

GENERATIVITY AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT: AN INTERPRETATIVE
PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF CAMBODIAN AND LAOTIAN AMERICAN
REFUGEE COMMUNITY WORKERS' GENERATIVITY

by

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(Under the Direction of Margaret Caughy)

ABSTRACT

While much is known about the expression of generativity in majority populations, research is just now beginning to explore the manifestation of generativity in minority populations. This research project adds to this discourse by utilizing interpretative phenomenological analysis to describe the generativity experiences of Cambodian and Laotian refugee community workers. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight Cambodian and Laotian community workers. Analysis revealed that participants perceived their community involvement as an opportunity to express technical and cultural generativity. Technically generative adults focused on empowering community members through skill transmission. Culturally generative adults sought to create a community where cultural identities, Buddhism, and altruism may be passed along to younger generations.

INDEX WORDS: Cultural Generativity, Technical Generativity, Community Involvement,
Cambodian, Laotian

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

To date, three million refugees arrived in the United States (U.S.) after fleeing war, violence, and persecution in their homelands due to religion, race, nationality, and political affiliation (UNHCR, 2018a, 2018b). Approximately half of these individuals originated from Southeast Asian countries such as Cambodia and Laos (Southeast Asian Resource Action Center, 2011). Refugees from these two countries fled different sociopolitical factors in their war-torn homelands during the 1970s (Bankston, 2018a, 2018b). Cambodians sought refuge from the Khmer Rouge, a violent political regime responsible for the deaths of millions. Laotians fled the Pathet Lao, a newly minted communist government. Many of the Cambodian and Laotian individuals fleeing from violence originated from rural, agrarian communities with little education. Upon arrival in the U.S., low educational attainment, limited skills, and poor English language skills hindered integration into American society (Kula & Paik, 2016; Pew Research Center, 2017a, 2017b).

Traditionally, refugee integration depended on collaboration between refugee resettlement organizations, faith-based organizations, and *ethnic communities*, or communities that share cultural and religious beliefs (Cepla, 2019; Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2017; Newland, Tanaka, & Barker, 2007). However, in recent years, the U.S. national government has lowered refugee admissions quotas, thereby reducing refugee resettlement organizations' budgets (Amos, 2018). These policy changes may have negative, irrevocable damage on formal resettlement

infrastructure in the U.S. especially as refugee numbers continue to increase worldwide (American Immigration Council, 2018; Amos, 2018).

Due to this, preexisting, informal networks, such as participants in this study's Cambodian-Laotian community, will become critical to successful refugee resettlement and implementation of interventions to improve refugee well-being. In the 1980s, several Cambodian refugees established the current community along the Gulf of Mexico's Mississippi Sound to alleviate common resettlement challenges, such as transportation (Lewis, 2010). Furthermore, the warmer climate and ocean-based industry resembled that of their homelands, enabling Cambodian refugees to be employed in careers similar to those they left behind. Since its establishment, hundreds of Cambodian and Laotian refugees relocated to this community. In the wake of recent cuts to resettlement budgets and infrastructure, these abundant community networks can expand existing resources to help newly-arrived refugees find housing, secure employment, and navigate American systems, such as healthcare.

Additionally, these networks provide refugees with opportunities to engage in traditional cultural practices. Over the past few decades, the Cambodian and Laotian communities have flourished into a dynamic religious and cultural hub centered around three Buddhist temple complexes, or *pagodas*. Here, refugees practice and express their cultural heritages, whose sustainability are at risk as community members age and younger generations – the future of the community – adopt American practices in lieu of their cultural roots through *acculturation* (Lewis, 2010; Merriam-Webster, 2019a), a process that may have profound implications for older generations' generativity (de St. Aubin & Bach, 2015).

Generativity refers to adults deriving a sense of fulfillment from leaving behind legacies that contribute to future generations (Erikson, 1963; McAdams & Logan, 2004; Rittenour &

Colaner, 2012). These concerns stimulate the creation of *legacies*, which are physical items, knowledge, cultural values, or wisdom that benefits others, such as family and community members (Kotre, 1984, 1999; Rubinstein, 1996). Traditional generative actions may include teaching, parenting, mentoring, political involvement, and engagement in communities and religious institutions (de St. Aubin, McAdams, & Kim, 2004; McAdams & Logan, 2004). Among culturally diverse populations, the term has broadened to include religious practices, caring for family and community members, and transmitting cultural identities (Bach, 2014; de St. Aubin & Bach, 2015; Kotre, 1984, 1999).

While much is known about the manifestation of generativity among majority populations, research is just beginning to explore generativity among minority populations, such as women (Versey & Newton, 2013), sexual and gender minorities (Bower, Lewis, Bermudez, & Singh, 2019) and Mexican immigrant populations (Bach, 2014). Understanding the motivations behind refugee community workers' generativity provides awareness on how to harness these important informal networks in facilitating refugee resettlement and program implementation, thus improving refugee integration and well-being. In this paper, I begin to address the gap in generativity literature through an interpretative phenomenological analysis of the generativity experiences of Cambodian and Laotian refugee community workers. This study answers the following research question: how do Cambodian and Laotian community workers experience generativity? In the following sections, I first review the literature on technical and cultural generativity. Then, I discuss frameworks and methodologies used in this study. Subsequently, I present and discuss this study's findings. I then conclude this paper with a discussion of the study's limitations and directions for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Generativity is the seventh stage of Erikson's (1963) psychosocial developmental theory wherein middle-aged adults feel fulfilled by contributing to future generations' well-being. This sense of responsibility stimulates the creation of legacies, or objects benefitting others (Rubinstein, 1996). At its core, generativity is an intergenerational process because *intergenerational relationships* – interactions between younger and older people – serve as important modes of legacy-leaving (Villar & Serrat, 2014). For example, an older female adult depends on an intergenerational relationship to pass along a cherished family heirloom, such as a veil, to her granddaughter on her wedding day. Through this grandmother-granddaughter dyad, the history of this treasure and the tradition of passing it on will survive into future generations. In recent years, scholars have theorized that these legacies vary by the type of generativity expressed, such as technical and cultural generativity (Kotre, 1984, 1996, 1999). Cultural and technical generativity are discussed in further detail below and help establish a framework for the discussion of Cambodian and Laotian generativity.

Technical Generativity

Technical generativity involves passing on skills to others through education (Kotre, 1984, 1996, 1999) For example, a music teacher engages in technical generativity by teaching a child to play the cello (Kotre, 1984, 1996, 1999). To date, no known literature explicitly examines technical generativity. Available generativity literature frequently connects education with hands-on experience, such as intergenerational programs (Herrmann, Sipsas-Herrmann,

Stafford, & Herrmann, 2005; Pratt, 2013; Warburton, 2014). In these programs that connect younger and older generations, adults serve as coaches, mentors, and tutors in order to enhance students' academic achievement (Glass et al., 2004). However, the connection between technical generativity and education may differ in immigrant communities. This paper considers technical generativity manifesting through participants seeking to empower others through skill transmission and giving remittances. The following sections describe the current literature related to these constructs.

Empowerment through skill transmission. The transmission of skills and knowledge through education to refugees empowers them to be successful and independent in their new countries (UNHCR, 2019). *Empowerment*, or the development of autonomy to live productively and successfully, is an important task for British volunteers working in refugee resettlement organizations (Guhan & Liebling-Kalifani, 2011). These volunteers help families settle and integrate into British society by providing shelter, food, caregiving, school supplies, and transportation (Guhan & Liebling-Kalifani, 2011; Jones & Williamson, 2014; Thomson, 2014). Other volunteers transmit life skills such as financial, household management, and English to refugees.

