HOPE CONCEPTUALIZED

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HOPE CONCEPTUALIZED:

AN ANALYSIS OF SETTLEMENT WORKERS'

UNDERSTANDINGS OF HOPE

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Abstract

This qualitative study examines the similarities and differences in settlement workers' conceptualizations of hope. This study begins with a literature review of existing hope theories, as well as an examination of how hope is significant in refugees' lives. It uses an interpretivist, social constructionist framework to do a comparative analysis of three in-depth interviews with settlement workers in southern Ontario. Emphasizing relationships, experiences, and multiple understandings, this study demonstrates the socially constructed nature of hope, which is found to be personally nuanced to each participant. The findings suggest that hope is understood differently by different people, with many underlying themes and similarities. These findings encourage settlement workers and social workers to reflect on their own conceptualizations of hope, as well as consider how their clients might understand it differently. Doing this will lead to increased client-centered practice and reduce misunderstandings about hope in practice.

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An Analysis of Settlement Workers' Understandings of Hope

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1. Introduction to Study

Refugees, by definition, leave their homes involuntary due to a "well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion" (UNHCR, 2011). They are forced to be away

from their home countries, without status or nationality, and are unable or unwilling to return due to this fear (UNHCR, 2011). After their arrival in their country of asylum, refugees are often assisted by settlement workers, who help them navigate systems, such as housing, legal, immigration, financial or social assistance, health care, and/or education systems (YMCA, 2012). These workers provide advice and guidance about cultural adjustment, language acquisition, social service involvement, forms completion, and counseling (YMCA, 2012). According to the director of a local refugee-serving agency, during the course of this work, some settlement workers and refugees engage in discussions about 'hope' (S. Jones, personal communication, January 16, 2013). Workers believe that these discussions are useful and relevant to the work being done, however, there is little consideration regarding whether refugees and settlement workers understand 'hope' in the same way (S. Jones, personal communication, January 16, 2013). This idea of studying various understandings of hope resonated with me because it appeared to be less about problematizing refugees' experiences and more positively-focused and strengths-based, which were attributes that I wanted my thesis to have. As is the case in any instance where difference or variance exists, without considering possible differences in conceptualizations there exists the potential for misunderstandings within the helping relationship, which could impact the effectiveness of the work that is being done or the helping relationship that is being formed. I, therefore, wanted to explore the ways settlement workers and refugees conceptualized hope.

1.1 Research Purpose and Question

This qualitative study initially sought to examine how refugee women and female settlement workers conceptualized the idea of 'hope'. The central idea was to explore variances in conceptualizations by inquiring about topics such as what hope means to the participant, who or what influenced her understanding, what she hopes for, and what it means to be hopeless. Unfortunately, due to difficulties in the recruitment of refugees, this thesis has become a comparative study of settlement workers' conceptualizations of hope. Despite ongoing efforts to recruit refugee women, I struggled to find participants, an issue which is addressed further in the "Methodology" chapter. However, despite this setback, the final product, undertaken with a sample of settlement workers, revealed important findings, which point towards several key implications for settlement work and social work practice.

Notwithstanding the change to the central focus of this study, the main purposes of this research project remain: (1) to examine any difference in conceptualizations of hope as described by the participants, (2) to compare and contrast the responses, and (3) to apply the findings to settlement work and social work practice. By acknowledging any difference in conceptualization identified within this study, social workers and settlement workers may consider modifying their approaches, such as by examining the way that hope may be discussed in practice, to ensure that it is client-centered and compatible with the client's own conceptualization of hope.

1.2 Research Study Evolution and Significance

The significance of my original project rested on the fact that differences between Western and non-Western understandings can lead to misunderstandings and mistrust when not acknowledged (Fadiman, 1997). These differences in conceptualizations are largely discussed in areas such as mental health and medical diagnoses. For example, Terheggen, Stroebe, and Kleber's (2001) study examines the applicability of the Western conceptualization of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) for Tibetan refugees living in India. Their findings demonstrate that, while a Western conceptualization may be a useful starting point, the cultural differences in experiencing and understanding mental health need to be considered when working cross-culturally (Terheggen, Stroebe & Kleber, 2001). In another example, Fadiman (1997) recounts the story of a young Hmong refugee living with a severe condition that is understood very differently when she comes to the United States. Her culture understands her condition as a spiritual experience, while Western doctors understand it bio-medically, as epilepsy (Fadiman, 1997). Due to this difference in conceptualization, the family endures misunderstandings and mistrust in their experiences with the medical system in the United States (Fadiman, 1997), which further demonstrates how clashing conceptualizations have the potential to be harmful and stressful for all those involved.

The findings of these two key examples informed this study's initial focus on the comparison of Western and non-Western conceptualizations, as they demonstrate why it is important to consider different understandings and ways of knowing. After considering how different various conceptualizations can be, and how failing to recognize these

differences can be quite detrimental, I began to consider how this same principle might be applied to a concept like 'hope'. Informal conversations with those involved in work with refugees confirmed that hope is an important topic in work with refugees, as well as that differences in understandings of hope between settlement workers and refugees could impact the work that is done (S. Jones, personal communication, January 16, 2013). Despite searching many major literature databases, such as JSTOR, PsycINFO, Social Sciences Abstracts, Social Work Abstracts, Social Services Abstracts, Scholar's Portal, ProQuest, and Sociological Abstracts, I was unable to find any existing research precisely about this topic. However, there is benefit to knowing more about it, as a related study shows that it can be very detrimental if refugees are not appropriately supported in their hopes, and that lack of support from settlement workers towards refugees' identified long-term hopes can "compromise refugee hopes during the later stages of the resettlement" (Anjum, Nordqvist & Timpka, 2012, p.6). Factors in the receiving country, such as the structure of settlement services, also have the ability to "promote or inhibit [refugees'] hopes" (Anjum, Nordqvist & Timpka, 2012, p.7). Therefore, further work in the area of hope as it relates to refugees and settlement workers is important, relevant and needed.

Despite my difficulties with recruitment, the principles underlying my original study transfer well to the modified study. The idea that differing conceptualizations could lead to misunderstandings is still a viable idea, even when only considering settlement workers understandings. Interestingly, however, one of the settlement workers also identified as a refugee woman from a non-Western country, which suggests that both

Western and non-Western ideas may still be represented within this study, although not as clearly as they may have been had settlement workers and refugee women been completely separate and distinct groups of participants. At the same time, it is important to recognize that people are not easily placed into binaries, such as Western or non-Western, and that identities, irregardless of how they are comprised, are complex. Likely, other intersecting identities not identified by the participants also influenced their responses and conceptualizations. This does, however, provide interesting implications for methodology, which will be discussed in chapter three.

1.3 Outline of the Study

Chapter one of this study has outlined the research purposes, question, evolution and significance of the project at hand. Chapter two will provide a literature review of hope theories as they appear in various bodies of literature, as well as how hope intersects with refugees' experiences. Discussion of how hope is interconnected with social work and settlement work will also be included. Chapter three will outline the methodology, methods and sampling used for this study, while chapter four will present the findings of the interviews that were conducted with female settlement workers. Chapter five will provide an in-depth discussion of the findings and chapter six will discuss the limitations and implications. Finally, chapter seven will draw the final conclusions.

1.4 Summary

This study is about the concept of hope, a topic that has been identified as being important in work with refugees (Anjum, Nordqvist & Timpka, 2012; S. Jones, personal communication, January 16, 2013; Yohani, 2010). Anjum, Nordqvist and Timpka (2012) support this idea by demonstrating that when support agencies are not responsive to refugees' identified hopes, such as for family reunification, it can be detrimental for their experiences with resettlement. Literature further shows that variances exist between Western and non-Western conceptualizations, and that it is important to consider multiple understandings in practice (Terheggan, Stroebe & Kleber, 2001). It also demonstrates that damage can be done by not considering these multiple perspectives (Fadiman, 1997). This research will contribute to refugees being supported in their hopes during resettlement, which has been shown to be important in their journeys (Anjum, Nordqvist & Timpka, 2012). A review of the literature will examine existing theories about hope, as well as how hope relates to refugees' experiences and how it is used in social work and settlement work.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Hope in Literature

To understand how hope might be imagined or experienced differently by different people, it is important to understand how hope is situated in the literature. A review of various bodies of hope literature, such as psychology, philosophy, social work, theology and business, has been conducted to draw out the complexity of the issue at hand. It is, however, not possible to do an exhaustive literature review due to the sheer volume of literature on the subject of 'hope theories'. This review emphasizes the key thoughts and theories about hope from a variety of disciplines, for the purpose of determining differences and commonalities in conceptualizations.

In part, the diversity of ideas encountered in this literature review can be attributed to differences in the authors' worldviews. For example, Snyder's use of measurable hope scales and attainable goals (Snyder, 2002) indicates a positivist leaning, while Webb's description of Freire's emphasis of hope as a motivator in the pursuit of completion as human beings (Webb, 2010) indicates a view that values personal experiences and stories, which are key elements of the interpretivist and critical approaches. My own view of hope is informed by the interpretivist approach, in that I believe that hope is experienced differently by different people at different times in their lives. As a result, the hope I am interested is best explored qualitatively as described and experienced by people individually and uniquely. The following pages explore these hope theorists' differing worldviews and perspectives on hope. No perspective is more right or

wrong; they are simply different. As such, each author contributes something new and unique to the discussion of hope theories.Some theorists view hope as a cognitive or thought process (Snyder, 2002), while others see it as a psychological process (Drahos, 2004). Still others think it is an emotional state (Beavers & Kaslow, 1981; Drahos, 2004), while others feel that it is more about perception or intuition (Capps, 1995) or an "ontological need" (Webb, 2010, p.328). Similarly, some theorists emphasize that to have hope is to have a positive expectation (Drahos, 2004; Miceli & Castlefranchi, 2010) or to be in a "positive motivational state" (Snyder, 2002, p.250), while others state that hope is a motivator (Webb, 2010) or the act of believing in a possibility (Capps, 1995; Steinbock, 2004). There are still others that believe it is about desire (Capps, 1995; McGeer, 2004) or challenging our limitations as human beings (McGeer, 2004; Miceli & Castlefranchi, 2010). It also seems that for as many that provide one explanation of hope, there are others that discredit it in favour of a new one. For example, in contrast to those listed above, there are theorists who stress that hope is absolutely *not* a cognitive process (Capps, 1995) or *not* an emotional response (Snyder, 2002), while still others emphasize that it is *both* (Webb, 2010).

Despite all of these differences, there are three main themes that many theories appear to have in common: (1) hope is a universal, integral human experience (McGeer, 2004; Steinbock, 2004; Webb, 2010), (2) hope is future oriented (Capps, 1995; Drahos, 2004; McGeer, 2004; Snyder, 2002; Steinbock, 2004; Webb, 2010), and (3) hope contains an element of being out of one's control (Beavers & Kaslow, 1981; Drahos, 2004; McGeer, 2004; Miceli & Castlefranchi, 2010; Steinbock, 2004). Other more subtle

themes that exist are ideas such as that hope is a motivator (Drahos, 2004; Snyder, 2002; Webb, 2010) or a possibility (Capps, 1995; Miceli & Castlefranchi, 2010; Steinbock, 2004), which are discussed in more depth in the following pages.

There are also many opinions about hope equivalents or synonyms, such as that it is related to optimism (Snyder, 2002); however, there are many more opinions about what hope is not. For example, psychology literature makes it clear that it is different than optimism, faith, or trust (Miceli & Castlefranchi, 2010), while philosophy literature discusses that it is different than expectation, longing, or wishing (Steinbock, 2004). Particular education literature, on the other hand, draws connections between hope and courage or perseverance (Webb, 2010), as well as impatience, outrage, indignation or "unsettled yearning" (Webb, 2010, p.334).

2.1.1 Hope theories in review. Snyder's theory is one of the most well referenced approaches to hope. C. R. Snyder is a psychology professor who posits hope as "a positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful (a) agency (goal-directed energy), and (b) pathways (planning to meet goals)" (Snyder, 2002, p. 250). His theory is based firmly on goal setting, planning, and attainment (Snyder, 2002). He also states that high-hoping individuals are better able to cope with challenges and difficulties than low-hoping individuals (Snyder, 2002). Furthermore, he explicates that hope is a thinking process, not an emotional one (Snyder, 2002).

In a similar vein, author Darren Webb (2010), in his exploration of educator and

philosopher Paolo Freire's philosophy on hope, articulates that Freire also identifies that hope is a motivator that drives us forward in our pursuit of completeness. Freire, however, identifies hope as both a cognitive *and* emotional process and refuses to acknowledge any separation between the two; he regards hope as "an experience of the entire body, involving emotions, desires, dreams, thought processes, and intuitions" (Webb, 2010, p.329). This is in direct contrast to Snyder's (2002) perception that hope is purely a cognitive function. Freire also recognizes a 'utopian' aspect to hope because it requires imagining an ideal world in which our hopes are realized (Webb, 2010). This is clearly much more abstract than Snyder's goal focused theory, and creates another distinction between them.

In the same way that Snyder (2002) emphasizes goals as a key concept in his hope theory, other theorists in the field of psychology do the same. Miceli and Castlefranchi (2010), however, emphasize that hope consists of a goal/wish, possibility, and the belief that the situation is out of one's control. This is a rather large divergence from Snyder's concept, which focuses on plans or pathways towards attaining a goal, and having the personal capacity achieve it (Snyder, 2002). Furthermore, Miceli and Castlefranchi (2010), like Snyder and Freire, also highlight hope as a motivator; however, they differ in that they primarily view it as an "anticipatory representation" (p.254) or, in other words, closely tied to positive expectations, rather than the achievement of goals, as Snyder (2002) discusses, or a move towards completion, as Freire proposes (Webb, 2010). According to their theory, hope is not constrained by *probability*, but is based on *possibility* (Miceli & Castlefranchi, 2010). Therefore, hope does not depend on how

likely the desired outcome is, rather it simply depends on the *possibility* of attaining the desired outcome, irregardless of how remote it is (Miceli & Castlefranchi, 2010). As a result of hope, an individual is able to avoid disappointment, as well as build resilience against comparing their downfalls to possible positive outcomes (Miceli & Castlefranchi, 2010). This concept appears to fit well with Snyder's (2002) idea about high-hoping people being better prepared to face challenges or negative outcomes.

Similarly to Miceli and Castlefranchi, philosopher Steinbock (2004) emphasizes the role of "engaged possibility" (p.6) in his hope theory. He argues that hope is similar to expectation, but that individuals can count on expectation more because it is somewhat probable or logical, unlike hope, which does not always carry likelihood, but in which the hoping individual is invested (Capps, 1995; Steinbock, 2004). Furthermore, he argues that it is *expectation* that is the motivator, not hope, due to the likelihood that it carries (Steinbock, 2004). This lies in contrast to Snyder and Freire's aforementioned theories. He, like other theorists, emphasizes that hope is not a rational or explainable activity (Capps, 1995; Steinbock, 2004), and that it is not about denying reality, but rather about looking forward to transforming the situation (Steinbock, 2004). As in Snyder's (2002) theory, there is also an element of recognizing one's own personal capacity or agency, or lack thereof, and acknowledging that the situation is out of one's control (Steinbock, 2004). There could also be a religious element to hope, but there does not have to be (Steinbock, 2004). For example, due to the fact that the situation is out of the hoping individual's control, they need to rely on an 'other', whether it be God, a friend, a stranger, or the universe (Steinbock, 2004).

As is perhaps to be expected, theological perspectives on hope often include religious, spiritual or abstract dimensions, such as with theologian Thomas Aquinas. Author Dominic Doyle (2011) articulates Aquinas' belief that hope is "the divinely infused movement of the will towards eternal union with God" (Doyle, 2011, p.20). A relationship with God is the final goal, and reliance on God is essential for obtaining the goal (Doyle, 2011). This discussion of goals is further emphasized by other theorists, such as Miceli and Castlefranchi (2010) and Snyder (2002). Aquinas also proposes that reliance on God makes hope a theological virtue, closely linked with faith and charity (Doyle, 2011). He also states that hope is not an emotion, but rather a part of the will. This is somewhat reflective of Freire's perspective that hope is a full body experience, including desire, emotions and intuitions (Webb, 2010). This is similar to Snyder (2001) and Miceli and Castlefranchi's (2010) view of hope as something other than an emotion, but is different in that none of these theorists connect it to an individual's will, as Aquinas does. Aquinas also clearly emphasizes that hope is a cause of joy (Doyle, 2011).

