

ASHE-NITE Paper Series

FAILED EDUCATIONAL JUSTICE: REFUGEE STUDENTS' POSTSECONDARY REALITIES IN RESTRICTIVE TIMES

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ABOUT THE SERIES

With support from Lumina Foundation, the Association for the Study of Higher Education and the National Institute for Transformation and Equity are excited to launch a collection of national papers on critical underserved populations in postsecondary education. The series is one of four initiatives under the leadership of the 2017-2018 ASHE President, Dr. Lori Patton Davis.

The overarching aim of the papers is to synthesize existing knowledge about how to create inclusive and equitable campus environments for underserved populations, and provide recommendations for higher education research, policy, and practice.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
Introduction	9
Review of Literature	10
Refugee Populations	11
Overview of Refugee Sub-Populations in the U.S.	12
Resettlement	13
Factors Influencing Postsecondary Opportunities	14
Cultural	14
Structural	15
Bias, Discrimination, and Racism	15
Financial	16
Language Acquisition	17
Barriers to and Within Postsecondary Education	18
Success, Support, and Protective Factors	19
Cultivation of High Educational Aspirations	19
Welcoming & Inclusive Schooling Environments	19
Culturally Informed Relationships	19
Technology as a Mediator	20
Policy Recommendations	20
K-12 and Higher Education Practice Recommendations	21
K-12	21
Parent and Family Engagement	21
English as a Second Language / English Language Learners	21
Bilingual and Multilingual Resources	21
Counselors	21
Higher Education	21
Admissions Materials, Transcripts, and Credentialing	22
Scholarships and Financial Aid	22
Academic Programs & Curriculum	22
Faculty and Staff Resources	22
Holistic Support	22
Institutional Assessment & Research	22
Reinvestment in Community College Education	24
Research Recommendations	24
Conclusion	24
References	25

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An Increasingly Restrictive Political Context. The political climate of the last two years has led to more restrictions for immigrant and refugee populations. Refugee students, in particular, remain largely ignored in higher education research, policy, and practice. The focus of this report is a critical look at who constitutes refugee populations, what characterizes their resettlement experiences in the United States, and the factors influencing their postsecondary opportunities. We issue an urgent call regarding implications and recommendations that practitioners and policymakers must consider at K-12 and higher education levels.

Executive orders and policy at the federal level have significantly restricted both the numbers of immigrants entering the United States (U.S.) and the resources provided to them. The current administration lowered the refugee admissions ceiling, those allowed to enter the U.S., to 45,000 in 2018, the lowest since 1980. Just recently, the administration announced the number of refugees allowed to enter the U.S. had been slashed for a second straight year, as only 30,000 refugees will be allowed to enter the U.S. in the coming fiscal year (Gonzales, 2018). The lowering of the refugee admissions ceiling followed Presidential Executive Orders issued in January 2017, declaring a travel ban on immigrants and refugees from seven majority-Muslim countries and calling for a suspension of the refugee resettlement program (Pierce & Meissner, 2017).

Immigrants & Refugees in the U.S. Immigrants have been and are defined based upon political, economic, and international climates. Immigrant populations are generally understood as those who move from one country to another; however, there are important distinctions between migrants who enter another country by choice (though constrained), those who engage in circular migration patterns, and those who are part of forced migration, such as asylum seekers and refugees. There are over 43.7 million immigrants living in the U.S., 3 million of which were refugees who entered the country after the Refugee Act of 1980 (Migration Policy Institute, 2018). Refugee and asylee groups are a heterogeneous population; yet, their displacement and involuntary migration are often associated with conflict, violence, and persecution.

Educational Access & Opportunity. Given the current context and the vast number of individuals affected by immigration policies, there is a need to center the educational access and opportunity of immigrant and refugee students. Scholarship dedicated to this population within postsecondary research literature is insufficient (Taylor & Sidhu, 2012). Missing from literature on refugee populations is specific data on the numbers of refugee students attending postsecondary institutions in the U.S. Because of varying methods of classifying immigrant students and significant differences in when refugee students resettle in the U.S., and subsequently enter U.S. education systems, no clear data exists that accurately captures refugee students in higher education.

Summary of Factors Influencing Postsecondary Opportunities

Cultural

- Acculturation stress and cultural mismatch.
- Refugee youth adapt quickly to U.S. customs, resulting in intergenerational conflict and upended cultural norms.

Structural

- Resettlement policies promote assimilation; Refugees resettled into low-resourced communities with limited access to quality education (Koyama, 2015).
- Policies prioritize quick employment to prevent dependency on government programs; refugees age 18-64 are guided into the workforce over attaining education.

Bias, Discrimination, Racism

- Negative public sentiments over immigration and refugee resettlement policies.
- Immigrant and refugee populations experience racism, racial baiting, and harassment.

Financial

- Significant changes in financial solvency and lifestyle after resettlement in U.S. (Hickey, 2005).
- Refugees experience a “refugee gap,” are economically disadvantaged compared to other immigrants, and more likely to work in low-wage jobs with limited resources for education and job training (Connor, 2010; Zhou & Xiong, 2005).
- Refugee students experience difficulties accessing financial aid.

Language Acquisition

- Language barriers create difficulties for accessing employment, communicating with health professionals, and physical, and social integration (Hauck, Lo, Maxwell, & Reynolds, 2014; Lee, Choi, Proulx, & Cornwell, 2015).
- Immigrant and refugee students are often separated from English-speaking classmates and placed into ESL programs (Olsen, 2000), given assessments in English (Hoot, 2011), and tracked into special education classes or low academic tracks (DePouw, 2012).
- Prioritization of English results in native language loss (Wright, 2010).
- Students may self-censor and assume they would not be admitted to a four-year institution and thus do not apply (Kanno & Varghese, 2010).

Barriers to and Within Postsecondary Education

- Lost or inaccessible credentials and inconsistent documentation of transcripts, test scores, and other educational credentials.
- Credentials may not transfer or be accepted in U.S. context.
- Institutions may be unfamiliar with refugee and asylee student rights as permanent residents to apply for college admission.
- Students are assigned international status and assessed higher tuition rates.
- Inconsistent asylum documents due to various bodies’ power to grant asylum (e.g., regional asylum boards, judges, Board of Immigration appeals).
- Limited access to financial aid, scholarships, and other financial assistance to attend college.

Summary of Success, Support, & Protective Factors

Cultivation of High Educational Aspirations

- High educational aspirations are viewed as a means for global and economic mobility (Dryden-Peterson, Dahya, & Adelman, 2017; Sarr & Mosselson, 2010).
- Families place a high value on schooling opportunities and will sacrifice financial and emotional support to encourage the development of educational aspirations (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2017).
- Upon resettlement, realizing high educational aspirations through persistence in school serve as a means to combat mental health trauma (Fox, Burns, Popovich, Belknap, & Frank-Stromborg, 2004).

Welcoming and Inclusive K-12 Environments

- Elementary and secondary schools can serve as some of the most influential spaces for supporting refugee students' future educational opportunity (García Coll Akiba, Palacios, Bailey, Silver, DiMartino, & Chin, 2002; Taylor & Sidhu, 2012).
- Support for students' social and emotional needs, parent involvement based on cultural practices and resources available in families' home language.
- Training and recruitment of bilingual, bicultural personnel in schools.
- Community connections.
- Targeted policies with budget support.
- Explicit commitment to social justice.
- Holistic approach to education and welfare.
- Support for learning needs.
- Cultural brokers available to help staff understand and adapt programming to social, economic, and cultural realities of families.

Culturally-Informed Relationships

- The role of family and ethnic enclaves formed based on cultural understanding and respect.
- Members of non-profit organizations working within refugee camps and in resettlement communities serve as the bridge to educational information (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2017).
- Ethnic enclaves are a space of strong cultural support and community ties (Lee et al., 2015).