Communication skills, such as the ability to speak English, facilitates refugees' self-sufficiency in American systems, such as healthcare (Khan & DeYoung, 2018). In the U.S., 60% of all Cambodian and Laotian Americans have poor English-speaking skills (Kula & Paik, 2016; Pew Research Center, 2017a, 2017b). Due to this, social capital, such as family and friends of similar ethnicity, are vital to successful resettlement (Brian, 2007; Stewart et al., 2008). Serving as cultural brokers, these social networks help refugees find employment, serve as translators between community members and English speakers, help community members develop English

proficiency, and navigate American systems, such as healthcare (Stewart et al., 2008; Stovel & Shaw, 2012).

Remittances. *Remittances* refer to “the money or good[s] that migrants send back to families and friends in origin countries” (Migration Data Portal, 2019, para. 1). Recent scholarship found that this financial support improves the educational attainment of children in homelands. For example, a recent study conducted in Vietnam found that remittances received from family and friends overseas enables children to remain in school longer, in lieu of prematurely joining the workforce (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2015). This international sponsorship may indicate technical generativity because by supporting educational pursuits, overseas family and friends are concurrently supporting children’s education and later well-being.

Underlying the transmission of these skills and knowledges is culture (Kotre, 1996). In the aforementioned example, as a music teacher transmits how to play a cello to her pupil, she is also transmitting the meaning – or culture – of being a cellist, which includes history, language, and etiquette. However, culture is not the primary focus in technical generativity. Technical generativity becomes cultural generativity when the focus shifts from skills to meanings (Kotre, 1996). The following section details existing literature on cultural generativity.

Cultural Generativity

Cultural generativity involves the transmission of cultural identities to younger generations (Kotre, 1984, 1996, 1999; Rubinstein, Girling, de Medeiros, Brazda, & Hannum, 2015). *Cultural identities* refers to the internalization of a *culture*, or a group’s shared values, beliefs, attitudes, language, religion, and customs (Knox & Marston, 2007; Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand, 2019). Little research examines the expression of cultural generativity, particularly in immigrant and refugee community settings. Scholarship that does

uses phenomenological research methodologies, such as a study that uncovered the experiences and meanings culturally diverse Australian older adults ascribed to their volunteerism (Warburton & McLaughlin, 2007; Warburton, McLaughlin, & Pinsker, 2006). For these individuals, community involvement is an essential part of “giving back” to their communities. Feeling responsible for preserving their cultures, these culturally generative older adults sought to transmit traditions, knowledge, and values because they feel responsible for preserving their cultures. *Traditions* include languages, foods, and customs that are often transmitted via education and formal events, such as weddings and welcoming ceremonies (Warburton & McLaughlin, 2007; Warburton et al., 2006). *Values* pertains to the transmission of altruism (Warburton et al., 2006). *Altruism* describes a desire to care for and help community members and are passed along through modeling (Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkeley, 2019; Warburton et al., 2006).

Recent scholarship expanded on these modes of transmission. A recent study of Mexican immigrants’ generativity revealed that involvement at religious institutions, belief in God, and gratitude serve as generative behaviors (Bach, 2014). This is because churches serve as both religious institutions and community centers, where social networks and emotional connections are created, thus providing a space for cultural generativity to occur. *Cultural transmission* such as this, or the passing along of cultures to younger generations, is an important component of Cambodian and Laotian adults’ cultural identities (Mortland, 1994). Cambodian and Laotian cultures consist of the Khmer and Lao languages (respectively), collectivism, and Theravada Buddhism, which the following sections detail (Bankston, 2018a, 2018b; Mortland, 1994).

Khmer and Lao languages. Khmer and Lao are the native (or *heritage*) languages of Cambodia and Laos, respectively (Bankston, 2018a, 2018b; Kelleher, 2010). In the U.S.,

approximately 211,000 Cambodian Americans and 306,000 Laotian Americans speak their native tongues (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017), yet transmission and preservation of language is difficult due to acculturation (Bankston, 2018a). Younger generations who have spent most, if not all, of their lives in the U.S. are often eager to embrace American ideologies; some even choose to be called by English names in lieu of their Cambodian birth names. To prevent the loss of their heritage languages, communities offer heritage language courses, which are often managed by the community's monks (Bankston, 2018a).

Collectivistic cultural ideologies. *Collectivistic cultural ideologies* are prevalent in Asian cultures; these ideologies value interdependency and the well-being of others, such as group or family members (Campos & Kim, 2017; Cherry, 2018; Lamanna, Reidmann, & Strahm, 2012). During resettlement, refugees develop new social networks that are often perceived by Cambodian refugees as extended family regardless of biological connections (Jensen, 2008; Lewis, 2009; Weng & Lee, 2016). This perception results from shared collectivistic cultural identities and hardships while fleeing home countries and resettling in the U.S. (Lewis, 2009; Weng & Lee, 2016). The former instills a sense of responsibility in refugees. Having experienced these hardships, refugees feel it is their responsibility to improve the well-being of those living in the U.S. and in their home country (Jensen, 2008). For immigrant and refugee community workers, these cultural values encourage attentiveness toward the well-being of younger generations, part of which involves the maintenance and transmission of cultural identities through cultural generativity (Erikson, 1963; Jensen, 2008; Kotre, 1984, 1996, 1999; McAdams & Logan, 2004; Rubinstein et al., 2015; Weng & Lee, 2016).

Theravada Buddhism. *Theravada Buddhism* is the most widely practiced religion in Cambodia and Laos (U.S. Department of State, 2007a, 2007b). Rooted in Gautama Buddha's

sixth century B.C. teachings, Buddhism focuses on freeing oneself from suffering, which is achieved by practicing benevolence, merit-making and service, and following the five precepts (UNHCR, 2012). The five precepts govern Buddhists' lives and include not killing; stealing; lying; consuming substances, such as drugs and alcohol; and engaging in illicit sexual activity, such as adultery, exploitation, and harassment. Failing to adhere to these values results in *karma*, or consequences for wrongful behaviors. These consequences may be borne in Buddhists' current or future lives after reincarnation (UNHCR, 2012). Buddhism continues to have precedence in refugees' lives during resettlement (Lewis, 2009). The religious values of benevolence, merit-making, and service influence Asian American Buddhists' prosocial behaviors such as preparing food for religious leaders and cultural events, donating and fundraising, serving as community leaders, and assisting community members with paperwork (Sundeen, Garcia, & Wang, 2007; Weng & Lee, 2016).

Despite these studies, few studies exist about the expression of technical and cultural generativity, particularly in refugee communities. This study addresses this by using interpretative phenomenological analysis to describe the generativity experiences of volunteers in a Cambodian-Laotian refugee community. The following section details the methodologies used in this study to answer the following research question: how do Cambodian and Laotian community workers experience generativity?

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) seeks to produce an in-depth description of what and how people make meaning of a particular experience (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). Jonathan Smith created IPA from three theoretical perspectives: phenomenology, idiography, and hermeneutics (Smith, 1996; Smith et al., 2009). At its core, IPA strives to understand people's lived *experiences*, or significant processes, events, and relationships that result in reflection and meaning-making (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Smith et al., 2009). However, this is the only theoretical foundation that IPA and traditional phenomenology have in common; the two differ in their philosophical stances (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2004).

Compared to other phenomenological methods, IPA uses a smaller sample size due to its idiographic foundations (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2004). *Idiography* refers to the study of small events, contexts, and groups of people (Oxford English Dictionary, n.d.; Smith et al., 2009). Through idiography, IPA scholars develop a rich, detailed description of how groups of people make meaning of a particular experience in a certain context (Smith et al., 2009). For example, the current study examines how several Cambodian and Laotian community workers understand their community involvement as an expression of generativity.