Another theologian, Donald Capps (1995) defines hope differently as "…the perception that what one wants to happen will happen, a perception that is fueled by desire and in response to felt deprivation" (p.53). He theorizes that hope is an individual activity in which the individual is quite invested (Capps, 1995), as Steinbock (2004) also emphasizes. Hope is a projection based on intuition that names an ongoing persistent desire that the individual has; it can also be a reflection of the individual's understanding of God or themselves (Capps, 1995). Within his view of hope, Capps (1995) also emphasizes an element of possibility, particularly in the context of human capacity and

the examination of what is possible for an individual to attain. This has been seen in other hope theories, as well. Capps' theory also has the same type of abstract quality to it as Freire's does, particularly when considering Freire's idea of humans being on a continuous search for completion (Webb, 2010).

McGeer (2004), a philosopher, iterates that hope is "desire combined with a certain epistemic state" (p.103) and a "way of actively confronting, exploring and biding our limitations as agents, rather than crumbling in the face of their reality" (p.103). This demonstrates that it is a way of thinking, as Freire also believes (Webb, 2010), as well as that it is founded on desire, which Capps (1995) proposes. Hope as a way of confronting limitations is also an idea similar to the idea of human capacity and agency, as posited by both Snyder (2002) and Steinbock (2004). McGeer (2004) further states that hope is possible because of other people – they enable us to hope – and is therefore a social experience. This social experience is alluded to by other theorists, but is expanded on by Beavers and Kaslow (1981) in their discussion of hope as a gift.

Theorists varyingly believe that hope is a learned behaviour (Snyder, 2002), that it is taught (Webb, 2010), or that it can be given (Beavers & Kaslow, 1981). Psychology professors and family therapists, Beavers and Kalsow (1981), have less a theory of hope and more a foundational theory on what is required for one to develop hope in another. In their view, some individuals are qualified to give hope (Beavers & Kaslow, 1981), which is a theme not elaborated upon by other theorists in this review. According to Beavers and Kaslow (1981), hope is instilled in others through several key elements, including being "heard, acknowledged, and empathized with" (p.121), developing capacity,

reducing mistrust, finding and elaborating on positive feelings, and creating a connection to things outside of the individual. These elements are shades of some of the other points made by various theorists. For example, creating a connection to something outside of the individual reflects the idea of hope being outside of one's control (Drahos, 2004; McGeer, 2004; Miceli & Castlefranchi, 2010; Steinbock, 2004), as well as Freire and Capp's (1995) abstract ideas of spirituality and searching for completeness (Webb, 2010). Developing capacity as defined by Beavers and Kaslow (1981) involves understanding why failures happen so they are not repeated. This is reflective of Snyder (2002) and Steinbock's (2004) similar ideas of agency.

To further examine this social quality of hope is a theory from the discipline of business and law. Drahos (2004) identifies that there are private, collective and public hopes. He proposes that hope is a "psychological event or process that is distinct from the services and products to which it may be linked (Drahos, 2004, p. 19). Hope, he iterates, can be commodified and used as a tool by politicians, particularly because it can evoke emotional and motivational qualities in people (Drahos, 2004). While the commodification piece is new, hope as a motivator and emotional response have already been repeatedly identified (Miceli & Castlefranchi, 2010; Snyder, 2002; Webb, 2010). Drahos (2004) also notes that, "within secular political contexts…hope is almost always bundled with a policy agenda that is the means to the achievement of the invoked public hope." (Drahos, 2004, p.33). This adds the possibility of deception or manipulation, which suggests that people need to be cautious with hope messaging. Drahos (2004) also posits that hope is a psychological resource used to deal with uncertainty, as well as a

mental act that involves expectation and anticipation (Drahos, 2010). Hope, he argues, leads to a "cycle of expectation, planning and action that sees the agent explore the power of her agency" (Drahos, 2004, p.22). This again reflects a theme of hope being a means of exploring agency (Beavers & Kaslow, 1981; Snyder, 2002; Steinbock, 2004). Furthermore, hope helps people solve problems and overcome the odds in their lives, and those that have high hopes tend to have psychological, physiological, cognitive and behavioural advantages over those who have lower hopes (Drahos, 2004). This is similar to Snyder's (2002) idea of high-hoping people having advantages in multiple areas over low-hoping people. Although there are a few common themes between this business theory of hope and the others, there are also obvious differences.

2.1.2 Loss of hope, despair and hopelessness. These theorists also have various ideas about what causes loss of hope, despair or hopelessness. Several thinkers posit that loss of hope is related to not achieving a goal (Miceli & Castlefranchi, 2010; Snyder, 2002). Snyder (2002) also states that hope is a learned behaviour and therefore, loss of hope is deeply connected to other people. For example, loss of hope in children is caused by lack of proper attention as a newborn or by damaging childhood events, while loss of hope in adults is often caused by loss in other areas of life, such as death or divorce, as well as by traumatic events (Snyder, 2002). Steinbock (2004) further states that hopelessness occurs when hope is not present to begin with, it is fulfilled, it is disappointed or it is abandoned. According to Miceli and Castlefranchi (2010), in cases of loss of hope or disappointment, hope is easier to restore than positive expectation and

there is less suffering in cases of lost hope rather than failed expectation. Steinbock (2004) argues that in cases of hopelessness, impossibility is experienced and believed; however, Miceli and Castlefranchi (2010) state that hopelessness still implies that there is an existing wish or desire, but that the individual not longer believes in the possibility, but rather in impossibility. Beavers and Kaslow (1981) also state that it is in situations of despair that people determine if others are loving or threatening, while Freire argues that without hope, people despair and become immobilized (Webb, 2010).

2.1.3 Hope scales. There are several hope scales that have been developed to measure hope in individuals. For example, Snyder, whose hope theory is outlined above, has developed two hope scales, the Adult Hope Scale or Trait Hope Scale and the Children's Hope Scale, to measure agency and pathways for goals in adults and children. The Adult Hope Scale is a 12-item questionnaire (Snyder, 1995), while the Children's Hope Scale is a six-item questionnaire (Snyder, Hoza, Pelham, Rapoff, Ware, Danovsky, Highberger, Rubinstein & Stahl, 1997). Snyder proposes that his hope scales can be used for diagnostic purposes, such as to determine if an individual is high- or low- hoping, if his or her scores for pathways and agency are mismatched (for example, if he or she scores high in agency, but low in pathways or vice versa), or to gauge the counselor's own hope level (Snyder, 1995). Obayuwana, Collins, Carter, Rao, Mathura, & Wilson (1982) have also developed a scale, called the Hope Index Scale. This is a 60-item questionnaire designed to "objectively" measure hope (p.761). Their scale is based on Obayuwana and Carter's definition of hope "as the state of mind which results from the

positive outcome of ego strength, perceived human family support, religion, education, and economic assets" (as cited in Obayuwana, et al, 1982, p.761). Participants are scored out of 500 and this score is designed to be used for "individual clinical evaluation or as a psychological research tool" (Obayuwana, et al, 1982, p.765). These scales measure hope from two very different perspectives, however, both propose to be used for counseling, psychological or research purposes (Obayuwana, et al, 1982; Snyder, 1995; Snyder, 1997).

2.1.4 Critiques and gaps. Several key elements have been overlooked in these particular theories and concepts, several of which are particularly important to my study. For example, the idea that there may be a cultural dimension to the conceptualizations of hope and hopelessness is missing. Furthermore, these theories do not address how individual factors may impact on people's ideas of hope, such as experiencing trauma or loss, or how the meaning of hope may change to an individual over time. These are concepts that need to be developed in the area of hope research and theory in order to completely understand what hope is and how it can be applied to different populations.

While there is merit to using these types of scales, one must also be critical of them. Snyder's tools are quite brief, causing one to question its validity. Furthermore, one might consider how workers' responses might vary the scores if they are not aligned with the theoretical background of the scaling tool.

2.1.5 Hope theory as a frame for this study. Clearly, there are many varying theories of hope that span multiple disciplines, and the literature plainly demonstrates that hope is, in fact, quite a complicated concept. As Webb (2007) eloquently summarizes,

> Hope is variously designated an emotion, a cognitive process, an existential stance, a state of being, a disposition, a state of mind, an emotion which resembles a state of mind, an instinct, impulse or intuition, a subliminal 'sense', a formed habit, a 'sociohormone', some complex, multifaceted affective-cognitive-behavioural phenomenon, or, quite simply, a mystery. (p.67)

As was previously mentioned, this is not an exhaustive literature review, and it cannot be because of the number of theories and variations available. These particular theories were selected both because they are some of the most well referenced theories found in the scholarship and because they represent hope theories in a diverse range of disciplines. This selection also provided a range of ideas and covered some of the classical theories of hope that others are built on. Due to the diversity of hope theories and ideas in existence, it is plausible to think that, since theorists themselves do not agree on the experience or conceptualization of hope, settlement workers may not either. This may especially be the case when differences in experiences such as culture, education, trauma, spirituality, privilege, loss or lived experience are involved. Since hope is discussed so extensively in the literature, and in so many disciplines, it is evident that it is a relevant and diversely applied topic. This leads to the conclusion that it could also be applied to work with refugees, an area which will be examined further through a review

of literature as it pertains to hope in refugees who are primarily in the resettlement stage of their journeys.

2.2 Significance of Hope to Refugees and Settlement Workers

Unfortunately, there is only a small body of literature about hope as it pertains to refugees as a general population. This literature review examines the existing literature about refugee men, women and children, with all of the studies being qualitative analyses of their experiences with hope. Two of the articles cited in this review provide perspectives from refugee camps, however, the majority are studies conducted after the refugees arrive in their country of asylum, which is most often in North America, Europe, or Australia. Many of the studies emphasize hope as one of the findings; only a small sample of the studies use hope as the main focus of study. Several of the studies include pieces about how hope is relevant to social workers, settlement workers and other professionals; these findings are also discussed within this literature review.

Snyder's (2002) theory, as described above, provides the underlying theoretical framework for several of the reviewed studies pertaining to the significance of hope to refugees (Ai, Tice, Whitsett, Ishisaka & Chim, 2007; Ai, Peterson & Huang, 2003; Anjum, Nordqvist & Timpka, 2012; Yohani, 2008; Yohani, 2010). In less obvious manners, other studies reflect shades of Snyder's theory through discussions of mapping out routes towards achieving goals (Atwell, Gifford and McDonald-Wilmsen, 2009). This emphasis on pathways and routes towards goals is strongly indicative of Snyder's (2002) theory, even though it is not explicitly stated. This clearly demonstrates the diversity of

scenarios to which Snyder's theory can be applied, however, it is not the only available theory. While Snyder is often referenced, as has already been discussed, there are many other theories of hope that other authors may prefer. The other studies do not specify which hope theory they were based on, likely because they are less strongly based on hope and more focused on well-being or coping.

2.2.1 Hopelessness prior to arrival. The literature reveals a distinct split between the experience of hope before and after arrival in the country of asylum. On one hand, some refugees reported that a sense of hope was important for survival in the refugee camps and that it helped them overcome the boredom and hardship that pervaded their daily lives (Goodman, 2004). On the other hand, many refugees identified strong senses of hopelessness (Goodman, 2004; Pavlish, 2005; Pavlish, 2007), lack or loss of hope (Ai, et all, 2007; Gladden, 2012; Pavlish, 2007), being "without a future" (Goodman, 2004; Pavlish, 2005; Pavlish, 2007, p.31), or being in a situation where "improvements were not possible" (Pavlish, 2005; Pavlish, 2007, p.31) in the refugee camps. Hopelessness was identified as an "outcome of the violent context of people's lives" (Goodman, 2004, p. 1189) and refugees explained that it was very difficult to maintain any hope in an environment that was rife with fear and the painful awareness of their own reality (Goodman, 2004). Even if refugees dared to hope, these hopes were often unrealized or entirely unattainable (Goodman, 2004; Pavlish, 2005). They also feared the future because they felt that there was little hope that there would ever be peace in their homeland (Pavlish, 2007). In addition, some refugees felt that they could

not hope for their future while they were in the refugee camps because there *was* no future for them (Goodman, 2004). Sadly, some refugees also expressed suicidal ideation (Pavlish, 2007), reported knowing people who had died by suicide, or had heard stories of suicide (Goodman, 2004).

Hopelessness was often accompanied by feelings of powerlessness (Goodman, 2004). Pavlish (2005) identified several actions that refugee women took in refugee camps to overcome difficulties, one of which was resignation, which was strongly related to hopelessness and powerlessness (Pavlish, 2005). In her study, she demonstrated that women who engaged in resignation tended to experience feelings of lack of hope, lack of choices, inability to hope and a "perceived impossibility for change" (Pavlish, 2005, p.15). She identified that there was "considerable power shifted away from individuals engaged in resignation" (Pavlish, 2005, p.15), which was particularly seen in the lack of energy or social support to move from resignation to a more positive response. This demonstrates the strong link between feelings of hopelessness and powerlessness.

2.2.2 Hopefulness upon arrival. The hopelessness felt in the refugee camps was sometimes replaced by hope when refugees received offers or approvals for transit to a new country (Goodman, 2004). Other refugees reported hopelessness during transit, as well, but it was often replaced by hopefulness upon arrival in their country of asylum (Atwell, Gifford & McDonald-Wilmsen, 2009; Goodman, 2004; McKinnon, Zeitun & Stephens, 2006). Goodman, as referenced by Gladden (2012), suggests that refugees could hope again after arrival because they felt like *people* once again, as he had

previously stated that refugees did not feel like people in the camps. This newfound hope was often sprung from dreams and expectations of what life in the new country would hold for them (Atwell, Gifford, McDonald-Wilmsen, 2009; Goodman, 2004), with particular emphasis on happier, easier lives, with more opportunities for future generations (Atwell, Gifford, McDonald-Wilmsen, 2009). These hopes were often well founded, but ended up being much more difficult to realize than the refugees expected (Atwell, Gifford, McDonald-Wilmsen, 2009). This may have been in part due to the ongoing need for the refugees to work through possible trauma, pain and loss from their pasts, in addition to looking towards the future (Atwell, Gifford & McDonald-Wilmsen, 2009). Furthermore, they were facing some of the same challenges that other people in the new country were facing, such as poverty, but their situations were compounded by additional experiences, such as racism, prejudice, cultural adjustment (McKinnon, Zeitun & Stephens, 2006), language barriers (Atwell, Gifford & McDonald-Wilmsen, 2009; McKinnon, Zeitun & Stephens, 2006), and other stresses, such as family separation and unemployment (Atwell, Gifford & McDonald-Wilmsen, 2009). They were, perhaps, unprepared for all of the challenges that they would face upon arrival (Atwell, Gifford & McDonald-Wilmsen, 2009). Overall, however, hope tended to become a motivating force for refugees as they resettled into a new country (Pavlish, 2007).

2.2.3 Hopes for the future. The literature suggests that two key hopes refugees often hold for themselves are for education and employment. The authors identified that this was particularly true for young people (Atwell, Gifford & McDonald-Wilmsen,

2009; Goodman, 2004), but also held true for adults (Anjum, Nordqvist & Timpka, 2012; McKinnon, Zeitun & Stephens, 2006). They found that young people that were accompanied by parents were shown to often be supported in this by their parents' hopes for them (Atwell, Gifford & McDonald-Wilmsen, 209). In some cases, their hopes for particular careers were also strongly influenced by their parents (Atwell, Gifford & McDonald-Wilmsen, 2009). For example, a young woman may have pursued dreams of becoming a nurse because her mother had been a midwife in their home country (Atwell, Gifford & McDonald-Wilmsen, 2009).

For adults, "hope was positively associated with education" (Ai, Peterson & Huang, 2003, p.29). They hoped for education because the knowledge that they obtained could not be taken from them (Gladden, 2012). Similarly, Ai et al (2007) suggest that "refugees with intellectual resources may have an increased confidence in achieving new goals after resettlement" (p.61). On a related note, refugee women identified resettlement as an opportunity to gain education and skills to be able to help people in their home country again one day (Baird & Boyle, 2012). Unfortunately, other refugee women stated that they felt that the 'system' in their country of asylum was so heavily focused on employment, irregardless of whether it was stable, well-paying or appropriate, that it destroyed their hopes and dreams (McKinnon, Zeitun & Stephens, 2006). They felt that the system was so focused on employment that it did not provide them with enough support or access to other opportunities (McKinnon, Zeitun & Stephens, 2006).

2.2.4 Hope-engendering experiences and hindrances to hope. Many of the articles discuss sources of and barriers to hope. Some of the experiences refugee children identified as hope-engendering, or sources of hope, were reciprocal relationships (Yohani, 2008; Yohani & Larsen, 2009), self-empowering activities, and relationships with nature (Yohani & Larsen, 2009). They were able to identify hope in various life experiences and contexts (Yohani, 2008). Furthermore, hope was seen in children by workers when the children felt successful, in activities in which they overcame challenges, and when they felt supported (Yohani, 2010). Children did not always identify these experiences as 'hopeful', but workers recognized hope as 'energy' coming from the children, which they interpreted as hopefulness (Yohani, 2010, p.869).

