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Employment: A Significant Indicator of Socio-Economic Upward Mobility for the Lost Boys Living in the Kansas City Area

Danvas Ogeto Mabeya

Additional information is available at the end of the chapter

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Abstract

The United States Citizenship and Immigration services (USIS) have a provision that grants refugees who enter the United States permission to work. The government policy requires adult refugees, who are eighteen years and above, get jobs within six months of resettlement. They are to be assisted by agencies specializing in resettlement aid and services to find employment so as to become self-reliant quickly. This study examines the socio-economic dynamics and processes of adjustments the South Sudanese refugees commonly known as the Lost Boys since their resettlement in 2000 in the U.S. The study argues that the resettlement process of the Lost Boys had a problem in the first place in that the Boys were resettled according to their arbitrary given ages. This had important consequences as those resettled as minors had advantages over those resettled as legal adults. The minors, who were resettled as dependents in foster families and started off without economic empowerment, were placed in schools. Those resettled as Legal adults were placed in apartments and were required to start working. This produced a clear reverse trend, in terms of acquisition of social economic capital of the minors over legal adults more than ten years since their resettlement.

Keywords: human capital, refugees, assigned ages, unaccompanied children, migration

1. Introduction

1.1. Historical perspective of Sudan

Sudan has continuously sustained civil wars among its demographic, religious, and racial groups for over four decades since its independence from Great Britain in 1956. The war

of 1983 triggered the exodus of the young Southern Sudanese Boys, commonly known as, the Lost Boys. Many South Sudanese refugees dream of 1 day returning to what most have termed as their “motherland” [1]. However, this dream was short lived. Before most could even set foot in their newest country, the world plunged into yet another conflict between the Southerners (tribal/ethnic groups). This conflict has been termed a “civil war” by some international monitoring agencies [2]. Once again, hope was lost. This “civil war” has continued into the better part of 2017 [3].

1.2. The start of the epic journey

As indicated above, the road-map of this study goes back to events starting in the 1980s. The Lost Boys are primarily refugees from Southern Sudan (Dinka and Nuer cultures). They are a very social group given that they were raised in rural areas of South Sudan where they worked as pastoralists and herders, spoke the same language, belonged to the same ethnic groups, practiced the same religion, were young Boys with similar economic status and had little to no formal education.

In the late 1980s, more than 33,000 boys were forced from their homes due to outbreaks of violence in Southern Sudan. The Sudanese (Islamic/Muslim) government attacked the rebels in the south, killing civilians and enslaving young girls. Young boys who took herds of cattle out to the grazing fields were instead forced to run for their lives. The journey of these young Boys who managed to survive began with them migrating from Sudan. They joined together in small groups and made their way first to Ethiopia, back to Sudan, then to Kenya [4]. The International Red Cross, which found them as they walked to Kenya, named them the Lost Boys, since they arrived in Kenya unaccompanied by their parents. These Boys were named after characters from the story Peter Pan. More so, these Boys did not know whether their families were alive or dead. The phrase Lost Boys was used to identify those who did not know where their families were. The international agency, United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), took them to the Kakuma refugee camps in Northern Kenya. While at the refugee camps, these Boys were housed, fed, medically treated and modestly educated from primary to high school [5]. By the time they reached the refugee camps, they had walked nearly 1000 miles. Approximately 10,000 Boys, of the original 33,000 who started the epic journey, arrived in Kenya [4]. It was here, that they were prepared for the long journey of resettlement in the U.S in 2000.

2. The research question

The central research problem investigated in this study is: What factors enhanced or hindered the refugee South Sudanese Lost Boys living in the Kansas City area access and penetrate the U.S. labor market after resettlement in 2000?

2.1. The 1980 refugee act

Established in 1980, the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives created the U.S. Homeland Security Act that was meant to ensure that refugees become self-sufficient as quickly as

possible. The House of Representatives in 2002 established a new status for unaccompanied refugee children termed “unaccompanied alien children” (UAC). To qualify under this act, a refugee had to be less than 18 years old, lack lawful immigration status and upon arrival in the U.S., be without parents or guardians. This contradicts with the Refugee Act of 1980. The Congressional Research Service (CRS) Report states that congress must (1) provide a uniform procedure for refugee admissions and (2) authorize federal assistance to resettle refugees and promote their self-sufficiency [6].

