

2019

Long-Term Implementation of Temporary Immigration Policy on the Security and Integration of Liberians in the U.S.

Glendaly Sanchez-Alicea
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Glendaly Sanchez-Alicea

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Review Committee

Dr. Ernesto Escobedo, Committee Chairperson,
Public Policy and Administration Faculty

Dr. Raj Singh, Committee Member,
Public Policy and Administration Faculty

Dr. George Kieh, University Reviewer,
Public Policy and Administration Faculty

Chief Academic Officer
Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University
2019

Abstract

Long-Term Implementation of Temporary Immigration Policy on the Security and
Integration of Liberians in the U.S.

by

Glendaly Sanchez-Alicea

MPA, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, 2007

BS, College of New Rochelle, 2001

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration

Walden University

March 2019

Abstract

Immigration policies such as temporary protected status and deferred enforced departure can serve as suitable humanitarian solutions to help displaced individuals.

Notwithstanding, when implemented in the course of many years, the uncertainty and stress of living in limbo can pose significant challenges to beneficiaries and create a multifarious scenario for government leaders. This qualitative study examined the experience of Liberians, a group designated with temporary immigration protection in the United States since 1991, who have consequently formed lives in the United States while in temporary status. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the effects of temporary immigration policy, implemented as a long-term solution on the security of Liberians and their successful integration in the United States. The study was designed with a case study approach, which yielded a breadth of data collected through semistructured interviews of 9 members of the Liberian community. The research question aimed to understand the perceived effects of long-term implementation of temporary immigration policy on Liberians and their ability to feel secure and integrate into U.S. society. The data were analyzed using content analysis and revealed that irrespective of the challenges and angst of living in limbo, and evidence of some degree of marginalization, Liberians have progressed in many ways and are contributing members of U.S. society. The social change implications of this research include providing a voice to Liberians and others in similar circumstances and the potential for policymakers to consider how temporary immigration policies are implemented in the future.

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Dedication

In loving dedication to my mother, Carmen Lorenzo, and my grandmother, Dulce Frias, for always believing in me and being the epitome of strength and hard work.

Acknowledgments

Thank you to Dr. Escobedo for his steady encouragement and guidance throughout the dissertation process. Great appreciation also goes to Dr. Raj Singh and Dr. George Kieh for their help and guidance.

I would like to give a special acknowledgement to my husband Elias, for being my biggest support and always encouraging me to keep going. To my babies, Elias and Averly, for being mommy's inspiration to finish what I started. I am truly blessed and grateful for our little family. I would also like to thank my parents Carmen Lorenzo and Orlando Sanchez for making me always feel loved. You are the best people I know and I am so lucky to have your hard working example. Making you proud has been a big part of this goal for me.

I would like to thank my best friend Kelly for all of her encouragement and confidence in me and for always checking in on how it was going.

I would like to thank Mr. Lawrence Levine for being so kind to a stranger and offering me immigration study ideas, one of which became the topic of this study. Thank you to my previous supervisor, Jim Ennis, for providing me with encouragement and support when I began this process.

I would especially like to thank the members of the Liberian community that were so welcoming and helpful. Especially to Dr. John Wollie, whom I will always be very grateful to for his help and support.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

The United States places itself as a country that provides various forms of humanitarian aid to the international community and implements policy such as temporary protected status (TPS) and deferred enforced departure (DED) to help those whose life might be in danger in a country that is experiencing civil strife or recent environmental catastrophe. According to the Congressional Research Service (Wilson, 2018) more than 430,000 foreign nationals in the United States hold temporary protection in the form of TPS or DED. The policies underlying these statuses provide protection from deportation for groups of individuals who cannot return to the country in which they last resided due to civil war or environmental disaster (Bergeron, 2014). Although the name of the status infers a temporary intention; the U.S. government has frequently extended the TPS designations for most countries for protracted periods (Kerwin, 2014). The outcome is groups of individuals who have resided in the United States in a quasilegal status for decades, are in limbo, with no promise of permanent status and with no guarantee that they will not have to leave the country at some point.

In this study, I focused on the effect that temporary immigration policy, namely TPS and DED, used as a long-term solution has on the lives of those who hold the status. While there are benefits to TPS and DED status, such as employment authorization, marginalization results from living as noncitizens due to limited rights and benefits (Abrego & Lakhani, 2015; Cebulko, 2014; Heeren, 2015). Through a qualitative approach consisting of case studies, the focus of this study was on bringing to light the

perceived central issues that affect Liberians as a subgroup of the thousands in a similar immigration scenario.

My aim in this study was to further understand the lived experience of being in immigration limbo as a result of having a quasilegal immigration status that limits full acculturation, a sense of belonging and formal societal recognition (Borri, 2014) yet grants certain benefits. As part of this exploration, I looked at how living with TPS or DED for an extended period shapes the lives of individuals and their outlook for the future. Further, I explored the unknown effects of living in limbo and considered how TPS and DED holders view themselves as members of U.S. society.

Although research on temporary immigration policy in the United States has focused on Salvadorian nationals (Abrego & Lakhani, 2015; Menjivar, 2006), minimal research (Reilly, 2014; Simmelink, 2011) has been conducted on Liberians, who have held a form of temporary immigration protection the longest. Significant hardships may be faced by the target group due to minimal awareness by the general public on this immigration category, resulting discrimination, and barriers to rights and resources (Abrego & Lakhani, 2015). Further, although TPS and DED are categorized as humanitarian programs that protect individuals from deportation (Kerwin, 2012) there is a need to explore the effects of temporary immigration policy (Hari, 2014), especially in the context of how the prolonged use of unchanged policy influences successful integration. Thus, the social change opportunity that arises is a potential to improve the quality of life for those who these policies are intended to help and to influence how these policies are developed and implemented in the future.

In this chapter, I provide background on how the United States has implemented temporary immigration policy, and describe the problem addressed by this study. In this chapter, I also introduce the research approach and the elements that frame the focus of the study. In addition, I provide important definitions and discussion of the scope and limits of the study. Last, I describe the significance of the study and its potential for social change.

Background

The United States has routinely implemented temporary immigration policies to fill gaps in statutory policy and provide for the need to delay the deportation of immigrants for one reason or another (Heeren, 2015; Olivas, 2012; Kerwin, 2012). Per the Immigration and Nationality Act, the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security can grant TPS to individuals who last resided in a country to which they cannot return after a natural disaster or due to civil conflict (Kerwin, 2012). DED serves a similar function, however it can be authorized by the president through an executive order or memorandum to delay the deportation of foreign nationals. Both of these policies are implemented as a humanitarian measure that protects persons that may face a dangerous situation if they were forced to return to an unstable country.

When a country is designated with TPS or DED those that meet the prescribed eligibility standards for the designation can apply for the benefit. To claim eligibility for the status, they must submit an application and fee to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) by the prescribed deadlines. The eligibility requirements generally involve proof that the applicant meets the physical presence and continual residence dates

determined with the designation, and that they attend an appointment to collect biometrics for the documents issued upon approval. TPS and DED holders must register and pay the application fees with each redesignation or they lose their benefits. Although an applicant can request a fee waiver, if they do not file an application with the original designation and within the deadlines, they will not be eligible to receive the benefit later. In essence, there must be an initial application and there can be no gap in the filing of subsequent applications for redesignations, except under very limited circumstances.

Although holders of TPS and DED are eligible to receive employment authorization, these policies are considered “dead ends” (Enchautegui & Menjivar, 2015; Salcido & Menjivar, 2012) as they do not offer any promise to permanent legal status or a guarantee of being able to remain in the United States. In addition, although they are characterized as a temporary policy, TPS and DED designations are usually for 18-month periods and are frequently extended within 60 days of the expiration for another term. According to Coutin (2011), DED enlarged the ambiguous circumstances of these types of policies because it is meant to only defer a required departure. Notably, some individuals with TPS and DED have spent a very long time in these statuses. In the case of Liberians, they have held either TPS or DED statuses at one time or another for more than 2 decades.

Remaining in the United States for many years in the limbo of TPS and DED results in individuals building their lives as would a U.S. citizen or permanent resident. However, for these individuals it means living under a cloud of uncertainty due to the potential scenario that one day the situation in their country of last residence is

considered improved and that the group is deemed to no longer need protection from deportation. If there is a decision to not redesignate a country with TPS or DED, the expectation is that unless these individuals are eligible to change to another immigration status, they would lose their immigration status and employment authorization and would leave the United States, however, there is no prescribed process to direct such a scenario. The potential effect then is that the state of limbo created by TPS and DED takes away a person's sense of stability and the security that they will not be forced to uproot their lives. Moreover, it is probable that having the fear of such a drastic change looming over them interferes with their ability to successfully integrate in the United States.

Temporary immigration policies are implemented throughout the world and can take many forms depending on the need they are intended to address. TPS was enacted by the Immigration Act of 1990, DED however, is more discretionary and ambiguous, as some forms of immigration status in the United States are known to be (Kerwin, 2012). These policies offer similar aid as that given to asylees but are distinct in how these are blanket policies that cover a group rather than individuals that are claiming a need for protection. The premise of TPS and DED is that based on a catastrophic event or period of unrest in a country, individuals who are physically present on a certain date should not be forced to return to that country since they would face extreme hardships and exposure to dangerous conditions. Although it is true that TPS is based on the statute in the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), the United States government exercises discretion to designate a country with TPS. It seems that there is no clear recipe for the criteria a country must meet but rather that there is an evaluation of foreign policy

interest and potential risk or benefits to the United States. There are regularly countries that seemingly undergo similar circumstances to those of designated countries and they do not receive a TPS designation.

Near the end of a period of designation, the U.S. government must reevaluate the conditions in the TPS or DED country to determine if there will be an extension. Heeren (2015) provides that whether a country's TPS or DED designation will be extended is based on political whim, and that status holders live under a renewed anxiety each year when they wait to know if their country designation will be renewed. This point is important as we consider that the decision to designate a country for TPS potentially alters the course of many people's lives. In deciding to allow individuals to remain in the United States that may have otherwise left, there begins a process of then needing to consider the extreme hardship that may be caused in the future by ending this protection and expecting that they will repatriate after living in the United States as immigrants. At a minimum, it should also be considered that there may be significant hardship and difficulty just by the limbo state that results from continuous designations with very limited alternative options. Although the decision to designate a country with TPS is seemingly well intended, it also seems to be bureaucratically driven and not based on a calculation for what the ultimate outcome will be for these individuals. This is also evident through the absence of a repatriation plan in the statute and failure by policy makers to enact any change to the TPS statute since its enactment.

Liberians are a group that best represent the conundrum of temporary immigration policies in the United States. According to USCIS (2016), in 2016 there were an

estimated 4,000 Liberians living in the U.S. holding TPS or DED. Liberians have held either TPS or DED since March 1991 as a result of civil war outbreaks in Liberia (Argueta & Wasem, 2016). In the course of several years, they have routinely been left in uncertainty as to whether there would be a redesignation, to the point where it seems as though they had been forgotten or that they would possibly not be redesignated. In September 2014, the DED redesignation of Liberia was announced just four days before the status was meant to expire (Heeren, 2015). Then in November 2014, Liberia was granted a new designated of TPS as a result of the Ebola outbreak, which terminated on May 21, 2017 (USCIS, 2017). Liberians who have remained in the United States with TPS or DED have had to apply almost yearly for renewed status and employment authorization, including the fees. The new designation of TPS in 2014 meant that Liberians who may have previously not been eligible for DED could have met new eligibility requirements for TPS, such as the requirement that they had been continuously physically present in the United States since November 21, 2014. Liberians are the only group to currently have a DED designation and terminates on March 31, 2019 after the president granted a 12 month “wind down” period a few days before the prior designation was set to expire (USCIS 2018). To complicate matters, the new administration presents a potential shift in how redesignations are decided and it seems unlikely that there will be any further extensions.

The circumstances of Liberians holding TPS or DED bring to the forefront questions about what happens when you live in a country as a citizen but do not have formal citizenship rights. Several authors argue that the result of living in limbo is a state

of high stress, anxiety, a lack of belonging as a result of fear of deportation, separation from family, and stress from highly bureaucratic renewal processes (Abrego & Lakhani, 2015; Abrego & Menjivar, 2012; Enchautegui & Menjivar, 2015). Further, Borri (2014) provides that citizenship is based on a set of rights and a sense of belonging, which temporary protection statuses put into question because migrants are not given access to full rights and are viewed as less than citizens. Abrego & Lakhani (2015) provide that the 2006 seminal article by Menjivar, “Liminal Legality: Salvadorian and Guatemalan Immigrants’ Lives in the United States” introduces the concept of liminal legality as a state of being more protected than someone who is undocumented but short of the rights of a lawful permanent residence or U.S. citizenship. Thus, the uncertainty and anxiety created by policies such as TPS and DED result in a state of “liminal legality” (Enchautegui & Menjivar, 2015). Further Cebulko (2014) provides that there is minimal research on the effects of liminal legality and any comparison of its consequences as compared to those with no status or permanent status. Hari (2013) agrees that there is still a need to understand those in temporary statuses and their experience in the host country.

Research suggests that although temporary protection policies are viewed as foreign relations measures and a way to track refugees (Heeren, 2015; Krombel, 2012), the recognition a country provides through immigration status affects individuals on a very personal level and magnifies the inequalities they face through limited access to resources (Glenn, 2011). Literature on temporary immigration policies has focused on identity formation, economic effects and analyses of the success or lack thereof of these policies (Simmelink, 2011; Krombel, 2012). Further research is needed to learn how

individuals cope with living under a prolonged, uncertain immigration state and how the impermanent nature of temporary immigration policy affects integration in the host state. Not conducting this research would continue to overlook groups impacted by this type of policy and would fail to pursue an understanding as to whether the benefits of temporary immigration policies implemented as long-term solutions outweigh the risks.

Problem Statement

The United States' prolonged implementation of temporary immigration policy minimizes the security and stability of the groups this policy is intended to protect. Krombel (2012) provides that these policies have adverse effects on recipients rather than protect them and may lead to damaging consequences for the immigrants and the society in which they live. Liberians have had temporary immigration protection, through TPS and DED for more than 25 years (Wasem & Ester, 2016), resulting in them living in limbo with no promise of permanent status and facing the threat of potential deportation. Liberians in many ways have completely integrated into society, yet they are excluded from certain rights provided to permanent residents and U.S. citizens (Simmelink, 2011). The problem is that the long-term implementation of temporary immigration policy overlooks the security of Liberians and their need to have full rights as citizens. This aligns with the view that immigration law shapes the immigrants potential achievement and future potential (Menjivar & Abrego, 2012). A qualitative study using a case study approach may yield a greater understanding of the long-term effects of these immigration policies on the security and successful integration of Liberians.

Purpose of the Study

My purpose in this this qualitative study was to explore the effects of temporary immigration policy implemented as a long-term solution on the security of Liberians and their successful integration in the United States. For the purpose of this study, the term *security* means the safety of living without a looming threat of losing legal immigration status or of being deported. I will expand on knowledge of the issue to inform future temporary immigration policy based on the experience of policy beneficiaries. The unique aspect of this research is centered on gaining insight on a group who has been subject to temporary immigration policy for more than two decades and continually face the scenario of involuntary repatriation. This study may also contribute to the knowledge of what experiences are most challenging for this group and how they view their rights as members of society.

I aimed to bridge the literature gap by examining this understudied group, which has a unique relationship with the United States and add to the knowledge about the effects of living in a prolonged temporary immigration status. In this study, I also added to the understanding of how these individuals identify with the host state after living in a state of prolonged temporariness. This study will be limited to focus on Liberians with temporary protection and as such will provide new perspectives about how this under researched group (Covington-Ward, Dennis, Reding, Simpson, & Willison, 2011) lives with its unique circumstances. The results of this study provide a voice to the Liberians affected by this issue and can lead to future research. In addition, the described negative effects from the current policy, shed light on the need to explore alternative ways to

provide humanitarian or social service assistance to foreigners who cannot return to their native country due to unique circumstances.

Research Questions

The research question this study aims to answer is: What are the perceived effects of long-term implementation of temporary immigration policy on the security and successful integration of Liberians?

Theoretical Framework

The study was framed using Berry's acculturation theory (Berry, 1997) to collect data on how temporary protection holders in a prolonged limbo state cope with the circumstances of their situation and relate to the host state. Berry (1997) described a model of acculturation through which programs or policies can be viewed to consider the degree to which individuals can be seen as assimilated, integrated, separated or marginalized. This theory adequately frames the focus of this study and it provides a lens through which the described experiences can be analyzed.

Nature of the Study

The nature of this study was qualitative a case study approach. The case study approach allows for the researcher to gather in-depth, descriptive data on a multifaceted social phenomenon through a clearly defined case (Yin, 2014). A case study approach allows for an intent focus on Liberians with temporary protection through. The Congressional Research Service provides that there are an estimated 745 Liberians with employment authorization based on DED, living in the United States, which may not include all that have DED status (Wilson, 2018). The participants were individuals in the

Liberian community that have experience with Liberians with temporary protection, most of which are members of community organizations that advocate for the Liberian community on immigration matters and other Liberian issues. The final sample size for this research was n=9. The data was collected through in-depth semistructured interviews, conducted in person and on the telephone with participants.

My role as the researcher was to engage the participants in conversation and capture a thorough, account of the experience of Liberians with temporary protection and to document observations. Researcher bias was documented in advance of beginning the data collection and reflected on throughout the interactions with participants and during data analysis. Trustworthiness of the results was addressed through objective discussion of the results, including any limitations to generalizability of the data to the population. The aim was to compile a case study that relays the experience of Liberians with temporary protection to gain an understanding of how they have been affected by living in a state of limbo for many years. The transcribed data from the interviews was categorized thematically through descriptive and In Vivo codes. NVivo software will be used to code and organize the data.

Definitions

Acculturation: The process by which an individual is modified or adapts to the culture of a society due to extended exposure to that culture. (Merriam-Webster, 2018).

Advanced parole: A travel authorization granted by USCIS that an eligible non-citizen can use to request entry into the United States after brief travel abroad. USCIS requires that individuals in TPS receive an advanced parole document prior to traveling

outside of the United States. If the TPS holder does not have an advanced parole document, they may not be permitted to enter the United States and can lose their TPS status (USCIS, 2018i).

I used the following additional abbreviations in my study:

Asylee: The immigration status granted to an individual that claimed fear of persecution after entry into the United States (Bergeron, 2014).

Berry's Acculturation theory: A theory encompassing the model of acculturation that can be used to gauge whether individuals have been able to become acculturate to a society after having left another society (Berry, 1997).

Citizenship: A formal status granted according to the laws of the state that provides basic rights and privileges of the state (Coutin, 2013).

DED holder: An individual who has a pending application for Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) status or has been approved for Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) and continues to file timely applications as prescribed by USCIS with each designation for the country of last residence by the president of the United States.

Deferred enforced departure: Measure that can be implemented at the discretion of the president of the United States to suspend the removal of foreign nationals for a designated period of time (USCIS, 2018g).

Employment authorization: The legal permission to work in the United States either incident to an individual's status or by explicit documentation issued by the Department of Homeland Security in the form of an Employment Authorization Document, Form I-94 Arrival Departure record or other document. U.S. employers are

required to review an employee's documents and to complete a Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification, to demonstrate that they have checked that the employee is authorized to work (USCIS, 2018h).

Immigrant: An individual that left their country of origin to reside permanently in another country (USCIS, 2016a).