On the contrary, workers were also able to clearly identify hindrances to hope. They noticed that there were challenges faced at home and school (Yohani, 2008; Yohani, 2010), in society (Yohani, 2010), and within the programs that children were engaged with that were barriers to their hopefulness (Yohani, 2010). Some of these challenges included parental unemployment (Yohani, 2008; Yohani, 2010), language barriers (Yohani, 2008; Yohani, 2010), racism (Yohani, 2008; Yohani, 2010), stress (Yohani, 2010), changes to family structure and roles (Yohani, 2010), loneliness (Yohani, 2008; Yohani, 2010), and workers that were unprepared to meet emotional or behavioural needs of the refugee children (Yohani, 2010). Refugee parents also expressed concern that it might be difficult for their children to feel hopeful when their parents felt hopeless (Yohani, 2008). Parents often felt responsible for developing hope in their children, which sometimes became a struggle for them (Yohani, 2008). Interestingly, when the

parents were shown representations of their children's hope, such as through art-based interventions, they expressed more hopefulness through talking about their children's hopes (Yohani, 2008). In essence, "hope radiated from children to adults" (Yohani, 2008, p. 319), which became a source of hope for the adults. This clearly has implications for social work and other disciplines, and will be discussed shortly.

2.2.5 Hoping and coping. A link is also made between hope and coping (Ai, Peterson & Huang, 2003; Gladden, 2012; Yohani, 2010). Ai, Peterson and Huang (2003) express that "one's capacity to cope depends on one's coping resources and coping responses" (p.29); this encompasses mental resources, and includes "cognitive mindsets" (Ai, Peterson & Huang, 2003, p.29), such as hope and optimism. Mindsets such as these tend to project positive outcomes in areas such as adjustment, mental health and physical health (Ai, Peterson & Huang, 2003). Hope has also been identified as a "positive psychological virtue" (Ai, et al, 2007, p.61), which is connected with adjustment and positive life changes (Ai, et al, 2007; Yohani, 2010) as well as growth (Ai, et al, 2007).

Spirituality was also a common coping strategy that refugees identified and used in their lives (Gladden, 2012). They highlighted how it aided in meaning-making and developing hopes for the future (Gladden, 2012). Lazarus and Folkman, as referenced in Gladden's (2012) article, also states that, "having strong positive beliefs, such as believing a situation is manageable or belief in a caring God, can bring a person hope that allows them to better cope with a situation" (Gladden, 2012, p.188).

2.2.6 Faith, religion and hope. In the same way that some refugees identified that maintaining hope in the refugee camp helped them survive boredom and hardship (Goodman, 2004), other refugees identified that practicing religion in the camps also kept them from boredom because they had nothing else to do (Dorais, 2007). Religion both gave meaning to their lives and represented a pathway toward beauty and truth (Dorais, 2007). Furthermore, many refugees identified the faith or religiosity that they had developed in their home country as a strong factor in "[sustaining] their hopes during the migration process…and [in reaffirming] their identity once resettled in a third country" (Dorais, 2007, p. 57). Before leaving their home country, they had well-established beliefs that guided them in "understanding where they stood in relation to their social, natural and spiritual environment and for defining how they should behave in the face of profound political and societal change" (Dorais, 2007, p.59). Therefore, their religious beliefs helped them make sense of the difficult migratory experiences that they went through (Dorais, 2007). They identified that faith or religion was a source of hope (Dorais, 2007), and that hope was the basis of their faith (Ai, et al, 2007; Gladden, 2012). The refugees also strongly connected their well-being to strong spiritual, religious or faith convictions (Baird & Boyle, 2012). In fact, being a refugee often reinforced their faith commitments, regardless of the faith tradition that they came from (Dorais, 2007, pg.60), and at times, their religious traditions changed throughout the course of their journey, depending on the experiences they endured (Dorais, 2007).

Once settled in the country of asylum, refugees often quickly began to reestablish religious traditions in their homes and communities because it offered a sense of

consistency and comfort in the face of adjustment and uncertainty (Dorais, 2007). It also helped in the beginning stages of adaptation because it provided respite from daily challenges (Dorais, 2007), and provided hope. This hopefulness "predicted over-time positive changes" or posttraumatic growth in their lives (Ai, et al, 2007, p.61).

2.2.7 Hope and peace. A final, very unique theme that appears in the articles is the use of the word 'peace' in relation to the concept of hope. It is used quite differently in four of the articles: refugee women from South Sudan translated 'well-being' to "peace in heart" (Baird & Boyle, 2012, p.19), refugee men in refugee camps identified "no peace in the heart" (Pavlish, 2007, p.32), refugee children described hope-engendering experiences with nature as sources of "peace and renewal" (Yohani & Larsen, 2009, p.257), and refugee women in refugee camps identified relying on God for a "heart of peace" (Pavlish, 2005, p.15). On a related note, the word "heart" is also used several times in relation to hope, such as "peace of heart" (Baird & Boyle, 2012, p.19), "heart of hope" (Yohani & Larsen, 2009), and "heart of peace" (Pavlish, 2005, p.15). This is interesting because these are words that are commonly associated with spirituality and religion, which has also been demonstrated to be closely linked to hope.

2.2.8 Impact of workers on hope. Refugees also identified that the support they received through their relationships with settlement workers had an impact on their ability to hope (Anjum, Nordqvist & Timpka, 2007). Many refugee women identified that they arrived in their new country with many hopes and dreams, but were faced with lack

of support, encouragement and acceptance, which impacted their ability to realize these hopes (McKinnon, Zeitun & Stephen, 2006). In a study conducted to document refugees' hopes upon their arrival, researchers found that the refugees' hopes for themselves were matched by their resettlement workers, with a particular focus on education and employment (Anjum, Nordqvist & Timpka, 2007). Unfortunately, when the refugees and resettlement workers were re-interviewed six years later, their hopes did not match and the refugees identified that the lack of support very much compromised their hopes (Anjum, Nordqvist & Timpka, 2007). In a further study in which children's hopes during the adjustment period were examined, workers were interviewed to identify hope and hope-engendering experiences for refugee children (Yohani, 2010). The results demonstrated that workers played a role in "growing, nurturing and [maintaining] hope" (Yohani, 2010, p.870), through the use of patience, encouragement, responsive action, personal commitment and self-reflection (Yohani, 2010). The researchers identified that a hopeful orientation was very important for workers to identify with and that hope was a trait that many effective group leaders possessed (Yohani, 2010). Unfortunately, despite this acknowledgement that it is important for workers to support refugees' hopes, hope is still not often used in fields such as therapy or education (Yohani & Larsen, 2009).

2.2.9 Implications, critiques and gaps. Many of the implications for research, particularly regarding the significance of hope to refugees, are very closely tied to both critiques of the literature and gaps in the scholarship. One of the most glaringly obvious findings of this literature review was the lack of substantial literature specifically about

refugees and hope. Although this review did cover several themes, most of the articles were *not* primarily about hope; rather, they were about well-being, coping, life experiences, posttraumatic growth, or actions of refugees, with one of the findings being hope. Beyond this, this literature review examined hope regarding refugee adults, youth and children due to a lack of literature with a particular focus on one demographic. It is clear that this is an area in which further research is needed, particularly because the literature demonstrates how important hope is in areas such as development in children (Yohani & Larsen, 2009), adjustment (Ai, et al, 2007; Yohani, 2010), personal changes (Ai, et al, 2007), coping (Ai, Peterson & Huang, 2003; Gladden, 2012; Yohani, 2010), resettlement (Pavlish, 2007), and well-being (Baird & Boyle, 2012). Adults, youth and children have very different experiences and needs, and this needs to be reflected in further research about hope.

In addition to this, this literature review revealed a significant need for further longitudinal studies about hope, particularly regarding how hope may evolve as children mature into young adults, or as adults become seniors. None of the literature in this review addressed hope over time, with the exception of one six-year study. This could be an interesting area of research, and it has the potential to span multiple disciplines, such as psychology, theology, philosophy, and social work. It would also address how hope may change over time, or how it may be impacted by such experiences as loss or trauma, which are two gaps that also existed in hope theory literature.

Ai, et al (2007) also demonstrated that "hope as a positive psychological virtue may be a universal resource for positive adaptations and changes" (p.61). Therefore, hope

may be very valuable in the future of posttraumatic growth research (Ai, et al, 2007), which is another relatively new area of research and practice. This is an area that focuses on the "experience of positive change that can occur in the struggle with highly challenging life crises" (Ai, et al, 2007, p.56). It is closely linked with posttraumatic stress research within the realm of psychology. Hope theory is already solidly present in psychology literature, however, by expanding it to intersect with particular fields such as posttraumatic growth, refugees may be better served in a variety of fields.

Furthermore, the articles that referenced a particular theory of hope are unclear on why they chose to use that specific theory. There are many hope theories, and the articles do not contain many critiques of the theories or discussions about how the chosen theory might impact (positively or negatively) the results of their studies or the ensuing discussion. With the exception of Yohani and Larsen's (2009) article about how refugee children perceived hope, none of the articles considered how the refugees responded to the use of this theory or whether they related hope to pathways and agency (Snyder, 2002).

Specific suggestions and implementation strategies for how to include hope in social work practice were not included in the articles. This may be in part because many of the articles reviewed did not set out to demonstrate a particular relationship between hope and refugees, however, even after hope appeared as a finding, the authors tended not to address how that particular finding might find its way into practice. Yohani and Larsen (2009) offered some suggestions, but they tended to be generalized, rather than specific examples of how hope could be integrated into practice.

2.3 Social Work and Hope

The small amount of literature that does exist about hope in social work or settlement work done with refugees demonstrates that hope is a relevant, useful and important topic to consider. Specifically, studies and theories that outline the problematic nature of hopelessness show that discussing hope and utilizing hope-engendering activities and discussions in practice are important (Yohani, 2008; Yohani & Larsen, 2009). Yohani (2008) also suggests that since hope is transferable from children to adults, intentional activities, such as group discussions about hope, presentations of children's hopes, or reflections about hope, could be very helpful when working with refugee parents or adults. Yohani and Larsen (2009) also recommend engaging in hope-engendering activities, as identified by children, in education or therapy to continue to build on children's hope and teach them how to access internal hopeful resources.

Furthermore, as has already been discussed, literature has shown that workers can impact both positively and negatively on refugees' hope (Anjum, Nordqvist & Timpka, 2007; McKinnon, Zeitun & Stephen, 2006; Yohani, 2010). This raises important questions about when, where, and how hope is used by settlement workers and social workers. However, before these questions can be examined, it is even more important to understand how social workers and other helping professionals understand hope, and whether their understandings match their refugee clients' understandings. Hope is clearly an important construct to consider in work with refugees. As the literature demonstrates, it can have different meanings for different people at different points in their lives. As such, social workers, educators, therapists and front line workers need to consider how

they understand hope, as well as how refugees themselves define hope before initiating discussions about hope from their own perspectives. By not engaging in discussions about how the clients understand hope, they are not only avoiding client-centered practice, but this could also have negative implications on the effectiveness and impact of any future-focused, hope-oriented work. Furthermore, in working with a diverse and multi-cultural population, it is somewhat negligent to fail to consider how their transnational, global and cultural experiences may impact on their views on such a diversely understood topic as hope.

2.4 Summary

Clearly, the study of hope has a long and varied history in multiple disciplines, and its application to refugee populations and settlement work and/or social work practice are important topics to also consider. Research has shown that hope is important in refugees' live in such areas as development in children (Yohani & Larsen, 2009), adjustment (Ai, et al, 2007; Yohani, 2010), coping (Ai, Peterson & Huang, 2003; Gladden, 2012; Yohani, 2010), resettlement (Pavlish, 2007), and well-being (Baird & Boyle, 2012). It also shows that settlement workers and other professionals can impact both positively and negatively on refugees' hopes (Anjum, Nordqvist & Timpka, 2007) and can even foster growth of hope in their lives (Yohani, 2010). Therefore, in doing work with refugee clients, it is important to understand how both the refugee client and the worker understand hope, so that the interactions that the clients and workers have can effectively grow, nurture and maintain hope in refugees' lives (Yohani, 2010).

This area of hope scholarship, particularly as it pertains to work with refugees, must continue to grow and be developed. The literature shows that hope is a key construct in work with refugee adults, youth and children; this study will seek to expand existing studies to examine if settlement workers understand hope differently or similarly, with the goal of applying the findings to social work and settlement practice.

3. Methodology

This study's key idea of looking at various ideas of hope from multiple standpoints and considering varying perspectives and experiences is indicative of its methodology. An interpretivist theoretical framework, with a social constructionist conceptual lens, has been used to examine several perspectives on hope. Through the consideration of differences or similarities in hope conceptualizations as described by settlement workers, this study will examine how interpretations and understandings can vary and can reflect how meaning is the result of personal histories, relationships and experiences. The ensuing discussion will cover the implications of the theoretical framework on the methodology, as well as the implications of the methodology on the data analysis.

3.1 Interpretivism as Theoretical Framework

Interpretivism originated with Weber and Dilthey in the areas of sociology and philosophy, respectively (Neuman, 1997). Interpretivism generally looks at people's perceptions, interpretations, meanings, and understandings, and uses these as data to be analyzed (Mason, 2002). Typically, interpretivist research is conducted as a way of understanding "what is meaningful or relevant to the people being studied, or how individuals experience daily life" (Neuman, 1997, p.69). It recognizes that meaning is developed through relationships and within shared systems of meaning (Neuman, 1997), rather than existing inherently within experiences or actions. Thus, meaning may be

collectively experienced, but with individual nuances and influences (Neuman, 1997). As such, some interpretivist studies tend to limit generalizations (Neuman, 1997), as different people could experience the same concept uniquely. There is, however, an ongoing debate within qualitative research about whether interpretive research can or should be generalized or not (Williams, 2000). Some feel that generalizability within this type of research is impossible, which others feel that generalizability is inevitable (Williams, 2000). My perspective on this issue is that since social constructionism sets out to present each voice as equal, unique, and differently nuanced, generalizability tends not to be the objective or purpose.

Another way of understanding the interpretive approach is as "the systematic analysis of socially meaningful action through the direct detailed observation of people in natural settings in order to arrive at understandings and interpretations of how people create and maintain their social worlds" (Neuman, 1997, p.68). Not all studies involve a participant observation or fieldwork element, however, which allows for interviews to occur which examine participants' reasoning, norms, and understandings (Mason, 2002). In either case, it is the responsibility of the researcher to request clarification when needed to ensure that he or she understands the meanings that are embedded in the language and actions of participants (Schwandt, 1994). Interpretivists are generally more concerned with understanding issues of knowing and being, than with the method used to obtain them (Schwandt, 1994). That said, the methods utilized tend to involve observing, listening, asking or clarifying, and recording (Schwandt, 1994).

Interpretivism has influenced the development of this study in that it is based on the value of settlement workers' perceptions and understandings, as well as how those perceptions are individually experienced and meaningful in daily life. This study will not be focused on generalizing the findings; it will instead provide space for the participants to share their ideas and thoughts and will honour differences in points of view. The findings will be summarized and then applied to the field of social work in a manner that encourages front line workers, therapists, or other social workers to consider how differences or similarities in conceptualizations may be impact practice or be otherwise applied to the field of social work. My study does not involve immersion or observation, however, it is based on interviewing participants and analyzing their varying interpretations of the socially meaningful concept of hope.

3.2 Social Constructionism as Conceptual Lens

Constructionism is one of the varieties of interpretivism (Neuman, 1997), which makes it a natural fit as a conceptual lens for my study. It was developed against a backdrop of postmodernism (Burr, 1995), and has evolved into three main movements: critical, literary/rhetorical, and social (Gergen & Gergen, 2007). The critical movement focuses on challenging and critiquing existing empirical and authoritative explanations of the world, while the literary/rhetorical movement queries whether existing scientific theories or descriptions of the world are more dependent on discourse or on the physical world (Gergen & Gergen, 2007). Lastly, and most relevant for this study, is the social

movement, which looks at "collective scholarship" (Gergen & Gergen, 2007, p.462) and the study of knowledge in the social sciences.

There is no consensus among authors on the exact description of social constructionism (Burr, 1995; Witkin, 2012); however, all social constructionist descriptions involve at least one of the following four assumptions: (1) that knowledge is taken-for-granted and we should be critical of this, (2) that knowledge is culturally and historically specific, (3) that knowledge is constructed in relational and social processes, and, (4) that social action is closely linked to knowledge (Burr, 1995). Social constructionism is more concerned with description and use of language than with 'Truth" (Witkin, 2012, p.25), or empirical knowledge; therefore, language and discourse are central to a constructionist's perspective, as is the political aspect of knowledge (Gergen & Gergen, 2007). This political element throws into question what *is* (Truth or empirical knowledge) versus what *might be* (Gergen & Gergen, 2007). Interestingly, "contemporary interpretivists and constructivists... [believe] that creation of meaning and the sense of reality is only what people think it is, and no set of meanings are better or superior to others" (Neuman, 1997, p.70).

