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THE INESCAPABLE EFFECTS OF DISCOURSE AS KNOWLEDGE AND POWER: REFUGEE YOUTH'S RESISTANCE TO "THE SYSTEM" IN PURSUIT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

by

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Bachelor of Arts
Western Washington University, 2018

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ABSTRACT

Employing a Foucauldian inflected analytic framework, I examine how youth resettled in and around Unity, NC, ambivalently managed racializing discourses associated with being "refugee" as they pursued access to higher education (HE). Like many scholars who are drawn to post-structuralist concepts, I understand "discourse" to be a form of knowledge and *power*, which operates through institutions implicated in advancing forms of self-government. In my video-conferenced interviews with youth they revealed cogent interpretations of the many ways these different U.S. governmental (and some non-governmental) institutions operated in their lives as "the System." In the particular case of refugee youth, they used the expression as a short-hand label to refer to all the agencies in charge of maintaining U.S. sovereignty through the monitoring of populations of people that seek to move through them. When the populations are displaced and mobile people, they are subjected to the racializing logics of immigration policies, which can intensify the marginalization that youth face, as well as neglect the importance of their lived experiences. In order to feel seen by "the System," these youth expressed the pressure they felt to perform as what social scientists call neoliberal, citizenship-striving subjects, when expected to act as cultural educators to their US citizen peers. The individualization of these pressures operated simultaneously through particular interactions within networked institutional settings. As such, they formed interlocking social and temporal scales. The exploration of my research adds to existing

literature by demonstrating the limits of African refugee youth's access to higher

education (HE) in the U.S. Southeast, requiring the assistance of programs such as the

African Diasporic Youth Development (ADYD) to navigate "the System." These claims

are supported by virtual ethnographic research conducted in partnership with ADANC's,

ADYD program participants and staff enlisting the methods of modified participant

observation, content and narrative analysis, and Photo Elicitation (PE). This is a modified

Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) study which centralizes on African

diasporic community building. This research was carried out in collaboration with

refugee youth ages 16-21 from a variety of countries of origin including, Eritrea,

Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), South Africa, Rwanda, Kenya, Tanzania and

Afghanistan. This research has revealed, across examples of many lived experiences of

refugee youth that they cannot be resistant to "the System" without first being actively

engaged in performing contra to every script of damning discourse surrounding the socio-

political label of "refugee" - they must understand "the System" in order to reform it.

PREFACE

Migrate: to move from one country, place, or locality to another.[1] Migration was a

process I became intimately familiar with from a young age. I came to embody the

definition of migration by living out of temporary containers: boxes, suitcases, U-Hauls.

As an adult, I often feel restless in moments where my body cannot be in motion, when

my belongings are not packed in vessels of movement. And so, I continue to seek

opportunities to transport myself to unexplored landscapes. From an academic standpoint

as an anthropologist, I align most closely with visual anthropologist, Steffen Köhn,[2] and

his definition of migration as a multi-scalar and multi-sited distributed field of discourse.[3]

In other words, migration is talked about and imaged in ways that often produce

dominant ways of thinking about and gazing upon migratory populations across diverse

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[1] "Migrate." *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, Merriam-Webster,
https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/migrate.

[2] Professor and Program Coordinator for the Visual and Media Anthropology Master's
program at Freie Universität Berlin.

[3] Köhn, Steffen. *Mediating Mobility: Visual Anthropology in the Age of Migration.*
Mediating Mobility. New York: Columbia University Press, 2016.

social contexts and institutions of discourse (knowledge) reproduction, dissemination, and reception. In contrast to refugee and other forms of forced migration, my personal childhood movements were based in privilege and choice, despite certain psychological barriers that keep them from feeling that way.

In my teenage years, these migrations were "mission trips," often marred by the white savior complex, where white people act to help non-white people in a self-serving capacity.[4] Each of these trips were funded by the Christian church writ large under the common belief that these were heroic endeavors of reaching the "10/40 window." This term, coined by Christian missionaries (which I was in training to become before changing courses to study anthropology), references the geographic location in the Eastern hemisphere between 10 and 40 degrees North of the equator; the region denoted most in need of hearing the teachings and revelations of Christ.

After many years of study, I have come to realize both missionaries *and* anthropologists have the tendency to enter into image-making (which I participated in by bringing my camera along on these mission trips) and research with an intrusive, voyeuristic gaze. In these years of my life, migration meant power, privilege, and being able to move out of the way of a camera lens; being able to be in the position of researcher, rather than research subject. Producing images and research was and still is

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[4] Aronson, Brittany A. "The White Savior Industrial Complex: A Cultural Studies Analysis of a Teacher Educator, Savior Film, and Future Teachers." *Journal of Critical Thought and Praxis: Iowa State University Digital Press & School of Education* 6, no. 3 (2017): 36-54.

important to me because of the people, cultures, and lived experiences they are referents of.

While different, I also have connections to the idea of forced migration within my own mind. In recent years I have experienced a forced migration which temporarily takes away my ability to control my mind and body in the form of PTSD. Conversations with refugee youth, who were forced from their homes, revealed to me that the politics of governmental institutions decide the fates of the population of a country and whether or not people feel safe in their homes, whether or not they feel as if they have a home. Similarly, the politics of religious institutions shaped my fate, deciding whether or not I have a mental illness from traumatic experiences, whether or not I have the right to receive therapy that allows me to feel in control of my mind and body again. Like the refugee youth I conversed with, I find control over my recent forced migration by resisting institutions through speech. By claiming our right to existence, we combat the feeling of ownership by those who hold institutional power and can reclaim ownership of our own minds.

Through my lived experiences, I share a common history with the field of anthropology, laden with colonial, objectifying tendencies, a period of deconstruction and conscious efforts moving forward, to rewrite the story of erasure to intentional allyship, collaboration and justice. This common history, being my own relatively forced movements. Therefore, when I began learning about migratory patterns and politics of refugees, asylees and immigrants, I felt a deep-seated empathy with their pain, forced migrations, and injustices. I began to change the way I frame the world to reflect the

notion, that to *see* and *listen* is to feel. This change of perspective is reflected in the

proceeding pages of this thesis through the many hours I spent listening and reflecting on

stories and images refugee youth trusted me with about their own lived experiences.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAE .... African American English

ADANCA .... African Diaspora Alliance of North Carolina

ADYD .... African Diasporic Youth Development

CPBR .... Community-Based Participatory Research

CDA .... Critical Discourse Analysis

CI .... Churches International

COVID-19 .... Corona Virus Disease of 2019

CRP .... Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

DACA .... Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals

DHHS .... Department of Health and Human Services

DHS .... Department of Homeland Security

DRC .... Democratic Republic of the Congo

ESL .... English as a Second Language

FAFSA .... Free Application for Federal Student Aid

FY .... Fiscal Year

GED .... General Education Development

HE .... Higher Education

HHS .... United States Department of Health and Human Services

INA .... Immigration Nationality Act

LPR .... Lawful Permanent Residents

NAS .... New Arrival's School

NGO .... Non-Governmental Organization

ORR .... Office for Refugee Resettlement

PE .... Photo Elicitation

R .... Researcher

S .... Student

TIM .... Tectonic Incorporation Model

UNCHR .... United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

U.S. .... United State

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1) Statement of the Problem and Guiding Research Questions

Employing a Foucauldian inflected analytic framework, I examine how youth

resettled in and around Unity, NC, ambivalently managed racializing discourses

associated with being "refugee" as they pursued access to higher education (HE). Like

many scholars who are drawn to post-structuralist concepts, I understand discourse to be

a form of knowledge and power, which operates through institutions implicated in

advancing forms of self-government. In my video-conferenced interviews with youth

they revealed cogent interpretations of the many ways these different U.S. governmental

(and some non-governmental) institutions operated in their lives as "the System." In the

particular case of refugee youth, they used the expression as a short-hand label to refer to

all the agencies in charge of maintaining U.S. sovereignty through the biopolitical

monitoring of populations of people that seek to move through them. When the

populations are displaced and mobile people, they are subjected to the racializing logics

of immigration policies, which can intensify the marginalization that youth face, as well

as neglect the importance of their lived experiences. In order to feel seen by "the

System," these youth expressed the pressure they felt to perform as what social scientists

call neoliberal, citizenship-striving subjects, when expected to act as cultural educators to

their US citizen peers. The individualization of these pressures operated simultaneously through particular interactions within networked institutional settings. As such, they formed interlocking social and temporal scales. The exploration of my research adds to existing literature by demonstrating the limits of African refugee youth's access to higher education (HE) in the U.S. Southeast, requiring the assistance of programs such as the African Diasporic Youth Development (ADYD) to navigate "the System." These claims are supported by virtual ethnographic research conducted in partnership with ADANC's, ADYD program participants and staff enlisting the methods of modified participant observation, content and narrative analysis, and Photo Elicitation (PE). This is a modified Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) study which centralizes on African diasporic community building. This research was carried out in collaboration with refugee youth ages 16-21 from a variety of countries of origin including, Eritrea, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), South Africa, Rwanda, Kenya, Tanzania and Afghanistan. This research has revealed, across examples of many lived experiences of refugee youth that they cannot be resistant to "the System" without first being actively engaged in performing contra to every script of damning discourse surrounding the socio-political label of "refugee" - they must understand "the System" in order to reform it.

This ethnographic exploration of refugee youth's experiences is guided by the following set of questions: (1) How are refugees and other ethnic minorities talked about (discourse) and thought about (knowledge)? (2) What social actors and/or institutions are producing images and speech; how do these institutions contribute to the social stigma identified by my research collaborators? (3) What images and discourse of refugees survive and circulate; which are destroyed/erased or never part of the archival record to

begin with? (4) How do refugees use discourse to reclaim the "refugee" label from dominant discursive formations and refract it as a valid, non-threatening identity status? (5) Are refugee youth resistant to "the System" or are they also actively engaged in performing within "the System?" 6) Are refugee youth seeking pathways to HE because of an intrinsic motivation to learn or because they feel external pressures from "the System" to move away from the normalized power of the abnormal that "refugee" has come to represent? Are researchers and humanitarian agencies partners also affording this biopolitical project?