Additionally, phenomenology and IPA differ in the positioning of the researcher (Smith et al., 2009). Traditionally, phenomenological studies espouse *bracketing*, a process wherein

researchers isolate preconceived notions about and connections to phenomena (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). Bracketing enables researchers to focus on the perceptions and languages participants use to understand phenomena. However, IPA asserts that research is a dynamic process dependent on researchers' connections to the phenomenon; the stronger the connection to the phenomena, the richer the understanding (Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2004). Researchers are encouraged to become insiders to phenomena through a process called *double hermeneutics* (Smith, 1996; Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2004). *Double hermeneutics* occurs when researchers attempt to decipher participants' meanings at the same time that participants are ascribing meaning to their experiences. The successful interpretation of participants' experiences is influenced by researchers' preconceptions, biases, and relationships to the phenomena (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Smith & Osborn, 2004). Therefore, the following section presents the frameworks informing my interpretation of the data, including a subjectivity statement that details my connection to the phenomenon.

Frameworks

Interpretation of data is informed by the researcher's experiences, perceptions, and biases (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Smith & Osborn, 2004). Therefore, I will first present my connection to the phenomenon in a subjectivity statement. Then, I will describe the theoretical framework influencing data analysis: Kotre's (1984, 1996, 1999) theory of generativity.

Subjectivity Statement. While working on the current study, I am aware that I enter it with several biases and preconceived notions related to my identity as a White, middle-class American. First, it will be challenging to become an insider of this phenomenon. I am not a refugee; I grew up among other White families in a predominately White, middle-class

neighborhood. Therefore, I will not be able to understand what it means to migrate to and live in the U.S. as a refugee.

Additionally, since I lived in a middle-class neighborhood, I had very little knowledge or exposure to social inequalities in the U.S. Aware of this, my mother made every effort to reveal the challenges faced by those who possessed less social privilege by having us volunteer with *Meals on Wheels*, our church, food pantries, and local hospitals. Over time, volunteerism became an important facet of my identity. Volunteering enabled me to feel fulfilled and learn about the inequalities families face in the U.S. Due to this, I continued to volunteer in high school and college without my mother's prompting.

Despite volunteerism's integral influence in my life, I did not begin working with refugees until the last year of my undergraduate studies. I joined a research lab focusing on exploring the unique challenges experienced by marginalized families. As an Undergraduate Research Assistant, I helped analyze data documenting the migration experiences of Filipino immigrant adults. This opportunity elevated my interest in working with immigrant and refugee communities and informed my decision to pursue graduate studies.

In graduate school, I began working directly with immigrant and refugee families as a facilitator of the Refugee Responsiveness Program. This program, co-directed by Drs. Denise Lewis and Desiree Seponski, delivers culturally responsive courses focused on family wellness at a local refugee resettlement center. This experience had a profound influence on my research interests. At the same time I was facilitating this outreach program, I was expanding my knowledge of generativity, a theme revealed in the aforementioned Filipino dataset, through my coursework. Due to this knowledge, I became aware, during informal conversations, that

generativity may be an important motivating factor for the center's staff and volunteers to work with refugee families.

I identified similar patterns during informal conversations with Cambodian and Laotian community workers, many of whom I worked alongside as a Research Assistant on a large mixed methods, ethnographic research project. Therefore, the quality of the data presented in this study may be influenced by my connection to the community. I developed relationships with these community workers and other community members while attending community events, family meals, birthday celebrations, and religious holidays. While this is an important facet of ethnography (Creswell & Poth, 2018), these relationships may have unforeseen implications for the current phenomenological study.

Additionally, my immersion in generativity research and literature creates another bias for this study. Generativity is frequently on my mind; thus I expect generativity to manifest in Cambodian and Laotian American community workers' narratives. Relatedly, my intimacy with the literature on Cambodian and Laotian culture results in my anticipation that culture will be an important motivating factor for volunteers' generativity. Both of these biases influenced my research decisions and may prevent me from truly understanding participants' experiences. For example, I chose to use Kotre's (1984, 1996, 1999) theory of generativity, which the ensuing section describes, as a guiding lens for data analysis; I did not consider another theory.

Kotre's (1984, 1996, 1999) theory of generativity. Few generativity theorists consider the role of culture in generative behaviors despite Erikson's (1963) inclusion of it in his writings (de St. Aubin & Bach, 2015). Kotre (1984, 1996, 1999) is the exception. He theorized that legacies vary by the type of generativity expressed: biological, parental, technical, and cultural. *Biological generativity* and *parental generativity* associate legacy-making with bearing and

raising of children. *Technical generativity* involves the creation of legacies through the transmission of skills through teaching and mentoring (Kotre, 1984, 1996, 1999). The legacy created by *cultural generativity* pertains to the transmission of cultural values, traditions, and ideologies to younger generations (Kotre, 1984, 1996, 1999; Rubinstein, Girling, de Medeiros, Brazda, & Hannum, 2015). The latter two types – technical and cultural generativity – provided a lens that informed data collection and analysis, both of which are subsequently detailed.

Procedures

Data collection began after approval from the Institutional Review Board at the University of Georgia. Eight Cambodian and Laotian refugee community volunteers were recruited between December 2017 and August 2018. The small sample size aligns with IPA traditions. Smaller sample sizes are favored because they enable researchers to deepen their understanding of phenomena (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Smith et al., 2009). IPA sample sizes range between one to ten participants, with most studies trending to the lower end of this range (Tang & Dos Santos, 2017). Currently, it is recommended that IPA researchers recruit three to six participants (Smith et al., 2009).

Recruitment. Recruitment occurred through *purposive sampling*, which uses specific inclusion criterion to recruit participants and produce a homogenous sample (Babbie, 2013; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). Homogenous samples are paramount in IPA studies, as they enable the development of in-depth descriptions about a group of people's experiences (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Smith et al., 2009). Four inclusion criteria generated the current study's homogenous sample. First, participants needed to identify as a member of the Cambodian and Laotian refugee communities in Coastal Alabama. Second, they were engaged in some type of community work. Third, participants were required to be over the age of 18 because generativity

is most prevalent during adulthood (Kotre, 1984, 1996, 1999). Finally, participants needed to speak English due my inability to speak Khmer (the Cambodian language) or Lao (the Laotian language). After initial contact through word-of-mouth and personal contacts, potential participants were informed about the study's purpose and informed consent was obtained (Babbie, 2013).

Data Collection. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix A), which also aligns with the chosen methodology, IPA (Ayres, 2008; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2004). Open-ended questions provide IPA researchers with the depth, breadth, and flexibility needed to obtain detailed descriptions of experiences (Ayres, 2008; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). The open-ended questions depicted in Appendix A were developed from my interactions in refugee communities as well as from the interview guides used by Jones and Williamson (2014) and Rubinstein et al. (2015). My questions sought to elicit responses about volunteers' experiences, generativity, and demographic details.

Interviews transpired in locations familiar to participants, including a research field office, restaurant, laundromat, homes, and a Buddhist temple complex (*pagoda*) (Babbie, 2013). I conducted the majority of the interviews; my advisor administered two of them. Interviews lasted between thirteen and fifty-three minutes. Most interviews were conducted in English, with the wife of one participant providing some translation. Two participants – Sona and Boun – were interviewed at the same time.

Participants

Table 1 presents the eight Cambodian and Laotian community workers interviewed in this study. Five participants worked in the Cambodian refugee community: Prham, Phil, Sona,

Khou, and Sok. Of these, Sona was the only female. Three worked in the Laotian community: San, Boun, and Seyha. Participants' names have been replaced with pseudonyms inspired by their culture of origin and preferred names. This is why Phil, a Cambodian refugee from the Cambodian community who uses an American name, was reassigned a common American name.