Social constructionism typically refers to the practice of "[tracing] the origin of knowledge, meaning or understanding to human relationships" (Gergen & Gergen, 2007, p.461). It is based on the "assumption that the terms by which the world is understood are social artifacts, products of historically situated interchanges among people" (Gergen, as referenced by Schwandt, 1994, p.127). Relationships are viewed as the source or centre of all knowledge and societal action; there is no individual knowledge, rather all thought

processes are developed culturally (Gergen & Gergen, 2007). While this is in and of itself a Western research methodology, this idea that knowledge is formed and founded within relationships exists in contrast to the traditional Western notion of the "individual knower, the rational, self-directing, morally centered and knowledgeable agent of action" (Gergen & Gergen, 2007, p.462). This provides an interesting element to my research, because my study will be conducted in a Western environment, by a Western researcher, with people who do not necessarily identify as Westerners. Therefore, the idea of collective formation of knowledge or meaning may feel familiar for some participants or readers, particularly those from collectivist societies; however, it may be interpreted or experienced differently by Canadian-born or assimilated participants or readers who are accustomed to more traditional Western way of knowing.

Social constructionism has two main implications on methodology (Gergen & Gergen, 2007). Firstly, "no authoritative statement about 'the nature of things' stands on any foundation other than its own network of presumptions" (Gergen & Gergen, 2007, p.465). This means that the community being researched is able to credit or discredit research practices based on their cultural and historical collective knowledge (Gergen & Gergen, 2007). Secondly, with this removal of power from the authoritative group comes a wealth of possibility for research (Gergen & Gergen, 2007). Since each participant's perspective contributes to the construction of knowledge, they also offer the possibility of ongoing dialogue, endless questioning and continuous knowledge creation (Gergen & Gergen, 2007). Over time, these implications have caused significant controversy within the social sciences, but they have also expanded research methods and questions (Gergen

& Gergen, 2007), as the possibilities for studies and sources of meaning making have been increased. This study begins to remove power from the authoritative voices within hope literature simply by questioning the social constructionist nature of hope and exploring how community members' ideas conflict and agree with existing theories. It also takes advantage of this opportunity to have members of the community offer their own interpretations of the meaning of hope as participants in this study, rather than simply considering academic and/or theoretical perspectives. The participants were also asked at the end of each interview to give feedback about areas to cover in future interviews and projects. That said, I, the researcher, still have authority as the study's designer and interpreter; therefore, trustworthiness, as it relates to research validity and accurately representing the participants, will be addressed shortly.

Social constructionism offers several different perspectives regarding questions about research validity, particularly because it tends to operate in opposition to positivism and empiricism (Burr, 1995). These considerations are reflexivity, multiple voicing, literary representation, and performance (Gergen & Gergen, 2007). Reflexivity is evident in how the researcher exposes his or her own bias, background, strengths, weaknesses, and alternative points of view as part of the research process (Gergen & Gergen, 2007). Multiple voicing allows many people's perspectives to be heard through the research, not just the researcher's voice (Gergen & Gergen, 2007). This may happen through collaborative work with participants to ensure that minority voices are not missed in the study's conclusions or interpretations, selecting participants who can present multiple perspectives on the subject matter, or allowing participants to speak for themselves in the

interpretation stage (Gergen & Gergen, 2007). This, however, is not always straightforward, as the researcher is also forced to consider how his or her voice will be heard, how to represent the participants equally, and how to present each person's multiple ideas and views (Gergen & Gergen, 2007). The researcher has the freedom to select a variety of literary styles to express or represent the participants' interpretations of the research questions (Gergen & Gergen, 2007). This may assist in "the replacement of traditional realist discourse with forms of writing cast in opposition to 'truth telling'" (Gergen & Gergen, 2007, p.468). For example, the researcher may choose to use fiction or poetry to describe their interpretations and reach out to a variety of audiences, not only other academics (Gergen & Gergen, 2007). In other words, "the use of literary styling signals the reader that the account does not function as a map of the world, but as an interpretive activity addressed to a community of interlocutors" (Gergen & Gergen, 2007, p.468). Finally, performance arts, as well as other forms of creative expression, are being used more often as a means of presenting the findings (Gergen & Gergen, 2007). This is appropriate, as these alternative forms of communication provide unique ways of conveying interpretive information.

Reflexivity is evident in this study through the discussion of the limitations of this study, detailed reflections about my own personal learning throughout the research process, and discussion of my own biases and assumptions. Multiple voicing is used by attempting to use the participants' own words as much as possible throughout the findings and discussion, and electing to use charts as a means of presenting the findings so that I could separate the participants' voices from each other, as well as from my own

voice. This will be discussed further in the discussion about trustworthiness within this study, as well as in the discussion about the complexity of identities. This particular study does not use alternative literary representation or performance arts to represent the findings or conclusions. The issue of trustworthiness and how I worked around some of the tensions and challenges in maintaining the integrity and validity of this study, including these social constructionist considerations, follows.

3.3 Trustworthiness

Several significant social constructionist challenges have already been outlined above; however, there are other challenges of both interpretivism and social constructionism. For me, the utmost challenge is the authority of the researcher (Schwandt, 1994). A clear tension exists in that the very act of interpreting various responses gives authority to the researcher (Schwandt, 1994). In an approach in which each voice is to be equal and authority is questioned, this is problematic. While there is no way to completely eliminate my authority as the researcher, there are ways in which I have attempted to diminish this power and ensure that the participants' voices are represented accurately. These strategies are discussed in depth in the following pages.

Another significant challenge is ensuring that I, the researcher who holds this authority, have not misrepresented the data that was obtained (Mason, 2002). One way that I attempted to counter this tension was by member checking the data with a participant who can offer personal experience and opinions as both a refugee and a settlement worker. However, while this may have somewhat diminished this tension, it

has not eliminated it entirely. Two other ways in which social constructionist researchers are rethinking the representation of their participants (instead of by writing and analyzing data on their own) is through *cojoint* representation, or working jointly with participants to write the research findings, and through *distributed* representation, or "attempts by the investigator to set in motion an array of differing voices in dialogic relationship" (Gergen & Gergen, 2007, p.472). An example of distributed representation would be using a direct transcription chart so that the participants' voices are entirely separated from the researcher's voice and the reader is able to consider how all of the voices exist individually as well as in relationship with one another (Gergen & Gergen, 2007). While I was not able to engage with cojoint representation due to time constraints, I have used distributed representation throughout the "Research Findings" chapter through the use of direct quotations in chart format to assist in separating each participants' voice from the others, as well as from my own voice.

In a further effort to in avoid misrepresentation, I also proposed to engage with triangulation, or the use of multiple data collection methods (Mason, 2002). I have audio-recorded in-depth one-on-one interviews with each participant and then transcribed them verbatim for clarity of analysis. This left less opportunity for judgment or my own interpretation of the interviews and allowed me to provide direct quotations within this final publication to demonstrate and enhance my analysis (Mason, 2002). In addition, the participants were also given the opportunity to bring a piece of artwork to the interview to assist them in describing what hope means to them. This was to assist in filling in some of the gaps in the audio recordings and my recollections of the interviews, as well as to

help clarify any descriptions of hope. It was also to be a way of "accessing aspects of [my] interviewees' lives or experiences which are non-verbalized, or difficult for them to verbalize" (Mason, 2002, p.77). Again, the proposed use of images of these pieces of artwork in the final publication was to help to clarify thoughts or explanations, particularly for those for whom English is not their first language, or those who struggle with verbally explaining their thoughts. Unfortunately, only one of the participants chose to engage with this method and I have chosen not to include a copy in this final publication for confidentiality reasons.

From my perspective, the strengths of social constructionism are clear and numerous: marginalized, lay, and lesser-heard voices are heard; 'Truth' is questioned; taken-for-granted knowledge is challenged; context is considered; and relationships are emphasized. Another key strength of social constructionism is its rejection of essentialism and taken-for-granted knowledge (Burr, 1995). It critiques what is considered 'Truth' or 'expert' knowledge and seeks to challenge this existing knowledge, with particular emphasis on adding lesser-heard voices to the dialogue. Social constructionism also gives way to new research practices and pushes research methods in areas in which they have previously been limited (Gergen & Gergen, 2007).

A final strength of using social constructionism as a methodology in my study is its clear link to social work (Witkin, 2012). Social workers tend to be conscious of trying to have alternative discourses or creating space for marginalized voices to be heard, and social constructionism provides a framework for doing so (Witkin, 2012). In a similar way, social workers are often interested in questioning dominant voices and bringing

alternate understandings to the forefront of discussion (Witkin, 2012). Social workers have long been interested in "person-in-environment" considerations and the impact of context on individuals' beliefs, which is reflective of the social constructionist approach (Witkin, 2012). Finally, social constructionism, by virtue of including marginalized or lesser-heard voices, imagines a future in which people are more open to different views; social workers tend to also envision this type of change as a central value within the field (Witkin, 2012). Clearly, there is goodness of fit between social work and social constructionism in research. This natural gelling is beneficial for my study and will assist with analysis and implications for practice.

3.4 Research Methods

This is a comparative study of female settlement workers' perspectives about hope. The emphasis on women was selected both for ease of rapport building between a female researcher and female participants, as well as for the purpose of creating a more manageable population to include in this study. As I was already both personally and professionally well-connected in the community, following ethics approval (see *Appendix A: Ethics Approval*), participants were contacted through personal connections, as well as through general e-mails sent to settlement programs and workers, and recruitment materials distributed through these agencies (see *Appendix B: Recruitment Materials*). When a participant expressed interest in the study, we had a brief phone or e-mail conversation to clarify any questions, concerns or issues; participants who wished to proceed were then able to select the time and location for their interview, to enhance their

comfort and convenience. At the interview, I reviewed the Letter of Information and Consent Form (see *Appendix C: Letter of Information & Consent Form*) with the participant, and gave her the opportunity to ask any questions she had. Each participant was then asked to complete a brief questionnaire (see *Appendix D: Background Information Sheet*) that collected some demographic and background information about herself for the purpose of summarizing the sample included in this study. When the participant was ready, the interview began.

The interview itself was structured by an interview guide (see *Appendix E: Interview Guide*), however, it was also open to prompts and conversation throughout. Through these in-depth, one-on-one interviews, I gathered data about how the participants understood hope. With the participant's permission, they were audio-recorded to allow me to use direct quotations and engage with distributed representation. Participants were also offered the opportunity to bring a piece of artwork to the interview, such as a photograph, drawing, or poem, to help them describe what hope means to them. This was not a required part of the process; participants were able to elect to bring artwork if it helped them describe hope or if they had something that was meaningful that they wanted to share visually. Only one of the three participants chose to engage with this method. This piece of artwork was photographed, again with the participant's permission, for use in this final report, if appropriate. This creative research method was chosen to provide an alternative, but equally important, way of demonstrating the trustworthiness of my study. It also gave the option to provide a visual representation of the participants' responses in the final publication.

The interviews were manually transcribed verbatim to ease in clarity, coding and analysis. They were coded by hand for themes and key phrases, as well as for commonalities and differences between interviews. The discussion of my study is focused on meanings, as depicted in the oral interviews and physical artwork example. This allows the social constructionist lens to be demonstrated and triangulated through two different methods, and provides opportunity for each participant to discuss how her conceptualization of hope is impacted by her lived experiences, relationships, culture, and/or history.

3.5 Sample and Sample Selection

While this study initially set out to compare female settlement workers' and refugee women's perspectives on hope, after a difficult period of recruitment, it was modified to include only female settlement workers' interviews. I attempted to recruit in several cities at various refugee-serving and social service agencies, through the use of posters, flyers and e-mails, as well as through my own personal contacts and those of my supervisor. Unfortunately, I did not receive interested responses from refugee women, other than one settlement worker who also identified as a refugee. Repeatedly, I was told that the lack of available interpretation was a significant barrier in recruiting participants and that refugee youth might have been a better population to sample because they may be more comfortable or fluent in English than refugee women. I was also told that many refugees already have many challenges in their lives and that they do not need the added responsibility or pressure of being part of a research study. In speculating further on my

difficulty with recruiting refugee women, I also considered that it may be an intimidating experience being interviewed (in English) by an 'academic' or that, not being actively connected to one of these agencies through my current employment, these agencies might be hesitant to advertise for a research study that they could not personally vouch for. I also considered that 'refugee' might be a label that is resisted by some people, as it is often imposed upon them by others, or perhaps that some people may no longer identify as a 'refugee' after they obtain their permanent residency or Canadian citizenship. By attempting to recruit using the term 'refugee women', some potential participants may have been off-put by the use of a label.

Despite these difficulties, I was able to gather a small, but diverse sample of three female settlement workers. These women work for several different refugee-serving agencies in southern Ontario. All are between the ages of 40-59; two are married, while one is separated. All three women are Canadian citizens, and one participant also identifies as a refugee herself. None of these participants were born in Canada, however, each of them has been here for more than twenty years.

Due to this small sample, each interview carried significant weight in this study. As a result, the interview with the participant who identified both as a refugee woman and a settlement worker provides some interesting implications for my study. Although I had initially planned to conduct very similar interviews with both refugee women and settlement workers, there were minor differences in the questions. For example, while I asked the settlement workers what their hopes were for their clients, I had planned to ask the refugee women what their hopes were for their workers. While recognizing the

complexity of identities, I interviewed this participant as a settlement worker who has both the personal experience of being a refugee, as well as the experience of working with and knowing others who have different experiences as refugees. While I cannot separate the parts of the interviews that were influenced by the experience of being a refugee or settlement worker, it is important to remember this complexity when reviewing the findings below. As stated, through the use of charts, which separate the participants' voices, the reader is able to gain a thorough understanding of each participant's conceptualization of hope. That said, readers may have added interest in recognizing that Participant 2, as identified throughout the remainder of this publication, identifies as both a refugee and settlement worker.

3.6 Summary

Although there is not a clearly agreed upon definition of social constructionism, nor are there set-in-stone methods to follow within this methodology, social constructionism provides a vehicle for hearing a multiplicity of voices and reconfiguring how discourse is created, sustained, and changed (Gergen & Gergen, 2007). It provides an interesting, and often creative, way for largely unheard voices to be heard and dominantly heard voices to be reconsidered; it shifts power and places emphasis on meaning-making and relationships (Gergen & Gergen, 2007). With care and thoughtfulness, this provides a useful way for settlement workers to have their voices heard about a topic that is often discussed in the field: hope. Through the use of individual interviews, I have collected data about how they understand hope and how this

understanding was formed. Triangulation, member checking and distributed representation contributed to the validity and trustworthiness of this study.

4. Research Findings – Introduction to Findings

Prior to the modifications made to my study, I had originally expected to encounter variances in perceptions of hope between refugee women and female settlement workers. I thought there might be similarities within each populations' explanations of hope, and differences between the two groups. Instead, even with the changes made to the study, I found variances in the opinions of all of the participants. While there were clear commonalities and themes present throughout the interviews, many differences appeared in the nuances, understandings, and descriptions that they gave, as well. The findings are presented straightforwardly in text, however, I also elected to use distributed representation by placing key quotations in chart format and separating them from my voice, as well as the voices of the other participants. This provides an effective method of understanding each participant's voice separately, as well as in relation to the other participants (Gergen & Gergen, 2007). Through this use of text and charts, this chapter outlines the contents of the interviews.

4.1 Defining Hope

The interviews began by asking all of the participants what hope is, whether it is about the past, present or future, whether it is a feeling or way of thinking, and what the significance of hope is in their lives. There were very different understandings of hope represented by the three participants; however, there were themes within these definitions, as well. To begin with, it is important to note that all of the participants made

comments about the abstract or intangible nature of hope, as well as the difficulty of defining or articulating it clearly. The first participant's definition had to do with hope giving people the "motivation to just keep moving forward", as well as recognizing a "positive future" or that "something better is coming". This better future, however, is based in reality and is "not just wishful thinking" that could never happen. This same individual felt that hope is both a feeling and a way of thinking. She emphasized that hope "[starts] with the thinking, but it ends up becoming a feeling". In other words, "it's something that you can set your mind to, but then it affects how you feel, and then your actions flow out of that". She felt that it is difficult to separate the thinking and feeling aspects of hope, but related it more strongly to hope being a feeling. When asked about the timing of hope, this participant expressed that hope is connected to the present and the future. She stated that it is "more about the future, but…it affects the now". She emphasized that having hope for a positive future "gives you motivation to keep living well in the now". In summary, she felt that it was more about the future because it impacts "the way you live now". The significance of hope to this participant was primarily about how it acts as a motivator that helps people overcome difficult times in their lives. It is during these hard times, when the "immediate doesn't look very good", that she felt that hope is most important (Participant 1).