Technology as Mediator

- Technologies serve as crucial tools for refugee students both within refugee camps and after resettlement (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2017; Gilhooly & Lee, 2014).
- Social media facilitate the means by which refugee students communicate with family and friends, promote cultural maintenance, and offer a way to ease the trauma of resettlement (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2017; Gilhooly & Lee, 2014).
- Technology offers refugee students opportunities for linguistic and cultural expression (Gilhooly & Lee, 2014).

Implications & Recommendations

Policy

- Data are needed that capture what Bernstein and DuBois (2018) call refugees' "continued learning" - the ongoing English language development, technical training, and higher education pursued by refugees.
- Data must be collected on college-going trends and refugee students must be consistently defined

within such data sets.

- Policies supporting long-term medical and economic assistance must continue (Koyama, 2015) and be decoupled from refugees' pursuit of permanent residency status if future postsecondary education is an aspiration.
- Workforce training and English language development training must not come at the expense of one another (Koyama, 2015), as limits in either one may have negative systematic consequences for refugee communities over time.

K-12

- *Parent and Family Engagement.* School policies and practices must support family engagement based on cultural practices found inside the home and further cultivated within schools (García Coll et al., 2002).
- *English as a Second Language / English Language Learners.* School policies and practices must include classroom support for these students (García Coll et al., 2002) and alternative testing options.
- *Bilingual and Multilingual Resources.* Bilingual and multilingual resources must be available to students, specifically within teacher and staff support, automated and print messages that are directed at parent and family members, and information presented on school websites (García Coll et al., 2002).
- *Counselors.* Counselors should work to understand students' cultural backgrounds and strengths, like multilingualism, and encourage students to share such strengths in their college narratives (Lander, 2018).

Higher Education

Admissions Materials, Transcripts, and Credentialing

- Identify alternative means of credentialing students who do not have access to their formal transcripts (Institute of International Education, 2016).
- Make test scores (i.e., ACT, SAT, GRE) optional for students who may not have access to the resources necessary to prepare for standardized tests.
- Institutions must understand the distinctions in refugee student resettlement experience, from a student development, financial aid perspective, and legal perspective (Institute of International Education, 2016).
- Develop formal transfer agreements to support refugee students moving between community colleges and four-year institutions.

Scholarships and Financial Aid

- Offer both scholarship and employment opportunities (Koyama, 2015).
- Ensure financial support extends beyond tuition and covers housing, transportation, meals, and associated course and book fees.
- Institute policies that offer a temporary registration waiver on financial holds that might prevent students from registering for the next term (Institute of International Education, 2016).

Academic Programs & Curriculum

- Create cohorts of students focused on academic programs of study to develop peer support (Institute of International Education, 2016).
- Develop culturally relevant pedagogical practices that build on refugee students' historical and cultural knowledge (Sarr & Mosselson, 2010).
- Reinforce learning that is reciprocal and bi-directional (Goodkind, 2006).

Faculty and Staff Resources

- Tap into faculty and staff who have background on the region in conflict to serve as mentors for refugee students and/or offer training to other faculty and staff (Institute of International Education, 2016).

Holistic Support

- Partner across campus departments, community organizations, and local resources to meet refugee students' religious, linguistic, emotional, psychosocial, and mental health needs (Institute of International Education, 2016; Sarr & Mosselson, 2010).

Institutional Assessment & Research

- Institutions should regularly review college data on refugee students including applications, success outcomes, courses of study, and completion rates (Hannah, 1999).

Reinvestment in Community College Education

- Funding initiatives at local levels should be designated to develop partnerships between community colleges, local high schools, and community organizations that serve large refugee populations.
- Assess practices in immigration centers to meet the full range of immigrant and refugee student populations.

Research

Access & Transition

- Offer more linguistically diverse support and resources.
- Explore the role of institutional agents (Stanton-Salazar, 1997) in support for refugee students aspiring towards postsecondary education.
- Explore the role of alternative credentialing in the transition processes both from the student and institution perspective.

The Role of the Institutions

- Explore which refugee communities are more likely to attend community colleges, and why, and how enrollment and transition factors are addressed.
- Examine how institutional culture and climate shift in supporting immigrant and refugee students when federal policy changes occur.

Success & Retention

- Determine how students are successfully retained, how success is defined, and who or what contributes to that success.
- Explore how an intensive, wraparound (e.g. tuition, books, transportation) approach to financial aid influences refugee students' retention and success.

Student Identity Development

- Broaden the definition of non/new-traditional students to include refugee students who are seeking to continue their education after many years of college in their home countries or who are entering higher education for the first time after resettlement.

INTRODUCTION

The political climate of the last two years has led to increasingly more restrictions for immigrant and refugee populations. Refugee students, in particular, remain largely ignored in higher education research, policy, and practice. The focus of this report is a critical look at who constitutes refugee populations, what characterizes their resettlement experiences in the United States, and the factors influencing their postsecondary opportunities. We issue an urgent call regarding implications and recommendations that practitioners and policymakers must consider at K-12 and higher education levels.

Executive orders and policy at the federal level have significantly restricted both the numbers of immigrants entering the United States (U.S.) and the resources provided to them. The current administration lowered the refugee admissions ceiling, those allowed to enter the U.S., to 45,000 in 2018, the lowest since 1980. As of July 2018, slightly over 9,600 refugees were admitted into the U.S. (Bernstein & DuBois, 2018). Just recently, the administration announced the number of refugees allowed to enter the U.S. had been slashed for a second straight year, as only 30,000 refugees will be allowed to enter the U.S. in the upcoming fiscal year (Gonzales, 2018). Under President Obama, the refugee ceiling was set at 110,000 (Pierce & Meissner, 2017). As a point of comparison, the largest refugee camp in the world, the Dadaab camps in Kenya, currently house over 224,000 Somalian refugees (UNHCR, 2018b). The lowering of the refugee admissions ceiling follows Presidential Executive Orders issued in January 2017, declaring a travel ban on immigrants and refugees from seven majority-Muslim countries, including Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen and calling for a suspension of the refugee resettlement program (Pierce & Meissner, 2017). Although legal battles have limited the implementation of certain parts of the Executive Orders, heightened security measures and limits on the admissions ceiling remain in place for refugees seeking to resettle in the U.S. (Bernstein & DuBois, 2018). In short, Bernstein and DuBois (2018), suggest that the future of the refugee resettlement program is uncertain despite a long history of success.

Refugee students, in particular, remain largely ignored in higher education research, policy, and practice.

Simultaneously, as refugee resettlement has become more restrictive, the Trump Administration has also attempted to dismantle the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy, increased U.S. Immigration and Customs (ICE) presence and authority at the border, pushed for building a wall at the U.S.-Mexico border, and detained and deported both undocumented immigrants and refugees, including those with permanent resident alien status. In 2017 alone, ICE deported over 226,119 immigrants (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, 2017). ICE has aggressively increased efforts to detain and deport Southeast Asian refugees who never became naturalized citizens, which left them vulnerable to policies that doubly penalized them for transgressions committed in their youth. Due to the retroactive nature of immigrant laws, many refugees could be deported even if their crimes were committed before the passage of these laws (SEARAC, n.d.). Considering that many fulfilled their full sentencing terms, often re-entered the workforce, and contributed to their communities and families, current deportation laws constitute a double punishment that disproportionately punishes them for (in many cases) petty and minor crimes (SEARAC, n.d.). Currently, more than 16,000 Southeast Asians have received final deportation orders, with 13,000 cases based on old criminal records (SEARAC, n.d.). Those affected, and their families, must live daily unsure of when they will face deportation.

Most recently, the Department of Homeland Security proposed a new “public charge” rule that would restrict and revoke green cards for immigrants who legally use public benefits (De-

partment of Homeland Security, 2018). Overall, the U.S. is moving towards deeply restricting and limiting immigration to the country in various forms. Yet, as estimated in 2016, there are over 43.7 million immigrants living in the U.S., making up 13.5 percent of the total U.S. population (Migration Policy Institute, 2018). This population includes “naturalized citizens, lawful permanent residents, refugees and asylees, persons on certain temporary visas, and the unauthorized” (Migration Policy Institute, 2018, fig. 1). Given the current context and the vast number of individuals affected by past and present immigration policies, there is a need to center the educational access and opportunity of immigrant and refugee students.