Lawful permanent resident: An alien who is admitted to the United States on an immigrant visa or adjusts their status in the United States and resides permanently in the U.S. (USCIS, 2018j).

Liberian: A person whose nationality or place of last habitual residence is the Republic of Liberia (USCIS, 2018g).

Limbo: A state of uncertainty that restrains or confines and can have a paralyzing effect on individuals. (Mountz, et.al, 2002)

Liminal legality: The state of being an individual with an immigration status that grants some legal recognition and benefits but excludes them from others and creates marginalization (Menjivar, 2006).

Nonimmigrant: An alien who permanently resides outside the United States but is temporarily in the United States for a particular purpose, such as to study or work.

Redesignation: The extension of an existing determination by the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security or the president that TPS or DED covers a country for a determined period of time. Eligible individuals need to apply for renewal of TPS or DED within the specified deadlines to maintain their status.

Refugee: An individual who applied for establish a "well-founded fear of

persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.” (USCIS, 2018k).

Security: The safety of living without a looming threat of losing legal immigration status or of being deported.

Section 244 of the INA: The section of the Immigration and Nationality Act that describes TPS.

Temporary protected status: Under the Immigration Act of 1990, provides suspension of removal proceedings and refuge to nationals of a foreign country as a result of environmental disaster or civil war for periods of 6 to 18 months as designated by the Secretary of Homeland Security (USCIS, 2018e).

TPS holder: An individual who has a pending application for temporary protected status or has been approved for TPS and continues to file timely applications as prescribed by USCIS with each designation for the country of last residence by the Secretary of Homeland Security.

TPS or DED designation: The determination by the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security or the president that the Temporary Protected Status covers a country for a determined period of time. Individuals that meet the physical presence, continual residence and that last resided in that country may be eligible for TPS.

The Immigration Act of 1990: Public Law 101-649 enacted on November 29, 1990, among other significant changes to immigration law, it ratified temporary protected status (USCIS, 2018a).

The Immigration and Nationality Act (INA): “The Act (INA), which, along with other immigration laws, treaties, and conventions of the United States, relates to the immigration, temporary admission, naturalization, and removal of aliens.” (USCIS, 2018b).

Assumptions

In this study, I assumed that the interviewees would be accessible, forthcoming, and honest with their responses. I also assumed that the participants would be fully engaged and take the time to recall their experiences with the issue truthfully and comprehensively. In addition, I assumed that the participants were comfortable in providing their testimony of life experiences. I assumed that the participants felt weary of expressing any negativity or may have chosen to restrain from providing negative feedback towards these policies or the U.S. government due to the position that it is better to have an immigration status than to be undocumented and that they could be viewed as lacking appreciation. It was communicated to the participants that their statements are confidential and not specifically attributed to them and that the goals of the study is to solely provide insight on the experiences of Liberians with temporary protection. I assumed that if they chose to participate in the study these concerns are minimal to them.

Another assumption is that the participants’ knowledge of my employment with USCIS would not significantly influence their responses. I clearly noted that my work has no direct connection with the programs or policies being explored and that I had no access to their cases or direct influence on cases or policy. I assumed that to some degree the participants were affected by knowing that I have a connection to the agency that

grants immigration benefits, It can be assumed that there may have been a level of intimidation experienced by the sensitive subject matter, however this factor is reduced given most participants are not benefit recipients themselves. I also assumed that there could have been a curiosity by the interviewees as to how my current work plays into my study. Another assumption is that there may have been a curiosity that influences the interview interaction as to my choice to study Liberians since I have no personal connection to the country. I assumed that since the interviewees had the opportunity to ask questions, they were able to clear these curiosities or concerns before the interview began to avoid having these elements influence the focus of the participants or their responses.

My previous position with USCIS required me to be significantly knowledgeable on most immigration topics and to use this knowledge to answer public questions on the telephone and provide training to other employees. This work exposed me regularly to individuals who had inquiries about the TPS and DED process in general and their cases specifically. I assumed that my experience with this topic through my previous work might incorporate bias into how the data is reported. I also assume that my personal experience as the daughter of immigrants may expose my study to bias. The overlying assumption is that my educational preparation leading up to this study and my genuine high awareness of these potential biases will limit any infiltration of bias and personal opinions into the study findings.

Scope and Delimitations

My focus in this study was derived from a need to further understand the experience of a specific group of individuals affected by temporary immigration policy. TPS and DED implementation for protracted periods has seemingly become normalized or status quo, which is representative of the complicated state of U.S. immigration policy. The fact that these policies have not been adapted or modified to provide a long term solution is an example of the reluctance to address immigration changes in general. Further, temporary immigration policy affects thousands of people and will potentially continue to be implemented, regardless of the gaps in understanding of the long term effects at a human level. Focusing specifically on this particular type of immigration policy and the experiences of the status holders may shed some light on the larger immigration picture.

The choice to use the theoretical lens of Berry's acculturation theory (Berry, 1997) is based on maintaining the scope with a theory in the realm of public policy. I had considered using Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory (Maslow, 1943); however, this would have deviated from the focus on policy and its effects. Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory could yield a very useful lens for this study as well, yet it would be more appropriate for a researcher interested in the psychosocial effects of the policy. Berry's acculturation theory provides a clear and manageable lens and aligns well with the purpose of the study.

The participants of this study were Liberian community members that have personal experience or have witnessed the experience of Liberians with temporary

protection. Although there are thousands of individuals that hold TPS or DED status in the United States, the focus on this particular group is intended to explore an under researched population that has had a unique experience and history with temporary immigration policy. The participants included individuals that hold or have held TPS and DED status. The study was not limited by region or state to account for varied experience due to location.

The potential for transferability of the results speaks to the degree to which the information derived from this study is applicable to other similar situations. It is essential for research to provide sufficiently descriptive data and descriptions, to allow future appliers to gauge whether the results can be applied to another situation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). To provide the best chance for transferability of the results of this study, I used the strategy of providing “rich, thick description of the setting and the participants of the study” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 257). I also aimed to incorporate variation in the participants, by including both genders and variation in adult ages among available participants. Through incorporating these strategies, there was an increased potential for transferability to other cases of individuals living with temporary protection statuses and similar scenarios.

Limitations

As a qualitative study using a case study method, the primary limitation was the small sample size. This places a limitation on the generalizability of the results on the population. There also is a limitation based on the unavailability of firsthand participants. There may ultimately be experiences that can only be described by those with firsthand

knowledge of living with temporary protection. Although these limitations could be potentially significant, the in-depth nature of the interviews yielded results that can be used to compliment current understanding and generate new curiosities for future research.

Significance

This study can be highly significant taking into consideration that with no legislative action on immigration, the U.S. will need to continue to use temporary immigration policies such as TPS, DED and most recently, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, to address population needs that cannot be ignored. Another consideration as noted by Omeziri (2014), indicates that countries need to increasingly consider the policies used to help displaced individuals, especially as we contemplate that it is estimated that in the next three decades there could be between 200 and 700 million estimated people displaced by environmental factors alone. As a world leader, the U.S. may benefit from considering the best approach to officially deal with humanitarian aid in the long-term as opposed to putting a bandage on the issue.

Social Change

The implications for positive social change that can result from this study include preventing marginalization of Liberians with DED and informing government and social service entities about the hardships faced by Liberians, including their perspectives as members of U.S. society. The findings of this study can be used to bring awareness to challenges faced by this group and can prompt new discussion and alternate approaches to how these policies are implemented. In particular, there is a societal significance in

identifying particular areas that are pain points in the lives of the study participants. There is additional potential for positive social change in gaining knowledge on how individuals cope with living in immigration limbo and how their lives are shaped by fear, uncertainty, and hope for the future. As individuals, Liberians may experience social change from feeling heard and acknowledged as members of society and eventually in a reduction of marginalized experiences.

For Liberians, as part of a larger group that live in similar circumstances, there is an important opportunity for positive social change brought by this study in that the findings can increase awareness of the human element of these types of policies. Further, that the findings can support further dialogue about this group and promote policy changes to address the challenges faced by those that live in this type of uncertainty. In particular, policy makers and other government and social service entities can use the findings of this study to inform policy and address issues that have gone overlooked and that create unnecessary hardships for these individuals. There is an opportunity to continue to expand on our understanding of the effects of these policies and whether there needs to be more done to truly support the integration of these individuals. Although it is important that the United States protect individuals during times of crisis from potential danger, it can be considered irresponsible to continually implement policies that result in ambiguous circumstances and perpetual limbo.

Summary

In Chapter 1, I provide a foundation for this study, the background of TPS and DED and its effects on Liberians. In Chapter 1 I also describe the problem statement,

purpose of the study and the theoretical framework that provided the lens to examine the effects of temporary immigration policy on Liberians.

In Chapter 2, I provide an in-depth analysis of the literature on this topic within the last five years and seminal works that have made significant contributions to the discussion. In Chapter 2, I also categorize the major recurring themes in the literature and considers themes that may require further exploration.

Chapter 3 details the methodological approach, design, and instruments used for the study.

In Chapter 4, I discuss the setting for implementing the research and presents the results of the study. In Chapter 4, I also review the evidence of trustworthiness and quality of the study by considering the elements of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

In Chapter 5, I provide the conclusion of this research study through a discussion of the interpretation of the findings, limitations of the study, recommendations, and social implications.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

In Chapter 2, I provide the context for this study and review the literature that supported its undertaking. My qualitative study explored the effects of temporary immigration policy implemented as a long term solution on the security of Liberians and their successful integration in the United States. The literature is described in the context of the history of temporary immigration policy in the United States, the themes that are prominent in the literature, in regard to the lived experience of immigrants that hold temporary protection status, and the theory that will be used to guide the study. There is also discussion of the themes surrounding the efficacy of temporary immigration policy, in the context of whether the challenges they create outweigh the benefits they provide and if this supports their intended purpose.

The chapter begins with a focus on Berry's Acculturation Theory, which served as the lens for exploring the effects of temporary immigration policies implemented long-term on specifically Liberians. The subsequent section is a review of the role of temporary immigration policy in the United States, including the historical background and requirements of TPS and DED. Insight is also provided on the history of temporary protection in the United States as it relates specifically to Liberians. The section that follows explores the prominent themes from prior research and analysis of temporary immigration policies and the effects these policies have on individuals.

Literature Sources

The literature reviewed includes trusted websites, textbooks and peer reviewed journal articles. The following databases were used for the literature review search: Google Scholar, Academic Search Premiere, EBSCO, LexisNexus Academic, Political Science Complete, SAGE Premiere and ProQuest Central.

Literature Key Search Terms

The search terms that I used to identify relevant articles included: *temporary protected status, deferred enforced departure, liminal legality, protracted refugee situations, immigration limbo, legal limbo, repatriation, Liberian immigrants, temporary protection, discretionary immigration policies, African immigrants, immigrant, acculturation theory and integration*. In addition, several relevant articles were identified in reference lists of professional journal articles and peer-reviewed journal articles. Statistical and policy specific information was referenced from the USCIS website, Congressional Research Service and Department of Justice websites.

The Iterative Search Process

The process for reviewing the literature began by an initial review to identify the level of relevance of the article to the topic. Articles that were deemed relevant were numbered and labeled electronically for easy identification. As articles were read, any significant material was noted or highlighted in the article. Notes paraphrasing the text were added in the article. Where applicable, notes were referenced in the text to relevant literature and literature that was noted as seminal to the topic were noted and later researched as additional sources of information. A literature review matrix was created to

collect the article citation, the article topic and the paraphrased notations. These notations were highlighted by theme and marked once included in the proposal.

Theoretical Foundation

Theory of acculturation describes the process that immigrants go through as they negotiate their experiences with the host culture. Fox et. al (2013) described acculturation as the changes that result from being exposed first hand to two different cultural groups, the country of origin and the host country. Ward and Geeraert (2016) defined acculturation or assimilation as the process of psychological and societal adjustment that ensues to a person's cultural identity after direct exposure to another culture. Although in some instances the literature describes acculturation and assimilation interchangeably, Berry's model uses assimilation as one of the four possible strategies of acculturation. This model prescribes that the acculturation process is a negotiation that can determine the long-term effects of immigrating in terms of stress level and life satisfaction.

Berry's work is driven by psychology, however, his theory of acculturation has been used in research that aims to understand how immigration policy impacts immigrants. Kerry (2016) offers that although Berry is focused on psychology, his work can be used as the lens for social policy and for understanding phenomena related to immigrants and political structures. Ward and Kuss (2012) offer that Berry's two-dimensional, (cultural maintenance and cultural contact) four-strategy acculturation model has been used for more than 30 years to study a range of immigrant groups.

Berry (1997) considers the four strategies of acculturation to derive from the degree to which the minority group chooses to shed their culture of origin and the degree

to which they accept the dominant culture. Among these factors is whether the nature of immigration policy in the host culture are inclusive of immigrants or are restrictive. Further, Schiefer et. al (2012) note that it is necessary for those making policy and researchers to work towards greater understanding of processes of acculturation and adaptation as migration increases. Berry (1997) reflected that understanding the acculturation process can contribute to policymaking that promotes integration rather than, assimilation, segregation or marginalization.

Berry (1997) described the complexity of acculturation as a process that has dimensions and can vary significantly among immigrant groups. Berry proposed that there are four categories or strategies to acculturation that can be analyzed in terms of the strength or weakness the immigrant has to each: integration, assimilation, separation or marginalization. Berry (1997) also explained that there can be a high variance in the consequences of the acculturation process in the long term because this depends on the experiences from the heritage country, the host country and factors that would have existed before the migration and during the process of acculturation.

Berry's (1997) four-strategy model looked to identify the degree to which immigrants are willing to shed their origin culture and take on the host culture. Integration seeks to maintain a degree of the origin culture but also an openness to integrate in the host society (Berry, 1997). Ward and Geeraert (2016) explained that assimilated individuals have a stronger orientation to the host culture. Separated individuals have a stronger orientation to the heritage culture, and marginalized individuals have a weak orientation with both cultures (Berry, 1997). It is consistently

noted in the literature that integrated individuals have a stronger orientation with both the settled culture and the heritage culture (Ward & Geeraert, 2016). Integration is discussed in the literature as the strategy that can yield the most success and well-being for immigrants.

There was significant agreement in the literature about how the acculturation process can influence the life satisfaction and good health of immigrants. A society that supports immigrants and multiculturalism creates less of a need for immigrants to change their culture or to feel marginalized thus creating a more positive acculturation experience (Berry, 1997). Berry (1997) added that adaptation in the long term will be poor if the attitudes towards the immigrant groups are that they are not well accepted.

Acculturation theory has been invoked in both quantitative and qualitative research to further the understanding of the immigrant experience and how the host culture can influence this experience. Berry's model has been adapted as a tool in measuring acculturation in quantitative studies to analyze attitude towards cultural maintenance and cultural contact (Ward & Kuz, 2012). In a study on Canadian immigrants, Berry and Hou (2016) aimed to examine sense of belonging, life satisfaction and mental health and look at the role of demographics in relation to the acculturation approaches. The sense of belonging to both the origin culture and the host culture can be essential to feeling comfortable with the transition to the new society and to feel wanted and welcome in the host society (Berry and Hou, 2016). Ward and Geeraert (2016) offered that the need to cope as a response to challenges of migration can intensify the level of acculturative stress.

Through the application of acculturation theory to this study, I aimed to view the issue of long term implementation of temporary immigration policy on Liberians in terms of the degree to which they consider themselves to be successfully integrated into the U.S. Rumbaut (2015) offered that the U.S has a substantial history with terming and operationalizing assimilation and related terms in relation to immigrant processes. Berry (1997) indicated that the alternatives to acculturation can be used to measure policy and programs and to identify whether the programs intend to promote assimilation, integration or to marginalize.

Through the theory of acculturation, I aimed to better understand the position of Liberians based on the circumstances of a policy that can be seen as anti-integration. According to Ward and Geeraert (2016), cultural orientation in societal settings that are inclusive and open to diversity have a positive influence on immigrant's ability to acculturate, as opposed to societies where immigrants are expected to conform to the host culture. Berry (1997) also offered that when there is significant conflict, the "acculturative stress" perspective denotes that although acculturation can be challenging, it usually involves a moderate level of challenge that the individual can cope with. Also, the experienced personal outcomes of acculturation may vary from shifting behavior to cope with challenges and avoid stress, to severe mental issues and significant behavior shifts, the latter being less likely but possible (Berry, 1997). As such there is an opportunity to learn where Liberians with temporary protection fit in terms of the acculturation model based on their perceptions and what factors contribute the most to their associated strategy.

Literature Review

Background

Although there is much literature on refugees and protracted refugee situations in general, there were limited studies within the last 5 years on this topic. A 2014 dissertation on Liberian civic engagement and transnationalism (Reilly, 2014) presented the most related and recent study on this topic. Studies conducted beyond 5 years, have mostly involved Central Americans with temporary protection. Studies that discussed acculturation theory and its use for studying immigrants also served to provide a context for this study. The majority of the literature on this topic involves analysis of temporary immigration policy based on related prior research and subject matter expert contributions. The review of the literature demonstrated a gap in understanding what it is like for Liberians with temporary protection to live in the uncertainty of not knowing whether they will be able to remain in the United States after having temporary protection for so many years.

Background of Temporary Protected Status in the United States

Forced migration is a long standing international issue with which the United States is quite experienced. As a developed, powerful leader in the world, the United States is expected to assist displaced migrants and provide them protection from returning to harmful conditions in a foreign state. This responsibility is exhibited through actions such as signing onto the Refugee Convention in 1957 and the enactment of The Refugee Act of 1980, which formalized refugee policy in the United States (Pace, 2012). According to Kerwin (2014), The Refugee Act of 1980 created the comprehensive

refugee resettlement program by which individuals in foreign states that meet certain stringent criteria can be granted admittance to the United States and offered public benefits. Section 101(a)(42) of the Immigration and Nationality defines a refugee as:

“(A) any person who is outside any country of such person's nationality or, in the case of a person having no nationality, is outside any country in which such person last habitually resided, and who is unable or unwilling to return to, and is unable or unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of, that country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion, . . . (Department of Homeland Security, 2018)”.

Refugees apply for resettlement outside of the United States and can apply for permanent residency after one year.

The definition of refugee also pertains to those that are granted asylum after entry to the U.S. Although applying for asylum is an option for those that fear returning to dangerous conditions in a foreign state, it is also a process that requires the applicant to prove an individual claim for protection. As such, a key distinction that creates the need for temporary immigration policy is that asylum is intended for persons that are facing individual threats and fear of persecution not events or circumstances that are affecting a general group. Additionally, the definition of “refugee” does not address those that are forced to migrate due to environmental catastrophe. TPS and DED are examples of blanket forms of relief granted to a migrant group by country designation. According to Coutin (2011), TPS is a way of acknowledging that a group of foreign nationals need to

remain in the United States due to the situation in their home country, without defining them per the international definition of refugee. Notably, temporary protection policy fills in for circumstances not covered by the refugee program and addresses a need that is bound to persist.