The second participant explained that hope is a "belief that no matter how things are…that there will be something that you will learn about this that will help you in the future" and that the lessons that you learn will not only help you, but will help others in your life, as well. Further, she clarified that it is "always knowing that no matter what, I

will be okay" and that "I will get some answers eventually". She stated that hope becomes more real to individuals when they are struggling. This participant felt that hope is both a feeling and way of thinking that she has developed throughout her work and life experiences, as well as by simply "being in the world". Hope is simply present in her life and it is something that she constantly lives with on a daily basis, indicating that hope is more about the present for her, than the past or future. Interestingly, however, when asked about the significance of hope in her life, this participant drew on her past experiences to explain. She stated that she went through some very difficult times and thought that she had lost hope. It was by somehow realizing that hope was alive in herself that she was able to overcome the pain, fear and desperation that these circumstances caused. Hope continues to be significant in her life because she can now encourage others with complete certainty and credibility when they are going through challenging situations (Participant 2).

The third participant told of a much different understanding of hope. She defined it as "the understanding that I don't have to have control over everything" and that "things have a way of turning out". She felt that there were both predictable and unpredictable elements to hope. For example, she felt that "experience really helps you to predict some things, but I've also learned that even when I have predicted things, they don't [always] turn out the way that I predicted them". She linked it more specifically to her faith, by stating that hope is knowing that "there is life beyond myself and there is something greater – in this case, God is greater" and that "I can rely on something that is bigger than myself". Hope, for this participant, is "more a way of thinking, but also a

state of being"; however, it is "more than a feeling". Furthermore, she identified that, while the present is important and it ties in with the future, hope is also very connected to the past because of the history and experiences that people take with them. It is by learning how hope got them through both negative and positive experiences in the past that people continue to have hope in the present. To emphasize the significance of hope in her life, this participant emphasized why hope is important by juxtaposing it with lack of hope. She stated that "without hope it is very difficult to work with so much pain" and that "without hope it really seems like everything is so negative" (Participant 3).

It is easy to see the differences in these perceptions of hope (*see Table #1*). Although the differences are clear, it is important to note several themes that were present. For example, all three participants' definitions indicated that hope has to do with believing that better things are coming, as well as that hope is an essential part of life. They also all indicated that hope impacts the present, although some participants also strongly connected it to the past or future. Furthermore, all three participants spoke about hope helping them or the people in their lives overcome difficult circumstances.

Table #1: Defining Hope

	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3
What is hope?	"…having a positive future" "…something better is coming" "…some kind of motivation to just keep moving forward"	"…a belief that no matter how things are…that there will be something that you will learn about this that will help you in the future" "…it's always knowing that no matter what, I will be okay" "…it's knowing that whatever happens now, as bad as it is,…that I will get some answers eventually and that I'll be okay somehow"	"…the understanding that I don't have to have control over everything" "…that things have a way of turning out" "…that there is life beyond myself and there is something greater"
Is hope a feeling or way of thinking?	"…in some ways it's both, but I think maybe it starts…with the thinking, but it ends up becoming a feeling"	"It's a feeling, it's a way of thinking that I have developed through my life experiences and my work experiences and just by being in the world"	"…for me, it's more a way of thinking, but it's also a state of being" "…it's more than a feeling"
Is hope about the present or future?	"I think it's more about the future, but again it affects the now"	"…I think you can live in hope everyday" "…becomes more real to you when you're struggling, when you're going through a hard time"	"…the present is very important because things are happening right now and that ties into the future" "…hope is also related to the past because there's a history to everybody and there's a history to most things" "…hope is the understanding that life is beyond the moment…and it's also beyond the past. And it's something in the future that is very important, that things have not been written"
How is hope significant to you?	"…it's a big motivator…for me personally and then for the people that I work with" "…that's what allows [people that I work with who are going through really bad situations] to get through"	"I was able to overcome the pain that I never thought was going to go away" "I'm able to tell [people who are going through difficult times] with total credibility because I believe in it, that they can do it"	"…without hope it's very difficult to work with so much pain and people's lives" "…without hope it really seems like everything is so negative"

4.2 Learning About Hope

When asked about how they came to their particular understanding of hope, there were several commonalities in the responses. It is important to note the slight difference

between responses that indicate variance in understandings and experiences (*see Table #2*).

All three participants stated that it was through their life experiences that they came to their understanding of hope. One participant stated that, "hope is most important for all of us when things are particularly bad…it becomes critical when the immediate doesn't look very good" (Participant 1). Another participant stated that knowing that she had supportive people around her when she went through difficult times is what brought her to her particular understanding of hope (Participant 2). Furthermore, she stated that being able to recognize that other people in the world were going through similar difficulties added to her understanding (Participant 2). The third participant outlined that her own experiences, as well as the experiences of others, has brought her to her understanding of hope, particularly because these experiences sometimes surprise her because they are different than she expected or predicted. This element of surprise helps keep her grounded and pushes her to learn more about hope (Participant 3).

All of the participants also identified that their work and witnessing the experiences of others has also taught them about hope. For example, one woman elaborated by clarifying that "watching and listening to friends and folks [at my agency] who have been through those low times…and seeing that that's really how people get through the darkness of the now is [by] looking to a better future" is how she has learned, and continues to learn, about hope (Participant 1). Another stated that her education and hearing about others' experiences has taught her about hope, and that her faith has also been an important factor in learning about hope (Participant 3).

These women also identified that there were particular people and events that influenced their understandings of hope. All three stated that women were major inspirations in their lives; however, they identified different women that they felt most inspired by. One identified feeling inspired by refugee women that she had met through work and traveling (Participant 1), another identified female co-workers, friends and mentors (Participant 2), while the third identified women who have suffered significantly in their lives yet still remain hopeful, as sources of hope (Participant 3).

Table #2: Learning About Hope

	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3
How did you come to this understanding of hope?	"I guess it's just life" "…I think hope is most important for all of us when things are particularly bad, you know? I think it becomes critical when the immediate doesn't look very good" "…just watching and listening to friends and folks [at my agency] who have been through those low times…" "…and just seeing that that's how people get through the darkness of the now is [by] looking to a better future…"	"…I was never alone…there were incredible people that came and walked with me during that time" "…this doesn't happen just to me, this is what is happening in other parts of the world"	"…my own training…and my own experiences and experiences of people" "…I've seen things happen that have really surprised me and they shouldn't surprise me anymore…so, there's an element of, that you don't know. That element keeps you grounded…and that's very healthy because it keeps pushing me to learn more about hope or anything" "…my faith"
Is there a specific person or experience that has influenced your understanding of hope?	"…I don't know of one particular person, but there's so many" "…the refugee people that I've connected with here in Canada, particularly some of the refugee women in Uganda and Kenya in Africa that I've met…just interacting with them and listening to them share their stories has shaped my understanding, but also it would be who I would look to when I think of who exhibits this"	"…there are many women in my life that have helped me keep my hope alive" "So, I think my hope, it comes from many sources…I am constantly nurtured in that way"	"…to me, it's really a building up of hope over the years" "…I think women have been a really good source of inspiration for me because, again, I've seen women struggle so hard sometimes, struggle so hard, and I don't know how they do it" "…and you can learn from people who've suffered so much and learn hope from them because they're really hopeful"

4.3 Experiencing Hope

The participants were asked about what makes them feel hopeful, what their hope depends on and how they maintain hope in their lives. Interestingly, within this series of questions, all three women spoke about nature, albeit in nuanced ways (*see Table #3*). One participant stated that, "when spring comes and there's signs of new life, you know, it's like signs that better things are coming" (Participant 1). Similarly, another participant found that "…knowing that the sun and the moon and the trees are always going to be there" makes her feel hopeful (Participant 3). Yet another participant identified that she gardens to maintain hope in her life because it is "constant rebirth", particularly in Canada because of the contrast between the winter and spring (Participant 2).

Within this section of the interviews, all of the participants also spoke about their faith and/or spirituality. For example, one participant identified that "knowing God is bigger than myself and bigger than the problem" makes her hopeful, and that her hope "depends on [her] understanding and belief in God" (Participant 3). Similarly, another participant spoke about "having some kind of belief beyond even this life gives me a lot of hope because a lot of problems aren't eradicated in this life, and so I need that to give me hope, that there's something bigger and better beyond what I can see and what I personally can fix or experience" (Participant 1). In a slightly different vein, another participant identified less closely with religiosity and more close with spirituality. She expressed that to maintain her hope, she "lives in prayer in a way and it's not about being a religious person" (Participant 2).

A third common theme found within these questions was about how seeing other people's hope makes these participants feel hopeful. "Seeing people up close who are able to live through those dire circumstance and find a reason to go on, still invest in others, and look beyond themselves" is a source of hope for one woman (Participant 1). Another woman articulated it differently by explaining that "the people that inspire my hope the most are the people that are coming from situations of extreme poverty, extreme persecution, horrible experiences that are still able to laugh and to look at the bright side of life" (Participant 2). She went on to explain that sometimes these people feel like they have lost hope, but it is actually just below the surface and "you only have to scratch a little bit and you find it there" (Participant 2). Witnessing this resiliency of the human spirit, then, serves as a way for this participant to feel hopeful in her life.

There were also several differences in responses. When asked what her hope was dependent on, one participant spoke about the privilege that she has in her life (Participant 2). Having a good place to live, food, friends and family, a support system, and healthy children are some of the elements of privilege that she identified (Participant 2). Practicing intentional gratefulness was one of the ways that she maintained hope in her life, although she identified that it is not difficult to maintain hope in her current environment (Participant 2). Another participant spoke about how knowing that "history tells me that things are not the way that I think all the time" is one of the things that her hope depends on (Participant 3). She uses the past, including stories and biographies, to reenergize and rekindle her hope (Participant 3).

Table #3: Experiencing Hope

	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3
What makes you feel hopeful?	"Spring!...when spring comes and there's signs of new life, you know, it's like signs that better things are coming" "…for me, my Christian faith" "…just seeing people up close who are able to live through dire circumstances and find a reason to go on and still invest in others and look beyond themselves" "…so, looking at other people's examples of what they've, how they've lived through particularly difficult circumstances, that's an example and a motivator for me and for others that might be drawn to them"	"…it's easy to lose hope" "…people that inspire my hope the most are the people that are coming from situations of extreme poverty, extreme persecution, horrible experiences that they are still able to laugh and to look at the bright side of life" "…it's the human spirit, the resiliency of people, it's amazing" "…just to see how people are growing and learning constantly"	"Knowing that God is bigger than myself and bigger than the problem and knowing that the sun and the moon and the trees are always going to be there"
What does your hope depend on?	"…a lot of my hope is around my Christian faith" "I think having some kind of belief beyond even this life gives me a lot of hope because a lot of problems aren't eradicated in this life, and so I need that to give me hope, that there's something bigger and better beyond what I can see and what I personally can fix or experience"	"The first word that comes right now, and I don't like it, is privilege" "…I have an excellent support system…and as I said, they nurture my hope"	"It depends on my understanding and belief in God" "It depends on my understanding of how things get resolved many times…life is messy, but in that unpredictability and messiness, things turn out for many people in ways that you don't know, like you have no control over it"
How do you maintain hope in your life?	**not asked**	"I read things that help me" "Gardening gives me hope because it's constant rebirth" "I live in prayer in a way and it's not about being a religious person" "…it's not difficult in the environment that I am in, with the people that I work with. I see hope in them" "…my friends, people who inspire me" "…being grateful in the morning when I wake up"	"…it's been very helpful that I see very positive outcomes in my work in people's lives" "I just have to remember all those wonderful things that happened in the past and then I become hopeful again" "I just go to the past and I go to other resources, other people, stories and biographies, and those kind of energize me and my hope is rekindled again"

4.4 Current Hopes

Each participant was asked about short- and long-term hopes for themselves, as well as their families, communities and clients (*see Table #4*). Two of the women outlined both short and long term hopes, however, one participant stated that "when you're living in hope, I don't think it is either long or short, it's just the moment" (Participant 2). She went on to outline some of her hopes, but did not tie them to a timeline. For example, her hopes for herself include having good family relationships, more time with her family, and a continuingly hopeful attitude (Participant 2). She also expressed hopes for her family to be hopeful, as well, and that "they are well in every way in their life" (Participant 2). In terms of hopes for her community, this participant stated that she hopes for a change in the government (Participant 2). When asked about hopes for her clients, this participant emphasized that above all, it is about clients being able to fulfill their dreams for themselves and their children (Participant 2). She also hopes that the workers that her clients encounter can see beyond skin colour and race to the human being underneath, and that her clients can have "equal opportunities, equal access" (Participant 2).

The other two participants more clearly linked their hopes to short- or long-term timelines. In terms of short-term goals for herself, one of these participants emphasized that she hopes that she does not become bitter and that she finds ways to resist in light of the current environment of hostility towards newcomers (Participant 1). The other participant indicated that she hopes to further her education in the near future (Participant 3). They identified having lots of time with their families and good relationships with

their families (Participant 1), as well as good quality of life (Participant 3), as short term hopes for their families. For their communities, they hope for changes in public attitudes, and that people will be more open to receiving newcomers well and having cross-cultural relationships with them (Participant 1). They also spoke about hoping for the current government to change so that "we can start talking about human rights in a different way…especially the rights of immigrants and refugees" (Participant 3). In terms of short-term hopes for their clients, these participants both mentioned that it depends on the client and that they were unsure if they could say that they hope that every refugee client can stay in Canada, as that is not necessarily realistic (both of these participants spoke about hope as needing to be based in reality or possibility). They also spoke about hoping that clients will be welcomed, appreciated, valued (Participant 1), and empowered (Participant 3), and that they will experience healing and growth in their lives (Participant 3). Furthermore, they hope that their clients "can maintain their hope long enough to see them through to reach their goals" (Participant 1) and find "purpose in their lives" (Participant 3).

In terms of long-term hopes for themselves, one participant spoke of hoping to maintain her health (Participant 3), while the other spoke about hoping to maintain cross-cultural relationships, as well as remain in a place in which she can continue to contribute positively to people's lives (Participant 1). Their hopes for their family's center on having good relationships with their children, long marriages (Participant 1) and good employment (Participant 3). They hope that their communities will have close relationships (Participant 1) and an improved quality of life, particularly for racialized

groups and women (Participant 3). Their hopes for their clients were again dependent on the particular client, however, one participant hopes that "…whether they stay or not, that they've had a positive experience in Canada", that "they would somehow just find a safe, secure, healthy place to live" so that "they're able to create the life that they're seeking" (Participant 1). The other participant expressed that she hopes that her clients can be independent, find meaningful employment and not be poor (Participant 3). She also hopes that "their children would thrive in school" and that her clients can "see themselves as authors of their own lives" (Participant 3).