Data Analysis

Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim by an undergraduate research assistant and myself using InqScribe, a transcription software program (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2004). Transcripts were cleaned of all identifying information and then uploaded into Atlas.ti 8 Mac, a qualitative data management software, for analysis. I followed the three-stage analysis method described by Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014): *exploratory comments*, *emerging themes*, and *clustered themes*. Table 1 and Table 2 present the IPA analysis used in this study. A simplified, collapsed coding structure may be seen in Table 1, which is expanded on with the addition of exploratory comments in Table 2.

Exploratory Comments	Emergent Themes	Clustered Themes
Desire for people to be independent	Empowering community members	Technical generativity
Desire for people to learn English		
Helping relieve life challenges		
Helping people feel empowered		
Helping for good of people		
Helping with anything		
Wanting people to be happy		
Building community	Community as a legacy	Cultural generativity
Helping people get along		
Interdependency in the community		
Legacy-leaving in form of infrastructure	Transmitting Cambodian/Laotian cultural identities	
Desiring to transmit		
Cambodian/Laotian culture	Transmitting altruism	
Desiring to transmit language		
Transmitting altruistic values to younger generations	Transmitting Buddhism	
Teaching about meditation		
Transmitting Buddhist languages		
Transmitting Buddhism		
Following American law embodies Buddhism		
Teaching about obeying US laws		
Transmitting ideology of being good citizen		

Exploratory comments. *Exploratory comments* involve closely reading and making notes about the researcher's observations and reflections about the data's content (Pietkiewicz &

Smith, 2014). This stage also includes preliminary interpretations of the data's significance within the context of selected theories. Exploratory comments include a combination of action codes and phrases (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). In this study, I used the memoing and coding feature of Atlas.ti to record my observations, reflections, and early connections to Kotre's (1984, 1996, 1999) theory of generativity. As seen in Table 1 and Table 2, these early connections included terms relevant to the theory, such as *legacy*.

Emergent themes. *Emergent themes* are short phrases that involve "a slightly higher level of abstraction" (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014 p. 12). Researchers group exploratory comments together into short phrases that indicate scientific concepts, such as Kotre's (1984, 1996, 1999) theory of generativity. For example, as depicted in Table 1 and Table 2, *desiring to transmit Cambodian/Laotian culture* and *desiring to transmit language* were grouped together into the emergent theme *transmitting Cambodian/Laotian cultural identities*. Cultural transmission of identities is an important concept of Kotre's (1984, 1996, 1999) theory of generativity. In this study, I used the code group feature of Atlas.ti to create my emergent themes, which are delineated in Table 1 and Table 2.

Clustered themes. *Clustered themes* describe connections, similarities, and differences between emergent themes (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). Kotre's (1984, 1996, 1999) theory of generativity provided a lens to understand these relationships. Clustered themes (portrayed in Table 1 and Table 2) were created using the memoing feature of Atlas.ti. As seen in the tables, *community as a legacy*, *transmitting Cambodian/Laotian cultural identities*, *transmitting altruism*, *transmitting Buddhism* were grouped together in the *cultural generativity* theme as they were related to transmission of cultural identities

Table 2. IPA data analysis with quotations

Quotations	Exploratory Comments	Emergent Themes	Clustered Themes
<p>This is a new society and unlike in Cambodia. In Cambodia they [community members] can help themselves but here it's new. A brand new community. Brand new society. So it's hard for them because they came here and they are old, they cannot speak English. So they don't know where to go. They don't know what to do.</p> <p>I [Khou] want them to understand about the community. We want them to be able to learn and speak English and be able to do things themselves.</p> <p>I think of myself as I have a very good heart. And I like to help people. When they see someone [helping them] they can [learn to] help themselves. And [the] main thing...I see something else I can [do to] help the people, [serve as a translator or] whatever to volunteer and to get people, set up people. And to let them feed themselves, to know it themselves. And that's what I did [when I volunteer].</p>	<p>Desire for people to be independent</p> <p>Desire for people to learn English</p> <p>Helping relieve life challenges</p> <p>Helping people feel empowered</p> <p>Helping for good of people</p> <p>Helping with anything</p> <p>Wanting people to be happy</p>	Empowering community members	Technical generativity
<p>I am hoping for a better community in the future. You know, maybe being able to teach the younger generation to do what the older people have been doing. I am hoping that we are not going to lose this closeness that everybody has right now and hopeful what we learn through these...this university grant that we together...is to find, you know, something that would solve some problems, some needs that we have, but hopefully in the future, we will have a better community.</p> <p>I build up [the] community. I named that community the Cambodian Village...I named the road. That's something that staying here for a thousand years maybe. I name another Khmer road. I build the temple...and then the temple still survive today. For the people to worship [in]. For the people to do some kind of ceremony, [the] old, old traditional [ceremonies] that people [do not] remember. But we have [the] monk [to do those ceremonies for the community]... All the way I believe, completely believe [that] when I die, my name not die. My identity never die. That[s] what I think. People remember me. My [legacy is] spread all over... [the road I named after an important historical place in Cambodia will] never go nowhere. I named that. [Another road I named will] never go nowhere. [The temple I named after a forest in Cambodia], I named that. I build that. I start that. I don't never say, "Look [at] me, I do this."</p>	<p>Building community</p> <p>Helping people get along</p> <p>Interdependency in the community</p> <p>Legacy-leaving in form of infrastructure</p>	Community as a legacy	Cultural generativity
<p>[Having a cultural school] will help for us when the old people - they [are] very old and they [will] pass away. But the young [will still be here] ...They must know their own culture, their own nation, where they come from, and what is their culture. What [it means to be a] Buddhist.</p> <p>It's about our people...it's basically about us being here as Cambodian, you know we don't want to lose that, so we help out the ones that can't help themselves. That's why we would. I guess you could say, we don't want to lose them as in like I don't know what to tell you.</p> <p>Now on the Laotian side, it's very different. The younger generation, they hardly speak it, but they understand it. They don't want to stop, but they listen to their grandparents, they'll listen to their mom and dad. They are pretty much raised listening to that, but they don't talk the language, but ever since the [university grant] started, I have been finding more and more younger kids that do want to be involved [in the community and with the Lao language] and I am happy.</p>	<p>Desiring to transmit Cambodian/Laotian culture</p> <p>Desiring to transmit language</p>	Transmitting Cambodian/Laotian cultural identities	
<p>I would like to see somebody, again the younger generation, to see what I'm doing and follow what I am doing like be a mentor...I liked to see young kids be more involved. I hope to be their role model, so I want to see that. That's what I want to leave behind, see somebody be, "Oh wow. That feels satisfying." You know, a young kid sees that, "I want to be like that. I want to help people." And the more I see a couple of kids right now, you know that want to help like Nary, Sophorn [two young Laotian women]. They all want to help.</p> <p>We are hoping that the younger kids would be able to do what we do for the older people right now and maybe, one of these days, Samantha [my daughter] might say, "Oh Ma, if you are not here anymore, I can take [grandmother] to the doctor, you know. I can help her translate here and there."</p>	<p>Transmitting altruistic values to younger generations</p>	Transmitting altruism	
<p>Or at least being involved in the Cambodian community, being involved in the temple. Make sure we don't lose who we were. Make sure they still know we are Buddhist and that they don't just go to church and stop going to the temple. That's what we are hoping for.</p> <p>My hope in the future if I [am] a monk forever, I will [teach the] lay people the Buddhist languages, Buddhist teaching for them [to learn how to do good] in their life. Be better. Be better. Don't do something bad. Like speak the good word. Don't be a bad word to their child, to the community. Tell the community, don't make a problem. We must follow the five precepts and follow - obey the rule of the Buddhist. And obey - follow too the law of the United States. That way we stay here.</p> <p>...you have certain laws, bylaws and all of that. You are supposed to follow, not perfectly but follow in a good, conscience way, so following the American way is following the practice of Buddhism. Buddhism was more about you try to do good, you try to, you know, follow what is written, the law.</p>	<p>Teaching about meditation</p> <p>Transmitting Buddhist languages</p> <p>Transmitting Buddhism</p> <p>Following American law embodies Buddhism</p> <p>Teaching about obeying US laws</p> <p>Transmitting ideology of being good citizen</p>	Transmitting Buddhism	

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

In their narratives, participants described how involvement in the Cambodian and Laotian community enabled them to express generativity. Generative actions varied, with participants engaging in two types: 1) technical generativity and 2) cultural generativity. Legacies engendered through technical generativity pertain to transmitting skills in order to empower community members, while those created through cultural generativity enabled participants to establish a strong community where cultural activities, such as speaking the Cambodian and Laotian languages, transpire. These cultural activities facilitated the transmission of the Cambodian and Laotian cultural identities, Buddhism, and altruism to younger generations. The following sections detail technical and cultural generativity in more detail.