2.2. The resettlement program and process

The resettlement and eventually integration of about 3600 Sudanese Lost Boys by the U.S government and Red Cross in 2000, was aimed at providing the Lost Boys with education and an environment in which they would overcome trauma. In the process, they would also be shielded from being victims of child soldiering in Sudan [5, 7]. The recruitment exercise was expected to go on for the rest of the Lost Boys, but was brought to a halt by the terrorist attacks on the U.S., September 11, 2001. Bixler says, “about 100 of the 3,800 Boys were still waiting to be interviewed after the 9/11 event” [5]. The resettlement of the refugee “South Sudanese Lost Boys” started with the arrival of small groups in 2000. The resettlement criterion was based on their ages unaccompanied by their parents or families. The International Rescue Committee stated that since most of the arriving Lost Boys were deemed to be over 18 and thus considered young adults, they did not qualify for foster care. “We placed the older boys together in apartments to try to maintain the kind of support network that they developed throughout their difficult journey”. Most of these “Boys”, however, did not know their birth dates and were randomly assigned an age (minors or legal adults) by the U.S. government/UN to facilitate their resettlement process [4, 8]. When physically examined in the refugee camps, the “Boy” who did not know their age was given January 1 as their date of birth. The intent was to make them eligible to receive U.S. government benefits for unaccompanied minors [9]. As stated above, the resettlement of the refugee “Lost Boys” was done in two categories (according to their assigned ages). The first group consisted of those who were 18 years or younger. This group was resettled as minors. They were placed with foster families who assisted them with going to school. The second group consisted of those who were 18 years and older. They were considered young adults. They were placed in apartments and expected to get jobs to start paying their bills. This group was not given a chance to immediately go to school after resettlement [10].

2.3. Primary findings: consequences of arbitrary assigned age resettlement

There were challenges that many were unprepared for from the demographic age resettlement arrangements. The Lost Boys that were considered minors were placed with foster families where they received different levels of support. Those Lost Boys that were considered legal adults had to secure employment immediately and learn how to fend for themselves. For 3 months they were provided a living space free of rent, but they had to be prepared to start paying for their living establishment after the 3 months was over. Once they began working, they were expected to repay certain medical expenses and the cost of the airplane tickets that allowed them to leave Africa. Some boys found it necessary to work two or three jobs to raise enough money to pay their bills and remit support to their families back in Africa. They also learned that

acquisition of English language skills was primary to secure even a manual job in the U.S., not to mention lack of previous work experience, as most had not worked in Africa [10].

2.4. Their expectations after resettlement

Finding a safe sanctuary, an education and a job, was uttermost to every participant in my study. This finding can be supported by Muhindi and Nyakato which underlined the expectations of the Lost Boys finding a safe environment in the U.S. in which they could move freely, express themselves without fear and realize their dreams of education and professional careers [11]. They also hoped to get well-paying jobs which would enable them to build their socio-economic upward mobility and remit money back home to help those left behind. Once resettled, the U.S. government and Red Cross planned to give the Boys an education, while allowing them to heal from extremely severe trauma [5].

3. Secondary migration

According to Dustmann, immigrants are very rational when it comes to choosing their place of residence in a new country. They are aware of favorable and unfavorable conditions in their new environment. Therefore, immigrants and refugees, who thought they might be resettled in unfavorable environment, which might not have many social opportunities, will relocate after some time to places where they will maximize their window of opportunities [12]. Immigrants and refugees will tend to relocate to areas where their own ethnic communities reside and in this way, they will share both economic and social assets. It is very common for immigrants to relocate to other states and cities in search of better work, cheaper housing, safer neighborhoods or to be closer to friends or family [13]. According to John Gak, President of the Brothers Organization for Relief, most of the Lost Boys who lived in Kansas City, relocated from other states in the U.S. [14]. The United States Federal government allows refugees, once legally admitted and resettled, to relocate to states and cities they deem to be conducive for their stay. This is like any other legal resident of the U.S. [15]. However, this migration can result in a high concentration of an ethnic population in one area. Critics see this as a rejection of assimilation of immigrant groups into the host society; resulting in those immigrants not becoming proficient in English language, consumption patterns, attitudes, customs, and family values [12].

Janzen, El-Hasan, Lohrentz and Hartnett, assert “Kansas had been demographically viewed as white, mainstream Americana by the media for a long time. Indeed, Barnett reported the then Kansas Senator, Sam Brownback, had opposed the resettlement of Somali Bantu refugees from Africa citing their huge populations and cultural differences” [16, 17]. He later gave in, partly because states have no say or control over refugee resettlement programs (Refugee Protection Act of 2001). He ended up supporting this bill and has been a key supporter of resettlement programs of Kansas refugees, more so, the “Sudanese Lost Boys.” Some of whom he has met with personally.