Refugees constitute over 21 million individuals around the world (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2017; UNHCR, 2016) and “refugees are some of the most educationally marginalized children in the world” (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2017, p. 1012). Refugee students have been largely ignored by education practitioners and policy-makers. Scholarship dedicated to this population within postsecondary research literature is insufficient (Taylor & Sidhu, 2012). Furthermore, approximately only one percent of eligible refugees have access to postsecondary opportunities compared to 36 percent of global youth (UNHCR, n.d.). Missing from literature on refugee populations is specific data on the numbers of refugee students attending postsecondary institutions in the U.S. Due to varying methods of classifying immigrant students and significant differences in when refugee students resettle in the U.S., and subsequently enter U.S. education systems, no clear data exists that accurately captures refugee students in higher education.

IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE CONTRIBUTIONS TO U.S. SOCIETY

The U.S. has been significantly concerned with the possibility that immigrants and refugees would become “public charges” who would increase crime rates in the country (The Century Foundation, 2018, Zatz & Smith, 2012). However, this narrow view does great injustice to the contributions of immigrant and refugee popu-

lations. Despite alarmist rhetoric that positions these communities as threats to U.S. society, a growing body of scholarship indicates that the immigrant population serves as a protective factor in reducing crime rates in economically depressed neighborhoods through community ties with other neighbors, effectively infusing communities with social control (Velez, 2009). Similarly, other scholars noted the immigrant paradox in which despite experiencing social disadvantages, immigrants are less likely to commit crimes or engage in other socially pathological behaviors than U.S.-born residents (Vaugh, Salas-Wright, DeLisi, & Maynard, 2014; Zatz & Smith, 2012). Additionally, immigrant and refugee populations contribute significantly to the U.S. economy. According to the American Immigration Council (2015), immigrants have positively impacted gross domestic product and tax revenue, created new businesses, helped sustain Medicare and Social Security, and complemented rather than competed with native-born workers for various skills-based jobs. Furthermore, many immigrant populations are less likely to receive public benefits due to significant barriers, up to and including ineligibility to receive benefits despite the \$11.8 billion contributions in state and local taxes in 2012 contributed by undocumented immigrants (Gardner, Johnson, & Wiehe, 2015). Overall, the evidence overwhelmingly indicates that immigrants and refugees contribute significantly to the health of the economy. Consequently, we must consider and address the ways that our education systems can better support and sustain the needs of immigrant and refugee students.

IMMIGRANT POPULATIONS

“Immigrants are repeatedly made, unmade, and remade” offer Koyama and Subramanian (2014, p. 1) in the opening statement of their book, suggesting that historical and current political, economic, and international climates impact how immigrants are defined, understood, and treated across global contexts. In its broadest definition, immigrant populations are generally understood as those who move from one country to another. However, (im)migration cannot be only viewed as a form of unilateral movement (Koyama & Subramanian, 2014). Important distinctions

must be made between migrants who enter another country by choice (though that choice may be constrained), those who engage in circular migration patterns characterized by multidirectional and multipart migration movement (Vega de Jesús & Sayers, 2007), and those who are part of forced migration, such as asylum seekers and refugee populations. Asylum seekers typically migrate and cross a border without having received prior legal permission while resettled refugees typically have legal permission through an application process (Connor & Krogstad, 2018).

Migration, and specifically, forced migration is a dimension of globalization, which contribute to (im)migration that is rarely linear or permanent (Koyama & Subramanian, 2014; Taylor & Sidhu, 2012). Alongside broader globalization forces are the issues of power, violence, and internal wars connected to struggles for resources and based on race, ethnicity, class, and religion (Taylor & Sidhu, 2012).

Approximately one million immigrants were relocating to the United States on an annual basis (Koyama & Subramanian, 2014) and it is estimated that by 2050, one-third of all children in the United States will be either children of immigrants or immigrants themselves (Lander, 2018). “Subpopulations of immigrants, including asylum-seekers, internally displaced people, undocumented migrants, and refugees are pushed by circumstances to become risk-takers, and thus are often at a greater economic disadvantage than other immigrants” (Connor, 2010) as referenced in Koyama, 2015 p. 609). After one year in the U.S., resettled refugees must apply for lawful permanent residence or green card status (Bernstein & DuBois, 2018). Just recently, the Department of Homeland Security issued a proposal that would expand the government’s ability to deny permanent residency cards or visas to immigrants who benefit from public assistance programs including Section 8 housing vouchers, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and Medicaid Part D (Bowman, 2018), further limiting the resources offered to immigrant and refugee populations in the United States.

Given that data capturing refugee students as a population within higher education is limit-

ed and because refugees represent some of the most marginalized communities in the world – economically, politically, and educationally (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2017), we focus this report specifically on refugee populations and the implications for postsecondary opportunity.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR] (2010) defines refugees as:

Any individual “owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.”

REFUGEE POPULATIONS

“Fear of persecution” is a phrase often associated with refugee populations. Refugees, a subpopulation within immigrant communities (Koyama, 2015), are witnesses to long-standing conflicts and historical contexts that have extensive implications for educational opportunities of refugee students (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2017).

Given the focus on factors influencing postsecondary opportunity within this report, research does generally suggest that when refugees arrive as younger children, they have stronger high school graduation rates, with many succeeding

in college as well (Bernstein & DuBois, 2018). Those refugees who arrive after the age of 14 tend to make up for educational gaps in their 20's and 30's, demonstrating high school and college completion (Bernstein & DuBois, 2018). Yet, this information remains vague with few details regarding specific postsecondary application, matriculation, retention, or graduation rates for refugee students.

Overview of Refugee Sub-Populations in the U.S.

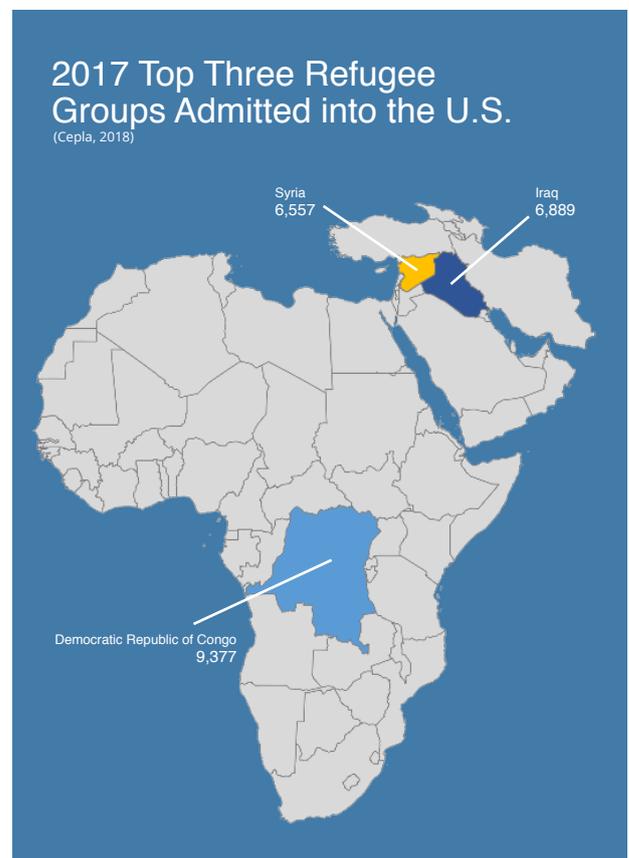
Since 1975, over 3 million refugees have resettled in the United States (Refugee Processing Center, 2018). Yet, many refugees across the world continue to live in protracted stays in refugee camps. In this section, we provide an overview of various refugee sub-populations, focusing on refugees and asylum seekers in the U.S. from Southeast Asia and Asia, Africa, Syria, Haiti, and Central America. This overview is not meant to be exhaustive but to provide an understanding of the diverse refugee populations within the U.S.