Table #4: Current Hopes

	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3
Short term hopes			
for yourself	"…because the environment now feels more hostile, I hope that I don't become angry and bitter" "…I need to find a way to resist that environment and still maintain hope"	"…when you're living in hope, I don't think it is either long or short, it's just the moment" **General Hopes -** **For yourself:** "…be more with my family" "…have a better relationship with my children" "…that I am able to continue to have, to be hopeful, always…and be able to inject a little of that enthusiasm for life and that belief that things will get better" **For your family:** "…that they can spread hope, too" "…that they are well in every way in their life" "…that I die before my kids" **For your community:** "…I hope the government changes soon" **For your clients:** "People have dreams for themselves and I just wish that those dreams, they can fulfill them for themselves and for their children" "…that people working with them can see beyond the colour of skin, the religion, that they can see the human being" "…that they have equal opportunity, equal access"	"…to go back to school"
for your family	"…lots of years with my husband" "…good relationships with my kids"		"…that [my parents] have good quality of life"
for your community	"…it feels like a really low point in terms of our public attitude towards immigrants and towards refugees and kind of this growing sense of protectionism and fear and keeping people out, so, I hope that changes" "…that people would be open to just receiving people well" "…have a relationship with someone from a different culture"		"…that this government…is out of the picture sometime in the future and so that we can start talking about human rights in a different way" "…that [the rights of immigrants and refugees] would be fair"
for your clients	"…that they have a positive hearing and that they would be able to stay" "…that they can find at least some place to connect here where they feel appreciated and valued" "…employment" "…that they can maintain their hope long enough to see them through to reach their goals…"		"…that they continue to be empowered in terms of getting the skills, getting the abilities, mental health issues…" "…that they continue the growth" "…continue the journey in self-healing and healing in general, and finding purpose in their lives"
Long term hopes			
for yourself	"…cross-cultural relationships and interacting with people from other cultural groups" "…to travel" "…to be in a place and a role that allows me to have a positive contribution to people		"…that I continue being healthy"

	and to be doing something with people, making a difference for other people"		
for your family	"…lots of years with my husband" "…good relationships with my kids"		"…that [my partner] will find a job here"
for your community	"…to have a close community"		"…to have a different quality of life, especially those who are racialized and for women, as well"
for your clients	"…everybody's situation is different…" "…that they would somehow just find a safe, secure, healthy place to live" "…that they're able to create the life that they're seeking" "…whether they stay or not, that they've had a positive experience in Canada"		"…it depends on the client" "…that they will be able to be independent, that women be able to have skills again, and that they be able to work in those things that they like and they're good at" "…that they would not be poor" "…that their children would thrive in school" "…that they see themselves as authors of their own lives"

4.5 Utilizing Hope

Beyond discussing how each settlement worker understands hope, I also collected data about how they use hope in their work. This seemed particularly important because each worker identified that hope was essential or very important to themselves, as well as to their clients (*see Table #5*). One settlement worker clearly stated that "you cannot do this work without having hope" and "I don't think a person who doesn't believe in hope or doesn't live a life with hope can be effective in this work" (Participant 2). She went on to speak about the "contagious" nature of hope when an individual believes in hope and lives with hope in their life (Participant 2). She clarified that drawing on hope in another person does not mean that bad things will not happen, it means that when the bad

times come, the individual is able to remember and recognize that the good times will come again (Participant 2). She spoke about "injecting" hope into her clients, not by taking it from herself, but by drawing on their own inner stores (Participant 2). By having clients draw on their own good and bad experiences, she helps them "inject" hope back into their lives "so they recover [hope] and it runs through their veins again" (Participant 2). In a similar way, another participant described how she uses hope "in a very strategic way, in a very direct way, intentionally" to "inspire" hope in people so that they "become more empowered and hopeful and they can plan their lives and they can see purpose in their lives" (Participant 3). She elaborated that she does this by helping her clients "see glimmers of light" in their lives when everything else seems dark (Participant 3). As with the previous participant, she does this by drawing on their past experiences when they felt hopeful and "[transferring] that into the future, into the present" (Participant 3). The final participant identified that hope in her practice varies, but often includes "words of encouragement to not give up and coming alongside [clients], providing practical support" (Participant 1). She also identified that it also involves "being present with people", countering negative self-talk, praying with clients, connecting clients to others, and providing "emotional support", including by helping clients ground their hopes in reality (Participant 1).

Table #5: Utilizing Hope

	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3
How do you use hope in your work?	"…words of encouragement to not give up, and coming alongside them, providing practical support" "…we'll offer to pray with people" "…being present so that people aren't journeying through it alone" "…give some encouraging words, some positiveness just to counteract [the negative things that they tell themselves]" "…connecting them to other people so that they don't feel isolated" "…it's not very often that we would have a conversation like this about what is hope and how do you maintain hope. It would be more often non-verbal things, just giving a hug or sitting with somebody" "…just being sensitive about when it is helpful to talk [about difficult things] and when it is helpful to just let it be and let it be on the back burner because if we talk about it too much, they just can't cope…" "…perhaps if they are very unrealistic hopes…[we try] to maybe reshape that in some way at some point"	"You cannot do this work without having hope" "If you believe [that things can get better] and you live a life with hope, it's contagious" "I don't think a person who doesn't believe in hope or doesn't live a life with hope can be effective in this work because there are lots of people out there who have lost [hope] and if you don't inject it in their system somehow, and you're credible, you're not helping your client" "I don't inject [hope] in the way that I take it from me. I take it from them. Because when people are going through bad times, they forget that they are transitioning. But they have had good times and so you have to draw from that…so they recover that and [hope] runs through their veins again" "There are hopes that you would like to give to people, but you can't"	"I think I'm using hope every single day…in a very strategic way, in a very direct way, intentionally" "I use hope in a way that is very much connected to being empowered" "…there's a lot of hope that is developed when you think of what positive things happened in the past…" "I inspire hope for people and that is very key. You have to do that so that they become more empowered and hopeful and they can plan their lives and they can see purpose in their lives" "I have a very positive view of what people can do with their lives…that people can be empowered even when they feel the most disempowered." "…when everything seems to work against them, you still have to be able to see glimmers of light…and if people can't see them, I help them" "…a lot of things we do and say that are very much to do with hope, we do it unconsciously"

4.6 Considering Clients' Hope

When asked if they feel that clients understand hope in the same way as they do, the participants had very different answers (*see Table #6*). One was unsure, stating that "there are a lot of cultural and language barriers or just differences, so even our

communication might be pieced together in patchwork", therefore it is difficult to know (Participant 1). Another stated that she feels that they understand hope differently, and that some some clients understand hope more clearly as faith (Participant 2). That said, she also stated that, regardless of how one understands hope, "at the end of the day, if you have hope, it will bring you joy and hope for the future, hope that whatever is wrong in your life, it's not eternal" (Participant 2). The third participant felt more convinced that her clients understand hope in the same way that she does (Participant 3). She also felt that "they probably understand it more than I do" and that "it's more present in their lives" because "they're suffering more, because they need it more, because it's important for their well-being" (Participant 3). This is not to say that it is not important for herself, she simply felt that she is "not suffering in the way that they are" (Participant 3). This third participant also felt that, due to this experience of suffering, clients hopes are possibly more basic and related to survival. However, she also identified that there are common hopes that many people have, such as for good families, well-being, and a good society (Participant 3). This is similar to another participant, who identified that, "as human beings, regardless of where you came from, we want the same things. We want to be loved, we want our children to be safe, our children to accomplish something in life, our children to be good people, that people we love are ok, that there are no wars" (Participant 2). These broad hopes are then individualized based on personal situations (Participant 2). The final participant felt that there are likely some differences between workers' and clients' hopes, however, in her work, she tries to listen to clients' hopes and help them pursue them and ground them in reality (Participant 1).

Table #6: Considering Clients' Hope

	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3
Do you think that your clients understand hope in the same way as you?	"That's a good question. I don't know" "There's a lot of cultural and language barriers or just differences, so sometimes even our communication might be pieced together in patchwork, so I guess what I'm saying is I don't know"	"No. For some people hope is faith" "It doesn't matter how you believe in [hope or faith] or not, I mean, how you believe differently. At the end of the day, if you have hope, it will bring you joy and hope for the future, hope that whatever is going wrong in your life, it's not eternal"	"I think they do. And they probably understand it more than I do. It's more present in their lives" "For many of my clients, they're constantly thinking about hope because they're suffering more. Because they need it more. Because it's important for their well-being
Do you think your clients have the same hopes as you?	"…I think that things that they're hoping for would be the same things that we're hoping for them" "…there's probably some differences. We try to hear what their hopes are and try to help them pursue those hopes or see those fulfilled in some way"	"No, we all have different hopes" "…there might be differences, but, as human beings, regardless of where you come from, we always want the same things. We want to be loved, we want our children to be safe, our children to accomplish something in life, our children to be good people, that people we love are okay, that there are no wars. I will say that most people want similar things."	"I think their hopes in some ways are the same and in some ways different" "When it comes to not having enough money, living in fear, things like that, your hope is a little bit different. It's more basic."

4.7 Lacking Hope

The final questions asked of each participant had to do with hopelessness. The first participant described hopelessness using words like "despair", "paralyzing", and "incapacitated" and using images of darkness (Participant 1). The second participant described people who "don't think that things can turn around". Hopelessness, she described, is seen in people "who cannot see any beauty around them; they cannot see any positive around them" (Participant 2). She continued her description by explaining that it is when "people look at this world in a completely grey way. There is no colour in that world" (Participant 2). People who experience hopelessness also often speak of suicidal ideation and of having "no desire to be here" (Participant 2). In a different

manner, the third participant described hopelessness as "not finding a way out, not seeing the road, not seeing the light at the end of the tunnel" (Participant 3). She also linked it to feelings of helplessness and powerlessness (Participant 3).

Each participant was asked to consider why people can go through the same circumstances and some people maintain hope, while others lose it. Two of the participants stressed that community (Participant 1) and interpersonal support (Participant 2) are important. One of these participants also speculated that perhaps personality, genetics or childhood experiences may contribute as well (Participant 1). In a similar way, the other participant discussed that hopelessness might be a learned behaviour that is role modeled throughout childhood and adolescence (Participant 1). Similarly, the third participant felt that it is related to histories of abuse, mistreatment or mental health because these histories are "related to what is happening at present", including current stressors and life situations (Participant 3).

Table #7: Lacking Hope

	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3
What does it mean to be hopeless?	"I think of words like despair" "…when I think of hope, I think of sun and light and when I think of hopelessness, I think of dark" "…not being able to get out of bed in the morning because you have no reason to" "paralyzing" "incapacitated"	"Hopeless is somebody who cannot see any beauty around them. They cannot see any positive around them" "…in many cases it's learned behaviour" "…a lot of them have constant suicidal ideation because they don't think that things can turn around" "…look at this world in a completely grey way. There is no colour in that world and they have no desire to be here"	"When there's no hope, you might as well not live. And that's a key, hope is very important in people's lives." "Powerless and hopeless not to see a way out and not to have the strength or the abilities to get out" "Helplessness is not being able to do much, but hopelessness is in some ways not finding a way out, not seeing the road, not seeing the light at the end of the tunnel" "When you feel hopeless, I think in many ways, you feel helpless and vice versa"
Why do some people maintain hope while others lose it?	"Is it their personality? It is something genetic? Is it some early childhood experience?" "It just seems somehow the role of community and the role of other people is significant…"	"…can be learned behaviour" "I don't know if it is genetic" "…people who never lose hope are people who always have people in their lives who were walking with them. They were encouraged, they were cheered on when they made little tiny successes" " …[some people are] working hard at getting what they want and what they need, and they don't get it, they are going to lose hope"	"I think a lot has to come from history of abuse, for example, or history of mistreatment or depression. Our histories follow us forever" "…and also it's related to what is happening at the present"

4.8 Hope Imagery

Participants were invited to bring a piece of artwork, such as a poem, photograph or sculpture, to the interview, to help them describe their understanding of hope. While only one participant decided to engage with this method, it was interesting to note the presence of hope imagery that all of the participants noted in their descriptions of hope, as well as throughout the interviews.

The most common image that was represented was that of lightness and darkness. The participants often spoke of hope being like light in the darkness, while hopelessness is like living in the dark. One participant described that people "get through the darkness of the now [by] looking to a better future" (Participant 1). Hope, then was strongly connected with visualizations of "sun and light" (Participant 1). Another participant identified that hope is like "glimmers of light" that remain even when everything else is going wrong (Participant 3). She spoke of working with a client who felt like she was in a dark room, with lots of negativity in her life, and helping her identify where the "glimmers" are coming from (Participant 3). She recognized that the darkness may still be there, but that she often helps clients find those "glimmers" when they cannot see them for themselves, which is how she inspires hope in her clients (Participant 3). Similarly, she also identified that hopelessness is "not seeing the light at the end of the tunnel" (Participant 3).

A second visual that was noted by all participants was the link between hope and nature. This connection was present in different parts of the interviews, such as when the participants were asked what makes them feel hopeful and how they maintain hope in their lives. One participant identified feeling hopeful when springtime comes because when there are "signs of new life…it's like signs that better things are coming" (Participant 1). Another participant spoke of being inspired by people who,

> …are coming from situations of extreme poverty, extreme persecution, horrible experiences that they are still able to laugh and to look at the bright side of life. And sometimes when they get here, they think that they've lost [hope], but you

> only have to scratch a little bit and you find it there. And it's amazing how [they] start from a place of brokenness and then you see them, they are like **butterflies**, you know. (Participant 2)

Witnessing this transformation and resilience was one of the ways that this participant maintained hope in her daily life (Participant 2). Furthermore, she identified that gardening gives her hope because it represents "constant rebirth" (Participant 2). As someone who has lived in multiple places, she stated that gardening in Canada provides an even stronger picture of this rebirth because of the contrast between winter and spring, death and rebirth (Participant 2). Another participant identified that nature represents hope to her because it "never changes" and this helps her to stay grounded in her work (Participant 3). Additionally, "knowing that the sun and the moon and the trees…are always going to be there" makes her feel hopeful (Participant 3).

One participant brought a piece of artwork to the interview to help explain what hope means to her. The artwork was a poster that was used to announce the unveiling of a monument that was personally connected to her life. For her, it represents hope because it signifies a time in her life when she was given a voice, when her dream of having a permanent monument became a reality, and when she able to grieve her losses. For confidentiality reasons, I have chosen not to include it in this publication, as it may identify the participant, however, I felt that it added depth to this discussion of hope by emphasizing the link between past, present and future hopes, as well as the personal and unique nature of hope representations. I suspect if each of the participants had brought a

piece of artwork, they might have been as varied and diverse as the definitions and conceptualizations that were discussed.

5. Discussion

The previous chapter offered the opportunity to gain insight into the conceptualizations of hope that the participants presented. It also gave space to consider some of the major similarities and differences between participants' views, as well as recognize the nuanced perceptions and ideas. This discussion will emphasize the consistencies and key differences in the findings, as well as link the interviews to the hope literature that was previously presented. Finally, I will offer some of my own personal reflections about what I learned about hope as a researcher, social worker and individual.

5.1 Consistencies and Differences in Research Findings

Perhaps the most striking consistencies in the three interviews were that each of the participants highlighted the essential nature of hope in life, as well as the importance of hope in their work. These were points that they all used very strong language to convey. For example, one participant explained that "if [hope is] not there, then there's no reason to do a whole lot" (Participant 1), while another expressed that "if we don't have [hope] alive, life loses its meaning" (Participant 2). The final participant stated that "when there's no hope…you might as well not live" (Participant 3). These quotations demonstrate both the integral nature of hope in everyday life, as well as hint at the danger of lacking hope.

In regards to the significance of hope in their work, one participant emphasized that she does not believe that "a person who doesn't believe in hope or doesn't live a life with hope can be effective in this work" (Participant 2). Another stressed that "without hope it's very difficult to work with so much pain" (Participant 3), while yet another emphasized that "if I didn't think that there was hope for…making some difference, I don't know if I would do what I do…it would be kind of de-motivating" (Participant 1). The language that they chose to use stresses that hope is essential in their work, and without hope, they could not or should not do the work that they are involved with.

This study has also revealed a number of differences regarding hope, such as variances in definitions of hope, the hopes one has for their own life and the lives of others, the significance of hope in one's life, the things that make one feel hopeful, the manner in which one maintains their hope, and why some people maintain hope while others do not. As has already been outlined in the chapter entitled 'Research Findings', within these differences, there are still similarities, as well. This is reflective of the hope theories reviewed in the "Literature Review" chapter; there were both common themes and clearly stated differences present between their theories, often directly contradicting each other. Further connections to the hope theorists, as previously outlined above, will be discussed shortly.

5.2 Links to Literature

In the same way that the hope theorists' views were likely impacted by their worldviews, so too were the participants' conceptualizations of hope. None of the

participants shared ideas that were consistent with a positivist framework, as none of the participants spoke of quantifying hope or valuing an empirical understanding of hope (Neuman, 1997). Instead, they all leaned towards interpretivist or critical frameworks, which value personal and social understandings, meanings and actions (Neuman, 1997). This was particularly noticeable in their discussions of how their personal experiences impacted their understandings of hope, as well as their descriptions of the significance of hope in their lives. All of the participants valued stories, experiences, and relationships in their descriptions of hope and emphasized that meaning-making happens through relationships (Neuman, 1997).

Interestingly, despite marked differences between the participants' interpretivist and critical views and Snyder's (2002) positivist leanings towards quantifying hope, there were some similarities between Snyder's (2002) hope theory and the participants' responses. Similarly, while none of the participants' conceptualizations of hope completely matched the hope theorists' ideas that were summarized in the "Literature Review", there were some instances in which the participants' ideas reflected those formally outlined by the theorists. For example, as was previously described, Snyder (2002), Freire (Webb, 2010), and Miceli and Castlefranchi (2010) identify hope as being a motivator. In a similar way, one participant shared this idea by stating that hope is "some kind of motivation to just keep moving forward" and to "keep living well in the now" (Participant 1). While this is reflective of these theorists' ideas, they all are slightly different. For example, Snyder sees hope as "a positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful (a) agency… and (b) pathways…" (Snyder,

2002, p. 250), while Freire views hope as a motivator that pushes us forward in our pursuit of completeness (Webb, 2010). Miceli and Castlefranchi (2010) take a somewhat different direction by describing it as related to positive expectations. Therefore, despite using the common term "motivation", there are different underlying meanings.