In their empirical research on why East African immigrants moved to Kansas City, Janzen found that socio-economic reasons have been the most important factors. In their final report to the Kansas Humanities Council, they concluded that some of the most important reasons why many African immigrants relocated to the Kansas City area from other states was:

"life was more straight-forward in the Midwest than in big cities of the East; educational opportunities were available more advantageously; raising families was possible." [16]

These opportunities attracted African immigrants from other States and cities to the Kansas City area. On the other hand, David James argues in his work, *"The Racial State Theory"*, that the movement of the blacks from the southern States to Kansas, represented an escape from the South's repression toward a free state. After conducting interviews with the Lost Boys, I found those Boys who migrated to Kansas, did so because of the same reasons given above by Janzen et al. as their important motivation. One participant in this study said:

"A lot of lost boys came from other states. Many of the lost boys came to Kansas City because of jobs. Another thing is that if you have a 'Lost Boy' who is your friend, you can call him to come and live with you." [18]

Laura Berger stated that Peter Nyarol Dut, one of the Lost Boys, left Houston, Texas for Kansas because he was frustrated with trying to make ends meet financially and trying to get to school [19]. Dut felt discriminated against and it was difficult to adjust to the urban environment in Houston. Dut thought the only reason he came to the U.S. was to go to school. His cousin in Olathe told him that Olathe East High School had accepted some Sudanese refugees and that he stood a chance of being accepted. That being the case, Dut made the decision to relocate to Olathe, Kansas. An article by Nancy Beardsley of Voice of America asserted that new waves of immigrants were transforming Kansas City. This included African-Americans moving from the southern U. S., to more northern states [20]. Many immigrants are attracted to opportunities provided to them in Kansas City as confirmed by one Ethiopian immigrant, Daniel Fikru. Fikru came to Kansas to seek opportunity and he had this to say:

"Kansas City is not a crowded place. There's a lot of opportunity. Housing and education is affordable." [20]

Many immigrants are attracted to both social and economic opportunities availed to them in Kansas City that are not easily available in other states. Today, the Kansas and Missouri area can be said to be a major destination for African immigrants.

3.1. Human capital theory consideration

Human capital theory, a proposal by Schultz in 1961 and developed by Becker in 1964, is a theory that has its foundation in labor economics. Labor economics refers to the study of workforce and productivity. According to the proponents of human capital theory, human capital enhances cognitive base of economically productive human capacity. That is the ability and investment in people [21]. Traditionally (pre-industrial societies), economic power of human beings was

dependent on material asserts such as land, animals, and even family size as a source of labor [22]. Unlike traditional societies, industrial societies depend on heavy investment in education, skills, and health of the population to foster economic growth of societies [23]. In what McLuhan refers to as a “Global Village”, training and skills are a vital capital needed in order for individuals to fully participate in the new and competitive global economy. Human capital has become a key tool for economic success not only in the Western world but around the world. In the U.S. for example, education is the key to good life [10, 24]. So, what is Human Capital Theory?

Adam Smith defines human capital as the accumulation of competencies, knowledge, and personality attributes embodied in the capability to perform a task to produce an economic value [25]. This is acquired through education and experience of a willing individual. Becker contends, human capital is realized through the amount of investment an individual is able to generate [23]. Full time investment in education is a good example of human capital in the Western world involving direct costs. Because of high costs involved in training individuals, Fagerlind and Saha argue that “human capital theory provides a basic justification for large public expenditure on education both in developing and developed nations [26].” The outcome of this large expenditure is realized through “rapid economic growth for society.” For individuals this could be seen through individual economic success and achievement. For society it would be seen through growth and wealth of a given society. A good example of such success of investment in human capital is referred to in economics as the “Asian Tigers” Hong Kong, Korea, Singapore, and Taiwan [27]. The World Bank 1993 report indicated that the success of those countries depended on the quality of education they provided to their citizens. Olaniyan and Okemakinde suppose that education can be equated to an economic good [28]. This is because it is not easily obtainable and thus a need to be apportioned. They go on to say, economists have come to regard education as both “consumer” and “capital good.” It can be used to enhance human resources vital for economic and social change. Individuals look into future income after investing presently and differed consumption. Various economic terms have been used to measure human capital: education, science and technological advancement, and research and innovation.

Fitzsimons explains that reformulation of human capital theory can be realized through education and training in the new global economy. He goes on to say “Under Human Capital Theory the basis for nation state structural policy frameworks is the enhancement of *labor flexibility* through regulatory reform in the labor market.” This is done by “raising skill levels by additional investment in education, training and employment schemes, and immigration focused on attracting high-quality human capital.” Therefore, human capital can be seen as an abstract form of labor as a commodity [29]. Idris Mgobozi on the other hand, contends that the labor market is a social institution, whereby people invest in their capacity for labor and reap as much as they can in the labor market by being rewarded in return by higher wages. He goes on to say, individuals who are more educated earn more than those who are less educated [30]. More so, employers are likely to hire workers who are highly educated because they can be trained in a short period for a specific job with low costs. Well-educated individuals can quickly and successfully adjust to rapidly changing and dynamic economic conditions in the labor market [31, 32].