According to the UNHCR (2018a), there are currently over 68.5 million forcibly displaced individuals in the world, including 40 million internally displaced, 25.4 million refugees, and 3.1 million asylum-seekers.

Historically, the U.S. has accepted many immigrant and refugee populations. The first significant wave of non-European refugees to resettle in the U.S. were victims of the Vietnam War and the resulting instability in the Southeast Asian region in the 1970s (Wright & Wu, 2008). Millions of Southeast Asians from Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia were displaced, including many ethnic minorities in the region (e.g., Hmong, Khmu, Iu Mien). This significant surge can also be characterized by two waves of migration. The first wave included refugees from Vietnam, who were mostly highly educated. The second wave consisted of Cambodian, Hmong, and Lao refugees who came from rural backgrounds with limited formal education (Museus & Yi, 2014; Smith-Hefner, 1990).

More recently, refugees from Burma (i.e., Myanmar) began arriving in the United States in 2002, with many having lived for over two decades in refugee camps along the borders of Thailand, Malaysia, and Bangladesh (Vang & Trieu, 2014). The refugee community from Burma accounted for 30% of the entering refugee population in 2011 alone (Vang & Trieu, 2014). Overall, there is an immense un-acknowledgment of the ethnic diversity within the Burmese population (Isik-Ercan, 2009). The ethnic groups that make up the majority of refugees from Burma are Chin, Kachin, Karen, Mon, Arakhan, Shan, and Karenni. In 2008, significant numbers of refugees from the South Asian country of Bhutan, who mostly identified as Nepali, also began to arrive due to political turmoil and unrest. Currently, over 88,348 refugees from Burma live in the United States while the number of refugees from Bhutan was last estimated in 2011 at 106,168 (Vang & Trieu, 2014).

The Burmese American population is relatively young with 64 percent under the age of 40. In terms of education, about 39 percent of the population has stopped out of high school while 31 percent of the population holds a college degree or more (Vang & Trieu, 2014). Demographic data



on the Bhutanese community is more challenging to find due to data aggregation (Vang & Trieu, 2014).

Since 2013, violence in the Central African Republic has displaced over 1 million Central Africans into neighboring countries. In Iraq, more than 3 million Iraqis have been displaced due to decades of conflict. Iraqi refugees were more likely to have higher English proficiency as English education is compulsory (Hauck et al., 2014). The Syrian refugee crisis currently constitutes the largest in the world. Previously, the U.S. accepted Syrian immigrants as legal permanent residents through family ties (Zong, 2015). The Syrian immigrant population in 2014 totaled approximately 86,000 (Zong, 2015). When the Syrian civil war broke out in 2011, the Syrian refugee crisis began as over 5.6 million Syrians were displaced (UNHCR, 2018b). In 2016, under President Barack Obama's administration, more than 12,587 Syrian refugees were resettled into the U.S. (Connor & Krogstad, 2017). Overall, Syrian refugees are older, highly educated, more likely to be proficient in English than the overall immigrant population and have higher family incomes. Yet, possibly due to low female labor force participation and large family sizes, they are more likely to have incomes below the federal poverty level (Zong, 2015).

Other refugee populations have included over 300,000 Haitian refugees who fled a dictatorship and poverty in the 1980s and many more who were displaced due to the 2010 earthquake. In 2015, over 676,000 Haitian refugees inhabited the U.S. with Temporary Protected Statutes (TPS), which provided work authorization and relief from deportation (Schulz & Batalova, 2017). In January 2018, Haitian TPS expired, leaving many Haitians uncertain about their status in the country. Additionally, asylum seekers from Central America include those from Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras, who fled organized crime and gang violence. Many of those fleeing are women and children, many of them escaping as unaccompanied minors to the U.S.-Mexico border seeking asylum from violence.

Overall, there is great diversity within and between immigrant and refugee populations in the U.S. Reasons for their displacement from their

home country varied but were often associated with conflict, violence, and persecution. These experiences have significant implications for their resettlement experiences in the U.S.

Resettlement

According to the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), resettlement refers to the "transfer of refugees from an asylum country to another State that has agreed to admit them and ultimately grant them permanent settlement" (UNHCR, 2018c, para. 2). Resettlement involves relocating refugees from a country of asylum to another country. At the end of 2016, the UNHCR reported that there were 17.2 million refugees of concern, but less than 1% were resettled during that same year (UNHCR, 2018, para 3). The United States represents the world's top resettlement country and provides refugees with both "physical and legal protection and access to multiple rights including education, civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights similar to those enjoyed by nationals" (UNHCR, 2018c, para. 2).

Once resettled, research indicates that nearly 1 in 5 refugees live in poverty (Koyama, 2015) and often resettle in neighborhoods with inadequate housing, unstable transportation, less access to diverse foods, inequitable education opportunities, gang and drug violence, and growing newcomer populations (Gilhooly & Lynn, 2015; Koyama, 2015). As refugee families may not resettle together, the process is disruptive for family structures, resulting in psychological, physical, and financial strain (Koyama, 2015, p. 610). For example, 16 percent of Southeast Asian children of immigrants live in single-parent families due to death of a parent in the conflict or in refugee camps (Landale et al., 2011).

While inadequate educational opportunities is a concern for school-aged children, adults face additional difficulties in resettlement as securing employment is the overarching narrative in refugees being considered "contributors" within their new communities and necessary for supporting their families (Hauck et al., 2014; Koyama, 2015, p. 611). Such a narrative then places the value of employment over educational opportunities for

Yet, the resulting implications from resettlement begin with asylum seeking and pre-resettlement. Children are especially impacted by inequities in educational opportunities including falling behind on academic content because of the focus on learning the language of the resettlement country, discrimination in school settings, and learning practices that are not congruent with home or cultural practices (Dryden-Peterson, 2016a). Falling behind on academic content has significant implications not only for children’s K-12 schooling but can limit their postsecondary options as well.

adults and/or training in English, which subsequently can lead to employment opportunities that are limited to lower-wage and entry-level positions (Koyama, 2015). Additionally, conflicts in language can further impact communication with health care professionals and in developing new social networks (Hauck, et al., 2014). These processes systematically keep refugees marginalized within society and limit access to postsecondary opportunity (Koyama, 2015).

FACTORS INFLUENCING POSTSECONDARY OPPORTUNITIES

The experiences of refugee students signify a tension between their aspirations and the realities of their available and accessible opportunities. A significant body of research attests to the high educational aspirations of refugee communities (García Coll et al., 2002; Gilhooly, 2015; Isik-Ercan, 2012; Museus, 2013). Yet, research also

indicates that refugee populations experience significant barriers that negatively impact their educational access and success (Connor, 2010; DePouw, 2012; Dryden-Peterson et al., 2017; Fujiwara, 2008; Han, 2012; Hauck et al., 2014; Hickey, 2005; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Potocky & McDonald, 1995; Zhou & Xiong, 2005). These barriers include cultural and structural factors, bias, discrimination, and racism, financial factors, language acquisition, and barriers to and within postsecondary education. These barriers have significant implications for access to postsecondary opportunities and are briefly addressed hereafter.

Cultural

Early U.S. resettlement policies prioritized assimilation where individuals were expected to exchange their culture for the new cultures of their new country. The process of acculturation involves adjusting to a new culture and making decisions on what cultural practices are to be saved or sacrificed (Messer & Rasmussen, 1986). Many immigrants and refugees experience tensions between their personal and cultural values and those of the U.S. This tension has been characterized as a cultural mismatch in collectivist values versus individualistic values of the U.S. (Hickey, 2005). Cultural mismatch has significantly affected immigrant and refugees’ integration into U.S. society. Acculturative stress (i.e., anxiety or depression) may arise. Considering the lack of choice and trauma that impact refugee’s lives, the acculturation or adaptation process is complicated. As involuntary acculturating groups, they experience greater acculturative stress than voluntary acculturating groups (Ward, 2001). Additionally, many refugee groups have had little experience or interaction with Westernized traditions and values, making the transition difficult (Dao, 1991).