Technical Generativity

Technical generativity emerged less often than cultural generativity. Adults who practiced technical generativity sought to empower community members. Empowerment is an important facet of technical generativity because of the community's shared refugee experience. In his narrative, Khou notes the impact the refugee experience has on social capital:

This is a new society and unlike in Cambodia. In Cambodia they [community members] can help themselves but here it's new. A brand new community. Brand new society. So it's hard for them because they came here and they are old, they cannot speak English. So they don't know where to go. They don't know what to do.

Khou notes that the refugee experience disrupted social supports. Community members do not have the same social capital as they did in Cambodia. They have limited English skills and are unable to build connections with English speakers. Therefore, they rely on bilingual middle-aged adults for assistance navigating the American system, as Khou's wife, Sona, reveal in an earlier interview, "When you know both languages, Cambodian and English and they will [need] somebody to help here and there, so that's probably why we are more involved." As indicated in this chronicle, bilingualism influences participants' community involvement decisions; they are more likely to help community members because of their ability to navigate both English and heritage language spheres.

This also means that participants like Khou and Sona are more aware of the challenges facing Cambodian refugees in the U.S than those who are not involved in the community. Due to this, participants want people to learn English, as Sona disclosed, "I want them to understand about the community. We want them to be able to learn and speak English and be able to do things themselves." According to Khou, education serves as a way to empower community members. By learning English, Cambodian people – and by extension Laotian people – will be able to help themselves, thereby becoming more independent.

This clustered theme – transmitting skills to empower community members – emerges in other narratives. For example, Seyha wants to help the Laotian people learn any skills they need to be successful:

I think of myself as I have a very good heart. And I like to help people. When they see someone [helping them] they can [learn to] help themselves. And [the] main thing...I see something else I can [do to] help the people, [serve as a translator or] whatever to

volunteer and to get people, set up people. And to let them feed themselves, to know it themselves. And that's what I did [when I volunteer].

Seyha attributes his community involvement to his “good heart,” which encourages him to help others and improve their lives. Specifically, Seyha models useful skills – such as English – while volunteering and serving as a translator. According to this participant, Laotian community members learn these skills and begin practicing it themselves. In this way, they become more self-sufficient, thereby improving their livelihood.

Sok also expresses similar desires, but hopes that community members will remember his good deeds: “That the people that I do good things for, they remember for the rest of their life. So maybe [all the] way to their grandchildren.” As revealed in this segment, community members’ memory of participants helping them is an important component of Sok’s legacy. As future generations remember his good deeds, they may also choose to help others. In this way, Sok continues to help those who will come after him.

Cultural Generativity

Most participants described engaging in cultural generativity. Specifically, participants discerned community involvement as a way for them to create and leave behind a strong community. In this community, adults hoped younger generations would engage in cultural activities that would promote the transfer of the Khmer and Lao language, Buddhism, and altruism. This section first describes the development of the community as a form of legacy. Following this is a discussion of the transmission of the Cambodian and Laotian cultural identities, altruism, and Buddhism.

Community as a legacy. Legacies pertain to social and physical features of the community. In this sample, social legacies include social networks, as indicated by Sona:

I am hoping for a better community in the future. You know, maybe being able to teach the younger generation to do what the older people have been doing. I am hoping that we are not going to lose this closeness that everybody has right now and hopeful what we learn through these...this university grant that we together...is to find, you know, something that would solve some problems, some needs that we have, but hopefully in the future, we will have a better community.

In her narrative, Sona discloses her desire to sustain interdependency in the community by associating it with her desire to have a “better community in the future.” She associates “better community” with its ability to respond to the needs of community members. This response is dependent not only on the community’s ability to identify and use local resources but also on its tendency to share those resources within social networks. As Sona reveals, social networks are how the community can successfully respond to challenges. Right now, “the older people” are the ones serving the community, but she expresses how important it is for younger people to take up the mantle of helping others. Only in this way can services, like cultural events, continue in the community and sustain the Cambodian culture.

Sona is not the only participant relying on social networks to sustain the Cambodian culture. Prham, also depends on these networks, as revealed in his interview:

I asked the head of the community in here. I want to ask them to open a school in the temple for and call the young people. All the kids come to temple [once] a day for one hour or two hours to learn [the] Khmer language. Learn about the Khmer tradition[s] and learn about Buddhism.

In this case, he needs the support of community leadership to create a cultural school. At this school, formal courses will be offered on Khmer language, Cambodian cultural traditions, and

Buddhism. At this school, a physical feature of the community, cultural and religious identities will survive into the next generation.

Physical aspects of the community also appear in Sok's narrative. Like his counterpart in the Lao community (Seyha), Sok helped establish the Cambodian community. He helped buy the land on which the community is built. As such, he had the opportunity to name the streets, as he reveals in this account:

I build up [the] community. I named that community the Cambodian Village...I named the road. That's something that staying here for a thousand years maybe. I name another Khmer road. I build the temple...and then the temple still survive today. For the people to worship [in]. For the people to do some kind of ceremony, [the] old, old traditional [ceremonies] that people [do not] remember. But we have [the] monk [to do those ceremonies for the community]... All the way I believe, completely believe [that] when I die, my name not die. My identity never die. That['s] what I think. People remember me. My [legacy is] spread all over... [the road I named after an important historical place in Cambodia will] never go nowhere. I named that. [Another road I named will] never go nowhere. [The temple I named after a forest in Cambodia], I named that. I build that. I start that. I don't never say, "Look [at] me, I do this."

A newly arrived refugee at the time, Sok decided to name the roads after heritage sites in his homeland. He states that his identity – his legacy – will live on after his death because the roads and temple, a physical, permanent aspect of the community, will still be there. These objects will persist throughout the decades, reminding new generations of their homelands and cultural backgrounds.

Cambodian and Laotian cultural identity. As participants revealed above, having a strong community is critical for the survival of the Cambodian and Laotian culture. Currently, older generations serve as cultural vessels, with few young people engaged in traditional activities, including religion and language. Prham's narrative speaks to this issue as he discusses the impact of the aforementioned cultural school in the ability to sustain Buddhism and the Cambodian culture:

[Having a cultural school] will help for us when the old people - they [are] very old and they [will] pass away. But the young [will still be here] ...They must know their own culture, their own nation, where they come from, and what is their culture. What [it means to be a] Buddhist.

In this segment, Prham shares how important it is that younger people take ownership of their heritage and develop cultural identities. Younger people are the future of the community, as they will live on after the older people die. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the participants to take steps now to ensure that younger people are developing bonds and connections to their culture, histories, and religions. Developing cultural identities will ensure that younger people are invested in the survival of their culture. In this way, participants are ensuring that their culture will still exist in the U.S. long after they are gone.