Most of the participant refugee Lost Boys in my study were in collegiate institutions by the time of the interviews, although some were working part time jobs. Those who had already acquired collegiate education had an opportunity to compete with Americans in the labor

market and this would lead to both social and economic upward mobility. The group of Lost Boys that had not managed to acquire proficiency in English had difficulty in securing a job and more so interacting with Americans [10]. David Haines states that refugee economic self-sufficiency is the principle goal of the U.S refugee resettlement policy as stipulated in the Refugee Act of 1980 [33]. This self-sufficiency principle is embedded in “The Federal Refugee Resettlement Program to provide for the effective resettlement of refugees and to assist them to achieve economic self-sufficiency as quickly as possible after arrival in the United States” [34].

3.1.1. Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR)

To effectively execute this refugee policy, the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) was forthwith established under the Department of Health and Human Services, which is headed by a Director under the Refugee act of 1980 [34]. Section 412. [8 U.S.C. 1522] (1) (B) provides the intent of congress as:

- i. employable refugees should be placed in jobs as soon as they arrive in the U.S; Section (2) (C) provides that the Director may recognize and take into account,
- ii. the availability of employment opportunities, affordable housing, public and private resources (including educational, healthcare, and mental health services) for refugees in the area, and
- iii. the likelihood of refugees becoming self-sufficient and free from long-term dependence on public assistance [34].

These stipulations are consistent with agencies that assist refugees with resettlement objectives. This is done through empowering refugees with human capital through education and training that enable them to access and penetrate the U.S. job markets. In the case of the refugee Lost Boys, Martha Donkor contends that those who had attended African or Arab learning institutions, found that the social capital carried with them from Africa was inefficient in American Society [35]. So, in schools they learned to do away with their low valued social capital with higher valued American capital that was valued by educators, employers, and American society. The degree of integration, assimilation, and even getting employed; depended on how fast each individual “Lost Boy” managed to do away with their original capital, while adopting American values [35].

4. Instruments and procedure

4.1. Ethnography

It is important to give this study an ethnographic approach given cultural elements (language, beliefs, values, and practices) of the Lost Boys are included in this study to enhance understanding of the processes of integration, assimilation, and/or marginalization of these Boys. Harris and Johnson define ethnography as “a descriptive account of social life and culture in a particular social system based on detailed observations of what people actually do.” Hammersley and Atkinson go a step further to say, “ethnography refers primarily to a specific method or set of

methods used in research or study” [36, 37]. This study draws from Ager and Strang’s demographic and cultural/ethnographic criteria by examining key human development indicators to elucidate the relative degree of assimilation of each participant “Lost Boy” since their resettlement in 2000. These indicators included whether the Lost Boys were employed, had an education, had acquired English language proficiency, participated in community activities such as politics and sports, had become U.S. citizens, participated in U. S. cultural activities, and practiced religions [38]. However, the two scholars caution that achievement in any of the above indicators does not necessarily suggest successful integration, but rather serve as means to achieve integration.

4.2. Research protocol

I opted to use qualitative research methods in this study. Rather than seeking validation, this study seeks to retain the rich original data in detail. In this study, purely quantitative methods are unlikely to elucidate the raw primary data necessary to address the research problem. Although both qualitative and quantitative studies seek to explain causal relationships, the latter is more variable-centered. Also, since this study is based on open-ended questions, it makes sense to apply qualitative research tools. Furthermore, it is hoped that an interested quantitative researcher will be able to take the conceptual tools developed in this study and apply them to isolate relevant variables in future research.

4.3. The study location

This study applies a multiple case study model, which provides the methodology for collection of data from randomly selected participants [39]. The study employs an information-oriented sampling technique (snowball) in which the participants refer or name their friends or other individuals in the population as potential interviewees [40]. This technique enables me to get 40 participants. Data used in this study was collected on July 25, 2009 from the participating Sudanese Lost Boys in the greater Kansas City area. Primary investigation with the Lost Boys participating in the study indicated that there were about 100 Lost Boys living in the greater Kansas City area (this number was not verified because official data was not available). All participants were 18 years and above at the time of their respective interviews. The interviews were conducted at the residence of one participant who was attending Johnson County Community College. He also acted as the liaison for the study and coordinated interviews held in his home. Data collection protocol for this study included in-depth and standard unstructured interviews, life stories, participant observation, informal conversation, and spending time with the Lost Boys.

4.4. Data collection agenda

The interviews were conducted face-to-face in English, while being recorded and later transcribed and analyzed. Face-to-face interviews allowed for the collection of observational data, such as facial expressions. Each interview ranged from half an hour to over 2 hours, with the majority being around an hour and a half. Although using an interview schedule, this study was flexible enough to allow the participants’ time to reflect and then answer (not rushing their responses). Though some participants did not respond to all questions sited to them, it

remained important to make sure that further information was harnessed by making follow ups at the end of the interview. Since the study used open-ended questions, it took a two-way communication where the interviewee asked for more relevant information when needed. The same questions were asked repeatedly to each participant and a saturation point was reached at 40 face-to-face interviews. This prompted the end of the interview process.