Sarr and Mosselson (2010) assert, “education is the primary acculturating institution where refugees often make their first contact with their host society” (p. 549). Refugee youth more quickly adapt to U.S. customs, language, and culture compared to their parents and become translators, which can result in intergenerational conflict as cultural norms are upended and family conflicts increase. Researchers identified a pat-

tern of acculturation involving youth who seek identification as American and reject parental culture (McBrien, 2005). Refugee youth are also more susceptible to learning difficulties, behavioral complications, and psychological distress (Fox et al., 2004; Messer & Rasmussen, 1986). Refugee communities experience significant consequences as a result of acculturation. More recently, scholarly perspectives on assimilation and acculturation have shifted with more recent literature critiquing their traditionalist foundations that extract significant costs from immigrant and refugee communities (Hurtado, 1994).

Structural

Many structural considerations impact immigrant and refugee access and success. In the Dadaab camps for Somalian refugees, access to education is limited, and enrollment in secondary school is low (2.3%). Additionally, only 38 girls are enrolled for every 100 boys (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2017). Once resettled, gender disparities continue as women experience lower rates of employment and, compared to men, their economic well-being remains low (Koyama, 2015).

In the 1980s U.S. resettlement agencies worked to disperse refugees across the nation in the efforts to quickly assimilate them and to prevent ethnic enclaves (Smith-Hefner, 1990; Vang & Trieu, 2014). Many were resettled into low-resourced communities with limited to no access to transportation and quality education for children (Koyama, 2015). U.S. national resettlement policy also included rules and guidelines to ensure that refugees were quickly employed to prevent dependency on government programs (Koyama, 2015). As a result, refugees between the ages of 18 and 64, deemed able to work, were prepared for the workforce and not education (Koyama, 2015). Yet, refugees are often only able to access entry-level and low-wage employment. Social mobility is thus diminished in the long-term. Additionally, policy changes regarding the use of citizenship status for eligibility requirements in government programs have impacted Asian immigrant and refugee women negatively, resulting in the systematic removal of public support for immigrant families (Fujiwara, 2008).

Bias, Discrimination, and Racism

Historically, public sentiment and bias over refugee resettlement policies in the U.S. have been low. Even in moments of high public sentiment (e.g., Cuban refugees) and attitudes regarding refugees shifted over time. For example, anti-Muslim sentiment has increased since the 9/11 terrorist bombings of the Twin Towers. As a result, public opinion regarding refugees from Syria has mostly been negative. While the Obama Administration resettled a record number of Syrian refugees up until 2016, the current administration has taken an increasingly restrictive stance on refugee resettlement overall. As a result, the U.S. is on track to resettle the lowest number of refugees since the U.S. Refugee Act of 1980 (Connor & Krogstad, 2018).

Discrimination was determined to be the most significant barrier to adaptation and acculturation for immigrants and refugees (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). In the 1980s, Southeast Asian refugee high school youth were subject to racial baiting or name calling among other forms of racism from both peers and educators (Rumbaut & Ima, 1988). As a result, many turned to gangs for protection (Coward & Coward, 1993). Dryden-Peterson (2016) asserted that refugee children experience discrimination in both their pre-resettlement education and within their resettlement countries. These experiences can have detrimental effects on their education and mental well-being. For example, Somali refugee youth experienced depression due to their experiences with discrimination (Ellis, MacDonald, Lincoln, & Cabral, 2008). Many refugees who hold several marginalized identities, such as African Muslim refugee youth, experience racism, discrimination, and Islamophobia in public schools. Additionally, such instances were often not reported due to perceptions that school administrators would not take their concerns seriously because of their status as non-citizens (Haffajee, 2015).

Additionally, the postsecondary experiences of immigrant and refugee students have also been impacted by race and racism. While refugee status was not addressed in their study, Museus and Park (2015) noted that Asian American and Southeast Asian American college students experienced racial harassment, vicarious racism,

racial isolation, pressure to racially segregate, pressure to racially assimilate, racial silencing, and stereotypes. High levels of perceived racial discrimination were associated with a higher level of depression and anxiety for Vietnamese American college students (Lam, 2007). DePouw (2012) asserted the importance of naming race and racism as pervasive in the lives of Hmong American students. As such, recognizing the impact of bias, discrimination, and racism on the experiences of immigrant and refugee students is vitally important for understanding fully the ways their postsecondary opportunities are constrained.

Financial

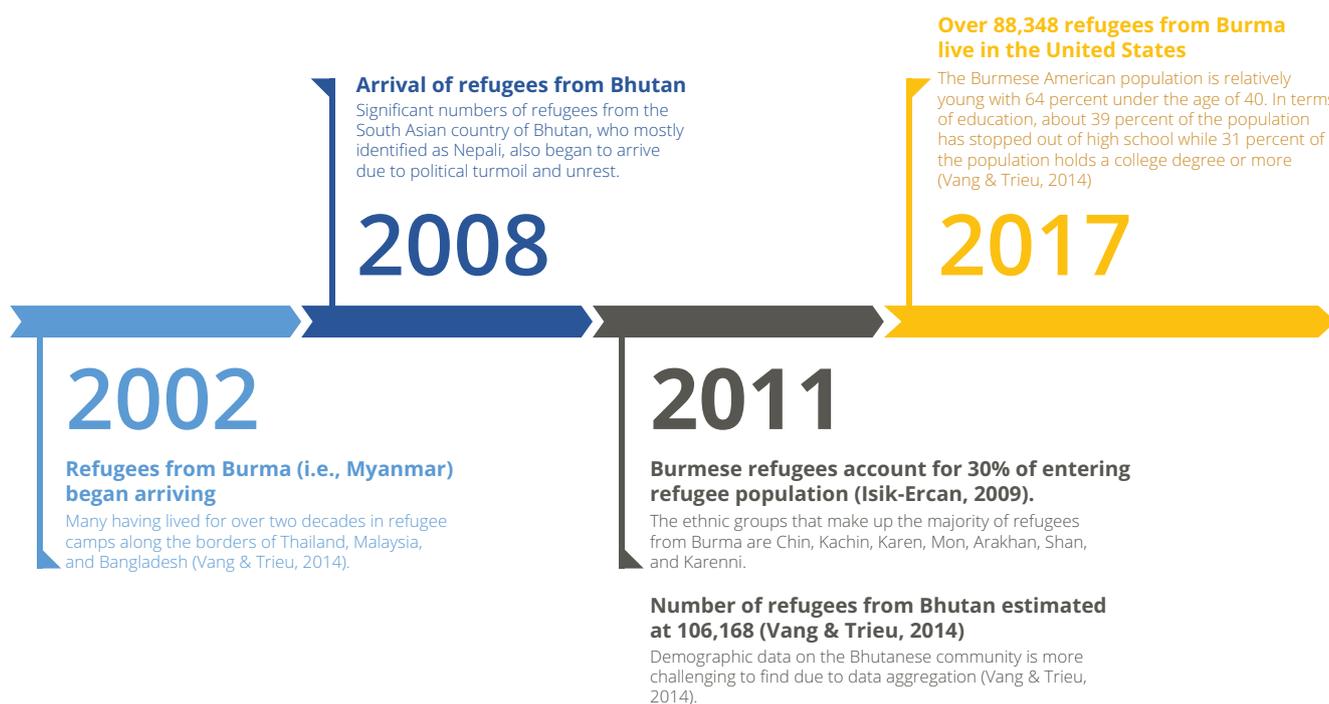
The financial backgrounds and status of refugee populations have been varied. For instance, some refugee groups possess extensive education and financial solvency (e.g., the first wave of Vietnamese refugees in the 1980s); however, many immigrant and refugee families experience significant economic concerns. For some refugees, changes in financial solvency and lifestyle occurred after resettlement in the U.S. (Hickey, 2005). These refugee families experience high levels of stress related to securing employment and meeting family needs (Hauck et al., 2014), espe-

cially given that some families are not resettled together (Koyama, 2015).