Temporary protection policy is implemented internationally to assist individuals and groups that are unable to return to their country of origin or last residence due to dangerous circumstances in their foreign state. The United States has an established record of postponing deportations and granting temporary protection to displaced migrants since at least the 1960's (Bergeron, 2014; Olivas, 2012). Initially, the approach to provide temporary protection was largely discretionary and informal or ad hoc in the form of nonpriority status, discretionary authority in legal cases, Extended Voluntary Departure (EVD) and parole. Before the establishment of The Refugee Act of 1980, parole was the primary means for the U.S. government to allow refugees to enter the United States (Kerwin, 2014). This less formal approach shifted somewhat when the Immigration Act of 1990 authorized TPS as the first formal policy to protect displaced immigrants (Kerwin, 2014). However, as noted by Kerwin (2014) there is still vast discretionary implementation of temporary protection to groups and individuals through parole and deferred action, such as the Deferred Action of Childhood Arrivals (DACA) established through presidential executive order to protect individuals that entered illegally as children.

TPS and DED are touted as mostly humanitarian efforts, yet the literature suggests that there is primarily a self interest by the U.S. in what motivated the inception

of these programs, how they are implemented, and the lack of attention they are given by policy makers. Coutin (2013) provided that TPS was created as a legislative extension of the less formal, Extended Voluntary Departure, as a limited remedy that resulted from characterizing groups as economic migrants versus formal refugees. Massey (2013) opined that TPS was issued to “economic migrants” that were not really wanted. Hallett (2014) offered that TPS is framed as a humanitarian program, although initially it was the result of Salvadorian activism against U.S. foreign policy results. Although there is some truth to each of these perspectives, Menjivar and Abrego (2012) provide that prior to the Act of 1990, the U.S. was under considerable pressure to deal with an influx of undocumented Central American migrants that were not protected from deportation and where not being granted asylum. The creation of the TPS statute serves as formal recognition that there was a need to protect groups that were settling in the U.S. due to the fear of returning to a country torn by civil war.

The United States can grant TPS to migrants that resided in a country experiencing civil war, environmental disaster or other extraordinary circumstances that keep them from being able to return to that country (Kerwin, 2012). Section 244 of The INA provided that TPS can be designated under circumstances where:

- “(A) the Attorney General finds that there is an ongoing armed conflict within the state and, due to such conflict, requiring the return of aliens who are nationals of that state to that state (or to the part of the state) would pose a serious threat to their personal safety;
- (B) the Attorney General finds that-

(i) there has been an earthquake, flood, drought, epidemic, or other environmental disaster in the state resulting in a substantial, but temporary, disruption of living conditions in the area,

(ii) the foreign state is unable, temporarily, to handle adequately the return to the state of aliens who are nationals of the state, and

(iii) the foreign state officially has requested designation under this subparagraph;
or

(C) the Attorney General finds that there exist extraordinary and temporary conditions in the foreign state that prevent aliens who are nationals of the state from returning to the state in safety, unless the Attorney General finds that permitting the aliens to remain temporarily in the United States is contrary to the national interest of the United States.” (USCIS, 2018c)

The Secretary of Homeland Security holds the authority to designate a foreign state for a TPS designation. According to the INA, each designation must be for between 6 and 18 months.

19 countries have been designated with TPS since 1990 (Bergeron, 2014). The 10 countries with current designations of TPS include: El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Nepal, Nicaragua, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria and Yemen (USCIS, 2018). The first country designation for TPS was El Salvador in 1990 as part of an effort to deal with an influx of Salvadorians that had entered the United States to flee conflict. Thousands of Salvadorians applied for asylum but were met with the inability to substantiate their cases and to clearly meet the definition of refugee as per the convention (Coutin, 2011).

According to Menjivar and Abrego (2012), amidst lobbying by immigrant rights groups, the United States granted Salvadorians TPS as an 18-month temporary protection from deportation.

At the end of the 18-month period nationals of El Salvador that met the requirements were granted DED, a type of discretionary status with similar administrative requirements, which must be declared by the president through executive order or memorandum. DED also grants employment authorization and protection from deportation but carries with it the connotation that there is a high possibility that the status will be terminated. Salvadorians remained in DED status until 1996 and then in 2001 El Salvador was once again designated for TPS following two catastrophic earthquakes that devastated the country (USCIS, 2018f). El Salvador has been redesignated for TPS ever since with the current designation extended based on a preliminary injunction (USCIS, 2018f). Currently there are an estimated 204,000 (Seghetti, Ester, and Wasem, 2015) individuals with TPS from El Salvador, which is demonstrative of the challenges that would arise if temporary protection were terminated for this group. According to USCIS (2017), the TPS designation for Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone was terminated as of May 21, 2017.

To qualify for TPS an individual must meet and substantiate very specific continuous residence and physical presence requirements, and apply by the deadlines provided in the Federal Register Notice. As noted by Kerwin (2014), TPS does not cover individuals that fled from a foreign state at any point after the country was designated for TPS. The INA provides the following criteria for TPS eligibility:

“(c) Aliens Eligible for Temporary Protected Status.-

(1) In general.-

(A) Nationals of designated foreign states.-Subject to paragraph (3), an alien, who is a national of a state designated under subsection (b)(1) (or in the case of an alien having no nationality, is a person who last habitually resided in such designated state), meets the requirements of this paragraph only if-

(i) the alien has been continuously physically present in the United States since the effective date of the most recent designation of that state;

(ii) the alien has continuously resided in the United States since such date as the Attorney General may designate;

(iii) the alien is admissible as an immigrant, except as otherwise provided under paragraph (2)(A), and is not ineligible for temporary protected status under paragraph (2)(B); and

(iv) to the extent and in a manner which the Attorney General establishes, the alien registers for the temporary protected status under this section during a registration period of not less than 180 days.” (USCIS, 2018c)

Applicants must also pay the required application fees, currently \$545, for anyone age 14 and older or file for a fee waiver (USCIS, 2018e).

An individual approved for TPS is granted employment authorization and protection from deportation during the period of designation. In some cases there is an initial grant of employment authorization while the TPS application remains under review. TPS recipients can also apply for an advanced parole document for readmission

after travel outside of the United States. The INA provides that 60 days before the expiration of a designation, there is to be a review, in consultation with relevant entities, such as the State Department, to determine whether the adverse conditions in the foreign state remain to warrant a redesignation or if the conditions have improved and the designation should be terminated (USCIS, 2018e). Kerwin (2012) indicates that the temporary nature of the program denotes that the situation in the country should eventually improve and the individuals who hold this status would then be able to return to the foreign state. Intriguingly, Kerwin (2014) adds that redesignation often results from a determination that it would be very difficult for returned nationals to reintegrate. This rationale does not align with the statute for TPS that only refers to the expectation that the status would end once the conditions in the foreign country improve.

TPS or DED do not promise or lead to permanent resident status or citizenship. Also, any TPS or DED status holder that entered the United States without inspection would be ineligible for adjustment to permanent resident in the United States, even if they have an immediate relative or employer that can petition for them (Bergeron, 2014). Essentially, once a designation is terminated the individual reverts back to any status they had before TPS or DED, if any. There is also no process for a relative from the designated foreign country to join their family in the U.S. and gain a dependent or relative temporary status. Family reunification is limited by the aforementioned requirement that an individual be physically present in the United States on the date of the designation. Although TPS or DED holders have the option to apply for other immigration benefits, they are more commonly dependent on redesignations for an

opportunity to remain in a legal status and with renewed employment authorization albeit of a temporary nature.

Each redesignation requires a new application with fees by the prescribed deadlines. If the individual applies for a redesignation by the deadline, there is an automatic extension of the employment authorization through a notice published in the Federal Register for the designated group. This measure allows USCIS to process new employment authorization documents for the group while not letting their current employment authorization lapse. The TPS holder must present the expired card with the Federal Register notice as proof of the automatic extension of employment authorization until they receive their next document with the new validity dates. This is notable because it is a unique aspect of the TPS and DED programs and a point that can cause challenges for TPS and DED holders with their employers. Employers may be unfamiliar or skeptical about this process which deviates from the more common methods to verify authorization to work. Hallett (2014) offers that employers may be dissuaded from hiring or investing in someone that is not in a stable status. Additionally, Kerwin (2014) noted that some beneficiaries fail to reregister and lose their status as a result.

The repatriation of individuals that have TPS or DED has been handled as a loose and marginal effort in the past. According to The Department of Justice (2017), 12 countries have had their TPS designation terminated with no further designations. Prior to the recent TPS terminations for Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, Montserrat was the last TPS country to be terminated in 2004 (Department of Justice, 2017). Kerwin (2014) noted that the U.S. does not engage in activities that promote improving circumstances in

the foreign state that would make repatriation more likely to succeed. The procedure to terminate TPS for a country involves issuance of a Federal Register notice that provides a 6-month extension for the “orderly transition” of individuals out of the United States or to another status (Federal Register, 2017, p. 66060). The Federal Register notice indicated that TPS holders will revert to the immigration status they had prior to TPS and that those that had no legal immigration status prior can be removed after the termination date (Federal Register, 2017). It is notable that the 1990 Act does not provide specific direction for any specific process upon termination of the TPS designation.

Liberians and Temporary Protection

The United States first granted TPS to Liberian nationals in 1991 at the commencement of a civil war in that nation and has extended TPS numerous times since then (Kerwin, 2014). In a 2014 memorandum, President Obama noted the 2001 redesignation as having resulted from “armed conflict and widespread civil strife” (2014) in that nation. By 2007, the conditions were deemed to be improved in Liberia due to an end of the conflict years prior, which resulted in a change of designation to DED by President Bush for those that had held TPS. Subsequently, President Obama used his constitutional authority to redesignate Liberia for DED for 12 months in 2009 and then in 2010, 2011 and 2013 for 18 months. In 2014, President Obama deemed it in the “foreign policy interest of the United States” (White House, 2014) to once again designate Liberia for DED for 24 months. Eligibility for the 2014 designation specified that the person must have been physically present in the United States and have held DED since September 2011.

In November 2014, the Secretary of Homeland Security newly designated Liberia with TPS through May 21, 2016. This designation resulted from an outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in West Africa that according to the published Federal Register notice created “extraordinary and temporary conditions in Liberia that prevent Liberian nationals (and persons having no nationality who last habitually resided in Liberia) from returning in safety” (2014). The EVD outbreak was the largest such epidemic in history, hitting Liberia particularly hard and resulted in thousands of deaths and shut downs of educational, health and other public facilities (Federal Register, 2014). In March 2016, USCIS issued a Federal Register Notice outlining a 6-month redesignation of TPS for eligible Liberians until November 21, 2016.

Currently Liberians have been granted TPS and/or DED continuously for more than 15 years, they are also the group that has the longest history of designations, for a period that spans more than 27 years (see Table 1). Liberia’s TPS designation has been published for termination in the Federal Register 6 times, all of which resulted in a subsequent designation of TPS or DED without the termination coming to fruition. The designation of TPS for Liberia terminated on May 21, 2017 and the 18-month extension of DED by President Obama expired on March 31, 2018 (USCIS, 2017). On March 30, 2018 President Trump granted a 12-month “wind down” period terminating DED for Liberians on March 31, 2019 (USCIS, 2018g).

Table 1

History of Temporary Protection for Liberia

Type of temporary protection	Date of designation	Length of designation	Description
DED	March 30, 2018	12 months	Wind down period before DED ends on March 31, 2019
DED	September 30, 2016	18 months	Extension of DED
TPS	September 26, 2016	6 months	Period of orderly transition before termination of TPS
TPS	March 22, 2016	6 months	Extension of TPS
TPS	November 21, 2014	18 months	Designation of TPS due to Ebola virus outbreak
DED	October 1, 2014	24 months	Extension of DED
DED	March 21, 2013	18 months	Extension of DED
DED	August 2011	18 months	Extension of DED
DED	March 2010	18 months	Extension of DED
DED	March 2009	12 months	Extension of DED
DED	October 2007	18 months	Designation of DED
TPS	September 20, 2006	12 months	Notice of termination of TPS on October 1, 2007
TPS	August 26, 2005	12 months	Extension of TPS
TPS	October 1, 2004	12 months	Extension of TPS

TPS	August 6, 2003	12 months	Extension of TPS
TPS	October 1, 2002	12 months	Designation of TPS based on ongoing armed conflict
DED	September 25, 2001	12 months	DED designation based on compelling foreign policy interests and instability in Liberia and the region
DED	September 28, 2000	12 months	DED designation based on compelling foreign policy interests and instability in Liberia and the region
TPS	July 30, 1999	N/A	Termination of TPS as of September 28, 1999
TPS	September 29, 1998	12 months	Redesignation of TPS
TPS	March 31, 1998	6 months	Termination of TPS after 6 month extension
TPS	April 7, 1997	12 months	Extension of TPS
TPS	March 1, 1996	12 months	Extension of TPS
TPS	March 29, 1995	12 months	Extension of TPS
TPS	January 24, 1992	12 months	Extension of TPS
TPS	March 27, 1991	12 months	Designation of TPS due to ongoing armed conflict

Note. *DED*, Measure that can be implemented at the discretion of the president of the United States to suspend the removal of foreign nationals for a designated period of time (USCIS, 2018g); *TPS*, Under the Immigration Act of 1990, provides suspension of removal proceedings and refuge to nationals of a foreign country as a result of environmental disaster or civil war for periods of 6 to 18 months as designated by the Secretary of Homeland Security (USCIS, 2018e).

The unique circumstance of Liberians has not been a significant topic for prior research. However, a 2014 dissertation provides some closely related perspectives on Liberians and their acculturation in the United States. Reilly (2014) studied the extent of political participation by Liberians living in the United States and how it was shaped by their experiences as transnational citizens. The researcher offered that immigration status has resurfaced some ethnic divide among Liberians between those that have a more permanent status and those that have temporary status (Reilly, 2014). Reilly (2014) concludes that TPS and DED affect Liberians most by the limitations it sets on their ability to attain a higher education. In the study conclusion Reilly (2014) also maintained that TPS and DED, as temporary immigration policy, do not support integration and rather reflect a trend in U.S. policy that steers away from encouraging inclusivity and civic participation among immigrants.

Reasons for Temporary Immigration Policies

The United States is not alone in implementing temporary immigration policies to deal with displaced migrants. Canada (Omeziri, 2014), Australia (Robertson, 2013), Greece (Cabot, 2012), and nations in the European Union (Bergeron, 2014) among others currently have or previously had a form of temporary protection from deportation. Omeziri (2014) provided that Canada has responded to environmental migrants with temporary and ad hoc policies that accept migrants but leave them open to arbitrary resolve and to uncertainty about future support and status. Omeziri (2014) also noted Canada's temporary protection policy to reflect a "wait and see approach". Hari (2014) provided that Canada has an exclusionary migration history where there has been a large

amount of temporariness in certain policies. Australia has issued temporary protection visas to Iraqi asylum seekers, which included work permission but left uncertainty as to the length of protection (Hoffman, 2012). Robertson (2013) added that student migrants in Australia have similar experiences as other temporary statuses because they are under the threat of deportation and have no guarantee of being able to attain permanent status (Robertson, 2013).

There are significant perspectives in the literature on the contradictions that exist on the temporary intent of the TPS statute and the reality of how it has been implemented as a long term solution that keeps certain immigrant groups in a prescribed state of limbo. These types of policies are presented as a demonstration of a humanitarian compassion by developed countries and a place in the global effort to protect individuals that are in dire circumstances. Kerwin (2012) provided that the United States is bound under the 1951 United Nations Convention to not place refugees in a state of “refoulement” (p.3), meaning that individuals that meet the refugee definition cannot be removed to a country where they may be in danger. Although this does not directly apply to all temporary immigration policy, it represents a certain responsibility or standard. It also reflects the position that it would not align well with refugee standards for the United States to be seen as cruel or inconsiderate to the needs of those in crisis. That said, disagreements exist about the reasons or agenda behind the United States implementation of temporary immigration policy.

The Federal Register notices for TPS designations include a description of TPS as a humanitarian effort to help individual’s stranded and in precarious situations away from

their home country and temporarily unable to return. Olivas (2012) agreed that the motivation of DED and TPS is humanitarian and that this is evident by the granting of employment authorization and other benefits. Yet, some argued that the motivations are much more complex and somewhat opportunistic. One position was that temporary immigration policy are politically driven and that its implementation around the world is often a means to control immigrants and keep track of them (Heeren, 2015). According to Hallett (2014), we want these individuals to be allowed to work (or need them for labor) and present the policy as humanitarian but then contradict this help by keeping them in limbo, while having a way to keep track of them. This position aligns with the language in the Federal Register notices that indicates there is a foreign policy interest in designating a country for TPS and that the designation is determined based on the finding that designating a group with TPS will not create an adverse effect on the United States. For example, designating Liberia for TPS due to EVD protects Liberians that already reside in the United States and would present a minimal risk that a Liberian national would introduce the disease considering the enhanced screening at airports. As noted previously, foreign policy interest has also been noted in presidential memoranda designating Liberia for DED.

There are those that question the reasons behind the United States' seemingly easing into certain country designations rather quickly after an international event and at other times choosing to take no action when similar strife or a natural disaster affects other countries. Kerwin (2014) spoke to a lack of transparency and trust due to how some countries are designated and others are not. Salcido & Menjivar (2012) and Amaya-

Castro (2013), indicated that the United States government implements TPS to deal with large numbers of immigrants from countries with severe economic struggles. There is also the matter of the benefit that these programs bring through making significant contributions to the labor force since those in TPS and DED status are eligible for employment authorization (Mountz, et.al, 2002). Some also questioned why the United States has chosen to not provide a means to permanent status for TPS or DED holders where it has historically created this path for other groups that were initially paroled, such as Cubans and Hungarians (Bergeron, 2014). Although it is likely that there are both economic and humanitarian reasons for implementing temporary immigration policy, since the main reason for TPS and DED is purported to be humanitarian, there seems to be a lack of consideration for the challenges these policies create when there is long term implementation.

Temporary Intent/Long Term Implementation

An important consideration raised in the literature is the intent behind the TPS statute as it was presented in the 1990 Act and how it has actually been implemented. The literature and the 1990 Act supported a strong position that the intent of the creators of the TPS statute was for the status to be literally temporary. For example, the 1990 Act specifically prohibits any law that provides for adjustment to permanent residency for TPS holders unless the legislative amendment is approved by three-fifths majority of the Senate (Bergeron, 2014). The issue arises when we consider how most countries have been designated for more than 10 years and only a few have ever had the designation terminated. In essence, although it may be that the intent of the TPS statute is temporary,

through extensive redesignations with no legislative action on immigration in sight, there is a perceived encroachment of the original intent.

Menjivar & Abrego (2012) provided that the temporary intent of TPS is reflected in how extensions are often announced at the last minute. Determining the true intent is further complicated when one considers that there is no detail in the statute to address what happens when the protection is terminated (Bergeron, 2014). Amaya-Castro (2013) provided that temporary protection used to deal with an influx of refugees often ends up being a permanent situation, in part because it is difficult to determine when a temporary need ends. Although the United States has held a significant place in the world as a provider of humanitarian aid and protection, TPS and DED policies represent a hesitance to openly allow certain immigrants to fully incorporate. Rather, it appears there is a preference for these individuals to remain in limbo for as long as necessary until conditions in the foreign country improve rather than accept them as permanent members, even if they have not lived in the foreign country for decades.