Because this study takes place in the Southeastern U.S. it fills an important regional gap in the literature. Recent ethnographic studies tend to focus on refugee resettlement in the United States Northeastern, and Midwestern regions.[5][6][7] The Southeastern region of the United States is one of the least studied ethnographically, yet North Carolina is one of the ten most refugee populous U.S. States. According to the United Nations Center High Commissioner for Refugees, there are approximately 25.9 million people who have been officially recognized as refugees worldwide as of 2018.[8] 3

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[5] Besteman, Catherine. *Making Refuge Somali Bantu Refugees and Lewiston, Maine*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016.

[6] Tang, Eric. *Unsettled Cambodian Refugees in the New York City Hyperghetto*. Philadelphia, Penn.: Temple University Press, 2015.

[7] Vega, Sujey. *Latino Heartland: of Borders and Belonging in the Midwest*. New York: New York University, 2015.

[8] "UNHCR Population Statistics Database," *UNHCR: The UN Refugee Agency,* 2018, http://popstats.unhcr.org/en/overview#_ga=2.47287073.720434806.1576442332-534705839.1576442332.

million have been resettled in the United States since 1975.[9] Statistics from recent fiscal years 2007-2020 reveal that approximately 22% of refugees are resettled in the US Southeast region.[10] In attempts to protect the identities of all participants, organizations and place names, I have used pseudonyms throughout.

1.1 Background of ADANC:

This research took place virtually in partnership with ADANC, a nationally recognized refugee resettlement agency in the Southeast United States. Due to the limited time available to conduct this study, subjects were recruited through ADANC via the connections and knowledge of staff members. This nonprofit organization serves the Unity, NC area by primarily helping refugees find a place to live and secondarily provide them with services to navigate resettlement. Some of these services include: Preferred Communities Program, Economic Development, Public Education and Advocacy, Employment Programs and the ADYD. Within the ADYD a range of services are offered including college access support assistance, case management, peer mentorship and peer support groups.[11]

In the Unity area, where I conducted my research (virtually), there are 4,787 refugees.[12] According to, ADANC's operations manager and employment specialist, the

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[9] See note 16 above.

[10] https://www.wrapsnet.org/admissions-and-arrivals/

[11] https://ascafrica.org/what-we-do/refugee-scholar-program/

[12] "North Carolina Refugee Statistics," *U.S. State Department Refugee Processing Center,* https://dataomaha.com/refugees/state/nc

number of students served by the ADYD has grown each fiscal year since the inception

of the program, due to staff continuing to work with students enrolled from previous

years. The current number of students served is 81 for fiscal year 2020. Additionally, the

ADYD program has 2 full-time staff members, one Program Coordinator, and one

College Navigator/Case Manager. The program averages around 30 volunteers per year

which includes college interns.

The timing of this research presented many additional challenges. Currently, the

world is under a great deal of stress from the sudden COVID-19 pandemic. ADANC had

to shift the way ADYD staff and volunteers interact with students. In the words of

ADANC's operation manager and employment specialist:

> Under normal conditions, the ADYD staff meets with students 15-20 times a week by
>
> face to face scheduled or walk-in meetings, What's app, text, email, or telephone. The
>
> mode of contact during COVID-19 has primarily changed to remote access via
>
> telephone, What's App, email and text. We are also providing limited face to face
>
> meetings when necessary to assist students in reaching their goals.

U.S. high school seniors have been highlighted in the media as missing out on the

rites of passage associated with transitioning into adulthood, including prom dances and

graduation ceremonies. In addition to the loss of these celebratory milestones, refugee

youth are experiencing additional stress as high school and university classrooms go

online. For the first time in history, an entire group of young adults is taking part in

strictly distance learning. Students with limited access to internet (preferably high-speed),

a computer (or other devices that can access the internet), and a workspace free of

distractions (such as a home office), may struggle to be successful in online education. I saw this unexpected turn of events as an opportunity to observe and analyze creative adjustments to education and resettlement agencies on behalf of students, staff and volunteers, as I hope will be reflected through my methods of data collection and analysis as well as the exploration of findings in the following pages.

1.2 History of Refugee Resettlement in the United States:

"Refugee," as a political identity category can be traced back to 1921, following WWI, when many individuals and groups were forced to flee their homelands. Following WWII in 1951, the United Nations held a refugee convention to collectively respond to an influx of displaced peoples worldwide. In the 21st century, "refugee" is also a highly contested category, entangled within an array of dominant discourse (visual, written and spoken) which has been explored by many scholars. In academic literature, refugees are often defined as "anyone fleeing persecution who is outside their country of nationality".[13]

The UNHCR estimates that in 2019 over 79.5 million people[14] "have been forcibly displaced from their homes due to the effects of protracted conflict, persecutions, political instability, and human rights violations."[15] Out of these 79.5 million, 26 million

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[13] Wilmott, Annabelle Cathryn. 2017. "The Politics of Photography: Visual Depictions of Syrian Refugees in U.K. Online Media." *Visual Communication Quarterly* 24 (2): 67. doi:10.1080/15551393.2017.1307113.

[14] United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. "Figures at a Glance." UNHCR. https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/figures-at-a-glance.html.

[15] Stevenson and Baker, *Refugees in Higher Education*, 2.

have obtained the status of "refugee."[16] The top five countries of origin that comprise these figures are: (1) Syria (2) Venezuela (3) Afghanistan (4) South Sudan and (5) Myanmar. Existing academic literature and visual renderings of those labeled "refugee" most frequently depict individuals and groups from these five countries. My research seeks to document the lived experiences of minoritized refugee groups originating from African countries and one student from Afghanistan.

A central aspect of this research requires an understanding of the temporal dimensions of refugee resettlement and how these dimensions ultimately impact the educational opportunities and trajectories of youth after resettlement. In addition, these resettlements are often driven by cultural ideologies that involve different timeframes. After having undergone witness and/or embodiment to trauma, high-risk fleeing, hunger, separation, etc. people seeking refugee status must wait. At the end of waiting there is no guarantee that they will be selected for resettlement status. In fact, some refugees will live in makeshift camps receiving no standardized access to education for up to 25 years.[17] Some scholars argue for understanding these waiting periods, which begin at the onset of refugee resettlement and continue when they reach their resettlement destination

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[16] UNCHR, "Figures at a Glance."

[17] https://www.unhcr.org/steppingup/wp-content/uploads/sites/76/2019/08/Education-Report-2019-Final-web-3.pdf

through a biopolitical lens; the notion that state powers control the movement of bodies across space and time.[18]

While the above description focuses on the precarity of refugee experiences seeking safety, they intersect with humanitarian agencies or assemblages of support. Matthew Wolfgram and Isabella Vang, for example, refer to the assemblages of support[19] available to refugees seeking HE as time politics which they define as "the political regimentation of the rhythms and conceptualization of time—by which the federal government manages (and curtails) refugee resettlement goals and practices."[20] To enter the United States under refugee status, individuals and families must go through tedious screenings that can take up to two years or more due to policy changes and backlogs. This process includes, but is not limited to, screening by eight federal agencies, three interviews with the Office for Homeland Security, six biometric and security database checks and health screenings.[21]

Recently, the U.S. government has focused on slowing refugee resettlement pipelines which operates on and through organizations in an assemblage of actors, which

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[18] Foucault, Michel. *Security, Territory, and Population. Lectures at the Collège De France, 1977-1978*. Picador USA, 2009.

[19] Ong, Aihwa, and Stephen Collier. "Global assemblages." *Technology, politics and, Ethics as Anthropological Problems.* Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005.

[20] Wolfgram, Matthew, and Isabella Vang. "The Time Politics of Higher Education for Refugees in the United States." *Anthropology News*, March 31, 2020, e113–e117. https://doi.org/ https://doi-org.pallas2.tcl.sc.edu/10.1111/AN.1180.

[21] Nadwa Mossaad, "Refugees and Asylees:2018," *U.S. Department of Homeland Security,* 2018, https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/immigration-statistics/yearbook/2018/refugees_asylees_2018.pdf.

might be thought of as a politics of sloth.[22] The UNHCR initially determines one's

eligibility for refugee status and secondarily which receiving country they will resettle in.

Refugee resettlement allowances to the United States are determined each Fiscal Year

(FY) by the president in consultation with Congress. Historically, the United States has

been a world leader in refugee resettlement, with ceilings ranging from 70,000 to 91,000

between fiscal years 1999 and 2016.[23] The Trump administration reduced and slowed the

number of refugees admitted for resettlement in the United States by lowering the ceiling

dramatically from 85,000 (FY 2016) to 18,000 (FY 2020).[24][25]

Simultaneously, the resettlement regime pushes for a time politics of speed. These

politics operate at the individual level by requiring resettled refugees to become self-

sufficient as quickly as possible. And although these policies were first established under

the under the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) and the Refugee Act of 1980, they

have not been updated since. Factors influencing refugee migration change daily. These

policies, being over 40 years old, highlight intentional erasure of refugees lived

experiences and a reliance on generalities based in ignorance. Self-sufficiency most often

equates to financial independence. It is also important to note that educational

achievements directly affect the speed at which immigrants can legally enter the U.S.

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[22] Wolfgram, Matthew, and Isabella Vang. "The Time Politics of Higher Education for Refugees in the United States." *Anthropology News*, March 31, 2020, e113. https://doi.org/ https://doi-org.pallas2.tcl.sc.edu/10.1111/AN.1180.

[23] https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/refugees-and-asylees-united-states.

[24] Wolfgram and Vang, "The Time Politics of Higher Education," e113.

[25] https://www.dhs.gov/immigration-statistics/refugees-asylees.

Resettled refugees over the age of 18 are often funneled into low-skill jobs and discouraged from pursuing post-secondary education.

Refugee youth in North Carolina have the right to public school education under the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment (1982). Public schools and "Newcomer Programs" become institutions responsible for undertaking the ethnocentric inspired task of assimilation, by instructing refugee youth how to speak English and prepare them for the job market. Refugee youth's pursuit of HE is left to chance based on proximity to resettlement agencies, such as ADANC, or religious institutions who offer support in navigating the complicated HE and U.S. government systems.

