

# "We only want safety"

## Narratives of Refugee Women

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### Berlin, Germany

Berlin is not only Germany's capital but also the largest city. The capital is home to more than 3.7 million people, making it the second most populous city in the European Union.



### Refugees in Berlin

Every minute 24 people were forced to flee their homes in 2015. Global Trends reported in 2015 65.3 million individuals were forcibly displaced worldwide as a result of persecution, conflict, generalized violence, or human rights violations. Many of these refugees made it to Germany. I conducted oral narratives with women in Berlin whose journeys are laced with persecution and violence.

### Oral Narratives Research Design

The research centered on understanding the refugee experience via a qualitative descriptive approach. The questions centered on the experiences of refugee women when they first arrived in Berlin, how they are negotiating their situation in Berlin. The interviews were semi-structured with a focus on language barriers, limitations to education, supportive factors, and identity construction.



### Outcomes

- Conducted seven hour long interviews with different women
- Identified strengths that refugees find in their transitions
- Identified limitations in regards to career & education
- Article in progress

### Classroom Connections

- SW 560 : This course provided me with a theory foundation on community engagement. The theories that I was exposed to during this course helped me tremendously in interacting with the community as an outsider, yet still be an ally.
- SW 648: This course introduced global social work themes. The course provided opportunities to explore social work within a global context.



### Skills Developed

- Methods to leverage the support of stakeholders
- Understanding key dimensions and characteristics of the community, and the social problems that are unique to them
- Connected themes of privilege, oppression, diversity, and social justice within a global context

### Lessons Learned

The experiences of refugees cannot be thought of as a hegemonic, collective experience. Rather, each community, group, and person must be given the opportunity to define themselves using their own voices. The global experience demonstrated this truth.

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