This desire to preserve one's culture manifests in other interviews, like Sona's. Here Sona reveals the meaning behind all of her community work as a desire to prevent the decline of social networks that are vital for cultural transmission in her community:

It's about our people...it's basically about us being here as Cambodian, you know we don't want to lose that, so we help out the ones that can't help themselves. That's why we

would. I guess you could say, we don't want to lose them as in like I don't know what to tell you.

At a surface level, the loss described by Sona refers to health and poverty, but underlying this is a cultural loss. By losing a member, the community loses someone else who can practice and transmit the Cambodian culture to future generations. By helping with transportation to doctor appointments, participants such as Sona ensure that there is a healthy, active individual who can participate in cultural activities and enable the transmission of what it means to be Cambodian to younger people.

Analysis revealed that one important component of identifying as Cambodian or Lao is being able to speak Khmer or Lao, respectively. Participants revealed that younger Cambodian and Laotian vary in their linguistic abilities. For example, when asked if young people speak Khmer, Sona revealed, “Yeah, if they have to. If they don’t have to, they are not going to speak it.” She reveals that young people only speak the language in social situations in which it is required, such as a family or formal community event. Outside of these situations, younger people are reluctant to speak Khmer. Therefore, participants find it important to create contexts where children may be exposed to and learn about Khmer and Lao languages, such as the cultural school Prham mentions above.

Other contexts include those created by a large university research study, of which the current study is a subset. This is evident in Boun’s narrative:

Now on the Laotian side, it’s very different. The younger generation, they hardly speak it, but they understand it. They don’t want to stop, but they listen to their grandparents, they’ll listen to their mom and dad. They are pretty much raised listening to that, but they don’t talk the language, but ever since the [university grant] started, I have been finding

more and more younger kids that do want to be involved [in the community and with the Lao language] and I am happy.

Following up to Sona's earlier revelation in their dyadic interview, Boun notes that there are differences in language proficiency among young Cambodians and Laotians. While some Cambodians can speak Khmer, only a few young Laotians can only understand Lao, and less speak the language. These young Laotians are able to understand their grandparents and parents speaking in their home language but respond in English as they do not have the skills to communicate in Lao. However, Boun notes that the university research study has encouraged younger people to become more involved in their community, which creates a need for them to become more fluent in Lao. As a result, more young Laotians are learning to speak Lao, thereby increasing the community's number of Lao speakers.

Adding to Boun's disclosure, Sona recognizes a similar pattern in the Cambodian community. The university research study has created an opportunity for her daughter, Samantha, to become more involved in the community:

[Samantha, my daughter] just started being involved [in the community]. Working [as a translator for a university research study] she is like, "Mom, I am learning some words, that I have never learned before." So later she might want to take on learning more and then maybe in the future, helping other people. Translating if she have to. [Helping people with] going to see the doctor and hopefully, we will have them more involved.

Later in the future.

As seen in this segment, Samantha provides translation services for the university research study. Therefore, she uses Khmer every day, causing her to expand her vocabulary. This brings

happiness to Sona, who hopes this linguistic growth will foster in her daughter a desire to help community members communicate with English-speaking healthcare providers.

Altruism. Sona's previous narrative reflects an emergent theme found in others' accounts: the hope that younger generations will assume older generations' responsibilities. This hope manifests as the intergenerational transmission of altruism, which many participants learned from their families. For example, Sok disclosed that he learned the importance of volunteering from his father:

I think it came from my bloodline. My father liked to help people, so I liked to help people, no matter [if] I get paid or not get paid. My father told me, "Do good things. Help people. Don't destroy people. Don't steal anything from people."

As seen here, Sok's father harnessed the Buddhist precepts to transmit altruism. He equates volunteerism and community involvement with being a faithful Cambodian Buddhist. As he and others reach middle- and late-adulthood, they aspire to instill altruism in younger people, as Seyha revealed, "I try to tell them, tell my kids, tell everything you know. [Tell] everybody out there. Let's work, try to support the young kid[s] and come out here, to learn more, and volunteer and help the people." As indicated in this narrative, Seyha wants the youth to help people in the community. They are the community's future, and if the community and culture is to survive, then younger people must begin taking responsibility for their communities' well-being.

Community members learn altruism through social networks. According to Seyha, social networks are important means to encourage young people to volunteer. He disclosed this earlier in his interview: "When I see sometimes the people don't know anything much about how people live together. And I make them associate with each other and all that. When someone else needs some help and we need to step out there and to help them. It don't matter what it is: in the

personal [life] or in the family organization.” Social connection is key to transmitting altruism because it attunes community members to the group’s needs. Without this, people would not be able to help solve personal and family challenges. Meanwhile, Boun uses another method. In his narrative, Boun describes modeling altruistic values to younger people:

I would like to see somebody, again the younger generation, to see what I’m doing and follow what I am doing like be a mentor...I liked to see young kids be more involved. I hope to be their role model, so I want to see that. That’s what I want to leave behind, see somebody be, “Oh wow. That feels satisfying.” You know, a young kid sees that, “I want to be like that. I want to help people.” And the more I see a couple of kids right now, you know that want to help like Nary, Sophorn [two young Laotian women]. They all want to help.

Boun acted as a role model for two young Laotian women who now act as translators for the university research study: Nary and Sophorn. Watching him work in the community, they were inspired to follow his lead and help Laotian community members. As Boun indicates, this helpful aspiration is spreading through the younger population, which satisfies him. Adding to Boun’s assertion, Sona also noted this dispersion in the Cambodian community:

We are hoping that the younger kids would be able to do what we do for the older people right now and maybe, one of these days, Samantha [my daughter] might say, “Oh Ma, if you are not here anymore, I can take [grandmother] to the doctor, you know. I can help her translate here and there.”

Sona’s daughter, Samantha, recently started to become involved in the community. Currently, Samantha provides translation services, which Sona hopes will grow into a lifelong desire to help other community members navigate language barriers.

Buddhism. Expanding on her previous comment about wanting her daughter to be involved in the community, Sona revealed that transmission of Buddhism facilitates the transmission of altruism:

Or at least being involved in the Cambodian community, being involved in the temple.

Make sure we don't lose who we were. Make sure they still know we are Buddhist and that they don't just go to church and stop going to the temple. That's what we are hoping for.

Here Sona describes how important it is for her daughter to remain a practicing Buddhist, if not in the greater Cambodian community. Living a Buddhist lifestyle may help transmit altruistic values. In this narrative, Sona describes the difference between attending church and temple. Compared to passively "attending church," "going to temple" involves intentionally and consciously practicing Buddhist tenets and values, such as benevolence (Harvey, 2013). With a strong Buddhist faith, Sona's daughter will practice benevolent activities, which naturally may morph into community involvement. This is why it was important to Sona to transmit her Buddhist faith to her daughter: it would concurrently transmit altruistic values.

Transmission of Buddhism also emerged in Prham's:

I [want the Cambodian] people [to know] the Buddhist languages, Buddhist teaching for them [to learn how to do good] in their life. Be better. Be better. Don't do something bad. Like speak the good word. Don't be a bad word to their child, to the community. Tell the community, don't make a problem. We must follow the five precepts and follow – obey the rule of the Buddhist. And obey – follow too the law of the United States. That way we stay here.

Similar to Sona, Prham asserts that instilling Buddhist language and teachings in younger generations helps Cambodians live good, benevolent lives. This is because it helps them get along with each other in their family lives. Prham also emphasizes the need to follow U.S. laws so that the community can “stay here.” Overtly pertaining to immigration and deportation, following U.S. laws may be another way in which Cambodians and Laotians can fulfill their Buddhist obligations. Phil expanded on this notion in his narrative:

You have certain laws, bylaws and all of that. You are supposed to follow, not perfectly but follow in a good, conscience way, so following the American way is following the practice of Buddhism. Buddhism was more about you try to do good, you try to, you know, follow what is written, the law.