Gray Areas of Legality

United States immigration laws provide an expansive list of status categories for immigrants and nonimmigrants. It would seem that foreigners in the United States should fit into a neat category of either having a permanent status such as U.S. citizen or permanent resident, a nonimmigrant status such as a foreign worker with a visa or a student, or that they have no legal immigration status. However, the literature on temporary immigration policy in the United States indicated that TPS, and similarly DED, presents a much more complex picture of what it means to have an immigration

status. Coutin (2013) provided that those with TPS or DED form a group that falls in the gray area or gap between having legal permanent status or no immigration status at all. These forms of protection are what authors have labeled “liminal legality” (Menjivar, 2006), nonstatus (Heeren, 2015), protracted refugee situations (Brun & Favos, 2015) or in referencing DED, a form of ambiguous discretionary status (Olivas, 2012). Further, there is a legal status hierarchy recognized by immigrants that goes from being undocumented, to being in a marginally legal status, to permanent resident or U.S. citizen status (Cebulko, 2014). TPS and DED as temporary immigration policies are seemingly considered to be marginally legal and land on the lower end of the hierarchy.

Gonzales (2011) provided that many contradictions exist and need to be studied when it comes to the idea of immigration status. An example that demonstrated the contradictions is the idea that there is a double side to DED because it is not considered by the government to be a legal status but it grants authorization to remain in the country and work legally (Heeren, 2015). Greenman & Hall (2013) equated temporary protection status to being undocumented and others note that these individuals face a lot of the stigma similar to those that are undocumented (Abrego & Lakhani, 2015; Cebulko, 2014). Additionally, the situation created by having a status that is in the grey area poses some unique circumstances for individuals. Cebulko (2014) shared that there is minimal research on the effects of liminal legality as compared to undocumented individuals or those with permanent status.

One theme that appeared in the literature is the notion of recognition and what it means to be formally recognized by society. Abrego and Lakhani (2015) provided that

having a status such as TPS or DED creates an incomplete form of inclusion where holders of liminally legal status are susceptible to barriers to rights and resources that hinder their full integration. Cebulko (2014) added that individuals in liminally legal statuses are not recognized as being legal because their legality could end at any time. According to Gonzales (2011), depending on the social setting, age and other factors, immigrants may experience inclusion and exclusion at different points in their lives. This is an important distinction from just assuming that anyone that is illegal just experiences full exclusion and supports the idea that individuals in prolonged temporary status have a complex and unique experience.

Of particular significance to this study is the condition that results from living in an unclear state for a prolonged period of time. Although the United States provides TPS and DED holders a delay of deportation and authorization to work, the temporariness of these statuses can evolve into many years or even a lifetime. The literature indicated that the longer they stay in the receiving country, the more they plan to stay (Parutis, 2013). This infers that those that remain in the United States for more than a decade or two have shaped their lives around remaining in the United States indefinitely. According to Coutin (2013), individuals whose experiences are so approximate to that of being a U.S. citizens, get to a point where they do not distinguish themselves from those that are citizens, yet they can have their status revoked or taken.

For those in temporary immigration statuses, there is also the unique element of feeling like after having paid into the system and after so many renewals there will be some due recognition that would lead to legal status and the ability to reunite with family

members (Abrego & Lakhani, 2015). This form of thinking relays an expectation and hope that they will be able to remain in the United States rather than any association with the possibility that they will need to return to their previous home country. There was also a significant focus in the literature on the association between liminal legality and the limitation on rights and benefits that results. Bergeron (2014) described that by continuously granting TPS, TPS holders find themselves living as residents of the United States but do not have access to most public benefits and do not have the same protective rights as actual permanent residents. Heeren (2015) added that although most holders of temporary programs pay taxes, they are not eligible for most types of public benefits like Social Security Insurance, food stamps and federal student loans, as the eligibility for these benefits varies by state requirements and how the state defines “lawful presence.” Kerwin (2014) relayed that TPS recipients are not qualified for federal aid as they would if they held refugee status.

Further, liminal legality creates a special category of immigration status where beneficiaries have authorization to work and protection from deportation but are denied benefits and rights provided by permanent status (Cebulko, 2014). Capps, Bachmeier, Fix, and Van Hook (2013) stipulated that the unauthorized, which include TPS holders, hold lower wage jobs and are less likely to have health insurance coverage. They are not eligible for public health insurance but may be covered by employer or spouse’s employer (Capps et.al, 2013). According to Hallett (2014), the restrictive nature of TPS is an example of the government’s use of categorization of legal status (or policy) to create a citizenship order that keeps certain immigrants down or in a lower social class.

Another limitation that results from TPS and DED is that there is no process to rejoin with family members that may remain in the designated country (Abrego & Lakhani, 2015; Hereen, 2015; Hoffman, 2012). Although refugees and asylees can include immediate family members in their process and permanent residents can petition to eventually have immediate family join them, there is no similar provision for TPS and DED holders. Recalling that one of the primary requirements for eligibility for TPS and DED is that the individual be physically present in the United States on a specified date, if a person falls outside of that requirement they are ineligible. The literature also spoke to the dynamics created in families where members live in the United States with mixed immigration statuses. Enchautegui and Menjivar (2015) relayed that having family members with different statuses can affect integration due to the different paths and challenges they experience to incorporate.

The Effects of Legal Limbo

The literature reinforced that the limbo status and insecurity created by temporary immigration policy results in tangible challenges as well as psychological effects. The uncertainty and limbo created by temporary immigration policy gives the government a power and a certain control of the protection seekers that has an emotional dimension (Cabot, 2012). Robertson & Runganaikaloo (2013) provided that being in a state of limbo promotes a feeling of being on the outside and generates anxiety. According to Greenman & Hall (2013), temporary status can be viewed as being more in line with being undocumented than with having legal status based on the challenges faced by immigrants. Additionally, Abrego & Lakhani (2015) and Cebulko (2014) offered the

perspective that fear of deportation is a significant source of stress for TPS and DED holders.

Distinct from the circumstance of undocumented immigrants, TPS and DED holders have a prominent record with USCIS that could potentially play against them if the TPS or DED designation is terminated. Hallett (2014) offered that TPS provides legal status and employment authorization but it exposes the immigrant to deportation once the program is terminated because the government now has their record. Also, unique to TPS and DED is the stress and tentativeness that results from looking out to see if their country will be redesignated or if they will suddenly lose their benefits (Abrego & Lakhani, 2015). In some cases the government did not announce a redesignation until a few days before the current designation expired. Since employers expect to have an updated employment authorization card or a Federal Register notice indicating an extension, this can result in an adverse effect for TPS and DED holders. Adding to this complex scenario, is the practice of showing an expired card with the Federal Register notice printed from the internet, which is unique to TPS and DED and has a potential to cause challenges with employers that are unfamiliar with this divergent method and fear employing an unauthorized worker.

Another layer of challenges comes with the cost of continuous renewal applications, changes of address and biometrics appointments (Heeren, 2015). TPS and DED applicants must reapply with every redesignation within the specified dates. As such, they are responsible to review the announcement on the USCIS website to obtain the details for reapplication or find assistance with the process. The matter of ensuring

that the government has their most current address can also be a challenge as certain groups of immigrants may move often. Missing a notice that requests evidence, their biometrics appointment or their new employment authorization card in the mail could cost them their status or their employment. According to Abrego & Lakhani (2015) TPS holders can fall out of status due to failure to reregister by a missed deadline, inability to pay fees, or due to administrative mistakes, such as a failure to change address. Dealing in such a delicate process with so much on the line is likely a large part of the experience of having a prolonged temporary protection status.

Another important challenge or stress point arises from the aforementioned point that there is no process in place to reunite with close relatives that remain abroad. Family separations can affect economic and emotional health and how well immigrants are able to integrate (Enchautegui & Menjivar, 2015). This creates a situation where there are financial dependencies for those family members in addition to concern for their well-being in an unstable country. Concern for family left behind still under bad circumstances contributes to mental health issues (Hoffman, 2012). Although TPS holders can apply for an Advanced Parole Document to travel, traveling back to the country from which they are seeking protection and a return entry into the United States is likely an intimidating and stressful experience.

Issues with stress and anxiety from living in immigration limbo are compounded by the fact that these groups may be more hesitant to seek help for mental health issues and may have limited health resources due to their status. Venters & Gany (2011) in discussing the mental health of African immigrants reference a mental condition

“adjustment disorder” as a possible situation that can result from a combination of prior experiences and current stresses. Further, misinformation among low-income immigrants and fear of deportation or the government, leads many to not seek out health benefits or to have incomplete application processes, even for their children that are U.S. citizens (Perreira et. al., 2012). Menjivar & Abrego (2012) relayed that legal status affects all aspects of immigrant’s lives, including health, educational attainment, finances and safety. Additionally, immigrants in tenuous statuses fear being deported and may not report violence towards them or unfair conditions (Menjivar & Abrego, 2012). In a seminal article on the topic of immigration limbo, Mountz et. al (2002), presented that TPS can promote a paralysis based on uncertainty and difficulty in making day to day decisions such as home improvements, education and what risks they are willing to take in returning to the home country for funerals and emergencies.

Summary

In this chapter, I discussed Berry’s acculturation theory and the use of this theory in research on immigrants. Acculturation theory provides an optimal lens through which to examine the research question - What are the perceived effects of long-term implementation of temporary immigration policy on the security and successful integration of Liberians? Berry (1997) defined that at the individual level, the acculturation strategy can be influential in the acculturation process with integration being the most successful strategy and marginalization being the least. He also provided that the attitude of the host society towards immigrants as expressed through policy can affect the extent to which immigrants feel accepted or marginalized (Berry,

2007). As such, this provides an opportunity to understand which acculturation strategy best describes the experience of Liberians with DED seeming as how they have been in a unique situation of protracted temporariness and yet have fully established lives in the United States.

In this chapter, I also provided a review of the recent literature on temporary immigration policy in the United States and the issues raised in the literature about this policy. The literature outlined that there is a need to address how temporary immigration policy, namely TPS and DED, are implemented and that there is a necessity for durable solution for individuals that remain in limbo for many years, build their lives in the U.S. and live with the concern that at some point that they may need to return to a country they have not lived in for a long time. The literature supported the notion that there is a problem in how temporary immigration policy is often implemented as a long-term solution and that there are several contradictions with the use of these policies. Some described TPS and DED as a humanitarian effort and a means for the United States to carry out its responsibility in the world. Others provided that the United States benefits economically and politically from keeping certain immigrants in a status that is neither fully inclusive nor outright exclusionary.

The literature on the experience of immigrants with temporary protection was limited and focused mainly on Central Americans with TPS. Although the experience of Central Americans is similar in that they have also held TPS for protracted periods, the sheer size of the groups may provide them with an added layer of security from having their status terminated as a group. For example, there would be a significant difference in

the termination of TPS for El Salvador who has an estimated 204,000 beneficiaries compared to an estimated 4,000 Liberians (Seghetti et al., 2015). Although remaining in TPS status is not the ideal scenario, the likelihood that there would be a termination for such a large group and the repercussions of such an action make the termination less likely, although still possible. This perspective then leaves a gap in the literature where we need to better understand how individuals with a constant looming threat of potential deportation or termination of status manage in society.

In chapter 3, I focus on the methods and strategy used to conduct this research.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

My purpose in this qualitative study was to explore the effects of temporary immigration policy implemented as a long-term solution on the security of Liberians and their successful integration in the United States. I used a purposeful sample to interview nine participants using the case study approach. My goal with the interviews was to discover the effects on the security and assimilation of Liberians with DED due to long-term implementation of temporary immigration policy. My goal with the research was to answer the following question: What are the perceived effects of long-term implementation of temporary immigration policy on the security and successful integration of Liberians?

In this chapter, I will detail the research methodology that was used to meet the goals of the research. The first section describes the research design and research tradition of the study and the rationale for these choices. The section also discusses the role of the researcher, including any significant factors or considerations that may have influenced the study. As a unique element to this study, the methodology section begins with a discussion of the challenges and considerations of conducting research on immigrants. The methodology section includes a discussion of the procedural method for data collection and considerations related to ensuring trustworthiness. In this section, I also relay the methods used to analyze the data. At the close of this chapter is a discussion of the ethical issues related to the study participants, including methods to preserve confidentiality and avoid any bias.

Research Design and Rationale

Qualitative research is based on a need to explore, discover, and understand a social problem inductively. In qualitative research, the concepts or theories emerge from the data and tell a story about how participants interpret their experiences versus the testing of a theory or hypothesis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This approach is ideal when the aim is to understand a complex topic or policy and its impact on individuals. Merriam & Tisdell (2016) posit that a qualitative approach has the potential to highly influence people's lives through what can be discovered and understood from the participants' perspectives. This view serves as a foundation for the decision to undertake this study through a qualitative approach, as it is both a complex topic and one that can lead to greater understanding and ultimately positive social change.

The decision to undertake a qualitative approach is based on several important considerations about the potential use of the results and the type of process that would best serve to understand the experiences of Liberians with temporary protection. A qualitative design served best to meet the purpose of this study because it allowed for flexibility in the pursuit of gaining deeper understanding of a real world problem. Maxwell (2013) described qualitative research as flexible, nonsequential, and emergent. These descriptions support this study since it allows for the possibility to discover what is unknown about this topic. There was also an opportunity to adapt the research as needed instead of simply testing what we think we know about the experience of these individuals living in limbo with DED. Further, there was the prospect to gain new insights that could lead to an opening for future research.

A qualitative approach is also an appropriate fit for this study due to the potential challenge in identifying large numbers of participants that would be required for a significant quantitative study. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), qualitative research accepts a small sample as a way to still provide valuable results. The qualitative approach recognizes that there is value in “richly descriptive” results that relay what was discovered about the complex topic or phenomena (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 17). Miles, Huberman and Saldana, (2014) provided that a strength of qualitative data is grounded in how it accounts for the context or natural setting of what is being studied and embeds the potential influences in these settings as part of the results. This notion played an essential role in this study where the data will likely be multidimensional, complex and have unique elements based on the participants detailed experience.

Research Tradition and Rationale

In this study, I followed a case study approach that is ideal for exploring a real world issue. Yin (2014) describes that a case study is needed when the researcher is investigating a focused “case” that involves “complex social phenomena” (p. 4) and wants to keep the real world description intact. A case study approach allowed for the collection of natural responses to focused questions that were analyzed to evaluate how living with temporary protection for a long period has influenced the lives of this group. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) described a case study as having some similar qualities to other approaches in that there is a focus on searching for understanding, the researcher collects and analyzes the results and the outcome is “richly descriptive” (p. 37). The distinction, however, is that a case study provides a richly descriptive end product

through the description and examination of a “bounded system”(p. 37). The unique bounded system for this study is a Liberian who is in the United States with DED status.

Further rationale for using a case study approach for this study is based on the research question, the scope and features of the study. The research question of: What are the perceived effects of long-term implementation of temporary immigration policy on the security and successful integration of Liberians?, aligns with the type of question that is appropriate for case study research. According to Yin (2014), real world exploration of a present-day issue is an ideal scenario for the case study approach. Further, Yin’s (2014) definition of a case study included inquiry that is in depth, cannot be controlled by the researcher and reliant on various sources of data. The scope of this study was an in depth exploration of a complex real world case. It was also justified to use a case study because the features of the study include triangulation through observation of the participant groups in a community setting.

Role of the Researcher

As the researcher, I served as an observer for the study through interviews, social media observation and document review. I am an employee of The Department of Homeland Security’s, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services for the past 17 years. This experience led me to the interest in this topic and exposed me to the potential significance of this study. Although I am employed by the agency that adjudicates TPS and DED cases, my work was unrelated to this process. I also do not have a relationship with anyone that has TPS or DED or anyone from Liberia. I used my experience with immigration law from my previous position to lay a foundation for the study. In my

previous position, I was trained and provided training on various immigration topics and also responded to customer service telephone calls. My work experience was useful in understanding the requirements and process that TPS and DED holders must go through. This lends to a different research experience than someone with minimal exposure of knowledge of the subject matter. I managed participant concerns of my having influence on their case through a clear interview protocol of the purpose of my study and by providing assurance that their personal information is not included in the study.

My role as the researcher was to interview the participants using the established protocol and to analyze the data to reveal how the data answers the research question. Through inductive analysis I aimed to see what the data tells about the effects that temporary immigration policy has had on the security of participants and their successful integration. My role was also to stick to the protocol and to note any instances where there was a deviation to delve further into a participants response. I also kept a journal after each interview to ensure that any notable aspects of the interaction are documented and included as part of the analysis. I transcribed the interview data personally and took note of any potential bias concerns. It is also important that I remained neutral towards participant responses to ensure the responses were authentic and not based on a perceived expected response.

Methodology

As social research has increasingly looked to further understand the complexity of immigration and its effects on people's lives, there has also been an increased awareness of the specific challenges that may present themselves for a researcher that wishes to

undertake a study with immigrants as participants. Although for this study, the Liberian community members may or may not currently hold temporary protection, there are sensitivities to consider as some of them are immigrants and/or have close ties to immigrants. The participants certainly have a compassion for and relate to the sensitive nature of discussing immigration status. According to Lu and Gatua (2014), researching immigrants presents a unique set of challenges that need to be accounted for to achieve successful research. Although it is not possible to foresee or overcome all potential difficulties, literature on researching immigrants can help to inform the study methodology and develop a strategy to mitigate potential challenges. In particular, it was important to proactively consider the conditions and plan for recruitment and data collection that will set the study up for success.

There were several known challenges that needed to be overcome for this study. One challenge was that the participants may not want to discuss their experience or that of their community members due to fear of the effect on their immigration status. Immigrants may be concerned with an agency accessing the study data or information that could affect any aspect of their livelihood (Ojeda, Flores, Rosales Meza, and Morales, 2011). In general, immigrants may not trust the intention of the research or feel comfortable speaking to a stranger about an intimate and sensitive aspect of their lives (Lu & Gatua, 2014; Ojeda et al., 2011). Certain immigrants groups may also be reluctant to participating in a research study due to lack of exposure to previous research and familiarity with the research process (Lu & Gatua, 2014; Ojeda et al., 2011). Someone that understands the research process and some of its requirements may be more at ease

than a person that does not truly understand the need for certain steps, such as informed consent or the need to record an interview. This study proactively aimed to mitigate these concerns and challenges through the recruitment and informed consent processes. There was hope in the possibility that since Liberians have many community members that pursue doctoral studies, potential participants would be aware of the process or could trust other community members that will help me to identify participants.

Participant Selection Logic

The two most significant foreseeable challenges that could have made recruitment of participants difficult were that I am an outsider of the Liberian community and that there may be a concern with discussing immigration related information or viewpoints. It was my responsibility as the researcher to incorporate cultural considerations in my plan to research an immigrant group (Ojeda et. al, 2011). Lu and Gatua (2014) provided that in preparing to research immigrant participants, there is also a need to be prepared to be flexible in the event that there is a need to adapt the methodology due to issues the researcher did not foresee. This occurred with this study as I was compelled to alter the approach and interview community members instead of those with mainly firsthand experience.

The main strategy for recruitment was to engage with potential participants through community organizations or a member of the Liberian community. Lu and Gatua (2014) offered that certain immigrant groups are more likely to participate if they are contacted by someone they know or through a community organization. Further, I approached recruitment of volunteers through a combination of ways to ensure the

sample size was met. This study implemented a recruitment strategy that has been successful with other research on immigrants (Lu and Gatua, 2014) which includes posting flyers, reaching out to community organizations, using a community insider and snowball sampling.

Population and Sample

There were an estimated 4,000 Liberians living in the United States who had been granted DED since the designation (Argueta & Wasem, 2016). In comparison to some of the other groups with temporary protection, this represents a smaller population, yet, several Liberian community organizations exist to help with a range of matters and provide support on efforts that require government advocacy and legal assistance. Community members include present or former members of Liberian community organizations that are employed by or volunteer in support of the organization and its community efforts.