Additionally, economic disparity between refugee and other immigrants persist despite both populations experiencing similar economic outcomes (Connor, 2010). This “refugee gap” characterizes refugees as economically disadvantaged compared to other immigrants (Connor, 2010). Connor (2010) determined that while employment rates were near equal, both occupational status and earnings were lower for refugees compared to non-refugee immigrants, with English-language ability and total years of education and training contributing significantly to the gap. Thus, refugees were more likely to access low-wage jobs and may not have the resources to return to school for job training for better employment (Zhou & Xiong, 2005).

Such financial limitations have implications for the academic preparation of children as they prevent parents from enrolling children in head-start, preschool, and childcare programs (Isik-Ercan, 2009). This also has implications for refugee students seeking higher education given the rising costs of higher education and refugee students’ experiences with accessing financial aid. For example, many institutions are unfa-

2002-2017 Refugee Migration



miliar with refugee and asylum status and may reclassify them as international students, which has both financial and admissions implications. Tobenkin (2006) noted, “many educators and administrators are unaware that holders of refugee and asylee status are entitled to many of the same rights as permanent residents for purposes of gaining admission and obtaining financial aid for undergraduate and graduate programs” (p. 44). Furthermore, for those refugees living in refugee camps, access to higher education is limited as few scholarships are available for students to attend postsecondary institutions (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2017).

Language Acquisition

English language-acquisition is vitally essential for immigrants and refugees (Zhou & Xiong, 2005). Many refugees recognize the importance of learning English as it has become a “social and political marker of affiliation and belonging” (Olsen, 2000, p. 197). Learning English is associated with social mobility, job opportunity, better economic status, and “success” in resettlement (Koyama, 2013; Potocky & McDonald, 1995). Research has shown that high levels of English-language proficiency can result in higher levels of familial community, institutional support, greater financial stability, and lower acculturative stress (Benson, Sun, Hodge, & Androff, 2012; Hauck et al., 2014). Fluency in academic English is a strong predictor of academic performance for immigrant youth (Han, 2012). Yet, English language literacy is a significant barrier for immigrants and refugees overall (Lee et al., 2015) who must contend with adjusting to not only a new lifestyle but also a new language as many refugees come from countries where English is seldom spoken.

Language barriers create great difficulty for refugees in finding employment, communicating with health professionals, and integrating into their surrounding communities (Hauck et al., 2014). Language barriers also inhibit physical and social integration into their resettlement communities (Lee et al., 2015). Specifically, language serves as a “major barrier to community integration among Burmese refugees” (Lee et al., 2015, p. 338). Refugees who demonstrated limited English proficiencies reported higher alien-

ation scores than those who were English proficient (Nicassio, 1983). As a result, many refugees experience isolation within their communities.

Refugee students also experience language barriers in new schooling environments (Hoot, 2011). Students are often separated from English speaking classmates and placed into ESL programs that fail to provide substantial training in English (Olsen, 2000). Ortmeier-Hooper asserted, “the term “ESL” is not only a descriptor, it is also an institutional marker, pointing to a need for additional services and also to the status of someone still marked as a novice in the English language, an English language learner (ELL)” (p. 390). Hoot (2011) reported that in some schools, refugee children were given assessments in English, despite their limited knowledge of English. They are also more likely to be placed in special education classes or low academic tracks. De-Pouw (2012) determined that “limited English proficiency” was used as a means of tracking and segregating Hmong students in schools. Such inappropriate (academic) assessments in K-12 schools have implications for future postsecondary opportunities (Hoot, 2011). Refugee youth also experience ridicule and discrimination by peers (Olsen, 2000).

Additionally, while parental involvement has been determined to be an essential aspect of student success, language proficiency can hinder parental involvement in their children’s education. For example, Cambodian parental involvement was lower compared to Portuguese and Dominican immigrants due to linguistic isolation and cultural mismatch; whereas, Dominican immigrants’ shared language of Spanish enabled them to access bilingual programs and educators, which created opportunities for direct engagement with Spanish-language homework (García Coll et al., 2002).

U.S. policies that prioritize English-language acquisition also have detrimentally affected refugee students through native language loss (McBrien, 2005). In the 2000s, many Cambodian refugee students were placed in English-only classrooms, resulting in both rapid native language loss and weakened English language skills (Wright, 2010). Zhou and Xiong (2005) also determined not only that Southeast Asian refugees’ English pro-

iciency were significantly lower than other non-refugee Southeast Asian groups, but that mother-tongue proficiency was generally low. Thus, immigrant and refugee students experience difficulties communicating in either English and their native language (McBrien, 2005).

English Language Learning and English as a Second Language status pose significant considerations for immigrant and refugee students in higher education. Scholars have critiqued the ways ESL status has impacted college students' access and success in college (Harklau, 1999, 2000; Kanno & Varghese, 2010; Ortmeier-Hooper, 2008). ESL status can negatively impact even relatively privileged, academically-oriented immigrant students who are admitted to four-year public institutions (Kanno & Varghese, 2010). For example, non-native English-speaking college students have been typically placed in remedial English instruction or ESL writing programs as institutional practice (Kanno & Varghese, 2010). These courses are rarely credit-bearing and come with extra tuition costs, often extending students' time to degree. Furthermore, students experience stigma related to both ESL and remedial student status and are often viewed as culturally deficient and in need of socialization into college norms (Harklau, 1999, 2000). Relatedly, many students self-censor themselves because of their ESL status. As a result, many students did not apply to four-year institutions because they assumed they would not be admitted (Kanno & Varghese, 2010).

Barriers to and Within Postsecondary Education

Access to higher education for refugees is limited when compared to the global population (UNHCR, n.d.). For those who may have the preparation, training, and skills to transition into higher education in the U.S., challenges continue to exist, including lost or inaccessible credentials and inconsistent documentation. Infrastructure collapse due to political and economic instability has prevented

their home higher education institutions from maintaining student records while transcripts, test scores, and other educational credentials have also been lost due to unplanned or forced migration (Phan, 2018).

For Syrian refugees, accessing their documentation is especially dangerous as the current Assad government requires students to return to their home institution to obtain transcripts, leaving them vulnerable to arrest (Institute of International Education, 2016). Without these documents, students face immense difficulties in proving their educational backgrounds and in gaining admission to higher education institutions. Even for those who have advanced degrees and the corresponding documentation, their credentials do not transfer and are not accepted in the U.S. context (Tobenkin, 2006). Consequently, they must spend valuable time and resources retaking courses and undergoing training.

Additionally, refugees may face interactions with institutions and systems unfamiliar with their refugee and asylee student rights. For example, while refugees and asylees have similar rights as permanent residents, such as the right to apply for college admission, admissions professionals may be unfamiliar with such policies. As a result, many refugee students are assigned international student status, which has financial implications as international students are often assessed high tuition rates and have lesser rights (Tobenkin, 2006). This is also exacerbated by inconsistent documentation from various asylum-granting institutions (e.g., regional asylum boards, judges, Board of Immigration appeals) as there is no one entity that determines asylum status (Tobenkin, 2006).

Financial access to pay for a postsecondary degree is of great concern for refugee populations, especially considering that many students are misclassified as international students and are unable to access federal financial aid. Additionally, there is a lack of information regarding financial assistance or scholarships specific for refugee populations (Institute of International Education, 2016). Refugees also face high ex-

penses and the need to support their families (Institute of International Education, 2016), which constrains their ability to attend school.