Buddhism centers on doing good, which, according to Phil, includes following society’s laws. According to these two participants, by following the laws, younger people will be good Buddhists. By encouraging younger generations to abide by laws, they help to transmit Buddhism to younger generations.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

While much is known about the expression of generativity among majority populations, research is only just beginning to investigate generativity among minority populations, such as sexual and gender minorities (Bower et al., 2019), women (Versey & Newton, 2013), and Mexican immigrant populations (Bach, 2014). Harnessing interpretative phenomenological analysis, the current study adds to this discourse by revealing that Cambodian and Laotian refugee community workers perceive their work as an opportunity to express generativity. The findings of the current study provide support for Kotre's (1984, 1996, 1999) theory of generativity, specifically his conceptualization of technical and cultural generativity. According to Kotre (1984, 1996, 1999), technical generativity refers to skill transmission through education. Cultural generativity involves the transmission of cultural identities, or values, language, and religion (Kotre, 1984, 1996, 1999; Rubinstein et al., 2015). Through both, participants created legacies that benefited community members, which supports the Rubinstein's (1996) definition of legacies as knowledge or cultural values that benefit others. In this study, knowledge-related legacies, the result of technical generativity (Kotre, 1984, 1996, 1999; Rubinstein, 1996), include the transmission of skills such as English. Cultural legacies, the outcome of cultural generativity (Kotre, 1984, 1996, 1999; Rubinstein, 1996), include the Cambodian and Laotian communities, cultural identities, Buddhism, and altruism. The following sections discuss the types of generativity by connecting to current literature and Kotre's (1984, 1996, 1999) theory of generativity.

Technical Generativity The current study provides insight into the phenomenon of technical generativity, an area in need of additional research. Findings support the definition of technical generativity proposed by Kotre (1984, 1996, 1999): transmission of skills through education. In the current sample, technical generativity and skill transmission served as a way to empower refugees. Empowerment surfaced as an important emergent theme because of shared refugee experience; six participants arrived in the U.S. as refugees and, therefore, understand the hardships facing the refugee communities. Participants noted that the refugee experience disrupted social supports and capital for many in the community. Due to this, the Cambodian and Laotian communities perceive each other as extended family, regardless, of biological connections, as Lewis (2009) discovered.

Compounded by the collectivistic ideology of Cambodia and Laos, these two factors – shared refugee experience and perception of community as extended family – resulted in participants feeling responsible for the well-being of the community. Many of these participants are bilingual and serve as cultural brokers for their communities, which reflects previous scholarship by Stewart et al. (2008) and Stovel and Shaw (2012). Like participants in Stewart et al.'s (2008) and Stovel and Shaw's (2012) studies, this sample provided translation services for community members with limited English proficiency, a common task people helping refugees offer, such as those at refugee resettlement organizations (Guhan & Liebling-Kalifani, 2011; Jones & Williamson, 2014; Thomson, 2014). This cultural brokerage results in empowerment, which, by definition, refers to the development of autonomy in people so that they may have successful lives. As cultural brokers, participants are acutely aware of the communities' need to learn English. Thus, these adults desire to empower community members by transmitting

English-proficiency, which will facilitate integration, improve refugee families' well-being, and foster independence.

Cultural Generativity

In their narratives, participants revealed the importance of preserving the Cambodian and Laotian cultures. Not only does this demonstrate the importance of culture described by generativity scholars such as Kotre (1984, 1996, 1999), Erikson (1963), and de St. Aubin and Bach (2015), but it also reinforces the significance of cultural transmission to Cambodian and Laotian adults' cultural identities reported by Mortland (1994). Similar to Kotre's (1984, 1996, 1999) definition of cultural generativity, participants sought to cultural values and traditions. More specifically, the current sample transmitted language, Buddhism, and altruism, all of which have been documented by previous scholars as important facets of Cambodian and Laotian cultural identities (Bankston, 2018a, 2018b; Mortland, 1994).

Central to this transmission is the establishment of a thriving ethnic community as a legacy. For this study, ethnic communities are considered an outcome of cultural generativity because, by definition, they are formed by shared cultural and religious beliefs between people (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2017). These beliefs constitute the definition of cultural identities and culture delineated by Knox and Marston (2007) and the Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand (2019): shared values, beliefs, attitudes, language, religion, and customs. Therefore, this study's findings show that Kotre's (1984, 1996, 1999) definition of cultural generativity, which initially focused on cultural values and traditions, may be expanded to consider social legacies, such as communities.

The social and physical features that exist in this community, such as social networks, roads, and cultural schools – serve as modes of cultural transmission. Interdependency between

social networks, a component of collectivism (Campos & Kim, 2017; Cherry, 2018; Lamanna et al., 2012), emerged as a subtheme in participants' narrative. Currently, the community relies on interdependency to identify and resolve challenges. However, participants revealed that while only the older generations are the ones serving the community, they want younger people to take up the mantle of helping others. This will prevent cultural loss: when a community member is lost to disease or poverty, the community is losing a member who can practice and transmit the culture. By helping with transportation to doctor appointments, community volunteers ensure that there are people who can participate in cultural events and transmit Cambodian ideology.

Physical features are also vital vessels of cultural transmission for this sample. A lot of the community's younger generation was not born in Cambodia and do not have memories of their parents' homelands. Through naming these physical features after sites in their homeland, community workers create a daily reminder of their homelands; these physical, permanent aspects of the community will persist throughout the decades, serving as a reminder of new generations' homelands and cultural backgrounds. Thus, if only through language, this sample passes down a familiarity with memories from the homeland.

Participants also disclosed that other physical features, such as a cultural school, would sustain the Cambodian and Laotian culture. They revealed the difficulty in transmitting the Khmer and Lao languages that is largely due to younger generations' embrace of American practices, such as speaking English and using English names (Bankston, 2018a). Participants noted that fluency differs between the two communities: while Cambodians speak Khmer, few young Laotians understand or speak Lao. For this sample, a temple-supported cultural school could prevent language loss by providing frequent exposure to Khmer and Lao, which is being done in other communities (Bankston, 2018a).

This school could also be used to spread Buddhism, which featured prominently in the interviews. While due, in part, to all participants being practicing Buddhists, this is also reflective of the significance of Buddhism in Cambodian and Laotian refugees' lives (Lewis, 2009; U.S. Department of State, 2007a, 2007b). As indicated by the current findings, the five Buddhist tenets play an important role in refugees' everyday lives, which encouraging adherence to avoid killing; stealing; lying; consuming substances, such as drugs and alcohol; and engaging in illicit sexual activity, such as adultery, exploitation, and harassment (UNHCR, 2012). Participants equated abiding by these precepts with being law-abiding citizens of the U.S. By following Buddhist and American rules, community members fulfill Buddhist obligations and their responsibilities as individuals residing in the U.S. This sample's narrative shows how important this religion is to Cambodians and Laotians because they interpret everything including U.S. laws through the tenets of Buddhism.

Other Buddhist values influencing participants include merit-making and benevolence, or altruism, which has been found to encourage Asian American Buddhists' community involvement (Sundeen et al., 2007; Weng & Lee, 2016). The same may be said of this sample as current findings indicate that altruism is influenced by Buddhism and collectivistic values. For some participants, family members transmitted altruism through the five Buddhist precepts. Family members encouraged them to do good for people by alluding to the Buddhist precepts, such as not killing, stealing, or lying (UNHCR, 2012). While family members never explicitly told them to work in communities, participants interpreted their advice by doing the opposite of killing, stealing, and lying: helping others in their community.