4.5. Data analysis

After conducting interviews with the Lost Boys, I transcribed the digitally recorded interviews and used the data as the primary research source. I assigned the responses in a coded form, where respondents were just called participants instead of using their real names. I employed a thematic system using Ager and Strang's [38] demographic and cultural/ethnographic criteria for my data analysis and identified common themes. A thematic system protects the confidentiality of individual participants instead of presenting individual cases. (Confidentiality of the participants in this research was of great importance, as they demanded this type of protection.) I designed a table (see Mabeya [10], Figure 9, p. 135) where I developed the major themes and sub-themes, which I later transformed into categories. In this case, all data were classified according to the main themes and sub-themes. A multiple case study framework was used to analyze the 40 cases. The sub-themes were based on the level of education a given participant had achieved: high school diploma and/or college degree. The type of education they received was sometimes reflected in the type of job or employment secured by an individual. However, this did not mean that those who were highly educated and had better jobs made more money than those who did manual work. Some manual jobs paid incredibly well. Those working as mechanics, in construction, and/

Education and English language			
	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Number	8	8	24
Adult/minor	Minor	Adult	Adult
Able to communicate with other African American immigrants	Yes, in English	No, common language with other groups	Could communicate in English and Swahili common to most Africans
Education in Africa	5	0	Yes
Continuing English Language proficiency	Immersed in American families	Enrolled in ESL difficult to learn English—lack of immersion and interaction	
Schooling in U.S.	Yes—after foster families assisted with tuition	Enrolled in English as a Second Language (ESL)	Yes
Financial assistance/income	FF paid tuition FF provided housing and helped with daily living	Difficult to find a job	Due to schooling, many were unable to find a job.

Table 1. Human capital.

or electricians, all commanded a high hourly wage. Alluding to Wolcott and Berg, each cautioned against drawing hasty conclusions and suggested that, “researchers should conduct open ‘coding.’” This would not only lead to ‘opening the inquiry widely,’ but, also, as Wolcott put it, ...keep breaking down elements until they are small enough units to invite rudimentary analysis, then begin to build the analysis from there” [41, 42]. As stated by K.M. Eisenhardt, if all participants or most participants provide similar results, then there exists substantial support for the development of a preliminary theory that describes the validity of the phenomena [43]. Three major themes emerged during this study and recurred among nearly all participants from the above 11 categories mentioned earlier (**Tables 1 and 2**). *Education (Human capital)*, *Employment (economic empowerment)*, and, *Citizenship (naturalization)*. Participants are then categorized into three themes depending on the social capital they possessed at the time of the interviews (see **Table 3**).

Naturalization			
	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Number	15	15	10
Adult/minor	Adults	3 minors 12 adults	5 minors 5 adults
U.S. permanent resident	No	Yes	Yes
U.S. citizen	No	No	Yes
Visit Africa	No	Yes	Yes
Bring families to U.S.	No	No	Yes
Financial assistance	No	Able to get student loans and unemployment benefits	Minors—yes Adults—no

Table 2. Citizenship.

Economic empowerment				
	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
Number	8	8	10	14
Adult/minor	Minor	Adult	Adult	Adult
School/English in Africa	5	No	Some	Some
Work in Africa	No	No	Some	No
Financial assistance	Supported by foster families who received financial assistance	Yes	Yes	Yes
Education in U.S.	Yes	No	Yes	No
Work in U.S.	No—not allowed due to being a minor	Required to work—difficult to find employment—no work skills—little English—temp manual labor jobs	Yes	Yes

Table 3. Employment.

5. Presenting the employment findings

For most refugees from developing countries (including the Lost Boys), economic empowerment can only be achieved through employment using human capital. Unfortunately, from the days of early childhood in Sudan through their exodus in Africa and eventual resettlement in the U.S., the Lost Boys never experienced an accommodating peaceful environment. It is only after resettlement in the U.S. that they recaptured their chance to get an education. Empowered with education, most Boys are now in a position to acquire employment in the American labor market. Those that are already employed have become economically self-sufficient [10]. A Halpern's 2008 report prepared for U. S. Department of Health and Human Services concluded that, economic self-sufficiency is very important for successful resettlement of refugees as stipulated in the U. S. Refugee Act of 1980 [44]. According to federal regulations, economic self-sufficiency is defined as "the total earnings of a family that enables it to support itself without external financial assistance" [44]. Sara McKinnon contends that the resettlement program for the Lost Boys in the U.S. was one of the most successful ever in U.S. history, given that nearly all the Boys who were legal adults at the time of their resettlement got employed [45]. The Office of Refugee Resettlement published the employment percentage of the Lost Boys at 85%; whereas, that rate was 55% for other refugees in the U.S. in 2003. Moreover, the ORR found economic opportunity, language, and education to be key for economic self-sufficiency [34]. A study done by Potocky and McDonald identified the length of residence, citizenship, and secondary migration to be related to economic self-sufficiency [46].