SUCCESS, SUPPORT, AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Although refugee students experience significant barriers when considering access to and transition into postsecondary institutions, they are also equipped with critical support and protective factors that must not be overlooked. These factors can be understood broadly as: (1) the cultivation of high educational aspirations; (2) welcoming and inclusive K-12 schooling environments; (3) culturally informed relationships; and (4) technology as a mediator.

Cultivation of High Educational Aspirations

A common thread running through much of the literature on refugee students is the value placed on education. Found even within some of the longest-standing and largest refugee camps, like Dadaab, which includes over 400,000 Somali residents, creating and attending schooling opportunities is placed at great value, and families will sacrifice financial and emotional support to encourage the development of educational aspirations (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2017). High educational aspirations are viewed as a means for global mobility (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2017) as well as economic mobility (Sarr & Mosselson, 2010). Upon resettlement, realizing high educational aspirations through persistence in school served to combat depression and other forms of mental health trauma, particularly for Southeast Asian students (Fox, Burns, Popovich, Belknap, & Frank-Stromborg, 2004). Research has well documented the high value for education developed in Southeast Asian cultures (Collignon, Men, & Tan, 2001; García Coll et al., 2002; D. J. Gilhooly, 2015; Isik-Ercan, 2012; Museus, 2013) and should be cultivated in culturally responsive ways through welcoming and inclusive schooling environments.

Welcoming & Inclusive Schooling Environments

Elementary and secondary schools can serve as some of the most influential spaces for support-

K-12 School Environment

(Garcia Coll et al., 2002; Taylor & Sidhu, 2012)

- Support for students' social and emotional needs
- Support parent involvement based on cultural practices
- Resources available in families' home language
- Training and recruitment of bilingual, bicultural personnel in schools
- Community connections
- Targeted policies with budget support
- Explicit commitment to social justice
- Holistic approach to education and welfare
- Support for learning needs
- Cultural brokers available to help staff understand and adapt programming to social, economic, and cultural realities of families

ing refugee students in their development of educational aspirations and access to postsecondary education. The following are noted as vital elements in creating welcoming, inclusive, and culturally responsive schooling environments.

Culturally Informed Relationships

The role of family, ethnic enclaves, and both local and extended networks formed based on collectivist family values and cultural understanding and respect, serve as a critical protective factor for refugee students. As noted previously, although families may not have significant resources, their emotional support and financial support with smaller items like school supplies served as the foundation for students to imagine the possibilities of education (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2017). Relationships developed with members of non-profit organizations working within

refugee camps and in resettlement communities serve as the bridge to additional networks and information about education (Dryden-Peterson, et al., 2017). Finally, ethnic enclaves are a space of strong cultural support and community ties, demonstrating how physical spaces, such as a community church setting, can serve as a site for information sharing, relationship building, and physical integration into new community settings (Lee et al., 2015).

Technology as a Mediator

Technologies, and specifically the Internet, serve as crucial tools for refugee students both within refugee camps and after resettlement (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2017; Gilhooly & Lee, 2014). The Internet, and social media specifically, facilitated the means by which refugee (prospective) students communicated with family and friends, promoted cultural maintenance, and offered a way to ease the trauma of resettlement (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2017; Gilhooly & Lee, 2014). Dryden-Peterson and colleagues (2017) offer that for some Somali students who moved directly from refugee camps into postsecondary education, technology was the resource that facilitated education access. That is, the relationships and networks maintained and cultivated across students' multiple ecosystems provided educational information necessary to begin their postsecondary studies. Noted as "traveling resources," technology became the conduit to cultivating social capital around academic guidance and encouragement (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2017, p. 1041). Finally, technology offers refugee students opportunities for linguistic and cultural expression, therefore providing a tool for students to develop their narratives (Gilhooly & Lee, 2014).

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

This report highlights a critical imperative that national, state, local, and postsecondary policymakers must develop evidence-based policies to address the needs of immigrant and refugee students rather than rely on populist rhetoric that positions these communities as threats to U.S. society. This is an issue of educational justice, in which a significant portion of the U.S. population is experiencing substantial disparities in access and opportunity in K-12 and postsecond-

ary opportunity. Policies that are equity-oriented and committed to the success of all present in the U.S. are needed.

It is often the case that policies impacting immigrant and refugee populations are conflated – that is, social and educational policy are mixed into arguments about these populations' economic means (Koyama, 2015). Koyama (2015) warns that "refugees' economic adaptation in the U.S. is but one aspect of resettlement that must be addressed" (p. 618). Therefore, the policy implications and recommendations noted here, while related, should be considered separately.

Improve and Expand Data Collection on Immigrant and Refugee Students. Significant data are collected at the federal level regarding the resettlement and services utilized by refugee communities, including Census data and the Annual Survey of Refugees among others. However, data regarding refugee students' educational pursuits, including college application, choice, enrollment, and graduation rates are inconsistent at best and completely missing at worst. Data are needed that captures what Bernstein and DuBois (2018) call refugees' "continued learning" – the ongoing English language development, technical training, and higher education pursued by refugees. Therefore, data must be collected on college-going trends and refugee students must be consistently defined within such data sets.

Reinvest in Social Support Services. Policies supporting long-term medical and economic assistance must continue (Koyama, 2015) and be decoupled from refugees' pursuit of permanent residency status if future postsecondary education is an aspiration.

Invest in High-Quality Workforce Development including English-Language Education. Workforce training and English language development training must not come at the expense of one another (Koyama, 2015), as limits in either one may have negative systematic consequences for refugee communities over time, in particular limiting future educational possibilities.

Education, Training, and Development of Institutional Agents. Institutional agents at all levels of education must receive education and training to holistically and proactively consider the needs and experiences of their immigrant and refugee students. Given the specific challenges faced by the population, institutional agents are essential brokers who can impact a students' experience in higher education. Equipping institutional agents with the knowledge to foster and support their success is critical.

(Re)Define Institutional Policies to Better Consider the Circumstances of Refugee Students. Postsecondary institutions should reconsider the ways their institutional policies create inequities for this population. Refugee students' postsecondary access is limited by admissions and financial aid policies that reclassify students as international students, increasing the cost for a postsecondary education exorbitantly. Additionally, refugee students are limited by policies that place an inordinate burden for them to produce credentials and certifications that may no longer be accessible or exist. Institutions can facilitate new pathways for entry and success for refugee students, which include ending practices of reclassifying refugee students as international students, creating targeted support programs, and identifying methods for transferring the knowledge, training, and experience refugees come to school with to the U.S. context.

K-12 & HIGHER EDUCATION PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS

Refugee students face many barriers to education at both K-12 and postsecondary levels. Taylor and Sidhu (2012) stress that it is crucial for educators and policy-makers to understand the obstacles facing refugee populations as building access to postsecondary education begins in elementary school. Thus we provide a brief review of vital K-12 recommendations.

K-12. Recommendations for policies and practices at the K-12 level fall into four main categories and can be reinforced by the role of cultural brokers who can help staff to understand and adapt programming to meet the social, economic, and cultural realities of students and their families (García Coll et al., 2002).

Parent and Family Engagement. Schools tend to rely on normative practices of parent and family engagement such as serving as a classroom parent, attending PTA meetings, serving as a chaperone on field trips, and volunteering in the classroom, among others. Yet, these practices can be quite exclusive. School policies and practice must support family engagement based on cultural practices found inside the home and further cultivated within schools (García Coll et al., 2002).

English as a Second Language / English Language Learners. Bilingualism and multilingualism are significant strengths of refugee students. School policies and practices must include classroom support for these students (García Coll et al., 2002) and alternative options to test – both standardized testing and those required for additional services like IEP support. Educational policy should address the economic and structural issues that affect ESL/ELL students, rather than focusing solely on language needs (Kanno & Varghese, 2010).

Bilingual and Multilingual Resources. Within large school districts, it is often the case that multiple home languages make up the student community. Bilingual and multilingual resources must be available to students specifically within teacher and staff support, automated and print messages that are directed at parent and family members, and information presented on school websites (García Coll et al., 2002).