Given these contradictory time politics, how do refugee youth experience a program like the ADANC that focuses on connecting young people to post-secondary education? In approaching this question, I build on the work of scholars who have explored how educational organizations work with communities impacted by the trauma of forced displacement, navigate the refugee resettlement process. Margaret Sinclair, for example, argues that access to educational organizations is essential in supporting the emotional and social well-being of resettled refugee youth.[26] Moreover, the trauma often accompanying forced migration leads to the need of a space offering psychosocial support. For refugee youth, the classroom facilitates multiple roles as learning

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[26] Sinclair, Margaret. Education in emergencies. In J. Crisp, C. Talbot, & D. B. Cipollone (Eds.), Learning for a future: Refugee education in developing countries (pp. 1–84). Lausanne, Switzerland: United Nations Publications. 2001.

environment, psychosocial healing center, as well as a zone for citizen-subject formation.[27][28]

In connection to temporal scales, my research also examines the various social scales through which support is administrated from government institutions to local resettlement organizations. I focus on how the ADYD, as part of a broader support assemblage, shapes interactions between coordinators and students who participate in the ADYD.[29] I am particularly interested in how youth and their families understand the temporality of their resettlement experiences in the context of their participation in the ADYD.

Most refugees remain within liminal spaces of refugee camps in countries bordering the countries of origin they fled. Few are afforded the chance to perform the rigorous rites of passage accompanied with this process (biometrics, interviews with government agencies, etc.). The main reasons that refugees flee their home countries are due to violence, persecution, war, and extreme poverty, spurring on the search for safety.[20] My concern is with those refugees who have successfully passed the many screenings described below to reach the United States, though the literature review will necessarily encompass the fuller range of settings and experiences.

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[27] McBrien, "Educational Needs," 329-64.

[28] Mosselson, Jacqueline, M. Mahboob Morshed, and Nyaradzai Changamire. "Education and Wellbeing for Refugee Youth." *Peace Review* 29, no. 1 (2017): 15–23.

[29] Ong, Aihwa, and Stephen Collier. "Global assemblages." *Technology, Politics and, Ethics as Anthropological Problems*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005.

According to Jacqueline Stevenson[30] and Sally Baker,[31] "only 23% of secondary school age refugee youth are engaged in schooling, compared with 84% globally."[32] Secondary schools in the United States include grades 6-12. If only 23% of refugee youth are engaged in secondary school, which is offered free of charge through public schools in the United States, how do the numbers change in terms of HE? Access to HE as a refugee is incredibly low, at only 3% in comparison to 37% globally.[33] "Since 2009, 60-70% of refugee students have been males, although the number of female refugee students enrolled in HE is showing consistent growth of 30-40% over a 6-year period."[34]

In attempts to rapidly increase this statistic, the United Nations Sustainable Development team has launched a campaign called 15by30 (15% of refugees enrolled in HE programs by the year 2030). The UNCHR website includes the following statements, "Access to secondary and tertiary education is the first step in closing the gap between learning and earning and is central to the objectives of the Global Compact to enhance refugee self-reliance."[35] The UNHCR is focused on neoliberal subject-making ideologies that encourages:

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[30] Sociologist instructor and director of Leeds Lifelong Learning Centre at the University of Leeds.

[31] TESOL instructor and education specialist of the Forced Migration Research Network (FMRN) at UNSW Sydney.

[32] Stevenson and Baker, 2.

[33] "UNHCR - Tertiary Education." https://www.unhcr.org/tertiary-education.html.

[34] Stevenson and Baker, 54.

[35] UNHCR, "Tertiary Education."

Compulsory individualization, personal initiative, a competitive individual who is exceptionally self-reliant and rather indifferent to the fact that his or her predicament is shared with others – and, therefore, incapable of organizing as a group to do anything about it.[36]

If refugee youth are unable to attend HE institutions due to socioeconomic limitations, they are structurally kept in positions where they are unable to critically engage with and actively change the dominant discourse that exists which frames them in deficient ways. Further, if discourse is knowledge and power, being able to meta-discursively unpack the epistemological frameworks that conditions their lives, refugee youth can then rework and refract dominant discourse and utilize HE as a platform to be heard. Below, I outline the specifics of the organization I partnered with, ADANC, in supporting refugee youth's transition from secondary to post-secondary education through the RS.

1.3 Goals of the ADYD Program:

The stated goals of the ADYD include but are not limited to, community building, student peer mentoring, and increased representation of refugee resettlement in academic research, through partnerships with local colleges. The ADYD program exists as a focal point, connecting clients to a wide range of services/resources that support their adjustment to United States institutions. U.S. citizen youth, by comparison, have taken-

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[36] McGuigan, J.. "The Neoliberal Self." *Culture Unbound: Journal of Current Cultural Research* 6 (2014): 223-240.

for-granted citizenship rights that ostensibly grant them higher access, albeit structural barriers still exist. This project examines the creative navigation of refugee youth around these limitations at various overlapping scales of influence: institutional, interactional and individual. These students, ranging in age from 17-23, are individuals who pursue academic and personal goals, interpret for their families, and act as role models for peers and younger siblings. When asked to describe students the ADYD serves ADANC's Operation's Manager and Employment Specialist told me:

> Our scholars seek help at their schools to gain a better understanding of becoming a college student. They learn to make decisions on choosing a college and serve as examples for younger siblings and youth in the community. Many become leaders and volunteer and serve in their communities. ADYD staff work to encourage and empower the students to stretch beyond their comfort zone and look for opportunities. This translates to students with a desire to learn and find resources to help them bridge the gaps in locating available school and community resources.

Take for example a student, who arrived in the U.S. in May 2015 from Sudan. In 2019 she graduated from high school and began to pursue a post-secondary degree. She said that the ADYD program helped her gain confidence to organize meetings with her peers to create a peer advocacy group at her school.[37] As I spoke with other refugee youth

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[37] https://ascafrica.org/2018/11/02/refugee-scholar-of-the-month-october-2018/

and ADANC staff, I began to understand the roles each of them serves in their families

and communities, as well as the finer details of their lived experiences.

A scalar lens- i.e. focusing on the comparisons that youth themselves draw upon-

builds on literature that examines how identity formation is negotiated interactionally

within programs such as the ADYD as well as through school pedagogy.[38] As

Inmaculada Garcia-Sanchez points out in her work on language socialization and

immigrant child language brokers, marginalization across domains and lifespan changes

are rarely totalizing, leaving space to consider how contextual factors give unequal shape

to structurally based inequalities.[39] Ultimately, this research works to highlight the ways

in which resettled refugee populations reflect on how they have creatively navigated

structural barriers as they negotiate multicultural identities, act as language brokers and

adjust to the biopolitical demands of the U.S. education system

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[38] Daniel, Shannon M., and Maria Zybina. 2019. "Resettled Refugee Teens' Perspectives:
Identifying a Need to Centralize Youths' 'Funds of Strategies' in Future Efforts to Enact
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy." *Urban Review* 51 (3): 345–68. doi:10.1007/s11256-
018-0484-7.

[39] García-Sánchez, Inmaculada M. 2016. Chapter 11: Language Socialization and
Marginalization in The Routledge Handbook of Linguistic Anthropology. Pp. 159-174.
Routledge.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND METHODS

1)   Theoretical Frameworks

In this chapter I synthesize two theoretical traditions: post-structuralist theorizing on forms of governance and self-governing using Foucauldian concepts in combination with a social semiotic approach of scale. There are three different socio-temporal scales at play in this study –institutional, interactional and individual. Below I outline how Foucault's theories of discourse, Panopticism and biopower operate within these three scales of interaction. When discourse is analyzed as operating in and through social scales it is performed primarily at the interactional scale, Panopticism at the individual level and biopower, institutionally; although, all operate within each level of scalar interactions. These topics overlap when addressing the literature on refugees/migration/citizenship and education/state institutions for producing citizens, interwoven throughout this outline. In what follows, I will define and expand upon debates in anthropology descending from the Foucauldian tradition.

1.1 How Foucault Became Taken up in Anthropological Research:

Foucault has been taken up by many U.S.-based anthropologists since the 1980s, when a turn in anthropology occurred to focus more directly on critical reflections of the

binary structures of us vs. them, primitive vs. civilized, natives vs. the State. Prominent anthropologists of the 1940s such as, Radcliffe-Brown and Evans-Pritchard supported structural-functionalist models which emphasized the role individuals and cultural constructs play in maintaining societies. The influence of Foucault's post-structuralist frameworks were introduced by anthropologist Paul Rainbow who used Foucault's theories to point out and critique the unequal power relations between anthropologists and their research "subjects." The introduction of Foucauldian concepts was moreover part of a broader critique of Anthropology (from within and especially from without) which has long been critiqued for the role they played in perpetuating the paternalistic ideologies of colonialism. This includes the continued involvement of anthropologists in war efforts including Samuel Lothrop, Sylvanus Morley, Herbert Spinden and John Mason (WWI) Margaret Mead, Ruth Benedict, Clyde Cluckhohn and Gregory Bateson (WWII). In recent decades many others trained in anthropological research, whose names remain undisclosed, practice as partners with the U.S. government on the post 9/11 war on terrorism.

Further, the introduction of Foucault's post-structural frameworks rejected a longstanding history of anthropological positivism, that participant-observation produced verifiable knowledge about the cultures they claimed to study. Foucault's work was part of a turn in the 1970s through the 1980s whereby feminist anthropologists opened up the concept of self-critique through measures such as, reflexivity and positionality. This practice challenges anthropologists to take account of the ways in which their own identity categories and lived experiences create overlapping positions of power, (i.e. anthropologist, white, male) that may affect their research practices in compounded ways.

In fact, many feminist anthropologists rejected Foucauldian frameworks in the early 1990s as many male anthropologists used Foucault's theories to claim they discovered reflexivity-ignoring the work of their feminist colleagues.

1.2 Foucauldian Concepts: Discourse, Panopticism & Biopower:

Foucault's definition of discourse expands the basic definition of discourse as written or spoken communication to include the belief that discourse is abstracted as diffuse knowledge and power through which the social order is produced. His 1969 treatise, *The Archaeology of Knowledge,* explores the historical grounding of research on two subjects: 1) systems of thought (epistemes) 2) knowledge (discursive formations).[40] He argues, "We must question those ready-made syntheses, those groupings that we normally accept before any examination."[41] In other words, certain political labels/categories (i.e. refugees) are tied to specific ideologies that need to be carefully examined to uncover their historical roots.

Bonnie McElhinny gives attention to Foucault's definition of discourse, along with others, stating that, "Language is one particularly important means for the construction of relations of social difference and social inequality."[42] If language is social action, one such action performed is the separation of groups based on differences.

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[40] Foucault, Michel. 1972 [1969]. The Archaeology of Knowledge. Tavistock Publications Limited.

[41] Foucault, 22.