The sample size for this research was originally $n=6$, however, additional participants were included to reach saturation, arriving at a final sample of $n=9$. The justification for this sample size considered a few key elements. The first consideration was that I perceive this to be a unique case and for the small community to likely describe similar experiences. As such, I expected that near saturation would be reached within the first few interviews. The other element relates to practicality and the availability of participants. Although there may be several potential participants in the United States, I had limited access to participants and there was a limited willingness to participate due to fears within the current political climate. Even with a small sample size

the data provided rich description of the experience of Liberians with temporary protection that can be considered relative to others in this and other similar groups.

Participants for this study were identified using a purposeful sample. Two primary sources lead to participants; contacts at Liberian community organizations and a doctoral graduate of Walden University. I identified Liberian community organizations on the Internet and contacted them for assistance by telephone and email. I called or emailed at least 20 organizations in communities with potential participants. Through this method, I was able to make several contacts that agreed to assist me to identify potential participants and include me in events with potential participants. Secondly, a doctoral graduate of Walden University with significant ties in the Liberian community offered to assist me in identifying potential participants. This was a key relationship, as this individual understood the research process and was able to relay the process to potential participants.

Once my study was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB), I emailed the participation flyer to previously identified contacts. As potential participants were identified, I ensured they met the criteria, confirmed that they were willing to participate in the study and provided the informed consent. An agreed time for the interviews time was set either for a future date or for the same day, if possible.

Eligibility Criteria

To participate in this study an individual must:

- Be 18 years old and above.
- Be a Liberian community organization leader, member, or volunteer.

- Have experience with the issue of Liberians with temporary protection.

To confirm eligibility for participation and before scheduling an interview, I asked potential participants the criteria questions below by email or on the telephone:

- Are you atleast18 years old?
- Do you have knowledge and experience with the issue of Liberians with temporary protection?
- What role do you have with the Liberian community?

If the response to any of these questions was no, the potential participant would be excluded.

Informed Consent

For this study, I aimed to primarily mitigate issues that can affect research on immigrants through the informed consent process. In general, immigrants may not be comfortable with signing an informed consent form due to the concern of the data affecting their immigration status in some way (Lu and Gatua, 2014). They may also not understand the research process and be skeptical about signing a document or being recorded. Lu and Gatua (2014) described how an immigrant participant may be more open to signing an informed consent once they understand the nature of the questions and there is ease to any concerns. In essence, the best way to create trust and comfort is to be transparent about the questions and allow the participant to be interviewed without concern.

The informed consent process for this study derived from successful strategies implemented in prior research with immigrant participants, which do not require a

signature until the participant has read the informed consent and has the opportunity to review sample questions. The consent process was as follows:

1. Provide the participant with the informed consent form.
2. Allow the participant to review the consent form and ask questions.
3. Review the consent form with the participant orally to ensure understanding.
4. Request recorded consent before beginning the interview and ask the participant to sign the consent form.

It was also helpful to ensure the participants understood their statements will not be tied to their names in the dissertation.

Data Collection

The data collection consisted of semistructured interviews with participants and observations of participants in a community conference on temporary protection. I also joined a Liberian social media group but that did not yield any information for this study.

The interviews were scheduled to allow 60 to 90 minutes at an agreed upon time and location. 6 of the 9 interviews were conducted over the telephone and 3 were in person.

The interview protocol consisted of six questions that engaged the participants but I follow up questions were added as needed. The use of a semistructured interview provided flexibility to adapt the interview as needed as long as the focus of the research was maintained. The questions were open ended to allow the participants to share their story or perspective and include a question that allows the participant to share anything

additional they would like for the study. The questions are designed to align with the research question and ensure the focus of the study is maintained.

For this study, I chose to design an interview protocol versus use an existing protocol from similar research. However, I reached out to researchers that previously conducted immigration research, and a researcher who specifically studies the effects of TPS on Central Americans for protocol suggestions. One researcher provided a protocol used for immigrant research but it was significantly a different focus than this study. I was able to use that protocol as an example for the format and flow of the questions. One of the researchers, who is also a published author on TPS and was in the process of conducting a national quantitative study on TPS, reviewed my proposal and initial protocol questions. My committee chair and methodologist also reviewed the questions, as experts in research.

The interview protocol included the following questions:

1. Tell me about your current role as a leader in a community organization that works with Liberians.
2. As a Liberian community leader, how do you describe the experience of Liberians living in the United States with TPS and DED for several years?
3. How have Liberians been challenged by their temporary immigration status?
4. What have been the benefits to Liberians living in the United States with temporary immigration status?
5. How do you describe the experience of Liberians with temporary immigration status in terms of being a member of U.S society with a temporary status?

6. What else would you like to share about the experience of Liberians living in the United States with temporary immigration status?

The interview was flexible in terms of what clarifying or follow up questions were asked. Participants were asked whether they may be contacted for follow up questions if needed. I recorded the interviews using a recording application on my telephone and transcribed each interview. Data was kept secure in a password-protected computer, and consent forms are kept in a locked filing cabinet. Coded names were used in the study results when quoting any part of the interview. The data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

Data Analysis

With this study, I aimed to identify the perceived effects of long term implementation of temporary immigration policies on the security and successful integration of Liberians. The method of data analysis determined what perceptions Liberians community members have about how long term implementation of temporary immigration policy - the independent variable affects the dependent variables: the security and successful integration of Liberians with temporary protection. The data analysis focused on instances where the participants imply or directly describe what they perceive as effects of the experience of living with a temporary protection for many years. The data analysis approach for the study considered the inductive nature of qualitative research and the need to remain curious about where the data led. There were no predetermined codes and rather the analysis involved inductive categorization of themes that emerge from the interview data.

The transcribed interview data was thoroughly reviewed through content analysis. Miles et.al (2014), described content analysis as a method that focuses on identifying the subtle and underlying meaning of each word in the data. Notably, I also maintained awareness throughout the interviews of obvious themes that required further exploration to amplify the quantity and quality of the data. This approach aligns with Merriam & Tisdell (2016), who noted that qualitative data analysis is most successful when the researcher is collecting data and concurrently adapting the study to pursue in depth discovery that may provide the answers to the research questions. I used NVivo software to code and organize the data.

The first cycle of data analysis used descriptive and In Vivo coding to chunk the data into categories, themes, and phrases as they relate to security and successful integration. *Security* is operationalized as the safety of living without a looming threat of losing legal immigration status or of being deported. The second cycle of coding focused on identifying patterns to create fewer categories. Miles et. al (2014), indicate that pattern codes and consolidate and refine the initial codes. I subsequently reviewed the data and codes for repetitive themes between the participants as a cross analysis. An additional aspect of the analysis was to look for divergent codes among the data that would warrant acknowledgement in the discussion of the data.

The data analysis focused on descriptions related to living with temporary protection and plans for the future. The data was also analyzed for criteria that align with Berry's (1997) four-strategy acculturation model. Berry's four-strategy model aimed to identify the degree to which immigrants associate with having assimilated or integrated

versus being separated or marginalized. The indicating factors in the data are descriptions related to a pull towards Liberian culture, the U.S. culture or both. Indications of successful integration are based on the ability to maintain a degree of the origin culture but also an openness to integrate in the host society (Berry, 1997). Since integrated individuals have a stronger orientation with both the settled culture and the heritage culture (Ward & Geeraert, 2016), clues in the data about their experience in the United States with temporary protection status for many years, through the lens of Berry's model, provided insight into the degree of successful integration.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Validity and Reliability

The nature of qualitative research poses some significant challenges to ensuring that a study is trustworthy, conversely these challenges can be strategically addressed to promote validity and reliability in a study. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) specified that although issues of trustworthiness in qualitative research are complex, the researcher can strategically conceptualize the study to include appropriate measures for data collection, analysis and interpretation that address validity and reliability. Similarly, Creswell (2013) suggested that a qualitative study should be validated through the use of several approaches that reflect the accuracy of the researcher's interpretation of the study. Yin (2014) further provided that the researcher deals with the quality of case study research by implementing strategies to account for validity and reliability tests. The reliability and validity strategies that will be employed in this study include triangulation, peer review and rich description.

Internal validity is a key factor that must be proactively addressed in qualitative research to reflect that results as interpreted by the researcher are valid and that alternate explanations are not being overlooked. Maxwell (2013) discussed that it is the researchers' responsibility to protect the research from threats to validity or alternative explanations, such as bias and the researcher's influence on participants. Specifically, internal validity speaks to the degree to which the researcher has gone to certain lengths to present a holistic account of the phenomena being studied (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). Although it is not possible to absolutely assert that the findings in a study are valid, a researcher must specifically be able to identify the potential threats to the validity of their study and explain how they will be addressed (Maxwell, 2013). Addressing internal validity then helps to assess how true to reality the results are as the researcher is presenting them.

Validity Threats and Strategies

The principal threats to validity in this study include any bias that I have about what the results of the study will be and how I may influence the participants. There were also some potential threats related to participant selection. Based on my literature review and my work experience, I recognize a bias towards believing that the experience described by the participants is likely negative in nature and that they would focus on describing hardships they experience or have witnessed. Another concern was that as an outsider who is asking them to speak about a very sensitive and complex topic, the participants may be inclined to respond based on what they think are optimal responses as a way of advocating for a certain policy change. I have considered that if I were part of

the Liberian community that might inspire more trust. Lastly, although qualitative research does not require a certain number of participants, my study could have been limited in the participants I recruited and it is possible that those that volunteered may be in a similar education class or fit into a criteria that is more willing to participate in a study. The concern in this case being limited access to capture data from other participants with differing opinions or experiences.

The primary strategy that I implemented to address threats to validity is triangulation. Triangulation is the diversification of recruitment and data collection methods to reduce the possibility for “chance associations” and “systematic biases” (Maxwell, 2013, p.128.). As previously described, for this study I recruited volunteers through community organizations. I also contacted a Walden graduate student that is a member of this community for assistance and potential references. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) agreed that triangulation is a strong approach for increasing credibility and addressing threats to validity in qualitative research. Further, I observed community interactions as a means to gather data beyond the interviews.

The other strategies that I implemented to address validity include, gathering rich data, peer reviews and discussion of discrepant cases. Maxwell (2013) described that rich data collection, including such found in verbatim detailed interview transcripts, provides a strong foundation for the researcher’s findings. Creswell (2013) expounded that detailed descriptions allow for the potential transferability of the information to other scenarios so that the reviewer can assess applicability. All interviews were diligently transcribed to ensure that the entire interview conversation is properly captured prior to

analysis. I also kept a journal after each interview and during any observation opportunity.

Peer review is a central strategy I implemented to minimize researcher bias. A peer review involves an external party reviewing the data and providing comments (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016) and can be an opportunity to consider alternative perspectives (Creswell, 2013). In addition, to reviews by my committee members, I had an external published professor that specializes in TPS review my proposal and initial interview questions. It was also key for me to identify and discuss any data that deviates from the identified themes. Implementation of peer reviews, considering divergent data and keeping detailed notes mitigated the potential for researcher bias and addressed its potential influence in the results.

Reliability

Reliability is another key factor for a qualitative researcher, although in a very different way than it is applied to quantitative research. In quantitative research, reliability speaks to the ability to repeat a study in exactly the same way and get the same result (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). Since qualitative research is based on real world interactions, the focus of reliability is on whether the results of the study make sense or are consistent with the data (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). Several of the strategies I planned to implement address internal validity also address reliability.

Triangulation plays a role in establishing reliability because it provides different sources of data that lend to the discussion of how the process to collect data was diversified and contribute in different ways to the results described by the researcher. As

suggested by Yin (2014), I used a case study protocol to promote consistency during the data collection process. Another significant strategy is for the researcher to keep detailed records throughout the study to support their interpretation of the findings. As previously noted, a detailed journal was kept to document post interview thoughts and observations. The journal served to keep comprehensive, descriptive notes throughout the data collection and data analysis processes.

Transferability

Qualitative research does not provide the necessary foundation, such as population size, for using the results to make generalizations about the population. It is possible however to promote the potential for transferability of the study. Transferability is based on the notion that the results of a qualitative study may be transferable or applicable to another similar scenario (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). Maxwell (2013) described that there can be a basis for limited generalizability that applies based on the similar dynamics or limitations of a situation although not as precisely as with quantitative research. To this degree, a well-designed study can provide results that are transferable to a similar group with related circumstances.

To provide the most opportunities for transferability as described, I provided rich detailed descriptions of the data collection and data analysis processes. The strategy of providing rich detailed descriptions provides the reader with the appropriate context to determine the degree to which the findings are transferable to a similar situation. Specifically, there is potential for transferability to other groups that are in a limbo situation for a prolonged period of time. There would not necessarily need to be a link to

immigration status or policy but rather the descriptions may be relatable to other scenarios.

Ethical Procedures

The sensitive nature of conducting a study on immigrants requires that certain measures be taken to protect them from any harm. Further, all aspects of the study must reflect a proactive and conscious effort to think critically about the steps that can be taken to ensure the study is based in trust and integrity (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). As such, the efforts to establish trust with participants, provide confidentiality and protect the data and findings are key to this study's success. To protect participants, all participant information was kept confidential. This approach was recommended when researching immigrant participants (Lu and Gatua, 2014) due to the concerns they may have about any effects to their immigration status.

The measures to establish trust with participants are designed into the recruitment, data collection, and data analysis phases of this study. Much of this effort relates to ensuring that the potential participant clearly understood the purpose of the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The recruitment flyer explains the purpose of the study, any potential benefits and voluntary nature of the process. Additionally, when identifying participants on the telephone, I explained the purpose of the study and asked for any questions or concerns. An important aspect to establishing trust is explaining to participants that participation in the study is voluntary and they can request to stop the interview at any time. I reviewed the confidentiality agreement and informed consent documents with each participant and addressed any questions they may have. Participants

also had the option to review the data and findings so that they can comment on whether the reflection is accurate.

Summary

In this chapter, I detailed the plan for the research design and methods of this study on the Liberians with temporary protection. The research question guided the study and was based onto the potential to gain a holistic understanding of this issue. The qualitative design and case study approach were well suited for this study due to the nature of this complex, real world issue for which rich description provided valuable insight.

In this chapter, I also described the appropriateness of a small sample size, which was attributed to potential challenges with access to such a specific group and took into consideration the current climate for immigrants that may reduce access to willing participants. Although the sample is small, there was important information yielded through in depth interviews.

The data collection plan primarily consisted of semistructured interviews from a sample of 9 participants; however community observations supported triangulation strategies. Several other measures were also planned to promote validity and reliability of the data, including peer reviews, rich description, identification of biases, and journaling. Once the data was collected, the data analysis consisted of a phased process, which incrementally looks for themes in the data with a focus on security and successful integration. The data was coded into categories and themes once all interviews were complete. Significant themes throughout this chapter include the measures to establish

trust, while taking into consideration the specific concerns related to researching immigrants.

In chapter 4, I discuss the implementation of this study, the measures of trustworthiness and quality of the study, and provide a description of the results.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the effects of temporary immigration policy implemented as a long-term solution on the security of Liberians and their successful integration in the United States. I used a purposeful sample to interview 9 participants using the case study approach. My objective with the interviews was to discover the effects on the security and assimilation of Liberians with DED due to long-term implementation of temporary immigration policies. My goal with the research was to answer the following question: What are the perceived effects of long-term implementation of temporary immigration policy on the security and successful integration of Liberians?

In this chapter, I begin with a discussion of the setting for implementing the research. The subsequent section provides details about the demographics of the participants, followed by a description of the process for collecting data through participant interviews and a discussion of the analysis of the data. This chapter also reviews the evidence of trustworthiness and quality of the study by considering the elements of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Finally, the chapter relays the results of the study in terms of how the results address the research question.

Setting

Approval to collect data for this study was received from the Walden Institutional Review Board (IRB) on October 2, 2017 as referenced by approval number 10-02-17-

033522. Although the initial approach was to identify and interview Liberians with DED as the population, this became very challenging due to the looming expiration of the designation on March 31, 2018 and the recent announcements by the current administration that TPS would be terminated for El Salvador and other groups. My initially proposed approach was to interview Liberians that hold or have held temporary protection, however, I was only able to recruit one participant with DED after significant efforts. As a result of this challenge, I made a request to the IRB to change my population to Liberian community members with knowledge and experience on the topic. This approach would allow me to proceed as I had already made successful contact with a few Liberian community members that seemed very knowledgeable about the topic. The IRB approved my change of procedure request and I was able to proceed with the data collection.

Following the IRB approval, potential participants were identified through phone calls and emails to Liberian organizations and through the assistance of a doctoral graduate of Walden with ties to the Liberian community. I was also invited by the president of a Liberian organization to attend a conference for Liberians with DED. I participated in the conference by listening to the speakers and making observations. While attending the conference I was able to approach potential participants, introduce myself, explain my study and ask them to participate. I prepared myself in advance by bringing copies of the informed consent form. If they agreed to participate I provided them with the informed consent notice to sign. I was able to recruit 4 participants at the conference and 3 were interviewed face to face during or at the end of the conference.

The rest of the data collection took place on the telephone, culminating in a total of 8 individuals that identified as members of the Liberian community and 1 individual currently with DED. All participants were provided with an informed consent either by email or in person, which included permission to record the interview. All of the interviews were recorded with the consent of the participants. Although the initial approved number of participants for this case study was 6, a total of 9 interviews were completed to reach the point of saturation. As noted by Fusch and Ness (2015), saturation is reached when there is sufficient data to reproduce, when there is no new information revealing itself and when it is no longer possible to code any further. These criteria were met for this study by 9 interviews.

Demographics

For this study, I interviewed 9 participants using a semistructured interview process. Of the 9 participants I interviewed 7 were male and 2 were female. The participants included individuals that are presidents of Liberian community organizations, members of Liberian community organizations, religious leaders, legal experts, and business and education leaders. All participants were either born in Liberia or are of Liberian descent. Although I did not collect specific demographic data on age, all participants were above the age of 18. Additionally, the participants included individuals from the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia (DMV) area, Minnesota, Georgia, Rhode Island and Philadelphia.

The interview participants include one individual that was a beneficiary of TPS and then DED but was able to adjust their status to permanent resident. As previously

mentioned, one participant, interviewed prior to modifying the population, identified as a current DED beneficiary. The interview data from these participants in particular enriches the results and serves to validate the account of other participants without firsthand experience.

Table 2

Participant Demographics

S/N	Role	Gender	State/region in United States	Previously held or currently held DED status
1	Community Volunteer/legal expert	F	DMV	No
2	Organization leader	M	MN	No
3	Organization leader	M	MN	Yes
4	Community Activist/volunteer	M	GA	No
5	N/A	F	RI	Yes
6	Community Activist/volunteer	M	PA	No
7	Community Activist/Volunteer	M	DMV	No
8	Community Activist/volunteer	M	DMV	No

9	Community Activist/volunteer	M	DMV	No
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Data Collection

Data was collected from 9 individuals in the course of 5 months. I allotted 60-90 minutes hours for the interviews; however, all of the interviews were completed in approximately an hour or less. At the start of each interview I provided a description of the study and asked the participants if they had any questions of the informed consent. I also confirmed consent to record the interview and explained that recording would remove the need for me to take notes while they were responding to the questions. I also reinforced that the information they provided would be confidential and that no names would be associated with the responses provided. It was also mentioned that the interviews were voluntary and they could let me know at any time if they did not wish to participate.