Helping others to carry out Buddhist tenets fulfills collectivistic values, which prioritizes the well-being of others over oneself (Campos & Kim, 2017; Cherry, 2018; Lamanna et al.,

2012). By helping community members, participants adhere to the collectivistic values of Cambodia and Laos. Additionally, collectivism encourages participants to transmit altruism to younger generations; this sample perceives that, in order to ensure the well-being of future generations, they need to instill a desire to help others in the younger generation. As participants revealed, this may be achieved through social connection, communication, and modeling, the latter of which is typically used to transmit altruism (Warburton et al., 2006). Through these generative actions, participants are securing the future well-being of the community, while abiding by collectivistic values.

Limitations and Future Directions

While these findings expand current understandings of generativity, there are several limitations that prevent generalizability. The first pertains to the methodological underpinnings of the current study. This study is a subset of a larger study seeking to understand the experiences of those working with refugee families in resettlement and community settings. A methodological shift – from phenomenology to IPA – occurred after data collection in order to focus on one sample of the larger study (i.e., community workers in a refugee community). This resulted in a noticeably smaller sample, thus reducing richness of the data. Compounding this is that the questionnaire, originally created according to phenomenological traditions, did not fully align with IPA. Due to this, it is possible that key questions typically asked by IPA researchers may not have been asked in the interview. This limits the study's ability to use IPA to its fullest degree to understand the phenomenon under investigation.

Second, participants were restricted to those with English-speaking abilities because of the author's limited fluency in Khmer and Lao. The sample of the current study was predominately male; only one participant was female. Due to this, the current findings may be

skewed; it is possible that the identified clustered themes are not fully representative of female generative Cambodian and Laotian community workers. As a result, this study may have overlooked the experiences of other key community workers in the Cambodian and Laotian communities.

Furthermore, findings relied heavily on Sok's voice because of the richness in his articulation of clustered themes. Relatedly, interpretation and understanding of data are subjected to the worldview and experiences of the researcher, despite rigorous attempts to focus on participants' experiences through first-hand interviews. I am not a member of the Cambodian and Laotian communities. This prevents me from fully understanding what it means to be a community member working in the community. As a result, these perceptions may skew the data in such a way that pivotal experiences from other participants as well as other community members may have been overlooked, thus preventing a holistic understanding of the experience of generativity in the Cambodian-Laotian refugee community. Together these factors – methodological shift, small sample size, heavy reliance on one voice, the influence of the researcher's perspective – curb this study's ability to generalize findings to other refugee communities.

Therefore, future research is needed to discern if generativity manifests similarly in other Cambodian and Laotian community workers. For example, the current study uncovers the importance of Buddhism to generativity in the context of a refugee community, a concept new to the field. While the influence of generativity is known within communities away from the refugee context, research does not know how these concepts carry through to refugee communities. This is due in part to limited understandings of how culture is recollected during resettlement, a time when assimilation and acculturation frequently influence cultural identities.

Further teasing apart this emergent concept would contribute to the field by deducing if Buddhism is an important facet of generativity because of its significance in Cambodian and Laotian refugees' lives (Lewis, 2009; U.S. Department of State, 2007a, 2007b). The current study reveals that this religion and associated values of merit-making and benevolence (Sundeen et al., 2007; Weng & Lee, 2016) are so salient in Cambodian and Laotian community workers' lives that they are expressed through structural elements such as collectivism and laws. Further exploration of this phenomenon in other refugee communities would provide further insight into the relationship between religion, cultural practices, and generativity within displaced communities.

Similarly, this is the first known study relating Buddhism, laws, and collectivism with generativity in refugee communities. Untwining this relationship in future studies would uncover whether or not these factors are interdependent, which this study asserts, or independent from one other. One way in which this may be discovered is by studying other Asian immigrant and refugee populations with similar cultural values, such as Thai and Burmese (Bankston, 2018a, 2018b; Cherry, 2018; Lamanna et al., 2012). By conducting research with these groups, researchers will be able to determine if the current study's findings – the salience of Buddhism, laws, and collectivism to generativity – manifest in other cultures. Studying these concepts in other Southeast Asian groups will also unveil the influence of gender on community workers' generativity experiences.

Additionally, there is a need for more research on technical generativity because there is a noticeable dearth of literature in the field. The current study is the first known study to address this gap, yet this type of generativity was less prevalent in the findings. Thus, the findings do not provide a comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon. For example, while many

participants discussed transmitting skills, only one participant described technical generativity within the context of remittances. This individual felt that the younger generation deserved to learn and grow. Previous scholarship by Nguyen and Nguyen (2015) found that remittances received from overseas family and friends enables children in Vietnam to remain in school longer, instead of joining the workforce. This financial support of children's education may be indicative of technical generativity, but the current findings cannot determine this. Future research is needed to further tease apart this phenomenon among community workers in Asian immigrant and refugee populations. This would enable researchers to discern if aspects of technical generativity, such as this study's discovery that community workers seek to empower community members through skill transmission and remittances, are common occurrence in immigrant and refugee communities.

Surprisingly, through the course of this study, findings also unveiled the influence of university research studies on immigrant and refugees' cultural generativity. In this sample, generative participants perceived a university community-based research study as an opportunity for the cultural transmission of Cambodian and Laotian language. This is the first known study that reveals the cultural implications of university research studies on generativity. More research is needed to untangle this phenomenon and its prevalence among culturally diverse populations in the U.S.

Conclusion

Findings reveal that Cambodian and Laotian refugee community workers engage in technical and cultural generativity. For this sample, technical generative actions include English language transmission that benefits community members. Refugee community workers engage in cultural generativity through the transmission of language, religion, cultural values, and ethnic

communities. These adults' roles as cultural and informational vessels may become more important as refugee admission and resettlement budgets continue to decrease. Therefore, awareness of community workers' underlying generative motivations may facilitate the successful integration of refugees as well as the improvement of refugee well-being through intervention programs.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Guide

1. Demographic Questions

- a. What is your age?
- b. What is your ethnicity and/or race?
- c. What is your religious orientation?
- d. What is your marital status?
- e. What is your educational attainment?
- f. Where were you born? Where do you currently live?
- g. Tell me about your family.

2. Experiences in the Community and/or Organization

- a. Tell me about yourself and who you are.
- b. Tell me about your role in other organizations and/or communities.
 - i. At local levels
 - ii. At national levels
 - iii. At international levels
- c. Tell me about what led you to become involved in this organization and/or community. Tell me about how you found out about this organization and/or community.
- d. Describe your role in your organization and/or community. How long have you have worked in this organization and/or community?
- e. Describe the most important thing about why you work in this organization and/or community.
- f. Tell me about the most satisfying/greatest accomplishment of your work. Describe what has been the most challenging part of your work.
- g. Tell me about what your families and/or friends feel about your work in this organization and/or community.
- h. Is there anything else about your work in the community and/or organization that you think is important for me to know?

3. Immigration Policies and the Community and/or Organization

- a. Tell me about how the recent policy changes on the amount of refugees allowed in the U.S. might impact:
 - i. Your organization
 - ii. Your role
 - iii. The refugees and immigrant families you work with
- b. Describe what you see yourself doing in the future if there aren't any refugees to serve. Tell me about options that are available to you.
- c. Is there anything else about immigration policies that you think is important for me to know?

4. Looking Forward/Generativity Questions

- a. Tell me about your hopes and expectations for the future:
 - i. For yourself
 - ii. For your work
 - iii. For your community
- b. Tell me about what you have learned or taken away from your work.
- c. Tell me about how your work has impacted who you are as an individual.
- d. Tell me about the legacy you wish to leave, or what you hope will outlive you and/or be passed on to other people or the next generation.
- e. Is there anything else that you think I should know?