[42] McElhinny, Bonnie. "Language and political economy." *The Routledge Handbook of Linguistic Anthropology. Abingdon:Routledge* (2015): 279.

Discourse becomes organized across institutions and groups, both within a nation and transnationally.[43] This means that discourse surrounding "refugees" is not an isolated occurrence, but one that happens across space and time, in the context of social interactions. By extension, many scholars agree that discourse is a two-way relationship whereby, discursive events and persons producing the discourse are shaped by situations, institutions and social structures, but also shape them simultaneously.[44] [45] [46]

Put another way, a discourse is an institutionalized way of speaking or writing about reality that defines what can be intelligibly thought and said about the world and what cannot. By extension, discourses are often institutionally supported and therefore, not neutral and objective. Instead, they legitimize specific ways of perceiving reality and exclude others. Feminist economist Karin Schöenpflug outlines four questions about discourse that can be returned to throughout this thesis. 1) Who is permitted to speak? 2) What is the language of the discussion (i.e. sciences or humanities) and what is the theoretical framework? 3) Who remains visible, who is left out of the picture and who is

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[43] McElhinny, 279.

[44] Glick Schiller, Nina. "Explanatory Frameworks in Transnational Migration Studies: The Missing Multi-Scalar Global Perspective." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 38, no. 13 (October 21, 2015): 2278.

[45] Fairclough, Norman, Jane Mulderrig and Ruth Wodak. "Critical Discourse Analysis." In *Discourse Studies: A Multidisciplinary Introduction*, edited by Teun A. Van Dijk2nd ed., 356. London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2011. doi: 10.4135/9781446289068.n17.

[46] Ong, Aihwa, Virginia R Dominguez, Jonathan Friedman, Nina Glick Schiller, Verena Stolcke, and Hu Ying. "Cultural Citizenship as Subject-Making: Immigrants Negotiate Racial and Cultural Boundaries in the United States [and Comments and Reply]." *Current anthropology* 37, no. 5 (1996): 737.

rendered as less than human? 4) What are the material consequences? Who wins and who loses?[47]

One example in which discourse is not neutral nor objective is evident in the socializing work universities perform. Universities train individuals in scientific methods and spread scientific knowledge until it becomes accepted as "the norm" in society. In this way, instructors, policy makers, historians, etc. play important roles in deciding what is normal and abnormal and create research, policies, and/or historical texts which reinforce these ideologies as truth. The danger of politics is that citizens who have been subject to forms of normalized power (whether it be from politicians, the news channels they watch or social groups they are active members of) posit populations such as refugees and immigrants as abnormal, come to accept those ideologies as truth. In turn, many of them come to fill seats of normalizing power as policy makers, for example, enabling them to freeze or perpetuate particular flows of power. As Aihwa Ong points out, one such flow of normalizing power is the undercurrent of racial logics that have driven the United States political state of affairs since its inception, which I will return to later in this section.[48]

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[47] Schöenpflug, Karin. "World Bank Discourse and World Bank policy in Engendering Development." In Drucilla K. Barker and Edith Kuiper, eds. Feminist Economics and the World Bank: History, Theory and Policy. New York and London: Routledge. (2006): 117-124.

[48] Ong, Aihwa, Virginia R Dominguez, Jonathan Friedman, Nina Glick Schiller, Verena Stolcke, and Hu Ying. "Cultural Citizenship as Subject-Making: Immigrants Negotiate Racial and Cultural Boundaries in the United States." *Current anthropology* 37, no. 5 (1996).

Foucault divides power into two categories, 1) Repressive or sovereign power and 2) Normalizing power.[49] Repressive power is the public display of power through violence or force. In other words, repressive power forces us to do what we do not want to do. Forms of repressive power are acted out through institutions such as the courts, militia, police and/or government. Normalizing power takes a subtler approach whereby thoughts and actions build over time until they become accepted as "normal" or the natural order of things. Institutions that aid in normalizing power are the family, schools, hospitals and/or the media. According to Foucault, normalizing power is the more insidious force, as it utilizes discourse as its central method of implementation and builds under the surface.

Foucault continued to develop his ideas of discourse as knowledge and power through his later 1979 writings in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison.* Here Foucault outlined the conditions under which the State and supporting institutions surveil its inhabitants developing technologies of biopower (that include the reorganization of bodies in space from architectural designs of prisons and schools to today's CCTV systems including bureaucratic systems of categorization etc.).[50] Foucault recalls this work in his 11th lecture at the College de France and articulates his theory of state racism.

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[49] Foucault, *The Will to Knowledge*.

[50] Foucault, Michel. "'Panopticism' from 'Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison.'" *Race/ethnicity : Multidisciplinary Global Contexts* 2, no. 1 (October 1, 2008): 1–12.

In this lecture, Foucault defines state racism as a form of biopower that demonstrates the divide between what must live and what must die.[51] Under Foucault's definition, racism relies on the separation of humans as a species into categories of race which are then placed along a hierarchy. In the United States, for example, people who are racially white hold the highest position with greatest access to power, wealth and status. Subsequently, people of color become viewed as inferior and experience structural disadvantages that white people do not. As Foucault articulates in his lecture:

> The fact that the other dies does not mean simply that I live in the sense that his death guarantees my safety; the death of the other, the death of the bad race, of the inferior race (or the degenerate, or the abnormal) is something that will make life in general healthier: healthier and purer.[52]

When biopower is implemented by the State or "the System," racism becomes the means of justification for the inhumane treatment of people of color or those deemed "abnormal." Therefore, Foucault's conceptual lens of biopolitics (or the form of governing that regulates populations through biopower) can be applied to the "problems" of modern-day nation-states such as our current pandemic or refugee, immigrant or asylee migration, assimilation and/or citizenship and the "crises" associated with these statuses/circumstances. In other words, racism is utilized as a political technology to slow

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[51] Foucault, Michel, Mauro. Bertani, Alessandro Fontana, François. Ewald, David Macey, and Arnold I. Davidson. *"Society Must Be Defended" : Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-76* 1st ed. New York: Picador, 2003: 254.

[52] Foucault, *"Society Must Be Defended,"* 255.

the movement of resettlement, and expedite the deportation of entire populations, such as refugees or immigrants as a group.

Ones vulnerability to be targeted by the State or "the System" is continually informed by racism. Aihwa Ong has taken on Foucault's theories in relation to citizenship. She considers "citizenship a cultural process of 'subjectification,'" in the Foucauldian sense of self-making and being-made, much like the two-way relationship of discourse mentioned above, through schemes of surveillance, discipline, regulation, and self-cultivation."[53] Ong expands Foucault's Eurocentric conceptualizations of State racism, as a woman of color, to demonstrate that subjectification in U.S. citizenship subject making is akin to processes of racialization. Since the creation of the socio-political term, "refugee," they have always been considered a category of the "abnormal"—a product of the formation of states which were defined in terms of territorial sovereignty. They exist in liminal spaces that do not afford them equal rights to U.S. birthright citizens. Via engaging with neoliberal institutions of the State, refugees are kept in motion towards "assimilation" and naturalized citizenship.[54] When liminal rights to citizenship intersect with pre-existing conditions of racism prevalent in the United States, the discursive climate becomes one that is racially and politically charged against them.

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[53]Ong et al. "Cultural Citizenship as Subject-Making," 737.

[54] Pinkerton, "The Biopolitics of the Migration-Development Nexus," 454.

Refugees are surrounded by a stigmatization of allegedly bringing global threats of disease, crime and terror, leading towards limited access to services and opportunities that allow for upward mobility.[55] Their movements are carefully discouraged by offering sub-citizenship, trapping them in a liminal position. Regardless of citizenship status, refugees will always face racialized stigmatization. As stated above, one facet of the biopolitical framework explores the determination by State-run institutions of who should freely pass or be held in a point of stasis. Patrick Pinkerton suggests that migration management can be understood to operate as sieves, filters, or membranes, allowing certain bodies to pass through freely, while others are disrupted, delayed, or prevented from entering.[56] This happens when institutional frameworks operate in conjunction with local learning environments to decide who deviates from the norm and should be treated as an outcast because of what seems like a lack of compliance with the larger institutional framework.

Many scholars over the past few decades have responded to Foucault's theorization of biopolitics. One scholar in conversation with Foucault whose ideas I wish to outline here is Giorgio Agamben. In *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, Agamben lays out four important concepts in relation to his argument: 1) Homo sacer; 2)

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[55] Sparke, Matthew. "Welcome, Its Suppression, and the in-between Spaces of Refugee Sub-Citizenship - Commentary to Gill." *Fennia* 196, no. 2 (July 2018): 218. doi:10.11143/fennia.70999.

[56] Pinkerton, Patrick. "The Biopolitics of the Migration-Development Nexus: Governing Migration in the UK." *Politics* 39, no. 4 (November 2019): 455. doi:10.1177/0263395718809287.

sovereign; 3) bare life and 4) State of exception.[57] *Homo sacer* is derived from Roman law, showing the transition of someone from being sacred and therefore, having the right to have their life protected, to someone who is exiled, permitting their life to be taken by anybody. The sovereign in Agamben's outline is the governing political force that holds the right to kill or protect their citizens. In the United States this would be the U.S. government. Homo sacer breaks off into two divisions, 1) Bios and 2) Zoê. Bios can be defined as the involvement in political life of a citizen while zoê refers to the biological/bare life of an individual. The important distinction between these two terms is that those with bios or citizenship are granted protection by the sovereign governing forces, while those with zoê are without citizenship, and therefore not extended protection by governing entities.

Agamben's conversation with Foucault enters at this point, whereby biopolitical control is political regulation over bare life. The bio in biopolitical is in reference to humans as biological objects. For Agamben, individuals who have been stripped of their citizenship or live in a liminal state with no citizenship become bare life, to purge the "abnormal" from the political system. To return to Ong and Foucault's point above, the State utilizes racism as another marker of abnormality to purge populations at intersecting socio-political identity categories (i.e. African refugees) from "the System." Those that are excluded from the full rights of citizens, but are still part of the working system, exist in what Agamben calls a state of exception. Refugees are one such group, politically

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[57] Agamben, Giorgio. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1998.

stripped down to their bare life qualities and placed in a state of exception when residing

within refugee camps and once resettled to the extent that noncitizens are deported.

1.3 States of Exception: From Camp to Classroom:

One scholar who explores refugee camps as being a state of exception is Liisa H.