At the beginning of one of the interviews a participant stopped me after I described the study and indicated that they would need to gather information from their constituents on the matter because they did not feel knowledgeable enough about the topic. We agreed that I would reach out again in a few weeks, however, the individual did not respond when I reached out in an attempt to reschedule. Also, one participant asked if the responses would be attributed specifically to them by name and I explained they would not.

Due to my knowledge with this topic I realized early on that I had to be very conscious of how I carried out my role as the interviewer. Also, even though several of

the participants provided second hand accounts of the experience of Liberians, several of the stories evoked emotion as they described hardships and triumphs. I made a purposeful effort to stay neutral and provide minimal feedback at the end of responses. This proves challenging as it is different from how we usually engage in a conversation with another individuals. Another note as the interviewer is that in some cases I had to repeat the question or ask it in a different way for clarification. In particular, the question: How do you describe the experience of Liberians with temporary immigration status in terms of being a member of U.S. society with temporary status? seemed to throw off some participants and required further explanation in some interviews. Also, in alignment with the semistructured interview format, in some cases I felt the need to ask a question again in a slightly different way or to ask follow up questions. I found that participants seemed at ease and willing to share additional perspectives for the last open question where I asked if there was anything else they would like to share.

The data collected at the conference for Liberians with DED was in integral part of this study. The president of the association invited me to the conference after I spoke with her on the telephone about my study. For the majority of that half day conference I simply listened to the presenters which were mainly lawyers or law assistants that were volunteering to provide information about legal assistance to those whose DED was about to expire. It is important to note that this conference was held shortly before the foreseen termination of DED for Liberians so there was a particular sense in the of wanting to protect those that might attend to seek help but may be embarrassed by their circumstances.

The conference specifically offered the opportunity of the attendees to ask questions in the larger forum and perhaps more importantly to meet privately with an immigration attorney and receive a pro bono consultation. My role as a participant in this conference was to mainly observe and take notes about the issues that were being discussed. Although not explicitly requested, I did not approach any individual that may have been a DED beneficiary I chose to be sensitive to the circumstances of individuals that were likely fearful of disclosing their immigration status. At the conclusion of the conference I approached or was introduced to some of the presenters or contributors who had identified as community members, described my study, and asked for their participation. Due to the time constraints I was able to interview 3 individuals at the conference location and then received contact information to interview others on the telephone at another time.

Data Analysis

Data analysis involves using ones “analytic imagination” to go beyond the literal responses to questions to consider possible explanations for the responses, the broader context of the data to society and a search for a deeper understanding of the data and what is not being said (James, 2012). For this study, I implemented content analysis to evaluate the data that was gathered. Content analysis is a research method that affords the opportunity to systematically and objectively describe and quantify the phenomena being studied through the creation of categories or other conceptual representations (Elo, S. et. al, 2014). Further Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014), offered that content analysis is

among other meticulous research processes that aims to uncover the abstract and deeper meaning imbedded in data.

According to Berger (2013), reflexivity is the researcher's process of continually evaluating, actively acknowledging and recognizing how their position can influence the research. As such, the data analysis for this study began at the data collection phase as I began to continually evaluate my role as the researcher. I reflected after each interview on the similar themes that were brought up and noticed that certain stories or strong feeling inspired emotions or made me consider my personal opinions. I also noticed that I could gauge from the interview that there were some individuals that were more knowledgeable about the topic than others and so at times there would be a digression to a perspective or topic they were more comfortable discussing but not necessarily related to the question or focus of this study.

Researchers must continually monitor for how personal bias, beliefs and experiences can throw the research off balance (Berger, 2013). This point brought me awareness and was key to my ability to keep my focus on the topic and consider what might be an association between what the participant was sharing and the experience that is being studied. This way of thinking permitted me to see the potential deeper meanings or the perspectives that I had not expected or was unaware of before collecting the data.

Upon completion of the interviews, I transcribed the interview recordings. I found this process to be tedious and challenging but this also gave me a new appreciation for this process. There was a lot gained for me as the researcher through the process of transcribing the interviews. There was a great value to experiencing the interviews again,

hearing clearly things that I did not notice as the interview was taking place and noticing as the themes arose. Once the interviews were transcribed I created a project in NVivo. I considered not using NVivo, because it felt like the themes would be easy enough to identify, however, as I was doing the analysis I realized that the software was useful to see the themes and organize them.

I had previously used NVivo only minimally during the advanced qualitative research course a few years back so I watched videos on YouTube to train myself on how to create the project. Once the interview source files were in NVivo, I read through each interview and named the codes or nodes that provided descriptions about the experience of Liberians with DED and TPS. Once a code was already named, I tagged additional statements that related to that code. I also created sub codes and organized the codes or sub codes into themes. I coded each of the interviews by listening for a word or set of words that described different aspects of the phenomena being studied and assigned those words as the code. Once I had coded all of the interviews, I looked at the codes and observed the relationships between the different codes. I found that some fit under the main themes and certain ones stuck out on their own. I revisited my research question and organized the codes into main themes that related directly to the research question. The process of reorganizing the codes also involved combining certain codes and renaming them for clarity.

Once the interviews were organized I could identify clear themes that derived from the data. The first cycle of data analysis used descriptive and In Vivo coding to chunk the data into categories, themes and phrases as they relate to security and

successful integration. Security is operationalized as the safety of living without a looming threat of losing legal immigration status or of being deported. The second cycle of coding focused on identifying patterns to create fewer categories. I subsequently reviewed the data and codes for repetitive themes between the participants as a cross analysis. An additional aspect of the analysis was to look for divergent codes among the data that will warrant acknowledgement in the discussion of the data.

The top-level codes I identified from the data are: benefits, challenges, successes, and heritage country relationship. I was able to organize the main themes into the sub themes that provide increased insight into the experience of Liberians with temporary protection, these subthemes are: renewal challenges, uncertainty, fear, progress, and protection.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Qualitative research is often criticized by those that do not consider it to be a tangible and reliable method to examine human experiences, due to the potential for subjectivity and bias influences from the researcher (Cope, 2014). However, qualitative research offers an opportunity to understand human experiences and interactions at a level that cannot be afforded through quantitative analysis. Cope (2014) offers that qualitative research is not second-rate and can be a different way to successfully explore the experiences of individuals if the researcher follows a high quality process. Credibility, transferability and dependability, as initially provided by Guba and Lincoln, are universally implemented strategies to evaluate the trustworthiness or quality of qualitative research (Morse, 2015; Chowdhury, 2015). The efforts made to protect the

integrity and trustworthiness of this study are best reviewed through a discussion of how credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability demonstrate an appropriate amount rigor was implemented throughout the research process.

Credibility

Credibility can be described as knowing that the data, as presented by the researcher, truthfully, and accurately reflects the voice of the respondent and that it is recognizable by others with similar experiences (Cope, 2015). Liao and Hitchcock (2018), provide that demonstrating credibility through, among other elements, accuracy and accountability methods throughout the research process is essential to the strength of a qualitative study. The first steps towards ensuring credibility of this study were implanted as part of the research planning by creating an interview protocol to guide the interview process. To further establish that the data collection instrument would meet the needs of the study, it was reviewed by a researcher outside of my institution that focuses on similar studies related to temporary protected status. I also implemented triangulation strategies by attending a conference and reviewing social media and Liberian organization websites to make observations for information that might deviate from or provide different perspectives not shared by the participants.

Further, although there was some flexibility in the semistructured interview process, the interviews were conducted without significant deviation from the protocol questions. On a couple of occasions where a participant needed clarification on a question I ensured that my explanation of the question or a follow up question was not asked in a way that could be seen as leading towards a particular answer. It was also significant that

I took steps to ensure participants felt comfortable and had the opportunity to ask questions. I also controlled any reactions from me to their responses by simply thanking them after a response and remaining neutral. Also, providing the opportunity, through the final question, to share anything that I had not asked them about allowed them to speak freely, clarify any previous thoughts or fill any gaps.

Another aspect that lends credibility to this study is that I was able to transcribe the data myself. This allowed me to ensure that the transcriptions reflect the exact word of the participants. During transcription I listened to the recordings several times if there was anything that initially sounded unclear. I was proactive in discarding one statement because I could not get a clear depiction of the words and did not want to assume or alter what the person said. Further, I kept a journal of my thoughts after interviews and during the conference I attending to ensure I was aware of any biases and kept track of my experiences, challenges, and insights as I collected and transcribed the data.

Transferability

Transferability or generalizability in qualitative research is the ability to extend the results and conclusions of the study to another population or situation (Morse, 2015). Transferability is also a way to measure the quality of the study in terms of external validity. Chowdury (2015) offers that transferability reflects the aspect of the study that allows a reader to make comparisons about the applicability of the study to a population or situation other than that of the study, based on the rich detail provided in the data about the phenomena. For this study, transferability was accomplished through the rich thick descriptions provided by the data.

The study also demonstrates transferability in that although the participants were members in the Liberian community, there is variety in the participant group. The study included male and female participants, individuals that are members of Liberian organizations, legal experts and individuals that currently or previously held temporary protection. There is additional varied context provided by the individuals living in different states and the inclusion of participants that have lived in Liberia and those that are of Liberian descent. This broad representation in the data provides confidence that the results provide enough contexts for a reader to determine the applicability of the results to a group or situation other than that of Liberians.

Dependability

The dependability of a qualitative study is represented by the researcher's transparent and detailed approach of tracking all aspects of the research process (Korstjens and Moser, 2018). Morse (2015) and Chowdhury (2015) further provide that dependability or reliability of the study should be considered in terms of the ability for another researcher to replicate the study and arrive at the same results. For this study I am able to demonstrate dependability through the audit trail of the research process, including the descriptions of preparation, participants, data collection and analysis of the data. Additionally, particular care was taken to ensure consistency with the interview process and the analysis of each set of participant responses.

Confirmability

Confirmability relates to the researcher's ability to demonstrate that the data accurately reflects the responses provided by the study participants and that they are not

tainted by the views or bias of the researcher (Cope, 2015). Two strategies were implemented to improve confirmability of this study: reflexivity and the depiction of verbatim quotes from the study participants, a strategy offered by Cope (2015). In addition to these primary strategies, it was helpful to have recordings of the interviews to ensure the data was captured and relayed accurately. I was particularly meticulous with the transcription process and found that transcribing the data myself allowed me to reflect on the high level themes and ultimately maintain a focus on ensuring the study results and conclusions are grounded in the data and not any bias from me as the researcher.

Study Results

This study aimed to explore the experiences of Liberians living in the United States with TPS or DED for many years. To gain an understanding of the phenomena, 9 individual were interviewed through a semistructured interview format. The interview questions were devised to inform the research question: What are the perceived effects of long-term implementation of temporary immigration policy on the security and successful integration of Liberians? The interview protocol included 6 focused questions aimed to answer the research question. The results are presented with the goal of representing how the responses relate to the research question and how the data might provide insight on where Liberians place in terms of Berry's strategies for acculturation theory (1997). Berry's model provides a lens through which we can consider how the experience of Liberians and their orientation with the United States, as the host state and Liberia as the heritage state, reflects their ability to successfully integrate or not. The

results will be presented through both narrative summary and verbatim quoting of the participants.

The first interview question provided demographic information on the role of the participant in the Liberian community as relayed in the demographics section of this chapter. Interview questions 2-4 asked the participants how they would describe the experience of Liberians with TPS and DED for many years, and what the challenges and benefits resulted from living with temporary protection. As part of these questions, I asked for specific stories or examples of the challenges and benefits. Following up by asking for specific examples added a dimension to the responses that brought a more real life component to the responses. The following sections summarize the results from questions 2-4. Table 3 below provides a preview of the significant themes in the participant responses, the number of unique interviews in which each theme was captured and the frequency of references.

Table 3

Preview of Significant Themes and Participant References

Significant themes	Unique interviews	Frequency of participant responses
Benefits		
Employment authorization	4	7
Protection from deportation	2	2
Protection from civil war	6	6
Legal Status	3	5
Challenges		

Family	4	9
Citizen children	4	7
Effects on family members in the U.S.	5	8
Fear of going back	3	5
Stress	5	7
Fear of losing status	4	6
Uncertainty	8	14
Antiimmigrant environment	3	5
Successes		
Contributors to society	7	19
Financial support to other Liberians	6	6
Members of U.S. society	6	9
Like citizens and residents	5	9
Many years in the U.S.	7	13
Heritage country relationship		
Unstable conditions in Liberia	5	10
Little America	6	6

Descriptions of the Experience of Liberians with Temporary Protection

The participants described the experience of Liberians with TPS and DED for many years as “terrible,” “mixed,” “good and bad,” “a very embarrassing experience,”

“fearful,” “stressful,” “hesitant,” “living in two worlds,” and “demonstrates the bravery and innovativeness of Liberians”. **Participant 05** described their experience as “I came here on an official passport and I have been here for 25 or 26 years. With temporary protected status they give you work permit and I just have that and go to work”.

Participant 09 stated, “So my experience with TPS is that people are able to work, they are able to provide for themselves, they are able to not depend on the social services that America has to offer but rather provide for themselves and provide for their families”. In describing the experience as mixed, one of the community leaders, **Participant 03** provided the following:

“On one hand, these are people who have been given the opportunity to contribute and many have contributed significantly and have gone to school. Some of them are nurses, some of them are actors, some of them are soldiers who have improved their status down the line. Some of them are still on that same status. On the other hand it is unpredictable. Their life is of fear and one of anxiety, unpredictability, uncertainty a sense of vulnerability, a sense of hopelessness because the status has not improved, has not changed dramatically. And so there is a challenge around where do we go from here? There is always a hope that there is an extension after 1 year after 2 years but that extension has not really been matched by a guarantee to legal status”.

Several participants also referenced fear of being deported because their status is not permanent and there is an anti-immigrant narrative that exists. **Participant 06** stated “It has been a little bit fearful for them because they don’t know what will happen next to

them. They might be walking up in the street and get picked up by ICE and get deported”. Another discussed having previously been in the state where you go to work but limit your interactions with government and have this looming fear that you could be arrested and deported.

Four of the participants discussed the experience as limiting and restricting. These limitations were associated with access to financial aid and health care in some cases.

Participant 02 said “Now we work and pay taxes like green card holders and citizens but we are not allowed to receive federal grants that are student loans or public benefits”.

Two participants specifically mentioned the inability to make long-term plans. One participant described that certain individuals chose to make long-term decisions such as investing in a home or business, while others chose to big commitments because they are uncertain of what their circumstance will be after the 18-month period.

At the time of several of the interviews, the deadline for the previous protection period was nearing and it was unknown if it would be extended. At that time **Participant 08** offered, “That segment of the Liberian community is left in the balance and we don’t know what their fate is going to be come next week so we have mixed perceptions about the whole thing but now we are in the state of grief as to what is going to be their fate”. It was mentioned by another participant that in 2014 the similar situation had ensued where up until the last day it was unknown if there would be an extension and so the community was lamenting that there would need to be a significant group of Liberians that would either need to return to Liberia or turn to “be in the shadows,” meaning they would remain in the United States and live as undocumented.

Negative and Positive Aspects of Temporary Protection

The themes that emerged from the data can be organized into both negative and positive aspect of the experience of Liberians with TPS and DED for many years. The themes that portray the adverse aspects of the experience include renewal challenges, uncertainty and fear. The positive themes can be grouped as protection and progress.

These themes and the most commonly mentioned sub themes are represented in figure 1.

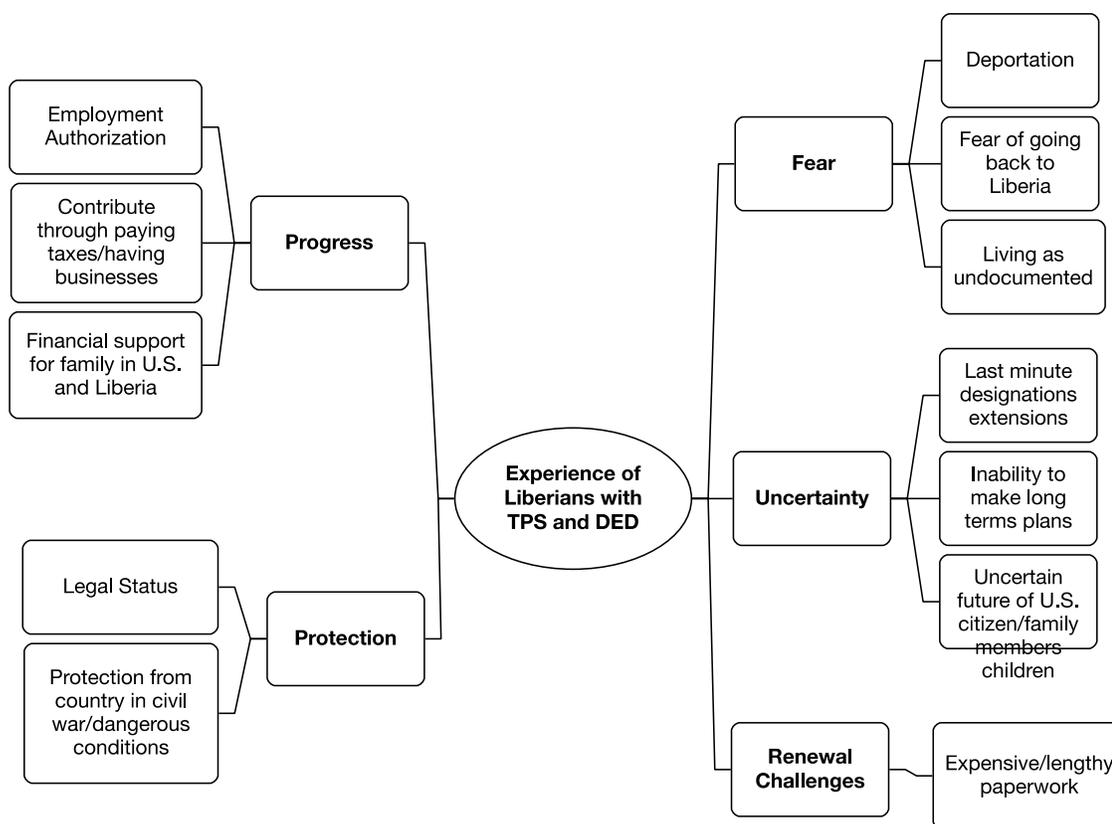


Figure 1. Representation of predominant themes and subthemes.

Renewal Challenges

In all 9 interviews the participants relayed the financial effects of living with a temporary immigration status for many years. The main reference to financial struggles related to the requirement to renew their immigration status every 18 months or so which means they must pay the fees for the TPS or DED reregistration form and the employment authorization document. One community leader, **Participant 01** said “The general challenge is that there is this uncertainty every time DED or TPS is about to expire. Whether or not the government will renew it and if the government does renew it then people have to worry about reapplying and that costs money”. The participant who currently holds DED status made particular reference to how these fees have increased significantly in the years since she began applying for the benefit. **Participant 02** stated “You know the price of renewal was getting you know expensive every year, just kept going up and then most of those people fear for their children that you know are American for the most part”.