Counselors. One crucial function of high school counselors is the role they play in assisting students with their college application process. Counselors should work to understand students' cultural backgrounds and strengths, like multilingualism, and encourage students to share such strengths in their college narratives (Lander, 2018).

Higher Education. A recent Institute of International Education report (2016) suggests that because of the internationalization goals within many higher education institutions, they are already equipped to handle many of the administrative challenges that accompany welcoming displaced and refugee students into their institutions. Because postsecondary institutions

have enrolled international students for quite some time, they are already prepared with the logistical resources necessary to support refugee students. The following implications and recommendations further highlight the opportunity to support refugee students. It is crucial that practitioners and policymakers pay close attention to the power differentials at play when developing programs and policies to help refugee students.

Admissions Materials, Transcripts, and Credentialing

- Identify alternative means of credentialing students who do not have access to their formal transcripts (Institute of International Education, 2016).
- Make test scores (i.e., ACT, SAT, GRE) optional for students who do not have access to the resources necessary to prepare for standardized tests. Culturally responsive alternatives might include options for students to present their skills such as testing of vocational and technical skills or presenting a portfolio of their work (Hannah, 1999).
- Refugee students may constitute a number of admission categories (i.e., possibly at U.S. citizens, permanent residents, F1 or J1 visa holders). Therefore, it is essential for institutions to understand the distinctions in refugee student resettlement experience from a student development perspective, a financial aid perspective, and a legal perspective, and offer resources to support those varying experiences (Institute of International Education, 2016).
- Develop stronger partnerships and formal transfer agreements to support refugee students moving between community colleges and four-year institutions.

Scholarships and Financial Aid

- Because many refugee students may also need to secure employment to support family members, develop partnerships and resources that can offer both scholarship and employment opportunities (Koyama, 2015).
- Ensure financial support extends beyond tuition and covers housing, transportation, meals, and associated course and book fees.
- Refugee students may need extra time to gather financial resources from term to term. Institute policies that offer a tempo-

rary registration waiver on financial holds that might prevent students from registering for the next term (Institute of International Education, 2016).

Academic Programs & Curriculum

- Create cohorts of students focused on academic programs of study to develop peer support (Institute of International Education, 2016).
- Develop culturally and critically relevant pedagogical practices that build on refugee students' historical and cultural knowledge (Sarr & Mosselson, 2010).
- Reinforce learning that is reciprocal and bi-directional (Goodkind, 2006).

Faculty and Staff Resources

- Tap into faculty and staff who have background on the region in conflict – either personally or through their research to serve as mentors for refugee students and offer training to other faculty and staff (Institute of International Education, 2016).

Holistic Support

- Community organizations represent a significant resource for refugee communities, particularly in offering resettlement support. Institutions should work closely with these local organizations to holistically meet refugee student and family needs.
- Partner across campus departments and local resources to meet refugee students' religious, linguistic, emotional, psychosocial, and mental health needs (Institute of International Education, 2016; Sarr & Mosselson, 2010). Cross-departmental support and resources should connect students to tutoring and counseling services early in their academic careers (Hannah, 1999).

Institutional Assessment & Research

- A significant gap in the literature is that we know very little about refugee students in college. Institutions should regularly review college data on refugee students including applications, success outcomes, courses of study, and completion rates (Hannah, 1999).

RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS AT-A-GLANCE

Access & Transition	The Role of the Institutions	Success & Retention	Student Identity Development
<p>A significant portion of the barriers section in this report detail the linguistic barriers that refugee students face. Future research must consider a broader examination of the transition to college for refugee students with English as a second language, how their home or native language can serve as a source of support, and what institutions can do to offer more linguistically diverse support and resources.</p>	<p>Because community colleges serve as broad-access institutions and gateways for access, they may be more readily able to address barriers of lost documentation or credentials. Research is needed to understand which refugee communities are more likely to attend community colleges, and why, and how enrollment and transition factors are addressed.</p>	<p>Little is known about the factors, resources, or experiences that contribute to refugee students' retention and success. When accounting for the diversity within refugee populations, future research must examine how students are successfully retained, how success is defined, and who or what contributes to that success. Both quantitative and qualitative data must contribute to this understanding.</p>	<p>Institutional assessment focused on the classification of refugee students, how programs supporting these students are configured, and how placement measures are made (Harklau, 2000) need to be researched from the lens of student identity. How do institutional markers of student identity impact the college experiences and individual identity development of refugee students?</p>
<p>It is important to understand how and if institutional agents offer positive support for refugee students aspiring towards postsecondary education and how those institutional agents remain as supportive mechanisms after college transition occurs.</p>	<p>Given the current political context and the recent Presidential Executive Orders restricting refugee communities from seeking resettlement, research must focus on how institutions are responding to rapidly changing federal policies that may impact refugee students' opportunities to study in U.S. postsecondary institutions. Further, research must examine how institutional culture and climate shifts in supporting immigrant and refugee students when such federal policy changes occur.</p>	<p>Many of the recommendations noted in this report address offering holistic financial support for students in the form of tuition scholarships, housing, meal plan, transportation scholarships, and employment opportunities. Accompanying research should explore how an intensive, wraparound approach to financial aid influences refugee students' retention and success.</p>	<p>Our understanding of non-traditional and new-traditional students is shifting with recognition of the growing number of older adults seeking postsecondary opportunities. Future research must continue to broaden this definition to include refugee students who are seeking to continue their education after many years of college in their home countries or who are entering higher education for the first time after resettling and entering the workforce.</p>
<p>When alternative forms of credentialing are in place for refugee students, it is assumed their access to postsecondary education will be a smoother one. Yet, research has not yet documented those processes, nor the challenges associated with alternative credentialing for refugee students. Future research must explore these transition processes both from the student and institution perspective.</p>			

Reinvestment in Community College Education. Community colleges serve as promising education gateways to higher education for refugee students due to their open-access missions, proximity to home, low cost, and flexible schedules (Phan, 2018; Teranishi, Suárez-Orozco, C., & Suárez-Orozco, M., 2011). As such, many immigrant and refugee students already attend community colleges. Consequently, community colleges already play a significant role in facilitating their educational access.

- Significant investment in capacity-building for community colleges is needed to better support immigrant and refugee students.
- Funding initiatives at local levels should be designated to develop partnerships between community colleges and local high schools that serve large refugee populations to help ease the transition into postsecondary education, develop scholarship initiatives specific to refugee students, and offer on-campus retention resources informed by the diverse needs of refugee populations.
- Community colleges serve as an essential site for GED completion, skill development courses, and vocational opportunities for refugee communities. As such, community colleges should develop partnerships with the local community organizations that serve as resource centers for refugee communities.
- Many community colleges have immigration centers in place to support and assist students with their immigration needs (Tobenkin, 2006) and should regularly assess their practices to meet the full range of immigrant and refugee student populations.

RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

Research on the experiences of immigrant and refugee students at the K-12 level is abundant and offers important implications across policy and practice when considering these students in postsecondary settings, yet scholarship at the postsecondary level remains quite limited. Those studies of immigrant and refugee students in college that do exist have focused on language and writing skills (e.g., Harklau, 1999, 2000; Horner & Trimbur, 2002; Leki, 2007; Ortmeier-Hooper, 2008). Few have focused on college access and success for these populations (e.g., Kanno & Varghese, 2010). Therefore, we offer research consid-

erations across four areas: access and transition; the role of the institution; success and retention; and student identity development. However, as has been stressed in this report, one overarching recommendation for postsecondary institutions is the need to identify who constitutes refugee students. Research and resources will continue to be limited if institutions cannot distinguish the needs of current and prospective refugee students.

CONCLUSION

Rapidly changing and increasingly restrictive federal policies may have long-term consequences on the postsecondary educational opportunities of immigrant and refugee students. As demonstrated in this report, there are proactive steps that both K-12 and higher education institutions can take to develop policies, practices, and research that create a foundation of support for these communities as they consider postsecondary possibilities.

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