Malkki. In her work, she analytically linked forced migration of populations labeled as

refugees to the intervention of humanitarian aid.[58] Malkki examined how the politicized

refugee category was used in a variety of ways in different social and institutional

contexts. Malkki argues that by emphasizing their biological needs, humanitarian

initiatives frame refugees as a universal persona that strips them of their personal

experience, which displaces, dehumanizes and dehistoricizes them.[59]

Furthermore, placing people in the refugee category can "strip from them the

authority to give credible narrative evidence or testimony about their own condition in

politically and institutionally consequential forums."[60] This is because the category of

refugee is produced while moving through State-driven processes where individuals and

families must verify their claims to refugee status. Refugees are unequal participants in

these processes, often pressured to perform in interviews by depicting traumatic events in

rich detail to interviewers. These place individuals attempting to gain refugee status in a

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[58] Malkki, Lisa H. 1996. "Speechless Emissaries: Refugees, Humanitarianism, and Dehistoricization" In Cultural Anthropology 11(3):377-404. American Anthropological Association.

[59] Malkki, *Speechless Emissaries*, 378.

[60] See note 98 above.

position of greater vulnerability, with no expectation of interviewers to reciprocate any vulnerability in return. In this way, interviews are laden with inequalities driven by normalized power, as a result of refugees existence in a state of exception.

In an attempt to give, rather than remove authority from research participants, some anthropologists argue for giving "voice" back to the "voiceless."[61] This is the role that some anthropologists play when they attempt to move from skeptic to ally, from an anthropologist of activism to an activist anthropologist and the fraught nature of "giving" voice in liberal processes of recognition. Others argue that caution must be taken with this approach. In fact, assuming that people under certain political identity categories, such as refugees, cannot speak for themselves and must be spoken for *by* academic elites is performing discursive violence against them.[62] Anthropologists have the potential to perpetuate the same forms of discursive violence as immigration interviewers. Gayatri Spivak calls out anthropologists who claim the voice of others as a form of "epistemic violence."[63] In addition, Francis Cody examines how activists framed the problem of illiterate individuals of Tamil Dalit castes of Southern India; suggesting that their lack of literacy was what kept them voiceless to the bureaucratic arrangement of affairs. He outlines the limits activist movements can have on the people they claim to "save" from their "deficient" states of being by delivering them into the realm of agency using

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[61] Clifford, James. 1988. "The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

[62] Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty., and Rosalind C. Morris. *Can the Subaltern Speak? : Reflections on the History of an Idea* New York: Columbia University Press, 2010.

[63] Spivak, *Can the Subaltern Speak?*

"literacy" as a technology of the State.[64] As Malkki states, "…one would find underneath the silence not a voice waiting to be liberated but ever deeper historical layers of silencing and bitter, complicated regional struggles over history and truth."[65]

In addition, Malkki argues that anthropologists must be aware that in seeking to "give a voice" to the "voiceless" they are assuming that research subjects are in need of academic liberation. In other words, the belief that access to education serves as a form of liberation from perceived conditions of academic and non-citizen deficiency. Language surrounding refugees is shown by Malkki and Ong to posit refugees as a problem that policy makers, resettlement agencies and public schools are responsible for solving, as supporting institutions of the United States government. Supporting agencies, such as U.S. public schools, in other words, might be seen as complicit in enacting normalized power against immigrants, refugees and asylees through methods of assimilation, as they are federally and locally mandated to.

Even if refugee youth become U.S. citizens, they are still not protected by the U.S. government equally to their native U.S. citizen peers, as they will always be marked with once being in a state of exception as discussed by Malkki and dwell within a nation that normalizes kinds of "othering" not necessarily linked back to states of exception, like racialization, as discussed by Ong. Only when the discourse of normalized power

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[64] Francis, Cody. 2013 The Light of Knowledge: Literacy Activism and the Politics of Writing in South India. Pp. 1-250. Cornell University Press.

[65] Malkki, *Speechless Emissaries*, 398.

changes in the United States, will refugee and other youth of marginalized identity categories have to stop resisting.

1.4 Dominant Discourse and Policies Influencing Refugee Youth's Access to HE:

Discourse informing refugees access to HE are even more exclusionary than discussions surrounding public K-12 education. HE institutions "serve particular social and political ends" which promote negative hegemonic discourse as institutions that fuel normalized power.[66] Stevenson and Baker argue that the driving force shaping discourse of refugees in the United States, Europe and Australia, is the alt-right (alternative right) which they define as a "far-right movement which joins together disparate nationalist and populist groups associated with the white identity cause/movement."[67] Those in intersectional positions of privilege (most often white, wealthy men) hold esteemed political offices, granting them the platform for public, far-reaching discourse through their roles as policy makers, professors, etc. Stevenson and Baker concur with Ong's point that "The political response to migration has also, in part, grown out of the ideology and racist discourses of white victimhood (Gillborn & Kirton, 2000; Nelson, Hynes, Sharpe, Paradies, & Dunn, 2018) wherein white people perceive themselves to be the victims of discrimination or oppression."[68]

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[66] Stevenson and Baker, *Refugees in Higher Education*, 31.

[67] Stevenson and Baker, 27.

[68] Stevenson and Baker, 29.

The earlier definition of refugees-"anyone fleeing persecution who is outside their country of nationality"[69]- is complicated via discursive political binaries which depict them as: "good or bad, worthy or unworthy, victim or perpetrator."[70] Along these lines, students face pushback from their peers in arguments surrounding their rights to education and/or whether their culture, language and histories are worthy of making their way into education curriculum. Further, HE institutions were created for middle and upper class American citizens which utilize discourse and marketing strategies that work towards the benefit of those already privileged.[71]

As a result, many refugee youth fall between the cracks of HE institutions as they present challenges to the white-washed realm of academia by requiring additional guidance in navigating the process of attaining a degree to their U.S. citizen peers.[72] There are not many systems of support available through HE institutions that refugee youth have access to. Without external support from kin, resettlement agencies (such as, ADANC) and religious communities, refugee youth would have to navigate the HE system with the same minimal, generalized assistance that is offered and tailored to U.S. citizen youth who often have pre-existing knowledge of the innerworkings of academia.

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[69] Wilmott, Annabelle Cathryn. 2017. "The Politics of Photography: Visual Depictions of Syrian Refugees in U.K. Online Media." *Visual Communication Quarterly* 24 (2): 67. doi:10.1080/15551393.2017.1307113.

[70] Stevenson and Baker, 30.

[71] Hughes, Katie. "The Social Inclusion Meme in Higher Education: Are Universities Doing Enough?" *International journal of inclusive education* 19, no. 3 (March 4, 2015): 307.

[72] Stevenson and Baker, 102.

Simultaneously, and paradoxically, refugee youth's stories are commodified by universities to market their university to prospective students. This includes "romanticized descriptions of survival and success" as well as, "…stories of 'heroic' refugees as a marketing device, presenting stories of 'remarkable' refugees who have 'overcome the odds' to gain a degree but doing so in ways which frame the university as having played a key role in this success."[73] This practice by HE institutions borders on discursive violence by exploiting the traumatic lived experiences of refugee youth for their own capital gain.

In most U.S. states, refugees are forced to pay out-of-state tuition rates. Some states have tuition equity laws which allow students to pay the same tuition rates as "in-state" U.S. citizen youth.[74] In most cases, to receive equal tuition rates, students must have attended in-state secondary schools and graduated from them with a GED or high school diploma. By making tuition rates unattainable for refugee youth to pay on their own, government and HE institutions discourage access to HE and encourage dependence on student loans, making students financially indebted to the government.

The 11th United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi produced this introduction to the 2017 UNHCR report entitled "Left Behind: Refugee Education in Crisis":

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[73] Stevenson and Baker, 25 & 33.

[74] https://www.nilc.org/issues/education/basic-facts-instate/

The case for education is clear. Education gives refugee children, adolescents and youth a place of safety amid the tumult of displacement. It amounts to an investment in the future, creating and nurturing the scientists, philosophers, architects, poets, teachers, health care workers and public servants who will rebuild and revitalize *their* countries once peace is established and they are able to return. The education of these young refugees is crucial to the peaceful and sustainable development of the places that have welcomed them, and to the future prosperity of their own countries.[75]

In the first two sentences above, Grandi describes education as safe place in contrast to the unstable process of leaving their countries of origin and resettling. The problem with equating academic spaces with safety is that refuge youth involved as partners in this research, revealed that academic settings are not always safe. Often, centers of education become spaces of reinforcing negative discourses (normalized power) of refugees as "foreign" or "threats" to U.S. citizen youth's access to education. In the following section, I will illustrate how anthropology of education literature resists viewing refugees as humanitarian subjects in need of saving or threats to national security which reinforce notions of deficiency and/or abnormality.

1.5 Meeting Needs in Mobile Refugee Youth Education:

In the existing literature, many corrections stand to be made by shifting focus of deficiency on institutions, a source of normalized power, rather than refugee and

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[75] "Left Behind - Refugee Education in Crisis." Left Behind - Refugee Education in Crisis. September 14, 2017. https://www.unhcr.org/left-behind/.

immigrant youth. Sherill W. Hayes and Etsegenet Endale set up the importance of

understanding and taking a critical look at the current systems structuring refugee youth's

education in the U.S.[76] With refugee youth comprising nearly half of the resettled

population, it is crucial to explore the ways in which they are framed in existing

literature. Reynolds and Orellana are two leading colleagues who have published

extensive work rejecting models of deficiency. Instead, they promote the notion of youth

as social actors whose actions, thoughts, and input are recognized and encouraged by

their parents.

They demonstrate that children perform the action of language brokers, helping

their families achieve scalar mobility, through mediation between people across

institutions, languages and ages precisely because "the System" lacks these services.

Reynolds and Orellana have worked alongside immigrant youth, documenting the role

they facilitate as interpreter, most commonly for their parents as well as representatives

of businesses and service organizations like grocery store clerks, cashiers, telemarketers,

teachers, nurses, police officers, etc., a majority of which in the U.S. who are often

monolinguals (speakers of one language).[77] As Reynolds and Orellana (2009) claim, the

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[76] Hayes, Sherrill W., and Etsegenet Endale. 2018. "'Sometimes My Mind, It Has to Analyze Two Things': Identity Development and Adaptation for Refugee and Newcomer Adolescents." *Peace & Conflict* 24 (3): 283–90. doi:10.1037/pac0000315.