Others noted that although there may be alternatives for some individuals to change their immigration status, individuals might not have the resources to pay for a lawyer to review their case and help them improve their situation. Additionally, respondents on several occasions mentioned the challenge of paying for higher education when you are ineligible for federal loans in reference to those that hold a temporary status and also their children that may likely be U.S. citizens. Also, respondents noted that often individuals living here on DED have family in Liberia, including their children, parents

or siblings and although they have not seen these family members in many years, they provide financial support since the conditions in Liberia remain unstable. One participant that had previously held DED mentioned that at one point he experienced hardships as a result of delays receiving his new employment authorization, **Participant 02** stated “I remember specifically 2004, my TPS processing for my EAD took a very long time. In 2004 I did not have a job for 6 months”.

Uncertainty

The most expressed effect of living with TPS or DED for many years was that of living in a state of uncertainty or constant limbo. Participants explained that Liberians with temporary protection in some cases had a hesitance to plan for the future since they only knew about their situation until the next the expiration date of their employment authorization document. **Participant 06** said “It has been a little bit fearful for them because they don’t know what will happen next to them”. Aside from losing the ability to work, participants discussed concern for not knowing the future of family members, particularly children, which may need to stay behind if the individual must return.

Participant 04 said;

“People are always afraid of the unknown. You know a lot of people ah Liberians in the program you know have to live day by day not knowing what the next day is going to bring you know when the program is going to end and they will all lose their jobs and as you know most of those Liberians in the program you know have kids in school, have work and you know have some form of normalcy in

American society. So to see them get abruptly disrupted you know for some was very stressful”.

Fears and Stress

Another prevailing theme in reference to the effects of long-term TPS or DED was the topic of fear in regards to deportation, leaving family and children and going back to Liberia. The community conference at the time when DED was thought to be ending in the following weeks provided information on the rights that an individual has if confronted by law enforcement and provided participants with the opportunity to speak to a lawyer pro bono to see if there were options for changing their status. It was noted during the conference that, especially at the beginning, there was low participation and that perhaps individuals were in denial about the possibility that there would be no extension.

Discussing her own concerns about losing her DED status, **Participant L 05** stated “So is not like you are just going to be here, you are going to get nothing. So it is kind of scary”. Several other participants discussed the concerns of having lived in the U.S. for so long and what it would be like to lose your immigration status, the ability to work legally and potentially have to return to Liberia.

Participant 08 said “These are some of the fears because when I have talked to some they say I have worked in the this country for 10 years or 15 years and I have paid all my taxes and I do everything and know they just took everything from us, they just took everything from me”.

Participant 05 said “So if all of these people are deported some have their children in school. Now will the children be taken out of the school and sent to Liberia. Where in addition to poor health system the education system is also bad. So this disconnect with the life that they are used to, is what makes many of them, like I used I was, to be in fear and worry all of the time”.

Participant 03 stated “There are families that are afraid of breaking apart, they cannot go back to their country because the economy is not ready to absorb all of them so there is a mixed feeling”.

Participant 02 stated “What was going to happen to them? So it was just a psychological – it just had a psychological impact on continually being in limbo especially now that Donald Trump is in office now that has been the fear of being deported has just been increased dramatically”.

Participant 06 said “They have already worked for years and years putting in the contributions and they would like to say when they are sent back or deported they have nothing after they worked for years and years”.

Protection Benefit

The participants relayed that the main benefit of temporary protection as the ability to have employment authorization. The other benefit stated by several participants is the ability to live in a country that is not inflicted by civil war and bad conditions. Although several participants noted the fear of living in limbo that the DED would not be renewed, they also mentioned how having DED and previously TPS allowed them to feel protected from deportation. Select participant responses to this question, are noted below:

Participant 08 said “That sense of safety from a war zone is the first stepping-stone to any success story and over the years we have seen people with TPS blend into mainstream American society”.

Participant 04 stated “The program provides them some form of stability and which you know Liberians in the program where able to find job, legal employment- let’s put it that way. They were able to live here without any fear of deportation temporarily and it brought some form of pride to them that they were not living here illegally”.

Participant 01 stated “I think the overall success is that people are protected from deportation; they can remain here with their families”.

Progress and Societal Contributions

One of the most repeated themes is the discussion of how Liberians have been able to overcome their circumstances and how they contribute to America rather than receive or deplete resources. Participants discussed the narrative in which Liberians as many immigrants, contribute to the economy and business through their own drive to work hard, pay taxes, and obtain higher education regardless of their circumstances. One community leader offered that one of the goals of his organization is to change the negative narrative that exists about immigrants and specifically Liberians and natives of other African nations. **Participant 03** said “. . . if you are talking about the economy, they are contributing to taxes to the tax base. They are paying taxes that represent important portions of the tax revenue that is helping these cities to hire people, to employ

people”. **Participant L09** said “I would say that as Liberians we are very hard working and our sole purpose and goal is to be a contributing factor to the US economy”.

Participants also discussed the successes that Liberians with TPS and DED have achieved. **Participant L01** said “Many have obtained advanced degrees, pursued professional careers and so that says a lot about Liberians living in the US. They are a very innovative people and they will do whatever they can to make themselves comfortable in life but still improve their surroundings”. **Participant 07** said “Some people were able to obtain education or skills and have been able to get their employers to help them regularize their status because they were marketable. So those are all success stories”.

Host Country and Origin Country Orientation

Questions 5 focused on how Liberians with DED see themselves as members of society in the U.S. Question 6 asked how Liberians that have been in the U.S. for many years with temporary protection interact with Liberia. Both of these questions in most interviews triggered the respondents to discuss the unique relationship between the United States and Liberia and the history of that relationship. A couple of the participants mentioned that Liberia is referenced among members of their community as “Little America”. In a similar sentiment, **Participant 09** said “The Liberian government is structured just similar to the U.S. government, we have three branches, the executive, legislative and the judiciary branch. You have the Senate, the House, the president, Supreme Court”. **Participant 04** said “Assimilation is not a difficult thing for Liberians because of the past history with the United States. Liberians have always been regarded

as little Americans because of our history from the slave days and the repatriation of free slaves from America”.

In discussing Liberia, several participants referenced a comfort in living in the United States because of the similarities and the sense that the relationship with America has been favorable to Liberians, specifically in comparison to other African countries. **Participant 08** said “So Liberia is pretty much like America in Africa. So we feel part of the American society, we feel part of America”. **Participant 02** stated “We feel comfortable here because we see American as our best friend, a historically well-connected country. We call Liberia the one state of America”. Another participant noted that among the reasons for Liberians being to assimilate is the fact that Liberia is an English speaking country.

Several participants however, referenced the challenges of living with a temporary status and specifically not being able to travel back to Liberia. **Participant 02**, who had held TPS status previously provided “I lost a lot of relatives during the Liberian civil war and until now, until 2016, I could not leave this country to travel anywhere”. Another participant that has DED, mentioned having although they were able to adopt a child in the U.S., and they have two children in Liberia that they have not seen in 26 years. Other participants noted that Liberians often send money back to Liberia to support relatives. **Participant 03** said “They take care of their families in Liberia; they are contributing to their families in Liberia, also contributing here”.

Most participants described the conditions in Liberia to continue to be unstable and expressed the hardship that would exist for those that might need to return to a

country that continues to experience significant challenges. **Participant 04** stated “Especially when you live here in America for a long time and you have to go back to Liberia to a fragile country that is still struggling to rebuild from the civil war. That can be quite embarrassing”.

In response to the question about how Liberian with DED view themselves as members of American society, the participants provided the following statements:

Participants 03 stated “They do everything the same but they feel at some point differently than anyone else”.

Participant 07 “Some people have incorporated well while some people haven’t. They still see themselves as outsiders. Some people have been able to acculturate and see themselves as American even though they are living on a DED status”

Participant 05 “I consider myself a citizen because I work, I pay taxes. I do everything that an American does- go to work, pay taxes”.

Participant 03 “They see themselves, they live everything American. They eat the same food, they go to the same games, they play and work in the same spaces as other Americans”.

Future Outlook

As the researcher, I chose to implement the flexibility of a qualitative study to ask a follow up question what they think should happen with Liberians that have been living in the U.S. for many years with temporary protection. The responses fit into two categories; Liberians should be granted permanent status or there should be more time given to allow Liberians to plan to return to Liberia, such as an additional extension. The

response to this question often turned to mention the government or the current administration and the perceived current anti-immigrant climate. **Participant 01** said “I just hope that the government can see that they are part of our fabric of the society that we live in and extending permanent long-term status to them so that they can continue to remain in our communities, I think it makes sense”. **Participant 05** provided, “If you have been here 25 years or more and you haven’t committed any crimes I think they should give us some permanent status or citizenship. After 25 years you haven’t committed any crime or done anything, I think citizenship is the right thing”. **Participant 04** stated “people who have lived in the US for so many year, they have contributed tremendously to our communities, they are a part of our communities I think it makes sense to allow them to fully integrate and not just have them on the outskirts and have them contribute to a community that they don’t feel comfortable in, that they don’t feel welcome”. **Participant 03** said “They are part of the fabric of the society. So there is no loss to give them permanent residency, it is a win. You increase the revenue base, you increase productive workers, you increase the number of nurses, you increase the number of different diversities, difficult cultures and communities, that is all you are doing. You stabilize families; you don’t have to break up families”.

Summary

This chapter began with a discussed all elements data collection and data analysis for this study on the experience of Liberians that have lived in the U.S. for decades with temporary protection. The chapter began by discussing the setting of the study. This study used a purposeful sample to interview 9 participants using the case study method.

The objective of the interviews was to determine the effects on the security and assimilation of Liberians with DED due to long-term implementation of a temporary immigration policy. The research aimed to answer the research question: What are the perceived effects of long-term implementation of temporary immigration policy on the security and successful integration of Liberians? This chapter also discussed the demographics of the study, which demonstrate that the participants offer a diverse group within the population of Liberian community leaders.

The data collection section discussed the process for conducting 9 semistructured interviews. In particular the care taken throughout the data collection to proactively implement reflexivity as the researcher and remain consistent in the interview process. The interviews were transcribed verbatim from the recordings. The data analysis involved using NVivo to organize the data and then identify themes and subthemes that answered the research question. The themes reflecting the perceived experience of Liberians with TPS and DED for many years were: renewal challenges, fear, uncertainty, progress, and protection.

This chapter discussed the rigor applied in the study through a discussion of the issues of trustworthiness through the elements of credibility, dependability, dependability and confirmability. In this section I discussed the proactive measures taken to ensure the data reflects quality and care taken to ensure researcher bias did not influence the results. The information provided reflects that the study relays the data truthfully, is relatable to others, can be reproduced and provides the unbiased responses to the interview questions.

A significant section in this chapter provided the results of the study. I provided narratives and verbatim quotes to relay the perspective of the study participants. The statements reflect thick rich descriptions about the general experiences of Liberians that have lived with temporary protection and specific dimensional perspectives. The study also provides descriptions about how Liberians view themselves as members of society in the U.S. and how the perceived unstable conditions in Liberia play into the fears of those that may need to return to Liberia if DED is terminated.

In Chapter 5, I discuss the interpretation of the results, provides recommendations and the conclusion for the study.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

In this final chapter, I provide the conclusion of this research study through a discussion of the interpretation of the findings, limitations of the study, recommendations, and social implications. My purpose in this study was to explore the effects of temporary immigration policy implemented as a long-term solution on the security of Liberians and their successful integration in the United States. The review of the literature reflected a need to explore what it is like for Liberians to live on the edge of knowing how secure they are in being able to remain in the United States after having temporary protection for so many years. With this study I aimed to bridge the literature gap by examining this understudied group, which has a unique relationship with the United States, to add to the knowledge on the effects of living in a prolonged temporary immigration status.

The research was executed as a qualitative study with a case study approach. The study interviewed members of the Liberian community using a semistructured interview process, with questions focused on exploring the perceived effects of living in the United States with temporary protection status, namely TPS and DED for many years, in terms of the benefits and challenges. The questions also explored the relationship of Liberians with the U.S. as the host country and Liberia as the heritage country to consider where the experience of Liberians stands in terms of Berry's theory of acculturation.

Interpretation of the Findings

Interpretation is central and constant in each stage of qualitative research, as the data does not speak for itself but rather, is given meaning by the researcher through self-reflexive implementation (Medico & Santiago-Delefosse, 2014). James (2012) further offered that the researcher needs to be reflexive while creatively crafting the data using an “analytic imagination” (p. 574) that is based on curiosity and an ability to consider different perspectives. Although it is difficult to describe the exact process of deriving meaning from the data, at the point where the researcher is seeking to interpret the findings, they have been immersed in the planning, implementation and analysis to a degree that allows for the revealing of what the data is communicating and what it is not. Through analysis of the data, I identified four overarching concepts that revealed themselves in the data: (a) Liberians with TPS and DED have a mixed experience; (b) the factor of how Liberians contribute to U.S. society is prevalent in how community leaders view their experience; (c) Liberians are mostly integrated after living in the U.S. for several decades but are also marginalized in ways; and (d) with the looming threat of termination of DED for Liberians, whereas community members spring into action, there appears to be a paralysis of sorts that occurs rather than a planning towards returning to their native country. These concepts are explored in additional detail.

A Mixed Experience

Liberians that have lived in the U.S. for decades with temporary protection experience the benefits of being able to legally work in the United States to support their families in the U.S. and Liberia, and they are protected from deportation through a legal

although temporary status. At the same time, they live in a perpetual limbo where every 12 or 18 months they do not know if their status will be extended, recently up until the very week or day of the current expiration. This perspective is clearly relayed in responses such as;

“They are contributing to this society in a lot of important ways but they are also a targeted group of people who feel any time that their legal status can be pulled away, any time their families can be separated, anytime they can leave their job, any time their life can be torn apart, any time everything they have worked for can be down the drain. So it is a mixed experience a mixed reality and so that is what I would describe to you”.

“Good and bad. Some people are within the shadows; they are hiding because of their current status. Some people are reaching out to us and telling us their fears and what can we do and so because of those who have reached out to us that is how we came up with the conference to help provide information to them and other alternatives to them so they can regularize their status if is possible. If not possible then they will be returning home so that is what we are doing right now”.

This experience aligns with the literature on the experience of Central Americans with TPS, as reflected in Chapter 2. A recent report on the experience of Hondurans and Salvadorians with TPS also reflects similar findings. Menjivar (2017) provides that although TPS allows for some economic progress and relief, living in temporary status for many years is not ideal and presents several hardships and challenges.

As previously mentioned, for the purpose of this study, the term *security* is interpreted as the safety of living without a looming threat of losing legal immigration status or of being deported. As such, the results of this study reflect that although Liberians can work legally and do not have to endure certain hardships of living without immigration status, they experience insecurity and uncertainty. As noted in the literature, living in limbo and fearing potential deportation can be a significant source of stress for those with temporary protection (Abrego and Lakhani, 2015; Cebulko, 2014). Abrego and Lakhani (2015) specifically note the stress that is prevalent when the end of a period of designation is nearing. The participants confirmed this perspective in how they relayed the challenges and uncertainty of not knowing if Liberia will be redesignated near the end of the designation with statements such as:

“They don’t know if they are going to stay in the country if the program ends and leave their kids here in America. What was going to happen to them? So it is psychological – it just has a psychological impact”.

“So they don’t know, they are just living here hoping that something going to happen and Congress will come up with a better solution and see how they can give their status. Most of these people have worked in this country for years and they have contributed towards society”.

“The general challenge is that there is this uncertainty every time DED or TPS is about to expire. Whether or not the government will renew it and if the government does renew it then people have to worry about reapplying and that costs money”.

Another note that contributes to the concept of a mixed experience involves the effects that the experience of Liberians has on the family dynamic. The literature provides that one of the limitations of TPS and DED is that there is no family reunification process (Abrego and Lakhani, 2015; Hereen, 2015; Hoffman, 2012) and there are effects to integration caused by the stress of being apart from family members, and the need to provide financial support for family in the U.S. and abroad (Enchautegui and Menjivar, 2015). One participant who holds DED status, shared that they has not left the U.S. in 25 years and has biological children and grandchildren in Liberia. Another participant noted not having returned to Liberia between 1999 and 2016, when they were able to change his status.

Immigrant Contributions vs. Antiimmigrant Narrative

A prevalent perspective shared by the participants is that after living in the U.S. for so many years, Liberians contribute to society in ways that are significant, and therefore society benefits from giving these individuals an opportunity to work legally. This view is significant because it presents a counter to the narrative of speaking of immigrants in provisional situations, which is often focused on the perception that immigrants take jobs from U.S. workers and receive public benefits, or that they are undesirable or dangerous. Converse to this antiimmigrant narrative, almost all of the participants relayed the many ways in which Liberians with temporary protection contribute to the U.S.

Aside from paying into the economy, several noted that Liberians often attain higher education and careers that provide essential services, such as nurses or attendants

in elderly homes. They also noted that Liberians have started businesses that contribute to the economy, buy homes and are active members of the community. As noted in Chapter 2, individuals whose experiences are so similar to that of being a U.S. citizens, get to a point where they do not distinguish themselves from those that are citizens (Coutin, 2013). As such, it is not surprising that Liberians in temporary status for many years have built lives in the U.S., feel as though they are citizens and make economic and career choices accordingly.

Menjivar (2017) reports that in addition to the economic benefits provided to Hondurans and Salvadorians by TPS, there is a social and cultural benefit to families and communities, and in turn a benefit to society in general. This narrative provides a broader view to the idea that the temporariness of temporary immigration policies is limiting. Although some live hesitantly, in the course of many years, some beneficiaries choose to take their chances on the future and seemingly set aside the potential for termination of their status and take progressive steps to improve their lives and that of their families. This perspective is reflected in statements such as:

“I would say they are very brave people to have to remain the country for so long. Very strong, very brave to remain in this country on temporary protected status or DED for several decades to build homes and attain the level of success that many have attained”.

“There is always a hope that there is an extension after 1 year after 2 years but that extension has not really been matched by a guarantee to legal status. So the

temporary legal status does not allow them to do a lot of long-term planning and they have kids and those kids' lives are unpredictable”.

“When it comes to Liberians in the program, these Liberians just want to be a part of the American society. Like for example, I know a Liberian who has been in the program that has been given the privilege of adopting an American kid and from small that kid has been living with her and going to school”.

“Some of them with homes, they have had American children, they are doing well in school. They have become good parents to these children and some of them are business owners”.

This narrative speaks of the resilience of this group and demonstrates an appreciation for the protection they have received.

Several participants also spoke of understanding that temporary or permanent benefits should not be afforded to those that have committed crimes or intend to hurt America in any way. As such, Liberians are noted as hard working and peaceful people that simply want to care for their families and feel safe. Participant 03 stated;

“Those that have been law abiding and have been doing everything right, they should be given permanent residence. It is a win for America and it a win for everybody. They are already part of the society. They are not going to disrupt anything by being here. Some of them have been here for so long. They are part of society, doing everything everyone else is doing and that has not harmed anybody”.

In general, the participants struck a tone protective of the U.S. and above all wanting to ensure that individuals that might harm the country or misrepresent the Liberian community would not be afforded benefits, or the privilege of remaining in the U.S.

Another significant perspective is that not only is there a mutual benefit from Liberians that have received TPS and DED, but that there would be a negative impact on society if DED is terminated for these individuals that have lived in the U.S. for many years. This sentiment is reflected in the views of one participant, which expressed the need to consider the adverse effects and cost of terminating DED for Liberians.