The following section categorizes the Lost Boys into four groups relative to the major theme of employment from my research. Participants in the first group were resettled as minors and were legally barred from working and instead were placed in foster families who sponsored their education in American schools. The second group was composed of Boys who had no labor and professional skills before their resettlement in the U.S. The third group arrived in the U.S. with minimal skills and education acquired in Africa. The fourth group acquired professional experience and skills, only after arrival in the U.S.

The first group: Due to their young ages and scarcity of employment opportunities, eight participants in this study did not work in Africa. Although they were sent out to the fields to tend to family cattle, this was not considered to be a job; it was considered to be an obligation to the family. Boys who were sent out to graze cattle were not paid. This group of Boys were resettled in the U.S. and placed under the care of foster families legally entrusted with their welfare. Foster families received assistance from the government and other refugee agencies in support of resettlement programs (according to the participants the foster families got financial, food assistance, and tax breaks). These Boys were not allowed to work in the U.S. because they were considered minors according to U.S. law. However, they had the opportunity to go to school while growing up. These Boys had become young adults by the time of this study and had moved out of the foster families homes; lived on their own or with other adults Boys. One participant said:

When I first came to the United States I was placed in a foster family in California. I was told I was a minor by resettlement agencies. I did not know my real age, though they said my age was thirteen years old. The foster family took care of me. They paid for my school, bought me clothes, books, and food. They also assisted me get a job when I become nineteen years. With a job, I decided to move out and live on my own before relocating to Kansas from California.

Another participant who had relocated from Dallas, Texas to Kansas City said:

I don't know what would have happened if I was left to live alone. In the United States, life is so expensive. My foster family helped me a lot. They took me as their child. They provided me with all that I needed. They took me to school because I did not get a chance to go to school in Africa. They even allowed me to use their phone to call family and friends in Africa. I am so grateful of them. I call them once in a while. They always want me to go visit, but I don't have time now that I work two jobs.

The second group: This was a group of eight Boys who arrived in the U.S. as young adults. They were required to start working immediately after arrival. However, this group possessed no working or professional skills prior to their arrival. This is because they did not have a chance to go to school in Africa. Those in this group who had a chance to go to school did not speak English because they went through Egypt, where the language of instruction was only Arabic. This group of Boys had problems getting employment because they did not possess the working skills needed and were not fluent in English. Due to this, most of them could only get temporary jobs as manual laborers. One participant said:

I did not have a job in Africa. I lived and depended on my parents going to school and back home. I only managed to get a job when I was resettled in the U.S. I have worked different jobs and made a lot of money. I currently work with a construction company making \$20 an hour.

However, they were all enrolled in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes in Kansas City where they were learning how to speak and write English. A few of those in this group had graduated from these programs and were already enrolled in two-year college programs in Kansas City learning institutions. This participant said:

I did not have a job nor go to school in Africa. I only took care of my family cattle. My family had a lot of cattle, maybe a thousand. They were passed on to my dad from my grandfather before he died. I like cattle a lot. Now that I am in the U.S, I have to be on my own. I have to pay my bills, go to school and pay tuition... I cannot get a nice paying job because I am not fluent in English. But one day when I will be fluent in English, I will get a good job.

Another participant gave this exciting response:

"I don't know whether Americans really understand Africa and Africans. They just resettled us in different states without asking us where we wanted to settle. I moved here because I did not want to live in New York. That one is big for me. I like small towns. I can't even speak English of big towns. I don't have any work experience that they require in big cities. I just wish they could resettle me in a farm where I could take care of cattle like I did in Sudan."

The third group: This group was composed of 10 participants who possessed some education and working skills accrued from Africa. McKinnon would consider the resettlement of this third group of participants as “successful” because they secured employment and enrolled in higher institutions of learning (colleges) [45]. Although their English was not fluent, they were able to adapt to American English. Due to this, American employers were ready to hire them. Some of them had some work experience from Africa. In addition, this group received education in the Kenyan refugee camps where English was a part of the Kenyan educational curriculum and a language of instruction. It was easy for participants in this group to fill out application forms for employment on their own. Some of them had already completed 2-year associate degrees and were working. One participant described his work experience in Africa and in America as follows:

In Africa I worked. I worked with a Chinese company in a high-rise in Nairobi. There was an estate which was being built over there. That was in 1996. I worked with them up to 98, then left to join St. Kizito. I finished in 2000. I did my practices, then I worked in a workshop. It was inside St. Kizito. They were not paying me very well. But I was just forcing myself because I needed to provide for my family and I needed some money. I have a family. I did not come with my parents. If I was to be with my parents I would not have suffered. I would have just concentrated on my education. My dad is there for me and my mother is there for me. I came to the United States through Catholic Charities. They sponsored me for three months. They gave me food stamps and some household stuff. They looked for me a job. Then from there I never saw them again. That was in 2005. Four and half years ago. They don't know what I am doing, how I am surviving.