[77] Reynolds, Jennifer F., and Marjorie Faulstich Orellana. "New Immigrant Youth Interpreting in White Public Space." *American Anthropologist* 111, no. 2 (June 2009): 212. doi:10.1111/j.1548-1433.2009.01114.x.

children of immigrants are often pivotal participants in emergent intercultural forms of communication.[78]

According to Reynolds and Orellana, brokering between and across often compartmentalized languages and myriad social domains of our pluralist society, children of immigrants negotiate multiple ideologies. They argued that in the process of so doing youth acquired translingual and multi-literate skills because of their participation in socially meaningful tasks and interactions. Additionally, their teachers and administrators could learn from them and better support them by leveraging and leveling inequalities through the use of cultural modeling strategies as well as other cultural sustaining pedagogies (Orellana and Reynolds 2008; Reynolds and Orellana 2019). Children of immigrants and refugee youth occupy the same facilitating role, that of language broker. This can also be viewed by Americans/Westerners as shouldering a burden of responsibility that goes against Western notions of childhood as a time of innocence, sheltered from the demands of adult life.[79] In this way, children who act as language brokers encompass a liminal place of having responsibility, but lacking authority.[80] Moreover, Reynolds and Orellana argue, language brokerage activities are scalar to the extent that they enable institutions and businesses to better serve marginalized populations.

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[78] See note 87 above.

[79] Reynolds, J.F. and Faulstich Orellana, M. Translanguaging within Enactments of Quotidian Interpreter-Mediated Interactions. Journal of Linguistic Anthropology, 24 (2014): 317. doi:10.1111/jola.12057

[80] Reynolds and Orellana, 213.

Similar to Reynolds and Orellana's critique of deficit framework, Mosselson and colleagues critically examine how psychological and social factors come together to create humanitarian education programs within refugee camps that double as safe spaces for refugee youth. Additionally, they point out refugees lived experiences are not homogenous, but distinct (based on countries of origin, the physical migration through space, etc.). They argue that scholars have yet to successfully analyze psychosocial wellbeing through education in a resilience, rather than deficit framework; showing that centers for education have the potential of promoting psychosocial wellbeing or further traumatizing students by placing emphasis on what they lack.

What they want to know is how settings of learning have the opportunity to encourage "human rights and dignity for children and youth impacted by the global refugee crisis"[81] and why many of them fail to do so. They advocate for a strength-based approach which acknowledges the resiliency refugee students perform (for what they have experienced) and encourages their ability to achieve their goals, to promote the psychosocial wellbeing of students. Emphasis is placed on including participants of education programs in their design to empower refugee youth to envision what their futures look like and provide a supportive space to communicate what they need to achieve their goals, similar to the aims of the ADYD.

Shannon M. Daniel and Maria Zybina add to this conversation from the analytic framework of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP), to explore the experiences of

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[81] Mosselson, Jacqueline, M. Mahboob Morshed, and Nyaradzai Changamire. 2017. "Education and Wellbeing for Refugee Youth." *Peace Review* 29 (1): 15–23. doi:10.1080/10402659.2017.1272281.

refugee youth in public secondary schools in their first years of resettlement in the U.S. They argue that refugee youth take on responsibility for their learning by teaching their instructors how to improve their approach to instruction. A central finding from their research is that refugee youth experience "…isolation, low teacher expectations, cultural or racial biases, and struggles with learning language and content simultaneously."[82] This point of failure on behalf of the U.S. education system is where organizations, such as ADANC have the opportunity to step in with greater consideration for the diverse lingual and cultural backgrounds of students. Since the public school system is overcrowded, they are often unable to accommodate the needs of each individual learner. What programs like the ADYD have the potential to do is create a "co-constructed" education environment "by learners and the teacher."[83] This places responsibility on refugee youth to not only act as language brokers for their parents, but as pedagogical brokers for their instructors. As Kathryn Kozaitis adds from an applied anthropological approach, there is a biopolitical role organizations such as ADANC often play in the postsecondary education process.

Postsecondary education initiatives have been implemented to call U.S. citizen youth to academic institutions across the nation. Research is selectively funded to promote certain findings over others and to collectively wage war against the array of problems, both real and institutionally perceived today (i.e. global pandemics, refugees,

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[82] Daniel, Shannon M., and Maria Zybina. 2019. "Resettled Refugee Teens' Perspectives: Identifying a Need to Centralize Youths' 'Funds of Strategies' in Future Efforts to Enact Culturally Responsive Pedagogy." *Urban Review* 51 (3): 346. doi:10.1007/s11256-018-0484-7

[83] Ibid, 347.

immigrants, economic growth, etc.).[84] Additionally, universities are partners in churning out neoliberal citizens that take on responsibility for self-management, extending to their family and local communities to benefit the state, society and fellow citizens. Kozaitis claims that there are three main goals of public research universities (1) To build economic wealth from external research grants to fund its academic programs (2) To educate the masses for productive work and citizenship; and (3) To aid in the solution of social problems through community-based partnerships.[85]

In sum, this collection of academic researchers, speaking from different fields employ a range of frameworks, to explore what kinds of education mobile youth are afforded. Those who work directly with refugees often work at different ends of the resettlement process from the camps to the receiving communities in the United States. By extension, these scholars critique a deficit approach, which is common to education of anthropology literature and points to refugee youth as the cause for limited access to education rather than the structural deficits of institutions and/or "the System." Ultimately, this literature cautions current and future researchers from reinforcing deficit narratives. Rather, they challenge current and future researchers to critically examine the deficiencies of "the System" which limit refugee youths' access to safe and culturally supportive education spaces, equal to their U.S. citizen peers.

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[84] Kozaitis, Kathryn A. 2013. "Anthropological Praxis in Higher Education" In Annals of Anthropological Practice. 37(1):134. American Anthropological Association. DOI:10.1111/napa.12021.

[85] Kozaitis, *Anthropological Praxis*, 136.

1.6 Dominant Discourse Surrounding Refugees in Mass Media:

As Malkki also suggested above, negative representations of people under the category of refugee are also present in the media and journalistic representations. Being that U.S. citizens are consumers of media sources for their political information and formation, they might have a restricted view of refugees, immigrants and other migrant communities as a deficient problem in need of biopolitical intervention. Through different visual regimes, refugees are framed as a deficient problem in need of biopolitical intervention and can become commodified as objects "of care and control by national and international organizations."[86] A broad body of research similarly describes how stereotyping refugees as diseased, criminal, primitive, cunning and threatening is dehumanizing and convincingly persuades people to fear refugees as "abnormal." [87] [88] [89] [90] [91]

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[86] Malkki, 386.

[87] Lenette, Cleland. "Changing Faces: Visual Representations of Asylum Seekers in Times of Crisis." *Creative Approaches to Research* 9, no. 1 (January 1, 2016): 71.

[88] Ukmar, Victor Alexander. 2017. "The Photographic Representation of Refugees." 1-year master student thesis. Malmö University Electronic Publishing. 12.

[89] Wilmott, "The Politics of Photography," 67.

[90] Doherty, B. (2015). Solving the Refugee Crisis Begins by Changing the Way we See Them, BBC online. Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/jun/01/refugee-crisis-migrants-changing-perception.

[91] Köhn, *Mediating Mobility*.

Cathryn Wilmott has taken up the visual discourse of refugees as threatening. Her publication uses quantitative content analysis approach to analyze 299 images from three online newspapers: *The Guardian, The Telegraph, and The Independent*. The central claim of her article is that British media places more emphasis on the security threat of refugees, as biopolitical subjects or (deviants) rather than on their humanity. This is similar to what Ong noted above, that the United States' media places more emphasis on the racial identity of refugees as people of color as a form of deviance from the "White" norm, rather than emphasizing their lived experiences. Wilmott's analysis is centered in the Copenhagen School of Security Studies (CSS) professor of International Relations, Ole Wæver's concept of securitization. She argues that securitization posits security as a speech act, meaning that something becomes a security threat when it is talked about (or visually depicted) as such (Also supported by Glick-Schiller 2015, Steffen Köhn 2016).[92] What she argues is that visuals are used, like speech acts, to shape public opinions; what she terms picture acts.[93]

Both the U.S. government and other sovereign powers around the world spread images of refugees through mass media that emphasize their bare life qualities. Agamben's categories of "political beings" (citizens) and "bare life" (bodies)"[94] are cited by Wilmott. Since refugees are in a state of existence outside the bounds of citizenship, they are reduced to the view of bodies in motion. Bodies whose movements can be

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[92] Wilmott, 68.

[93] See note 69 above.

[94] Wilmott, 69.

regulated because of their lack of citizenship to a nation-state. Their lives are only valued to the degree they can be controlled.

1.7 A Semiotic Approach to Scale:

Susan Gal and Judith Irvine, two linguistic anthropologists (See also Carr and Lempert 2016) describe scale-making as "a relational practice that relies on situated juxtapositions and comparisons among events, persons, things, and activities."[95] Scales are a crucial dimension of how people are organized and separated into groups that are then set up in a linear fashion making certain events, persons, things and activities more important than others. To incorporate the thoughts of Foucault, the "abnormal" are not considered as important as those at higher scalar positioning when decisions are made by policy makers or the U.S. government, for example, that directly affect their lives. Scales are maintained or reconfigured via discourse and lead to restrained mobility in society. E Summerson Carr and Michael Lempert define scales as what "social actors rely upon to organize, interpret, orient, and act in their worlds that are not given but made—and rather laboriously so."[96]

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[95] Gal, Susan, and Judith T. Irvine. "Scales and Scale-Making: Connecting Sites." Chapter. In *Signs of Difference: Language and Ideology in Social Life*, 217–218. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019.

[96] Carr, E. Summerson, and Michael Lempert, eds. *Scale: Discourse and Dimensions of Social Life*. California: University of California Press, 2016. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1525/luminos.15. 3

2) <u>Research Design and Methodology</u>

I conducted a modified Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) study with a refugee resettlement agency which centralizes on African diasporic community building. This research incorporates the interaction of groups operating at different scales, with the ADANC acting as an organization to aid refugee youth's access to academic institutions to achieve upward scalar mobility in the United States. CBPR, an approach to research originating in the field of Psychology, emphasizes collaboration through negotiating research goals and objectives with members of the participating community.[97] The initial decision to take a CBPR approach reflects broader trends in the social sciences and professional schools where work within and through civic organizations is imagined to be best undertaken in partnerships. I was drawn to an empowerment framework as I am able to give back to the organization through the research findings that will be used to provide supporting documentation to extend funding for the ADYD. However, I also acknowledge full well the pitfalls of this approach (as discussed in the background of the Literature Reviews section surrounding the notion of "giving voice").