Participants stated;

“We shouldn’t only focus just on the people that are living here on DED, we should also focus on the impact that it can have on their families as well. Like I mentioned earlier, a lot of Liberians that are living in the US have US citizen family members who have never traveled to Liberia before, we are talking about adult children and so think about the impact that ending DED for Liberians can have on their children and their grandchildren as well”.

“I adopted a kid and for 10 years I have been wondering what are they going to do with her or what will become of her. If they don’t renew my status within 3 months then when will I be living”.

The literature discussed that immigration status can affect family dynamics and present significant challenges (Enchautegui & Menjivar, 2015), and this study expounds on that perspective. The participant feedback allows for consideration beyond the view that there are hardships to families caused by living in a prolonged immigration limbo to

a perspective that U.S. citizens, the economy, and society as a whole loses out when integrated members of society are required to return to their country of origin.

Integration with Marginalization

Berry (1997) relays that a society that supports immigrants and multiculturalism will reduce the need for immigrants to modify their culture or feel marginalized therefore creating a more positive acculturation experience. He further describes that long-term adaptation will be adversely affected if the host country attitude towards immigrant groups reflects that they are not accepted (Berry, 1997). Berry's model of acculturation is a lens through which we can explore how Liberians that have lived in the U.S. for many years with temporary protection relate to the host country, the United States, and Liberia, the heritage country, in terms of acculturation. The perceived experience of Liberians with prolonged temporary protection as provided by the participants of this study, provide the factors by which this immigrant group can be evaluated using Berry's model. The lens of acculturation theory helped to better understand the position of Liberians based on the circumstances of a policy that from certain angles can be seen as anti-integration.

Berry (1997) provides a model of acculturation to represent the relationship negotiated by cultural groups in society in terms of the strategy the individuals in these groups use to deal with acculturation. The four-acculturation strategies in the model shown in Figure 2: integration, assimilation, separation and marginalization, are the result of the attitude the cultural group members have towards the dominant and nondominant situations (Berry, 1997). In using Berry's model for this study, the dominant situation is

the host country or the U.S., where Liberians are living and immersed as a result of prolonged temporary immigration status. The nondominant situation is represented as their relationship with the heritage culture as individuals that were born in Liberia, or last resided there, and have an affinity to their identity as Liberians. Berry (1997) offers that the association to one of the four-acculturation strategies is telling in part on how the host or dominant culture treats the cultural group.

Figure 2. *Model of Acculturation*

		Attitude Towards Cultural Maintenance Tendency to focus on maintaining identity with heritage culture	
		Yes	No
Attitude towards Contact and Participation Tendency to focus on involvements with host culture	Yes	Integration	Assimilation
	No	Separation	Marginalization

Figure 2. Model of acculturation. Based on Berry's acculturation model (Berry, 1997).

Using Berry's model of acculturation, and based on the descriptions provided by the participants, Liberians that have lived in the United States for many years with temporary protection can be associated more closely with integration. The participants described a perceived experience that is centered on the fact that this group has now lived in the United States for decades, with the benefit of employment authorization. Many

have U.S. citizen children, some have purchased homes and many have not returned to Liberia since being in the U.S., for fear of not being able to return. The following statements support the view that Liberians can be associated with integration:

“So there is nothing in mainstream American society that you will not find DED people associating themselves with. The American dream is something that many of them are enjoying and that is why we are taking a look at the whole situation that is going to be stripped of them and it is going to be difficult for them”.

“I mean a lot of these people have assimilated into the culture. They have kids in school, they have good jobs and they are just peaceful people. Assimilation is not a difficult thing for Liberians because past history with the United States”.

“So perhaps unlike other nationals, we feel “comfortable” here; comfortable, as my own words. We feel Comfortable here because we see American as our best friend, a historically well-connected country. We call Liberian the one state of America”.

There is also evidence that the years away from Liberia, the continued instability there, and potential dangers, further influences them towards living as permanent members of U.S. society with the hope of a permanent situation and not needing to repatriate.

Notwithstanding, there is evidence that the circumstances of TPS and DED policies have led Liberians to feel some degree of marginalization as supported with statements such as;

“Now we work and pay taxes like green card holders and citizens but we are not allowed to receive federal grants, that is student loans or public benefits. We are

not entitled to those things and specifically student loans. So it is a very difficult situation to be in. Unless your children were born here, they will be in the same situation and not having the right to go to school – that is a terrible situation for people in this category”.

“Well I think many of them are contributing in a lot of ways but they are not fully. They see themselves, they live everything American. They eat the same food, they go to the same games, they play and work in the same spaces as other Americans. So they do everything the same way but there is that one point of view that I am not totally fully present in everything I do because I am not legally complete, they feel incomplete, they feel there is something missing”.

Being that the intention and nature of these policies is temporary, this group is not afforded certain privileges and benefits of others in the dominant culture. There is also a heightened awareness nearing the end of a designation that forces these individuals to consider the possibility of being deported or needing to choose to leave to a country they have not lived in for decades. Participant 08 stated;

“You know these people have been in that program for the past 20 some more years. That is almost more than half their life. So to uproot them from that and take them to a completely strange situation is something that is sad and we that something can be done about it”.

This is significant in considering the perspective provided by Ward and Geeraert (2016) that cultural orientation in societal settings that are inclusive and open to diversity positively influence immigrants’ ability to acculturate in contrast to societies where

immigrants are expected to conform to the host culture.

Termination Activism and Paralysis

As the data collection for this study was taking place, there were several circumstances that made that period in time particularly critical for those Liberians whose DED was potentially about to expire. As the administration had recently completed its first year, several participants made mention of the perception that this time may be different than previous years when there has been a redesignation due to the president seeming to not favor certain immigrants. There was a significant concern as to the possibility that Liberians with DED would need to plan to return or consider if there was an alternative status they could apply for to remain in the U.S. As observed in a community conference and through the interviews, the community members were in action to fight for a redesignation of DED, and conversely to support Liberians with DED with the resources they may need to face the difficult reality of returning to Liberia after decades away.

A further observation confirms and slightly expands on the seminal article by Mountz et. al (2002) which provided that TPS can promote a paralysis based on uncertainty and difficulty in making day to day decisions such as home improvements, education and what risks they are willing to take in returning to the home country for funerals and emergencies. In speaking to community members in the weeks approaching the potential termination of DED for Liberia, community leaders were making efforts to speak to Congressional representatives and travel to Washington DC to speak to those that had potential influence, yet the tone was obvious as to the real possibility that a

renewal may not happen. This tone is noticeable in statements such as:

“So our hope is that you can give them permanent status what they can build up what they have already been doing without them looking over their shoulder say okay when is this going to come to an end. This is enough already so especially this time the unpredictability of the whole situation is really scaring a whole lot of them. So it is time to give them permanent status and let them get their road to citizenship so that they can cater to these American children they have”.

“Some people are reaching out to us and telling us their fears and what can we do and so because of those who have reached out to us that is how we came up with the conference to help provide information to them and other alternatives to them so they can regularize their status if possible. If not possible then they will be returning home so that is what we are doing right now”.

“You know a lot of people ah Liberians in the program you know have to live day by day not knowing what the next day is going to bring you know when the program is going to end and they will all lose their jobs and as you know most of those Liberians in the program you know have kids in school, have work and you know have some form of normalcy in American society. So to see them get abruptly disrupted you know for some was very stressful”.

Although the initial intent of this study was not to learn about the experiences in a period when temporary protecting is expiring, this inadvertently became part of the dynamic of this study. It also reflects that in general, the not knowing what will be of their immigration status leads to a “paralysis” of sorts, where these individuals must surrender

to the decision of the government and will only plan to return when there is a certainty that their status will not be extended. In reality it seemed that there was little they could do until they learn the fate of their status, especially if they do not have the option to apply to some other immigration status.

Limitations of the Study

This study was limited due to the sample size and the inability to interview more DED participants with firsthand experience of living with temporary protection.

Although I was able to interview more participants than my original sample size, there would be additional benefit to identifying more individuals that could speak more in detail about the topic, and provide other examples. Although there is consistency in the results, it is possible that more can be learned from additional individuals that work closely with this group. Unfortunately, the political climate at the time of the data collection perhaps made it difficult for individuals to trust an individual outside of their community.

In ideal circumstances, this study would yield the best results from interviews with Liberians with DED or that previously had TPS themselves. I was fortunate to be able to include two participants that fit into this criteria, but there would be more detailed examples of the experience from those that had actually lived those experiences. It is notable, however, that several of the participants did have significant involvement and/or interactions with the group in focus. Also, although there are several consistencies with other TPS groups, as per the literature, the generalizability of the experience of this group

may be weakened by the unique relationship and history of the United States and Liberia as described by several participants.

Recommendations

The results of this study demonstrate that the experience of Liberians with DED is mixed, as they are mostly integrated individuals that have contributed significantly to society for many years, yet face forms of marginalization as a result of living in immigration limbo. Additionally, the results reflect that although the community has galvanized to support these individuals each time a status termination is looming, there is a severe inability for this group to plan for a return to Liberia when each time the fate of their status comes down to the week or day their status is set to expire. Based on these results, I have the following recommendations:

Long-Term Integration Policy

Implementation of a long-term integration policy is in the best interest of the United States and those that have lived in a protracted temporary situation. Although there is significant debate and divisiveness on the topic of immigration in the United States, there is likely consensus that parties on all sides ultimately want to ensure that the country is able to thrive economically, while having knowledge of those living in the country. In this vein, it is also necessary to consider the realistic possibility of what happens when individuals with temporary protection do not return to their country of origin, especially after living in the United States for many years and creating their lives here. It is particularly necessary to account for the cost of having individuals choosing to go into the shadows instead of leaving their family behind or going back to a country they

still consider dangerous and unstable. As noted by Yildiz and Uzgoren (2016), in discussing Syrian refugees, government policy needs to consider moving away from prolonged ad hoc measures and provide a long-term integration policy to account for the reality of those that have no intention to leave.

Although the majority effort and attitude of community members was that Liberians would need to try and apply for an alternative immigration status or prepare to leave, several participants expressed the potential for some to remain in the United States in a state of hiding. Consequently, there is potential cost to society that goes beyond the enforcement costs related to investigation and deportation. These costs are economic in terms of losing labor and income tax revenue, and perhaps more significantly, it is the cost of breaking apart families that have become part of the fabric of their communities. In the scenario, such as that of Liberians, where there has been a prolonged temporary experience there should be a policy that leads to permanent status. Although not all countries can be afforded the option to change from a temporary status to a permanent status, there should be consideration of groups that have integrated into society in the U.S. due to prolonged temporary status.

A long-term integration policy should include criteria such as demonstrating maintenance of temporary status since initial designations began, demonstrated positive economic and community contributions, and no criminal record. There should be weight given to those that have not broken the law, and on the contrary have made positive contributions to the economy and society in general. This recommendation also takes into account how temporary protection is implemented in the future to avoid, to the degree

possible, setting up a situation where the status quo is to implement temporary protection policies as long-term solutions. There should also be measures in place to avoid using temporary protection as a long-term solution for helping displaced individuals. This may include setting a limit of 10 or 15 years to provide designations, at which time the government would need to evaluate a path to permanent status, termination based on improved conditions, or another measure.

Improved Notifications and Renewals

Government agencies should implement solutions that improve the DED designation process, including timely issuance of employment authorization documents. As prices have increased in the course of time, the systems in place to process and issue immigration benefits should also be improved in terms of timeliness, innovation and efficiency. One specific recommendation is for the government to require a notification to beneficiaries of an extension at least 60 or perhaps 90 days before the current DED period is set to expire. This notification should also happen when there has been a termination notice, to ensure there is no expectation of further extensions. As noted by this study, the renewal process is a source of stress and uncertainty for beneficiaries and this can be a way of lessening that angst. Furthermore, this measure is already part of the TPS statute and can reduce the stress of the process on recipients from waiting to hear at the last moment. Currently Liberia is the only country with a designation of DED and it is set to expire in March 2019, however if DED is implemented again in the future, there should be consideration for the timing of announcements and how significant these notifications are to the health and livelihood of the affected populations.

Temporary Protection Termination Policy

This study brings to light the inherent problem that results from continual designations of temporary protection policy as an ad hoc solution to help those in humanitarian need while their country is enduring conflict and rehabilitation. To address this problem there needs to be a consistent and realistic termination policy. In the absence of such a policy, there is a likely chance that the same scenario will continue to play out with other countries in the future. We already have the case of Central Americans that have also been provided TPS for many years, and in their scenario the numbers are much larger than Liberians with DED. In the case of TPS, Congress should revisit the statute and address gaps in the law that have become evident in time, such as the failure to mention require a consistent termination transition process. There may also need to be resources or organizations needed to assist individuals, or the receiving country for repatriation to be successful.

The most significant element that needs to be considered for future implementation of temporary protection policies is what happens when a country remains unstable after many years? A recommendation is for the U.S. to invest in programs to help build the economy and infrastructure of the foreign nation, in consideration of foreign relation advantages. Although the responsibility for the foreign nation's progress should lie mainly on that nation, the United States can support efforts and provide oversight in coordination. The expectation that countries will be able to rebuild on their own in less than several decades seems unrealistic, and a flawed way to manage foreign policy in relationship to temporary protection policies. There are many challenges in

considering when a country that has been designated with TPS or DED are sufficiently stable to the degree where that country can receive those individuals that were provided temporary protection.

Implications

The issue of how humanitarian policy, and specifically temporary immigration policies, will manifest in the future is only one drop in the large complex immigration debate. The individual, societal and social implications of this study are discussed in the following section.

Individual Implications

On an individual level, this study allowed for Liberian community members that have knowledge of the experience of Liberians with temporary protection due to their involvement with the community, political involvement and relationships with family and friends to speak about their struggles and successes. Although there are those that are cautious of speaking of their experiences, having a strong community that is able to come together and provide support, set up resources, hold conferences and lobby to the government on behalf of those that feel fear or that they must remain silent is an essential part of this society. This study also brings to light how although immigration status and citizenship are factors that shape the lives of individuals (Menjivar & Abrego, 2012), the process of integration takes place over the course of time given favorable conditions. Some individuals are even able to surpass substantial limitations to build success and make significant contributions to society.

Societal Implications

One of the complex and significant aspects of temporary protection policy is in how it represents the role of the United States as a country that provides relief and protection to those that cannot return to their country of origin. Yet, there is another complexity that arises in that the current scenario represents large groups of members of society that have held legal status and now face the possibility of losing their status and needing to repatriate to potentially unsafe conditions. Notwithstanding, is the matter that these individuals also have U.S. citizen children, jobs, homes and businesses that deepen their relationship with the United States and weaken their will to return to a country that is unlikely to provide them the protection and security they have experienced. The results of this study align with the literature on temporary protection policy and offer that after many years as members of the society in the U.S., Liberians with temporary protection have made notable contributions.

When I decided on this topic in 2014, I did not imagine that while collecting data and thereafter, this would become an exponentially complex matter to study due to the political dynamics surrounding immigration. On March 27, 2018, a few days before the designation of DED was set to expire, the president announced a 12-month period in which Liberians should find an alternative immigration benefit to apply for or make plans to exit the country (USCIS, 2018g). It appears that unless there is some new reason for a redesignation for Liberia before March 2019, the lengthy temporary protection story between Liberia and the United States will come to an end. In the backdrop of this reality, there is another set of temporary protection terminations that are potentially leading to

thousands of current TPS beneficiaries without status, and the looming possibility of mass deportations. At a minimum, this study provides the perspective that these individuals have been resilient and hopeful, which has allowed them to progress and to help their families and the community. This study also allows for society be aware of this unique story that began decades ago and hopefully yields lessons learned about the diverse challenges that some face in our communities.

Policy Implications

On January 18, 2018 a Federal Register Notice was released indicating the termination of TPS for El Salvador (Department of Justice, 2018), one of the largest groups of TPS recipients, after an 18-month orderly transition period set to expire on September 9, 2019. Among several lawsuits filed against the government involving the termination of TPS, on October 03, 2018, a California District Court Judge granted a preliminary injunction in *Ramos v. Nielsen* for beneficiaries of TPS from Haiti, Sudan, Nicaragua and El Salvador (USCIS, 2018d). In his ruling the judge notes the irreparable harm that would come to those that could lose TPS status. *Ramos v. Nielsen* also finds that there is a change in policy from prior administrations in considering solely whether the conditions that originated the designation still existed as opposed to the past practice of taking a comprehensive look at the conditions of the country.

These recent events and the results of this study bring to light the need to revisit how temporary immigration policy is implemented in the United States. Just as those designated with temporary protection benefit from having immigration status and employment authorization, the U.S. has benefited from labor and other contributions of

these individuals (Mountz, et.al, 2002; Menjivar, 2017). The government has chosen not to address the shortcoming of these policies but rather to continually use them as a solution to a very complex scenario. As with immigration in general, there also has not been a change to the statute since it was enacted decades ago. This study further demonstrates a need for Congress to address temporary protection as one of the components of immigration policy that needs to be revisited and made appropriate to the modern needs of society.

Areas for Future Research

With this study, I exposed the need for additional research on the effects of temporary protection in the future. Further study is needed to better understand what happens when a “wind-down” period is issued that will result in no further extensions of temporary protection. Rather than working from an idealistic view of what individuals should be doing during this time, it is important to be able to understand that the ties of someone that has lived in a country for decades are deep and complex. Information on the experience of those that face a transition from having employment authorization to undocumented status is unique and can inform how terminations are handled in the future. Another possible future research focus could be a comparative study of the experience of different ethnic groups with temporary protection around the world. It would be beneficial to learn how different approaches to temporary protection affect the beneficiaries experience and their abilities to assimilate and progress. Finally, it would be very beneficial to continue studying the story of Liberians and the experience of those

that repatriate to Liberia to understand the effects of returning to the origin country after many years away.

Conclusion

It is projected that in the next three decades there could be between an estimated 200 and 700 million people displaced by environmental factors alone (Omeziri, 2014). This projection reflects the need for developed nations, including the United States, to consider what policies will be in place to address the inevitable circumstance when a group cannot return to their country of origin due to an environmental crisis or otherwise dangerous conditions. The United States as a leader in humanitarian affairs on a global scale must use the lessons learned from previous implementation of temporary protection policies to generate policies that are compassionate, comprehensive and in the best interest of its current and future citizens. Further, the United States although just one of many countries that helps displaced individuals around the world (Omeziri, 2014; Robertson, 2013; Cabot, 2012; Bergeron, 2014), has an opportunity to evolve the policy associated with these complex circumstances as it considers immigration reform as a whole. Although this study focuses on the effects of beneficiaries, it is noteworthy that government leaders end up in a predicament when faced with deciding to renew or terminate the status of thousands of individuals with strong ties in the U.S.

The findings of this study describe the experience of Liberians that have lived with temporary protection for many years as one that has afforded these individuals with protection and relief from returning to a dangerous and unstable country. These individuals have created a life in the United States and contribute to society in many

ways despite the challenges and angst of living in limbo. As with Central Americans that have lived with TPS for many years, there are many benefits to temporary protection. The main result of these policies are individuals and their families that gain the ability to progress economically and contribute to their communities and society, yet it is also clear that a prolonged temporary state is not ideal (Menjivar, 2017). The challenge remains finding a compassionate way to ensure that the best interest of the United States is carried out while working with foreign nations to support their development to avoid sending members of our society into circumstances that may put them in harm or brings significant hardship to U.S. citizens.

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