In a statement reflecting Snyders' (2002) theory about hope being born from *successful* agency and pathways, one participant described the reason some people maintain their hope while others lose it by stating that "it has to do with making little successes" (Participant 2). She explained that "when you make little successes, you can build on those and those give you hope that you accomplished something tiny…that gives you the drive, the incentive to go [on]" (Participant 2). However, while Snyder (2002) based his hope theory on agency, pathways and goals, this participant expanded her description to include structural barriers (Participant 2). She explained that sometimes "structural problems" impede a person from making these successes, which then hinders their hope (Participant 2).

Miceli and Castlefranchi (2010) speak of hope as based on possibility, not probability. In other words, it is about the chance that something *could* happen, not the *likelihood* that it will happen. In a similar way, two of the participants spoke about the importance of hope being grounded in reality (Participants 1 & 3). They acknowledged that sometimes their role involves helping clients take unrealistic hopes, or simply "wishful thinking" (Participant 1), and "informing" them (Participant 3) or "rooting [them] in sound information" (Participant 3). This sometimes involves helping clients come up with concrete or practical plans or actions that will help them achieve more

realistic or possible hopes. This practice of grounding hope in reality, however, is somewhat contradictory to Steinbock's (2004) theory, which emphasizes that hope, by its very nature, is not always probable or logical.

Miceli and Castlefranchi (2010) also state that an element of hope is the belief that the situation is out of one's control. One participant strongly related this element to their definition, stating that "hope is the understanding that I don't have to have control over everything…that things have a way of turning out and that there is life beyond myself and there is something greater" (Participant 3). For some, this part of Miceli and Castlefranchi's (2010) theory may hint at the belief in a higher power or force of nature and for two of the participants in this study, faith in God was a key part of their understandings of hope and their ability to maintain hope. Acquinas, as described by Doyle (2011), also strongly links faith to hope, even stating that it is a theological virtue.

Aquinas also states that hope is a cause of joy (Doyle, 2011), which was an idea repeated several times in one interview. This participant made a distinction between hope and joy, stating that one "can be really sad and still have hope", but also spoke about things in her life that give her hope and joy, such as gardening, her support network, and the privilege that she experiences in life (Participant 2). As a result of this joy, she explained that she when she is feeling down, she thinks of the worst times in her life and realizes that the present is not as bad (Participant 2). Her joy is connected to her hope.

Another theologian, Capps (1995), states that hope is a reflection of a one's understanding of God and themselves. One participant appeared to reflect this idea by stating that "God is greater" and that hope allows her to "rely on something that is bigger

than myself" (Participant 3). This demonstrates her understanding of God as being reliable, in control, and bigger than both herself and the problem. She further stated that her hope "depends on my understanding and belief in God" (Participant 3). Capps (1995) goes on to explain that hope is "…the perception that what one wants to happen will happen, a perception that is fueled by desire and in *response to felt deprivation*" (p.53, *italics added*). Similarly, this participant expressed that she feels that her clients may understand hope better than she does because they are suffering more (Participant 3). She elaborated by stating that, "when it comes to not having enough money, living in fear, things like that, your hope is a little bit different…it's more basic" (Participant 3). Other participants also expressed being inspired in their hope by people who have experienced this "felt deprivation" (Capps, 1995, p.53) through "extreme poverty, extreme persecution, horrible experiences" and who are "still able to laugh and to look at the bright side of life" (Participant 2).

In contrast to Capps' (1995) idea that hope is an individual activity, however, all of the participants emphasized the relational and social element of hope. There were multiple comments about the role of community, inspiring hope in others, having others inspire their own hope, learning about hope from other people, and recognizing and nurturing hope in themselves or in others. In a similar way, McGeer (2004) recognized that hope is possible because of other people. He recognized that people cause us to hope and that hope is a social experience.

Although Drahos (2004) did not have many similarities to other theorists represented in the literature review, part of his hope theory was reflected by a

participant's responses. He stated that hope helps people solve problems and overcome odds in their lives (Drahos, 2004). Similarly, one participant shared that hope is a belief that, regardless of the bad things that might be happening in your life, "that there will be something that you will learn about these that will help you in the future" (Participant 2). She further explained that it is about "knowing that whatever happens now, as bad as it is, that I will get some answers eventually and that I'll be okay somehow" (Participant 2). Getting answers, learning from life experiences and finding purpose in life all appear to be similar ideas to overcoming odds in one's life. Drahos (2004) also spoke about hope helping people deal with uncertainty, which is again related to the above quotations about getting answers and finding purpose.

Finally, all three interviews were very connected to Beavers and Kaslow's (1981) theory about developing hope in others. For example, one participant stated that hope is "contagious" (Participant 2), and another spoke about inspiring hope in others (Participant 3). Some of the techniques that Beavers and Kaslow (1981) used included listening, acknowledging, and empathizing; developing capacity in others; finding and elaborating on positive feelings; and creating connections to things outside of the individual. All of these ideas were present in the interviews, particularly as the participants spoke about using hope in their work. The first participant spoke about developing hope through listening, "being present with people", using "encouraging words", "providing practical support", praying, "connecting [clients] to other people", and giving "emotional support". The second participant spoke about believing in clients, helping people overcome barriers, "injecting" hope that is drawn from the clients' own

past experiences back into their lives, and listening to or helping clients identify their dreams. The third participant identified helping clients see "glimmers of light" in their lives, having a positive view of people, helping clients find purpose in their lives, and drawing on the past to inspire hope in the present. All of these techniques are very reflective of Beavers and Kaslow's (1981) ideas about developing hope in others. One significant area of difference is that Beavers and Kaslow (1981) stated that some people are qualified to give hope, while the participants expressed sentiments that anyone can inspire or nurture hope in others. They did not specify about certain people being qualified or not, but rather spoke about a range of people with various personal and professional backgrounds in their own lives and work that inspire hope in themselves and others.

As one might expect, and as is likely quite clear, none of the participants' conceptualizations matched the theorists' ideas exactly. There were similarities, which are outlined here, but there were also direct contradictions. This is not surprising because the theorists themselves could not agree on one definition, and often contradicted or negated each others' theories. It is my overall finding that perhaps this is the very nature of hope…

5.3 Personal Learning

When I began this process of researching, I did not have my own clear definition of hope. As I researched hope theories and literature, my conceptualization clarified and gained depth, if only through agreeing and disagreeing with various theories and ideas.

During a meeting with my supervisor prior to my first interview, he turned my own questions on me and asked me to answer them myself. I was stumped. How do you define an intangible, abstract concept? How do you describe a word that has so many meanings? How do you incorporate your personal experience into your definition so that it *means something*? I gave a vague answer that hope is what motivates us to move forward in life, and promised myself that I would consider it further at a later date. It was not until I met with my participants and spent an hour of time with each of them for the sole purpose of discussing hope that I truly began to realize the deep, personally nuanced, and sometimes emotional, nature of hope.

Even after these interviews, and the subsequent writing and soul-searching, I still do not have a solid definition of hope. And I think that might be okay. If I have learned anything from this study, I have learned that hope is different to all of us. There is no right or wrong definition or timeline or significance. I think hope changes as our situations change. It evolves with us, as does our understanding of what hope is. I continue to think it motivates us, but now I also think that it gives purpose to our struggles and that it is about recognizing that I do not always have to be in control. It is about the past, present and future, not necessarily only about one particular time. It is a feeling, a way of thinking and a state of being. It is represented by nature and inspired by people. It needs to be nurtured and grown and supported by our communities. Hope does not happen in isolation.

This may appear to be a very innocuous and incomplete definition, and that is the point. To me, hope is an ellipses: a possibility for the future, a motivator, a dream, a wish,

a belief in a higher power, a sense that things will be okay. It continues, evolves, and changes with us. Hope is…

5.4 Summary

As is clear by now, hope is understood differently by different people. With similarities and differences, disagreements and concessions, this discussion is moved forward. However, despite the lack of a cohesive understanding of hope, these findings mean something and have expanded our own conceptualizations. By engaging with social constructionism, and recognizing meaning-making done through relationships, experiences and dialogues, my own understanding of hope has changed and grown. It is my hope that through this process, the participants, as well as those who choose to peruse this thesis, will also consider how their own ideas fit or deviate, and how hope is, or could be, used in their lives.

6. Limitations and Implications

The findings and discussion from above highlight several important limitations of this study, as well as a number of implications, which are important to take forward into both daily life and settlement work, as well as other areas of social work.

6.1 Limitations of this Study

One of the most significant limitations to this study was clearly the number of participants. Although I am not trying to generalize the findings or create a new hope theory, additional participants would likely have contributed new thoughts and ideas that would have enhanced this study. Furthermore, the inclusion of additional refugee women may have provided new perceptions of the idea of hope. Perhaps, had there been a longer timeline to complete this thesis, allowing increased opportunity for community engagement or relationship building with refugee-serving agencies, recruitment might have been smoother and more successful. Unfortunately, the limited time constraints surrounding this project, as well as the lack of existing personal and direct connections with refugee-serving agencies, did not allow for this to happen.

In working with a diverse population, such as with refugees and settlement workers, it may also have been helpful to offer the use of interpreters. This may have helped me to recruit more refugee women, as well as settlement workers from diverse backgrounds, particularly those with whom English is a second, third or forth language,

and who were perhaps hesitant to engage in an interview in English. Unfortunately, the lack of funding for this thesis prohibited the option of having interpreters.

In receiving feedback from the participants about this study, I also recognize that there were other areas of hope that I could have gone deeper into. For example, I did not focus strongly on how hope relates to the past or what memories of hope people have. My original intention for this study, in part due to the short timeline, was not to problematize refugee experiences or ask refugees to divulge and relive their past experiences, and this was reflected in the questions that I chose to ask both refugees (in the original proposal) and settlement workers. It may have also been due to my own biased thoughts and assumptions that hope is forward-facing. However, after conducting interviews with settlement workers, I now recognize that hope may be very much tied to the past for some people. Inquiring about this connection may have added a new and important dimension to this study.

Finally, to contribute to trustworthiness, I offered the opportunity to bring a piece of artwork to the interview to assist with explaining hope. One participant chose to do this, however, this method might have been more effective with a larger sample and more pieces of artwork, which I could then have analyzed and included in discussion. Perhaps I could also have asked participants to bring something, rather than leaving it as an option. This might have added another element of interest and degree of analysis to this study, as well.

6.2 Implications for Settlement Work and Social Work

This study set out to compare refugee women and female settlement workers understandings of hope. However, despite ongoing efforts, I struggled to recruit refugee women. One settlement worker identified both as a refugee and a settlement worker, however, I was not able to recruit more refugee women who do not also have the experience of being a settlement worker. I have already speculated in the *'Sample and Sample Selection'* section about why this may have been, however, the lack of more refugee women in this study also prompted two considerations. Upon reflecting on the challenges with recruitment, particularly after being told that refugees have enough stress in their lives without adding a research study to it, I wondered whether an element of protectionism or paternalism may sometimes exist between workers and their clients and that perhaps some workers perceive that part of their role is to protect their clients and shelter them from potential risks. Although it is important to be sensitive to refugees' needs and to ensure that a research study is valid and approved by an ethics board, it is also important to remember that refugees, irregardless of their past or present situation, are entitled to make these decisions independently or perhaps with guidance. Participation in a research study has the potential to be empowering by providing an opportunity to share thoughts, experiences and knowledge. This may actually be a very positive experience for refugee clients, and is also beneficial for service providers because new research leads to up-to-date best practices and more effective support for clients. Perhaps there is an opportunity for settlement workers and agencies to collaborate

more closely with the academic community to engage in current research that can improve their practices and approaches.

Although more refugee women were not included, this study can still lend some insight into the use of hope in settlement work with refugees. The findings demonstrate that hope is viewed as an essential element to the human experience, and that it is useful for overcoming difficult circumstances in people's lives. This may indicate that hope plays an even more critical role in the lives of refugees, as they have been forced to leave their countries of residence and are unable to return due to fear of persecution (UNHCR, 2011). Having endured difficult, and potentially life threatening and/or traumatic experiences, refugees may benefit from encounters that focus on nurturing, inspiring, growing and expanding their hope. The participant that identified both as a refugee and a settlement worker spoke about hope being a state of being that she lived in, a way of knowing that she will get some answers in time (Participant 2). She also spoke about getting through difficult situations because of the support that she received from others, which helped her have hope (Participant 2). This may be reflective of how other refugee women understand and have hope, indicating that having support and living in hope are important parts of getting through their experience as a refugee.

This study also emphasizes the importance of settlement workers being aware of, and maintaining or growing, their own levels of hope. While I do not personally subscribe to Snyder's ideas of measuring hope with scales, he does highlight a couple of points about the importance of being aware of the level of hope that a worker or helper has. For example, he indicates that higher-hoping helpers may be less likely to burn-out

than lower-hoping individuals (Snyder, 1995). He also suggests that hope may be transferred from helpers to clients (Snyder, 1995). Snyder (1995), in referencing work done by Crouch, states that "correlational evidence has revealed that the hope of staff members (in rehabilitation agencies) correlates positively (and significantly) with the level of hope reported for their clients" (p.358). One settlement worker spoke about inspiring hope in her clients through her "very positive view of people and their abilities and their skills...and what people can do with their lives" (Participant 2). Perhaps it is by beginning with the positive outlook and a personal store of hope within oneself, that workers and helpers can be most effective. Some workers may find it useful to use a scale, while others may use such informal methods as reflection, self-care, or peer-based accountability or check-ins to monitor, maintain or grow their hope. As one participant explained, "Without hope, it's very difficult to work with so much pain in people's lives…without hope it really seems like everything is so negative". This again demonstrates the need for workers to be aware of their level of hope, whether formally or informally, and consciously work to nurture it.

Lastly, but perhaps most importantly, the settlement workers in this study also indicated that their hope is inspired by various other people in their lives, including friends, co-workers, clients and mentors. Inspiring hope in their clients, or connecting them to others who may inspire their hope, may be a primary area in which settlement and social workers can intentionally focus. While none of the workers identified having conversations with clients that were directly dedicated to hope, they all spoke about verbal and non-verbal, practical and emotional ways of supporting their clients, which

they also identified as being the ways in which they use hope in their work. For example, one settlement worker eloquently described helping her clients "see glimmers of light" in the darkness (Participant 3), while another described scratching at the surface and finding hope underneath (Participant 2). They also spoke about hugs, prayers, words of encouragement, fostering interpersonal connections (Participant 1), and telling stories from the past (Participant 3) as ways of using hope in their work. Beyond this, workers might try engaging in hope-engendering activities as defined by the client (Yohani, 2010), discussions about maintaining hope, or connecting refugees to their spiritual communities to help nurture hope. Workers who subscribe to the idea of measuring hope may also wish to familiarize themselves with various hope scales so that they can formally or informally observe their clients' levels of hope. In trying to be more deliberate or direct in using hope in practice, however, it is important for workers to intentionally engage with clients about how they understand hope and what their hopes are, or at the very least recognize that their conceptualizations might be different, so that the work is client-centered and personalized.

6.3 Implications for Future Research

The many differences in hope conceptualizations, as demonstrated in this study, suggest that there are likely many differences in refugee women's understandings of hope, as well. The literature reviewed in this study clearly demonstrated that hope is an important concept in refugee adult, youth and children's lives. This indicates that the question of how refugee women (or men, children, youth) conceptualize hope is still a

viable and important research question to consider as a separate project. It may reveal important differences that have not been considered as part of this project, which can then be used in settlement work or social work practice. As a researcher who has spent countless hours considering this question, I wonder whether refugees might have learned about hope differently throughout the experiences that led them to become a refugee or whether the significance of hope in their lives is rooted differently than in settlement workers. It may also be interesting to consider how settlement workers who also have the experience of being a refugee might also understand hope differently. While it is not possible to separate these identities, further questioning into such areas as how hope brought them through their experience as a refugee to where they are now, or how they think they understand hope differently than other workers who have not experienced being a refugee could be revealing into this intricate identity.

Hope as it pertains to refugee children, youth, men and seniors are other areas in which further research may be beneficial. Literature has shown that hope impacts on many areas of life, including development in children (Yohani & Larsen, 2009), adjustment (Ai, et al, 2007; Yohani, 2010), personal changes (Ai, et al, 2007), coping (Ai, Peterson & Huang, 2003; Gladden, 2012; Yohani, 2010), resettlement (Pavlish, 2007), and well-being (Baird & Boyle, 2012); however, further research might expand these areas to elaborate on how hope might specifically be used in practice or how hope specifically influences in these areas. Since the scholarship has shown that the topic of hope is important, relevant and useful, more research is needed in these areas to expand existing literature and clarify the specific role that hope plays. Additionally, it would be

beneficial for new research to focus specifically on *hope*, as much of the existing literature tends to address 'well-being' or 'optimism', with one of the findings being hope.

