source of resilience.</li> <li>Propose and describe the strengths self-assessment questionnaire.</li> </ul>
Peterson & Seligman, 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Propose a comprehensive classification of human strengths.</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A	Book	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documents 24 character strengths arranged under 6 virtue headings: wisdom and knowledge, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, and transcendence.</li> <li>Contributed enormously to a debate and discussion about a psychology of strengths but is presented as an initial product expected to be revised as a result of future research.</li> </ul>
Prilleltensky, 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss the well-being of migrants as a multilevel, dynamic, value dependent phenomenon</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A	Theoretical Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Authors argue that the well-being of migrants is multilevel because at different ecological levels (from the individual to the social sphere) there are risk and protective factors</li> <li>They note that the dynamism is a result of the interaction of objective and subjective risk and protective factors across ecological planes, leading to favorable or unfavorable conditions for migrants in their new environments.</li> <li>Additionally, it is value dependent because norms of justice in the host country determine access to resources.</li> </ul>
Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outlines a framework for positive psychology, points to gaps in the field's knowledge, and argues that</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A	Literature Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aim of positive psychology is to inspire a change in psychology from preoccupation with problems and negative qualities to also building positive attributes</li> <li>Before WW II, psychology was focused on curing mental illness, making the lives of individuals more fulfilling and productive, and identifying and nurturing talent.</li> </ul>



	<p>psychological research in the coming century will focus on factors that allow individuals, communities, and societies to thrive.</p>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After the war, with the establishment of the Veterans Administration and NIMH, the focus of psychological research shifted to pathology.</li> <li>• In the past decade, psychologists have become concerned with prevention and have realized that the disease model does not aid in the prevention of serious problems.</li> <li>• Prevention researchers have uncovered that human strengths act as buffers against mental illness and the authors call for massive research to be conducted on human strengths and virtues.</li> <li>• People and experiences are embedded in a social context, and therefore positive psychology needs to take into account positive communities and institutions.</li> <li>• Fundamental gaps in the field's knowledge include the relationship between momentary experiences of happiness and long-lasting well-being, the development of positivity, a neuroanatomical perspective of rational and flexible thinking, differences between enjoyment and pleasure, defining the science of positive psychology as prescriptive vs. descriptive, collective well-being, authenticity, buffering, and realism.</li> </ul>
Sheldon & King, 2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides a definition of positive psychology and advocates that psychologists embrace a more appreciative perspective on human nature.</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A	Theoretical Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive psychology is the scientific study of ordinary human strengths and virtues. It is an attempt to urge psychologists to adopt a more open and appreciative perspective regarding human potentials, motives, and capacities.</li> <li>• Embracing such a perspective is difficult given psychology's reductionist epistemological traditions, which train psychologists to view positivity with suspicion.</li> </ul>
Smith, 2006a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposes a strength-based model for counseling at-risk</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A	Theoretical Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strength-based counseling represents a significant paradigm shift from the medical model to a competence development model.</li> </ul>

	<p>youth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The author discusses the propositions leading toward a theory of strength-based counseling, stages of this model, representative strength-based counseling techniques, a case study used to illustrate risk factors, protective factors, and strength assessment. Also discussed are ethical, research, and training implications.</li> </ul>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Several movements laid the foundation for strength-based counseling including counseling psychology, prevention and positive psychology, social work, solution-focused therapy, and the narrative therapy movement.</li> <li>Strength is defined as “that which helps a person to cope with life or that which makes life more fulfilling for oneself and others.”</li> <li>The author reviews culturally bound strengths, contextually based strengths, developmental and lifespan-oriented strengths, adaptability and functionality, normative quality and enabling environments, transcendence, and polarities.</li> <li>Ten categories of strengths are delineated as: wisdom, emotional strengths, character strengths, creative strengths, relational and nurturing strengths, educational strengths, analytical and cognitive strengths, work-related and provider strengths, ability to secure or make good use of social support and community strengths, and survival skills.</li> <li>12 Propositions that outline the basic principles of strength-based counseling: (i) humans are “self-righting organisms who engage perpetually in an ongoing pattern of adaptation to their environment, a pattern that may be unhealthy or healthy” (ii) strengths are developed as a result of “human driving force to meet basic psychological needs” (iii) “strength development is a lifelong process that is influenced by the interaction of individuals’ heredity and the cultural, social, economic, and political environments in which they find themselves” (iv) level of strengths vary from low to high (v) strength is “the end product of a dialectical process involving a person’s struggle with adversity” (vi) human strengths protect against mental illness (vii) when therapists focus on strengths rather than deficits, client’s motivation to change increases (viii) in therapy, encouragement is a key mechanism of change (ix) in strength-based counseling, therapists “consciously and</li> </ul>
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					<p>intentionally honor the client’s efforts and struggles to deal with his or her problems or presenting issues” (x) hope mobilizes individuals (xi) the strengths-based counselor understands that healing from pain and adversity is a process, and designates sessions to helps clients heal (xii) the strengths-based therapist assumes that “race, class, and gender are organizing elements in every counseling interaction.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 stages of strengths-based counseling: (i) creating the therapeutic alliance (ii) identifying strengths (iii) assessing presenting problems (iv) encouraging and instilling hope (v) framing solutions (vi) building strength and competence (vii) empowering (viii) changing (ix) building resilience (x) evaluating and terminating.</li> <li>• Understanding risk factors, protective factors, and resiliency is central to strength-based counseling.</li> <li>• The authors challenges psychologists to develop instruments that measure levels of strength-based competencies as well as the degree of risk and resiliency in a client’s life</li> </ul>
Smith, 2006b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyzes the literature in the March 2006 (Volume 34, Number 1) edition of The Counseling Psychologist and discusses how strength-based counseling represents a paradigm shift in psychology from a deficit medical</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A	Critical Analysis of the Literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strength-based counseling model differs from other models due to the fact that it recognizes client’s strengths as a basic therapeutic intervention.</li> <li>• Recognizing client strengths in turn builds confidence, motivation, and feelings of power and creates an empowering therapeutic relationship.</li> <li>• While counseling psychology claims to have placed a historic emphasis on strengths, the field does not have a theory or model to describe categories of strengths and strength-counseling interventions.</li> <li>• The field lacks a taxonomy of strengths and has, previously to Smith’s model, lacked a model for developing strengths in counseling.</li> </ul>