Given the unexpected circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, my hopes of conducting an in-depth CBPR study had to be altered. Originally, I planned on spending at least three days a week at the ADANC headquarters in Unity, North Carolina to be in close proximity to ADANC staff and students. However, COVID-19 halted in person

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[97] Jacquez, Vaughn. "Youth as Partners, Participants or Passive Recipients: A Review of Children and Adolescents in Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR)." *American Journal of Community Psychology* 51, no. 1-2 (March 2013): 176–189.

interactions during the summer months when I was conducting my research. Under these unprecedented circumstances I faced frustrating setbacks from the Institutional Review Board requiring me to revise my approach to include new protocols in conducting virtual research. Despite the limited access on methods of approach to conducting virtual ethnographic research, I was still able to creatively collaborate with ADYD program staff who were essential in acting as brokers between myself and students. They generously conveyed my reliability and trustworthiness as a researcher to students. This incredible measure of trust in my integrity (someone whom they had never met in person) enabled me to establish rapport with students at an accelerated pace. Throughout the writing process I have engaged in member checking by giving research updates to organization staff and students whose stories served as illustrative examples by sending them portions of my writing and asking them if they would like anything changed or corrected. Although I wasn't able to engage in the fullness of methodologies that a CBPR approach enables due to living in the midst of a global pandemic, I was still able to collaborate with staff and students in a meaningful way by engaging in interviews with 16 students and collecting over 350 pages of transcribed data.

This research process was primarily comprised of interviewing students in order to gain a deeper understanding of their individual lived experiences (i.e. resettlement, involvement with ADYD students and staff, social mobility through education, etc.). Through the interview process combined with photo elicitation (described in greater detail below), I was able to tap into the complex intersectionalities and positionalities of the refugee youth I worked with. I primarily focused on individuals ages 16-21 from a

variety of countries of origin including, Eritrea, Democratic Republic of the Congo

(DRC), South Africa, Rwanda, Kenya, Tanzania and Afghanistan.[98]

2.1 Methods of Data Collection:

I used three methods to conduct this research over the course of two months (June

22, 2020 - August 10, 2020): (1) semi-structured interviews, (2) photo elicitation, and (3)

participant-observation. These methods used for data collection will be triangulated to

answer the questions posted in the Statement of the Problem and Guiding Research

Questions section of this study.

Originally, ethnographic participant-observation of refugee youth in social

settings was my main site for data collection. However, under the social distancing orders

in place with COVID-19, I was unable to conduct in person participant observation.

Instead, I conducted remote/virtual participant observation through WhatsApp with 16

refugee youth from seven countries of origin. I also corresponded with ADYD staff via

email and WhatsApp. I audio recorded video call interviews with students using an audio

recording device in order to transcribe and analyze interview data. My observations

during interviews are documented in physical written field notes guided by James

Spradley's descriptive question matrix.[99] More specifically, observations were primarily

recorded through jottings while in the field and turned into expanded fieldnote entries at

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[98] https://cnnc.uncg.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Refugee-Arrival-Numbers-FY-2014.pdf

[99] Spradley, James P. *Participant Observation*. Waveland Press, 2016.

the end of each day spent conducting interviews.[100] Throughout the course of my research, North Carolina was in phase II of COVID-19 restrictions, which permitted indoor socially distanced gatherings of no more than 10 people. In order to limit possible virus transmission, I only attended one in-person mask making event on July 28th at the ADANC office with four students, three of the student's family members, one ADANC staff and one ADANC college intern.

In addition, I conducted semi-structured interviews with participants, designed to draw out detailed reflections on the interactions of refugee students with teachers, parents, peers, and organizations since their arrival in the United States. These interviews were also meant to assess the development and evolution of their personal academic goals/experiences. I gained detailed insight into the specific influence the previously identified scales (institutional, interactional and individual) have on students. I conducted two separate interviews one-on-one with participants via WhatsApp video calls, with each participant answering the same set of questions. These interviews were estimated to last 30 minutes to one hour, depending on the length of the individual's responses. Out of the total 23 interviews conducted, only two surpassed the predicted time of one hour. Questions consisted of a mix of open-ended and probing questions. I used prompts during interviews to guide the research deeper. Interviews were recorded using an audio recording device, transcribed, and coded for common themes outlined in the analysis section. [See appendix A for interview protocol]

I also used the method of photo elicitation to allow refugee scholar youth a space to express their lived experiences from their point of view. Photo elicitation affords research participants a more active role in identifying what is important to them, as well as the opportunity to elaborate on the significance of their choices with the researcher through the interview process. Using the method of photo elicitation, students were asked to bring photographs (either taken specifically for this task or already in existence) to a second virtual interview where I asked them open-ended questions regarding their photos, allowing them to explain what each photograph means to them. Parameters (formed after the first interviews with students) for these images were thematic: (1) Images that represent their culture; (2) Images that showcase community and their daily lives; (3) Images that illustrate their academic goals. To be consistent, I asked research participants to choose no more than five pictures for each theme. My original hopes for including this method proved to be unrealistic, as most students did not have access to images (or technologies capable of producing images) in their home countries or from time spent living in refugee camps. Instead, students often had to seek images from Google to illustrate their lives prior to resettlement in the U.S. Many students sent five or fewer images as they did not possess or were unable to locate images of their families and/or home countries. For these reasons, as well as refugee youth being considered a vulnerable population in the eyes of academic institutions, I was unable to make image analysis an integral part of this study. The majority of students interviewed have been separated, through the process of resettlement, from one or more of their immediate family members. Seven out of 16 students live with their biological mother or father, while only two students live with both. Participants were asked to send digital copies of any images

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they wish to be included in the final research record in WhatsApp through encrypted messaging. The categories of image selection performed a scalar analysis that covers the temporal dimensions of past, present and future.

2.2 Methods of Data Analysis:

Analysis was conducted from compiled fieldnotes and transcribed and coded interviews searching for patterns in the data through a combination of content analysis, narrative analysis inspired by a critical discourse analysis (CDA) approach. Italicized interview texts have been added throughout to add my own emphasis. Born out of a Foucauldian influence, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) provides a methodology to uncover the layers of power and knowledge, and therefore, social action, wrapped up in discursive formations. The many forms of CDA are defined by linguists Fairclough, Mulerrig and Wodak as having "a shared interest in the semiotic dimensions of power, injustice, abuse, and political-economic or cultural change in society."[101]

By taking up the work of tracing roots of systems of speech and knowledge through a historical outline of U.S. immigration policies in chapter 3, it becomes clear that "…every instance of language use makes its own small contribution to reproducing and/or transforming society and culture, including power relations."[102] Language (and I would also argue image making) are therefore either individual choices to reiterate dominate discourse or to contest it. Fairclough et al. outline six main functions of

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[101] Fairclough et al., "Critical Discourse Analysis," 2.

[102] Fairclough et al., 11.

discourse in society: 1) is produced within historical context; 2) highlights power relations; 3) constitutes society and culture; 4) does ideological work; 5) is interpretive and explanatory; 6) A form of social action. In anthropological research then, I find it crucial to take up discourse as a valid point of analysis and historical-political marker of identity categories born out of social conflict. The two areas of dominant discourse most relevant to my research that I wish to explore here is visual depictions of refugees in mass media and education.

As professor of linguistics, Mary Bucholtz critiques, transcription is a research practice inherently embedded in relations of power.[103] In attempts to minimize my intervention with the discourse as it was spoken in interview conversations, I decided to take a denaturalized approach to transcription. This approach seeks to express speech in its written format as it was said. Other researchers often employ a naturalized approach to transcribing, whereby researchers take "professional authority" to alter interview speech into normalized written prose. The choice to not transcribe speech into the norms of written prose was influenced by Bucholtzs' argument that "such revisions can imply that the original is inadequate."[104] Including second language learners speech as it was spoken by including their mistakes is not intended to treat them as mistakes, but rather, to challenge readers to engage in not judging their speech as second language learners. Many anthropologists choose to clean up speech to normalized written prose because they don't want participants scrutinized. Instead I want to naturalize their verbatim

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[103] Bucholtz, Mary. "The Politics of Transcription." *Journal of pragmatics* 32, no. 10 (2000): 1439–1465.

[104] Bucholtz, 1453.

speech as normal. I did not want to reproduce what I consider a form of erasure enacted

by researchers by "polishing" speech into a standardized and/or "acceptable" written

format. For example, my choice to keep "cause" in included texts instead of correcting it

to because. I still made choices as a researcher over which portions of transcribed texts to

include, meaning that transcription is never a neutral process.[105]

To demonstrate the use of each of these methods, I will be using the following

passage (taken from an interview with an 18-year-old high school student from Eritrea)

from my transcribed interview data:

Table 2.1 Erasure of African Countries:

1	Yeah, the most thing that *I* don't like is like	
2	so *I'm* from Africa	
3	so like *I* think American	they know everything and
4		they know everything and
5	so when *we* are in Africa we know there are seven continents, there's like different countries	
6	so *we* know everything about geography before *I* came here.	
7	So, like *I* knew there are 50 states,	
8	like there's Mexico and different countries around United States, like Canada.	

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[105] Bucholtz, 1451.

9		But *they* don't know nothing about Africa.
10	So like, when *I* came here	*they* were like "speak African"
11	and *I* was like *I* can't *speak* African	or *they'd* be like do you know,
12	so like mostly *I* tell them *I'm* from Eritrea	so *they* be like, what's Eritrea
13	and like *I'd* say, it's in East Africa	and some people would say, "do you know this guy? I used to work with him."
14		Or "he was here."
15	And *I'd* say, "*I* don't even know him."	
16	*I* would be like "where is he from"	and then like *they'd* say, "He's African".
17		And *they'd* say, "Speak African or write Mayan stuff".
18		Even if you tell *them* about it tomorrow *they* will say the same thing.
19	So yeah. Like *I* tell them there's 54 countries in Africa. *My* country is different. *My* language, *my*	

| culture, *my* religion and stuff. To be African does not mean *we* are all the same. | |

Content analysis was utilized to examine patterns in communication through transcribed interview data texts. This form of analysis is commonly accompanied by a set of research codes that group patterns within the data thematically. The following are a set of preliminary codes I created from my guiding research questions:

Time scales: Where they are coming from (past), their current academic standing and involvement with the ADYD (present), their academic and other related goals (future); **Assemblages of support:** ADYD, parents, teachers; References to COVID-19; **Identity:** lived experiences tied to gender, race, legal status, and age; **Neoliberal self-making/ being made:** responsibility to educate or solve their country of origin's problems; and **Forms of discursive social scales**: institutional, interactional and individual in which each of these occur.