Another participant said:

Yea, yea, in Africa, I work in, you know, just in a lab. Like in Khartoum, I work in a market. I worked for somebody, not for me. We stay in the market and someone came to buy something you know. That one I do in Sudan. Then Egypt, too, I work in a company like America but I don't have money because America here you work two company. Is good. They give, you know, five hundred two weeks. In Egypt I think it is....aaahhh \$60 for a month. You don't work for hour. I now work here for \$8 an hour. Is good. You work 8 hours for \$8 is not bad. But in Egypt no hours. It is a month.

He added:

In the United States it is very difficult survive if you don't have job. Most people will not even want to live with you. You don't have job, that one is difficult. In Africa you can survive even without a job. Your family, neighbors and even the community can take care of you. They can provide housing and food.

According to Latkiewicz and Anderson, employers report that refugees have difficulty in correctly filling out application forms [47]. The actual process of job application is foreign to most refugee Lost Boys as participant explained:

In Africa we did not have to apply for jobs. If we wanted to work, we just went into an office and asked some if there was work, and if there was we just got it. I don't have English to write application because somebody is busy and don't have time to fill my application. I don't have to do anything.

More so,

At work, you don't have to speak well. Some people don't address you because they see you like different...different because, you know, another language, it is difficult to learn. In the future I don't know what I want to be or do because I don't have English or education for now. Aaahhh, I try this one for three years. I know something for that one. That, I think, I will know what I will want to be. Now.... Doctor is good for me because how can people here in the United States be good and help me. I go help people in a lot of place, too.

The fourth group: This group was comprised of 14 participants who did not have work experience from Africa. Though some of them went to school in Kenyan refugee camps of Kakuma, they did not have a chance to work there, as work opportunities in refugee camps were limited. This group acquired working skills only after they arrived in the U.S. This group did not have a lot of problems getting simple manual jobs because they could speak English. Most of them said they received on-site job training. Six of these participants worked in nursing homes where they took care of the elderly. Trained as Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA). One participant said:

I did my high school at the Kenyan refugee camp of Kakuma. I was advised it was easy to get a job on arrival in the U.S. in a nursing home but I had to get some training. So I took a three month course and graduated as a CNA. After that It was not hard for me to get a job in nursing homes. This a job many Americans don't like to do.

Another participant said:

I work at the....My first job was in a hotel at Casino (inaudible), that was my first year when I got to the United States, I worked a year or so, I was going to a community college. My second job was working at the nursing home as a nursing aid (nursing assistant). And my, ahhhh, I don't think I can remember all, I worked at a chemist (a pharmacy company). I am working now at what they call Wall Fund. There are different jobs. There is no really single job that I have worked.

5.1. Discussion

It is clear from this study that the Lost Boys, though being handicapped with the lack of English Language, they were ready to learn and move up the social ladder in American society. They were eager and motivated. However, a small number of those who participated in this study seemed not to be highly motivated because of the lack of English language skills. Sponsorship of the U.S. government and other refugee interest groups played a key role in resettling newly arrived refugees. This role was even greater for refugees who came from very poor countries and of different cultures. From the research finding of this study, the resettlement programs for the Lost Boys who were resettled as minors, had advantages in resettlement over those resettled as legal adults. This is because the Lost Boys were resettled according to their assigned arbitrary ages. The minors were resettled in foster families and were not allowed to seek employment until they were of legal age to work (18 years and above). Therefore, they started off without economic empowerment. Those that were resettled as legal adults were expected to get jobs immediately so that they could

pay their bills (housing and other utilities). In this way, there was a clear reverse trend in terms of acquisition of social and cultural capital of the adult Boys since their resettlement more than 10 years ago. Those resettled as legal adults seemed to struggle with balancing to work, acquiring English language skills and going to school. Those considered minors were placed with foster families starting off as dependents, but ended up having a better opportunity of acquiring English language from their foster families. The experiences they received in American schools helped them greatly improve their English language skills by interacting with American children [10]. This was not my expectation. I expected to find those Lost Boys who had started working immediately after resettlement to be doing well in terms of education and finances. This was not the case though. It became clear after my research that allocation of placement of the “Lost Boys” based on arbitrary ages, had serious consequences in terms of their integration, assimilation, and employment as time went by.