	<p>model to one that emphasizes client's strengths.</p>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Author purports that counseling psychology needs to move in the direction of evidence-based research, even for multicultural competences.</li> <li>• Argues that counseling psychology must make a paradigm shift to a strength emphasis and align research questions accordingly; the field cannot claim that it emphasizes strengths when most research questions focus on clients' deficits and the medical model for viewing mental disorders.</li> <li>• Acknowledges that the strength-based counseling model needs further refinement with delineating discrete stages, specifying additional strength interventions, and defining guidelines for use across the life span; however it is the first real theoretical step for counseling psychologists to make a commitment to looking for strengths.</li> </ul>
<p>Tedeschi &amp; Calhoun, 2008</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The authors analyze and respond to theoretical pieces that purport that recovery is the outcome of bereavement</li> </ul>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Critical Analysis of the Literature</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Argue that the term recovery might suggest a response to a mental disorder, while bereavement responses are largely normative.</li> <li>• Add that the term recovery does not account for "transformative outcomes" in bereavement, including posttraumatic growth.</li> <li>• Authors describe the process of posttraumatic growth.</li> <li>• The term recovery might produce a bias towards conceptualizing bereavement as a disordered state.</li> </ul>
<p>Tedeschi &amp; Kilmer, 2005</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides a broad overview of the constructs (i) strength, (ii) resilience, and (iii) growth, discusses their relevance for clinical assessment and intervention,</li> </ul>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Literature Review</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Although an important component and primary goal of many assessments, a problem-focused approach may reduce the range of information sought and considered, limiting the clarity of the picture painted by the evaluation and emphasizing negative aspects of individuals and situations.</li> <li>• Informal, qualitative methods for assessing strengths can be a part of any assessment process.</li> <li>• Although few scales are solely strength based or developed</li> </ul>

	and describes selected strategies and approaches for conducting assessments that can guide intervention.				<p>specifically to assess competencies, one such measure is the Behavioral and Emotional Rating Scale; yields norm-referenced standard scores.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When assets and risks are both assessed, clients are more likely to experience the intervention as affirming and empowering, even motivating.</li> <li>• A strengths orientation can foster supportiveness and trust, facilitate positive caregiver-practitioner relationships, and redirect caregivers from focusing only on the child's symptoms or problem behaviors.</li> <li>• Clinicians and researchers agree about the relevance of the construct resilience, however operational definitions of resilience have varied.</li> <li>• By including the construct of resilience in assessments, practitioners will be attending to multiple resources and potential protective factors that can be targeted to enhance existing competencies.</li> <li>• Posttraumatic growth (PTG) is described as an area of emerging study, and is defined as positive changes in individuals that occur as the result of attempts to cope in the aftermath of traumatic life events; the Posttraumatic Growth Inventory and Stress-Related Growth Scale are noted as valid instruments used to assess PTG.</li> <li>• The assessment of PTG is not done at the outset of therapy; it is usually done after a good deal of time has passed since the trauma.</li> <li>• The authors purport that it may be more fruitful, in the long term, to work to establish means by which clinicians can build on clients' strengths, harness and promote the development of empirically identified factors associated with resilient adjustment across multiple levels of influence, and facilitate PTG.</li> </ul>
Wong,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describes Strength-</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A	Theoretical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The theoretical assumptions of ST: (i) focuses on clients'</li> </ul>

2006	<p>Centered Therapy (ST), a therapeutic model based on the positive psychology of character strengths and virtues in addition to social constructionist perspectives on psychotherapy. Also examined are the contributions of the positive psychology of character strengths and social constructionist conceptualizations of psychotherapy. The theoretical assumptions, applications, and limitations of the Strength-Centered Therapy model are discussed.</p>			Discussion	<p>positive resources and not merely alleviating pathology, (ii) seeks to integrate the perspectives of positive psychology and social constructionism on the nature of character strengths and virtues, (iii) emphasizes the view that the client and therapist co-create new meanings concerning the clients' subjective experiences (iv) gives credence to how systematic, cultural, and political forces influence and mold the meanings clients attach to their character strengths (v) views the therapist as intricately connected to, rather than independent of, the client.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ST described in terms of 4 phases of psychotherapy:</li> <li>• <i>Explicitizing phase</i>: explicitly identifying the client's existing character strengths</li> <li>• <i>Envisioning phase</i>: involves clients envisioning the character strengths they want to develop as well as how they can use the strengths they currently have (as identified in the explicitizing phase) to advance their therapeutic goals</li> <li>• <i>Empowering phase</i>: clients experiencing empowerment through the development of their desired character strengths</li> <li>• <i>Evolving phase</i>: most prominent during the termination stage of therapy and continues after the end of therapy.</li> </ul>
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