As was already discussed, participants were invited to bring a piece of artwork that represents hope to them to their interview. One participant engaged with this method, however, this is perhaps another area of further research that could come out of this project. Examining visual representations of hope, as depicted by artwork, photo-voice, or creative writing may reveal interesting results between participants, as this study suggests that these representations could be very personal and unique.

6.4 Summary

Despite the inevitable presence of limitations, which I have tried to counter in various ways throughout this study, there were some important findings and implications for both settlement work or social work practice and research. This study expanded hope literature to consider conceptualizations from individuals that do not identify as, or even with, existing hope theorists. The findings of this study encourage workers to be cognizant of hope in themselves and their clients, as well as to be intentional about using hope in their practice. It also demonstrates the importance of connecting current research to practice and strengthening the link between the community and academia. Due in part to its limitations, this project also provided a jumping-off point for future hope research as it pertains to refugees and settlement workers, as well as more general settlement work or social work practice.

7. Conclusion

This study provided the opportunity to consider how female settlement workers conceptualize the idea of hope. It is not an exhaustive study, it does, however, provide a glimpse into some of the ideas that these three settlement workers hold about hope, and how they use hope in their work. Through an examination of the similarities and differences in their opinions and experiences with hope, as well as through a comparison of their views and existing hope theories, I have begun to draw out the complex, socially constructed nature of hope.

The objective of this study was not to make generalizations about how settlement workers understand hope or to create a new hope theory. Rather, this study this study set out to examine hope as a social construct whose meaning is created through relationships and experiences. Yet, although the meaning of hope is individually understood, but collectively developed through life experiences and interactions, there are elements of hope that appeared in each of the descriptions. From this study, it appears that hope is related to various moments in time, whether they be from the past, present or future. It is also a positive thing, being the opposite of hopelessness and despair. It is connected to emotions and people feel strongly about the necessity of hope; it is also tied to imagery and specific life experiences. Despite these elements in many definitions, the absence of one or more of these elements in a definition of hope does not negate it. Beyond this, this data about hope also has additional meaning. It demonstrates that people experience hope daily and

that they find hope meaningful and relevant. It also shows that hope is developed and nurtured through relationships with various people in their lives. Hope is shown to be a relational and social process, as many social constructs are (Burr, 1995).

By recognizing the many different understandings of hope that may be present in settlement work or social work practice, including those of settlement workers and their refugee clients, practice may be improved, and misunderstandings may be avoided. As hope is an important concept in settlement work, and one which is used and spoken of often (S. Jones, personal communication, January 16, 2013), it is important to recognize its diversity of meanings and applications within practice.

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Appendix A: Ethics Approval

McMaster University
Inspiring Innovation and Discovery

McMaster University Research Ethics Board (MREB)

c/o Research Office for Administrative Development and Support, MREB Secretariat, GH-305, e-mail: ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca

CERTIFICATE OF ETHICS CLEARANCE TO INVOLVE HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH

Application Status: New ☑ **Addendum** ☐ **Project Number:** 2013 045

TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT:

Hope Conceptualized: An Analysis of Refugee Women and Settlement Workers' Understandings of Hope

Faculty Investigator (s)/ Supervisor(s)	Dept./Address	Phone	E-Mail
G. Dumbrill	Social Work	23791	dumbrill@mcmaster.ca
Student Investigator(s)	**Dept./Address**	**Phone**	**E-Mail**
R. Tedesco	Social Work	[redacted]	tedescr@mcmaster.ca

The application in support of the above research project has been reviewed by the MREB to ensure compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement and the McMaster University Policies and Guidelines for Research Involving Human Participants. The following ethics certification is provided by the MREB:

☐ The application protocol is cleared as presented without questions or requests for modification.

☑ The application protocol is cleared as revised without questions or requests for modification.

☐ The application protocol is cleared subject to clarification and/or modification as appended or identified below:

COMMENTS AND CONDITIONS: Ongoing clearance is contingent on completing the annual completed/status report. A "Change Request" or amendment must be made and cleared before any alterations are made to the research.

Reporting Frequency:	Annual: Apr-17-2014	Other:

Date: Apr-17-2013 **Chair, Dr. B. Detlor / Vice Chair, C. Anderson:**

Appendix B: Recruitment Materials

McMaster University

PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR A RESEARCH STUDY ABOUT HOPE

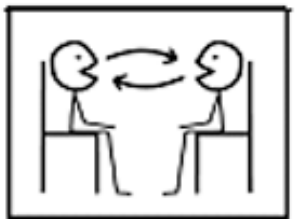
I am looking for English-speaking refugee women (18+) to volunteer to take part in a study about how you understand hope.

You will be asked to:
1. Complete a short questionnaire
2. Participate in an individual interview

Your participation will involve 1 interview, which will take approximately 1 – 1.5 hours

For more information about this study, or to volunt
please contact:

Robyn Tedesco
Department of Social Work
McMaster University
[redacted]
tedescr@mcmaster.ca



This study has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance from, the McMaster Research Ethics Board.

Call Robyn Tedesco [redacted] Or Email: tedescr@mcmaster.ca

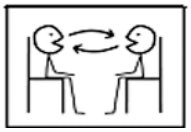
Call Robyn Tedesco [redacted] Or Email: tedescr@mcmaster.ca
Call Robyn Tedesco [redacted] Or Email: tedescr@mcmaster.ca
Call Robyn Tedesco [redacted] Or Email: tedescr@mcmaster.ca
Call Robyn Tedesco [redacted] Or Email: tedescr@mcmaster.ca

PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR A RESEARCH STUDY ABOUT HOPE

I am looking for English-speaking refugee women (18+) to volunteer to take part in a study about how they understand hope.

You will be asked to:

3. Complete a short questionnaire
4. Participate in an individual interview



Your participation will involve 1 interview, which will take approximately 1 – 1.5 hours

McMaster University

For more information, or to volunteer for this study, please contact:

Robyn Tedesco
Department of Social Work
McMaster University
[redacted]
tedescr@mcmaster.ca

This study has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance from, the McMaster Research Ethics Board.

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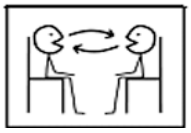
PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR A RESEARCH STUDY ABOUT HOPE

I am looking for English-speaking refugee women (18+) to volunteer to take part in a study about how they understand hope.

You will be asked to:

5. Complete a short questionnaire
6. Participate in an individual interview



Your participation will involve 1 interview, which will take approximately 1 – 1.5 hours

McMaster University

For more information, or to volunteer for this study, please contact:

Robyn Tedesco
Department of Social Work
McMaster University
[redacted]
tedescr@mcmaster.ca

This study has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance from, the McMaster Research Ethics Board.

E-mail Subject line: McMaster Study – Hope Conceptualized

Hello!

I am inviting you to participate in a one-time interview about your understanding of 'hope'.

As part of the Masters of Social Work program at McMaster University, I am carrying out this study to learn about refugee women and female settlement workers' perceptions of the concept of 'hope'. I am interested in learning about whether there are similarities or differences in their understandings, and applying this to social work practice. As such, I am currently recruiting female settlement workers and refugee women for this study.

Involvement in this study will involve one interview, which will take approximately 1 – 1.5 hours, and will take place in a location that is convenient for you.

There are minor risks for participating in this study. Please refer to the attached Letter of Information for further details.

I have attached a copy of a Letter of Information about the study that gives you full details. This study has been reviewed and cleared by the McMaster Research Ethics Board. If you have any have concerns or questions about your rights as a participant or about the way the study is being conducted, you can contact:

The McMaster Research Ethics Board Secretariat
Telephone: (905) 525-9140 ext. 23142
c/o Research Office for Administration, Development and Support (ROADS)
E-mail: ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca

I would like to thank you in advance for your time and consideration. If you are interested in participating, you may contact me by e-mail or phone to schedule your interview. If you know a female settlement worker or refugee woman who may be interested in this study, please feel free to forward this e-mail.

After a week, I will send you a one-time follow-up reminder.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Robyn Tedesco, BA, BSW
Masters Candidate in Social Work
Department of Social Work
McMaster University, Hamilton Ontario
[redacted]
tedescr@mcmaster.ca

Appendix C: Letter of Information and Consent Form

DATE: _____

A study about how the concept of 'hope' is understood by refugee women and settlement workers.

Investigator: Robyn Tedesco

Student Investigator:
Robyn Tedesco
Department of Social Work
McMaster University
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada
[redacted]
tedescr@mcmaster.ca

Faculty Supervisor:
Dr. Gary Dumbrill
Department of Social Work
McMaster University
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada
905-525-9140 ext.23791
dumbrill@mcmaster.ca

What is this study about?
You are invited to take part in this study about hope. I am doing this research study as a thesis project for my Masters of Social Work degree. I am interested in studying how refugee women and female settlement workers understand the idea of 'hope', and what it means to them. It is my hope that the findings of this study may help settlement workers and social workers provide better service to refugee clients. It may also help them better understand why hope is important to talk about and why it is important to understand any differences in how they and their clients understand hope.

What will happen during the study?
If you choose to take part in this study, you will have an individual interview with me that will last for about 1 - 1.5 hours. You will be able to choose where you would like the interview to take place (ie. the library, a social service agency, etc.). You will be invited to bring a piece of artwork (ie. photo, poem, drawing, object, etc.) with you to your interview to help you describe what hope means to you.

At the interview, you will be asked to complete a brief questionnaire to collect some background information, such as your age, citizenship, etc. You will not have to put your name on this questionnaire and your personal information will not be used in a way that will identify you.

I will then ask you if I can record the interview or take notes while you speak, to make sure that I accurately recall your responses.

I will then ask you a number of questions about the topic of 'hope', such as:

1. What does 'hope' mean to you?
2. What influenced your understanding of 'hope'?
3. What do you hope for yourself?

If you bring a piece of artwork to the interview, I will ask you to explain its meaning, and may ask to take a photograph or make a copy of it to include in the final publication.

You will be given a $5 Tim Horton's gift card for taking part in this project.

Why are you inviting me to bring a piece of artwork?
You may choose to bring a piece of artwork with you to help you explain what hope means to you. Some people may find this helpful and it may be meaningful to them. It may also help you clarify your description of hope, and help me understand exactly what you mean. You may choose not to bring artwork, or you may choose to bring artwork and decide not to have it photographed or copied. If you choose to bring a piece of artwork, a photograph or copy of it may appear in the final thesis, which will be made available online through the McMaster library. Students, McMaster staff, service providers and community members may view it. In some cases, I may describe the artwork, rather than include it in the thesis to protect your privacy (ie. with a family photo).

Are there any risks to doing this study?
The risks involved in participating in this study are minimal. There are two minor risks:

1. Some people may feel uncomfortable with giving their opinion or telling of their experiences with hope. You do not need to answer any questions that you do not want to answer or that make you feel uncomfortable. You can also choose to stop taking part in the study at any time.
2. If you bring a piece of artwork with you to the interview that identifies you, and you give permission for it to be copied or photographed, you may be identified as a participant in the study. Some people may find this distressing. You may choose whether you would like to bring a piece of media with you to the interview or not. You may also decide whether it can be photographed or copied or not. You may choose to talk about a piece of artwork, but decide not to have it photographed or copied. I describe below more steps I am taking to protect your privacy.

Are there any benefits to doing this study?
The research will not benefit you directly. This study gives you an opportunity to share your opinions, experiences and ideas, which some people may find rewarding.

Who will know what I said in the study?
Every effort will be made to guarantee your confidentiality and privacy. I will not use your name or any information that would allow you to be identified. No one except me will know whether you participated unless you choose to tell them. However, we are sometimes identifiable through the stories we tell. Please keep this in mind when deciding what to tell me.

If you choose to tell a story that identifies you, I will replace your name with an alternate name in the final publication to protect your privacy.

The information you provide will be kept in a locked drawer that only I will have access to. Information kept on the computer will be protected by a password and changed into a coded form to protect your privacy. Once the study has been completed, the data will be kept for at least 1 year (maximum 5 years); this is because I may use it in further education. After this, all data will be securely destroyed.

Will you ever breach my confidentiality?
Although I will protect your privacy as outlined above, if the law requires it, I will have to reveal certain personal information. The following situations will allow me to breach confidentiality:

1. If you tell me about a situation where a child is at risk or is being abused, or
2. If you tell me that you plan to harm yourself or another person.

What if I change my mind about being in the study?
Your participation in this study is voluntary. It is your choice to be part of the study or not. If you decide to be part of the study, you can stop the interview for whatever reason, even after signing the consent form. You can withdraw up until approximately August 2013, when I expect to be submitting my thesis. If you decide to withdraw, there will be no consequences to you and it will not affect your ability to access services. In cases of withdrawal, any data you have provided will be destroyed unless you indicate otherwise. If you do not want to answer some of the questions you do not have to, but you can still be in the study. You can keep the $5 Tim Horton's gift card if you decide to stop taking part in the study at any time.

How do I find out what was learned in this study?
I expect to have this study completed by approximately August 2013. If you would like a brief summary of the results, please let me know how you would like it to be sent to you.

Questions about the Study
If you have questions or need more information about the study itself, please contact me at:
tedescr@mcmaster.ca or [redacted].

This study has been reviewed by the McMaster University Research Ethics Board and received ethics clearance. If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a participant or about the way the study is conducted, please contact:

McMaster Research Ethics Secretariat
Telephone: (905) 525-9140 ext. 23142
c/o Research Office for Administrative Development and Support
E-mail: ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca

CONSENT FORM

- I have read the information presented in the Letter of Information about this study, which is being conducted by Robyn Tedesco from McMaster University.
- I have had the opportunity to ask questions about my involvement in this study and to receive additional details.
- I understand that if I agree to participate in this study, I may withdraw from the study at any time or up until approximately August 2013.
- I have been given a copy of this form.
- I agree to participate in the study.

Signature: _____

Name of Participant (Printed) _____

AUDIO RECORDING CONSENT

I agree that this interview can be audio recorded.
___ Yes
___ No

Participant Initials: _____

CONSENT TO USE PICTURE OF ARTWORK

I agree that my artwork (ie. photo, poem, drawing, etc.) can be used in the final publication.
___ Yes
___ No
___ Does not apply

Participant Initials: _____

REQUEST TO RECEIVE SHORT REPORT ABOUT WHAT WAS LEARNED

Yes, I would like to receive a summary of the study's results.
Please send it to this email address: _____
Or to this mailing address: _____
_____
_____

___ No, I do not want to receive a summary of the study's results.

Appendix D: Background Information Sheet

Hope Conceptualized

PLEASE DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON THIS PAPER!

INSTRUCTIONS: Please complete this questionnaire to provide some basic background information about you.

1. I am: (check one)
   [ ] between the ages of 18-20
   [ ] between the ages of 21-29
   [ ] between the ages of 30-39
   [ ] between the ages of 40-49
   [ ] between the ages of 50-59
   [ ] 60 years or older

2. I am: (check one)
   [ ] single
   [ ] married
   [ ] separated
   [ ] divorced
   [ ] a common-law spouse
   [ ] I prefer not to answer

3. I am a: (check one)
   [ ] Canadian citizen
   [ ] Landed immigrant
   [ ] Refugee
   [ ] Other: (please specify) _____

4. I was born in Canada:
   [ ] yes
   [ ] no

5. If you answered no to question #4, please answer the following question:
   I have lived in Canada for:
   [ ] 1-3 years
   [ ] 4-6 years
   [ ] 7-10 years
   [ ] 11-20 years
   [ ] more than 20 years

Appendix E: Interview Guide

Information about these interview questions:
This gives you an idea about what I would like to learn about hope. Interviews will be one-to-one and will give you time to answer questions as fully as you would like to. Because of this, the exact wording may change a little. Sometimes I will use other short questions to make sure I understand what you are saying *("So, you're saying that…")*, to get more information ("*Please tell me more...")*, or to learn what you think or feel about something (*"Why do you think that is…?")*. If you brought a piece of media (ie. photo, poem, drawing, etc.) with you to help you explain your ideas and opinions, feel free to use it throughout the interview.

1. **What does 'hope' mean to you?**
    a. **How is it significant to you?**
2. **How did you come to this understanding of hope?**
3. **What do you hope for?**
    a. **Long term?**
    b. **Short term?**
    c. **For yourself?**
    d. **For your family?**
    e. **For your community?**
    f. **For your worker/client?**
4. **What makes you feel hopeful?**
5. **Do you feel that your worker/client understands hope in the same way that you do?**
    a. **Do you think they have the same hopes as you do?**
    b. **Have you ever spoken to your worker/client about hope?**
6. **What does it mean to be hopeless?**
    a. **Similar probes as question #3**
7. **Is there anything else you would like to share with me about hope?**

END