5.2. Analysis

My primary investigations found those immigrant/refugees in the Metropolitan Kansas City areas who do not have job skills, who are not fluent in the English language or have no college education; tend to look for employment in ethnically owned businesses of people from their original countries (Mexicans, Cubans, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Somalis). I classify this group of immigrants/refugees as enclave laborers. However, this is not the case with the Lost Boys since not many Sudanese immigrant’s own businesses in the Kansas City area. Lost Boys in the Kansas City area have no alternative but to look for jobs run by Americans or foreign investors. In this case, the basic underlying condition for them is to have professional skills and to be fluent in the English language in order to get an American job and be able to keep it. James Tollefson argues that getting any job in America, maintaining a job, and advancing to even a better job depends to a large extent on English language proficiency for immigrants. Employers in most cases take it for granted that the failure of refugees not clearly understanding what they are instructed to do, is a major weakness in terms of productivity in the work place [48]. Lack of education and English proficiency skills led some “Lost Boys” to live in ethnic enclaves and in segregation [35]. This further lead to their exclusion from social and labor markets since employers seem reluctant to employ people who do not speak English or do not have professional skills [10]. The Lost Boys who were resettled as minors had an advantage by living with foster families who took care of them. The foster families also took them to schools where they were enrolled. They also paid their tuition and other expenses. Those Lost Boys that were resettled as legal adults seemed to be struggling after 10 years of their resettlement. They were placed in apartments and were required to start working immediately after their resettlement. They were to repay all their resettlement expenses from Africa to the U.S. They were also to repay their air tickets. In this case, the legal adults did not have the opportunity to go to school immediately after their resettlement. They were not immediately integrated into American culture, which is readily available in learning institutions through teachers and students. This led some of them to be marginalized or self-excluded from society [10].

6. Conclusion

Resettlement in a new country is often challenging due to: new culture, food, values, languages, social life and the environment. As opposed to economic and academic immigrants who prepare and learn more about their new host country before relocating, many refugees do not have much time and choice. Any assistance that refugees can get becomes handy. Whereas, the U.S. government has assisted unaccompanied minors from Cuba, Haiti and Vietnam, much attention was given to the “Sudanese Lost Boys”. This was because the Lost Boys underwent many traumatic experiences in Africa before their resettlement in the U.S. in 2000. Unlike other unaccompanied refugees, the Lost Boys had to walk about 1000 miles before they were rescued by the international community from the Sudanese army who wanted to persecute them. The U.S. government has helped the Lost Boys a great deal in their resettlement programs. The government not only provided housing and other social welfare amenities, but also assisted the legal adult Lost Boys to get employment. This was done through assigned agencies that were allocated the responsibilities to see that those legal adults got jobs.

Employment of refugees in host societies is probably one of the significant indicators of their adjustment/accluturation and thus integration/assimilation. This leads the refugees into becoming economically self-sufficient in their new environment. From the above discussions, you can see that the acquisition of the English language was among the barriers the Lost Boys had to overcome to secure employment. This was the primary and most important barrier. Another barrier was the lack of previous work experience (professional skills) since most of them never worked in Africa. Only in rare cases did school-aged children work in Africa. The vast-majority depended on their parents to provide everything; whereas, in the U.S., children as young as 16 years of age are allowed to work in small businesses. Orphaned and resettled in the U.S., the Lost Boys who were not placed in foster care had to learn quickly to fend for themselves. They soon found nothing was for free in the U.S. This point was driven home when they were asked to start repaying the purchase price of the airplane tickets from Africa, as well as certain medical expenses as soon as they started working. Some Boys found it necessary to work two or three jobs in order to raise enough money to pay their bills, tuition, and also to remit some finances to people back in Africa.

Research in this study identified advantages and challenges associated with the arbitrarily assigned ages to each of the Lost Boys. While they were doing well, challenges still existed that tested their individual resilience. Minors received social and educational support from foster families, while those who were legal adults, largely had to fend for themselves. It was very difficult for some legal adults to secure employment because some of them lacked work skills and were not proficient in English on arrival in the U.S. Therefore, as stated earlier, “experience” defined by age was a handicap once the human capital of the participants was analyzed. It was interesting from this study to find out how much more human capital was possessed by Lost Boys resettled as minors relative to those resettled as adults, especially

given the fact that all of these Boys are now legal adults. The findings in this study suggest that one's age and the treatment of people by their arbitrary assigned ages (minors/adults) can play an important role in shaping the kind of capital and opportunities made available to individuals. Therefore, the Lost Boys, though resettled at nearly the same time, had a wide range of integration experiences. Some Boys have disappeared into the margins of American society, while some have become very successful in the American society.

Finally, I would say, it would be an immigration process improvement in the future for the policy makers to avail equal opportunities to all refugees resettled in the U.S. no matter what their age, race, gender, disability, and nationality.

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Author details

Danvas Ogeto Mabeya

Address all correspondence to: danvasm@yahoo.com

Southeast Community College, Lincoln, United States of America

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