The above example was coded for time scale, both past and present. The student is comparing their experiences of education (past) in Africa to their experiences (present) in the United States. The excerpt was also coded for identity as the student is explaining their lived experiences tied to both race and legal status.

Following the process of content analysis, I performed a narrative analysis which allowed me to interpret the students' stories within the context of research and their lived

experiences.[106] Particularly, this method of analysis was utilized to pull apart the function their stories serve and the substance of them. The proceeding narrative analysis was conducted on the excerpt at the beginning of this section.

This student is connecting themes of being treated differently on the basis of being African as a lived experience tied to identity. The story being laid out by the student compares the expectations of African refugee youth to possess knowledge of American geography, culture and language to that of American citizen youth who, from the students lived experiences, are not expected to possess the same degree of geographic and cultural knowledge of Africa. The student then explains the role they are expected to take up as cultural educators of where they are coming from (past) to those they interact with in America (in the present). As a final layer of analysis, I used CDA, which views language as a form of social action, to perform a close line-by-line analysis. The following illustrates a third layer of analysis, through CDA on the example passage.

This excerpt performs a comparison of refugee youth to American citizen youth. In lines 1-5 the student reveals that she expected coming to the United States that her peers would have a general understanding of Africa geographically and culturally from their education. This expectation appears to be coming from the students' own education experience in Africa where they were instructed on the geographic and general cultural attributes of the Americas. Upon interacting with her peers the student revealed that "they don't know nothing about Africa." She outlines in lines 5-11 the assumption from

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[106] Allen, Mike *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Communication Research Methods*. 4 vols. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc, 2017. doi: 10.4135/9781483381411.

American citizen youth that Africans are culturally and linguistically homogenous. As linguistic anthropologist, Krystal Smalls points out, there is a "…diligent avoidance and erasure of race from most school curricula and discourse."[107] This could also be extended to include a "diligent avoidance" of geography, culture, and language instruction.

By extension, as depicted in lines 11-13, refugee youth take on the responsibility of an institutional system that has failed, becoming educators of culture, language and geography to their U.S. citizen peers. This student articulates that Africans are *not* culturally and linguistically homogenous. In this way, the student performs Smalls claim that: "'Youth critique the very institutions and practices that adults take for granted and question those behaviors, institutions, policies, and practices that seem most natural in mainstream adult society.'"[108]

3) <u>**Ethical Issues**</u>

Due to the potential sensitive nature of lived experiences that research participants may have endured, there was the risk of bringing up negative or triggering emotions tied to these events. It was possible that interview questions would cause research participants to recall potentially troubling memories. In an attempt to mitigate any negative effects, I always prefaced interviews by informing students that we can stop the interview at any time if the participant needs a break from the study. If they felt uncomfortable answering any questions of sharing images, they had the option to skip answering questions or to opt

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[107] Smalls, Krystal A. "Fighting Words: Antiblackness and Discursive Violence in an American High School." *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 28, no. 3 (2018): 358.

[108] Smalls, 360.

out from sharing images. Through this practice, research participants are given equal say in how they are represented through this research collaboration. To reduce the risk of any unintended harm to the organization or to the students, measures of confidentiality were taken by changing the names of the city, organization and students. There was no perceived risk of physical harm to research participants through this study

CHAPTER 3

"THE SYSTEM"

1) <u>Introduction</u>

Refugee youth colloquially refer to the ins and outs of U.S. legal and HE institutions as "the System." Through their discourse, they critique "the System" as inadequately providing them with the services they need to understand it. As a result of "the System's" inadequacies, local public schools and resettlement agencies are tasked with creating self-sufficient neoliberal citizen-bound subjects who enter the HE system equipped with the knowledge they need to be successful. I argue that the U.S. federal government places responsibility on refugee youth for their own success, rather than addressing the ways in which the U.S. government is actively engaged in creating refugee youth's lived circumstances of disadvantage. Acts of structural violence occur not only at the global level through biopolitical regulations by systems of administration or governance, but by extension, within assemblages of support (i.e. resettlement organizations, K-12 schools, HE)[109] through tactics of self and peer-to-peer policing

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[109] Ong, Aihwa, and Stephen Collier. "Global Assemblages." *Technology, politics and Ethics as Anthropological Problems*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005,4.

which make up "the System." Assemblages are defined by Aihwa Ong and Stephen Collier as how "global forms are articulated in specific situations… they define new material, collective, and discursive relationships."[110] In these chapters I add to Ong and Collier's discussion through assemblages of support to mean those networks of social support, both local and transnational, which provide refugee youth encouragement and/or tangible resources for navigating "the System's" within the United States. In addition, the historical collection of federal and local immigration policies fail to recognize is that "the System" creates an ever-shifting terrain, often deterring and altering the idealized linear pathway from refugee or immigrant to U.S. citizen.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also created another opening for federal and local government officials an excuse to limit movement across borders and deport persons being held in detention centers. Refugees, under these global complications had their "journeys toward upward mobility slowed and interrupted."[111] The following historic rendering shows how the United States, from its onset, has made anti-immigration a priority, shifting from racially and morally charged fronts towards positing immigrants and refugees as security threats. In both cases, immigrants, refugees and asylees are declared a problem in need of "correction" under methods of assimilation (i.e. local law enforcement or English language acquisition) which will be discussed throughout the remainder of this chapter.

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[110] Ong and Collier, "Global Assemblages," 4.

[111] Silver, *Shifting Boundaries*, 106.

2) <u>Federal Government Policies</u>

<u>2.1 Brief History of Immigration Policies in the United States:</u>

In the year 1790, 14 years after the signing of the Declaration of Independence, everyone residing in the newly established United States was considered an immigrant to native lands. The first policy of the newly founded United States was the Naturalization Act of 1790 which stated "any alien, being a free *white* person, may be admitted to become a citizen of the U.S."[1] From the outset, American immigration policy favored racially white people of European descent and actively excluded the native populations whose land they declared theirs, as well as any foreign-born persons who were racially or ethnically different. White people immediately began to declare themselves as *the* nativist population and enacted orders to keep any deviating populations out. To refer back to the theory and literature review section, to separate the "normal" from the "abnormal."

This hegemonic ideology fueled the formation of groups such as the "Know-Nothing Party" in 1849. Drawing most of its members from Protestant denominations, Know-Nothings became the first organized anti-immigrant party. They focused their attentions on keeping the U.S. pure from practicing Catholics or racially non-white persons. Over time, anti-immigrant policies and legal decisions expanded to include ever more groups on a national scale- though they were always grounded in regionally specific political-economic conflicts over control of places. In 1875 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that congress had absolute authority over immigration. As a result, acts such as the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 were passed to bar Chinese men, brought over to construct the Transcontinental Railroad, from bringing family members to join them,

becoming U.S. citizens or traveling out of country. This act was not repealed until 1952, after an extensive stretch of 70 years.

With the passing of the Immigration Act of 1891, exclusions were made increasingly specific: barring immigrants who were polygamists, criminals, lunatics, sick and/or diseased.[2] The foundations of United States immigration policies are, once again, not only racist and misogynistic but also morally and biopolitically driven. In 1917 the U.S. government established literacy requirements for immigrants, adding a standard of education to the conditions of entry. In 1924 the national origins quota system was established, meaning that visas were only awarded to 2% or less of the total number of people of each nationality residing in the United States as of the 1890 census. This act specifically barred immigrants from Asian countries of origin and excluded the masses of family members tied to African-born populations who were transported by force and treated as commodities working as slave labor up until the late 1800s. In 1942 the Bracero program was established, allowing single men from Mexico and their families to work in agricultural fields. Both Chinese and Mexican immigrants, as well as African slaves, were established as dispensable cornerstones of the strenuous manual labor workforce in the United States. Africans have historically been violently abused in the United States and continue to be abused from the undertow of discursive violence, which refugee youth who participated in this research gave ample evidence of (which I outline in greater detail in Chapter 4).

In response to the mass displacements following WWII, the first refugee resettlement law was passed under the Displaced Persons Act. This act allowed over

350,000 persons from European countries of origin to resettle in the U.S. Collectively, acts passed up to this point constructed a United States population which was almost entirely of European descent. Major shifts in immigration policy were not seen until 1965 during the wake of the civil rights movement. 1965 marked the year when the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) was passed, which replaced the quota system with a seven category preference system emphasizing family reunification and skilled immigrants. Under this act, having HE afforded favor in "the System." The Plyer vs. Doe ruling of 1982 granted equal access to public K-12 education to all, regardless of immigration status but no such federal policy exists to protect access to public HE institutions.

Following the attacks of 9/11, the Homeland Security Act of 2002 was passed, marking another significant wave of change to the way immigrants and refugees are discursively rendered. This act importantly shifted discourse depicting immigrants as economic, moral and humanitarian issues to a collective security concern. These processes had disproportionate impacts for individuals from Muslim countries of origin. In 2012, under President Obama's administration, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) was passed to confer a legal status while deferring to some undetermined date when they might be able to pursue citizenship.

Sociologist Alexis Silver introduces a model for understanding the overlapping spatial and temporal scales by which policies, agencies, and individuals are affected called the Tectonic Incorporation Model (TIM). She argues that the many groups and institutions present in migratory youths' lives in the United States, "all interact with one

another to form a layered and unstable context of reception."[112] This metaphor suggests

that the U.S. System is just as unstable and unpredictable as shifting tectonic plates,

creating ripple effects of high magnitudes which cause fissures to the ground upon which

refugee youth stand, further hindering their accessibility to assemblages of support.

Policy changes often happen without warning and can either block refugee youth from

reaching their goals or propel them forward. This model rejects the historically

longstanding belief that integration into the U.S. system happens on a linear, consistent

pathway. Instead, this model accounts for the realities of constant policy changes and the

collection of factors which effect the rates at which immigrants and refugees become
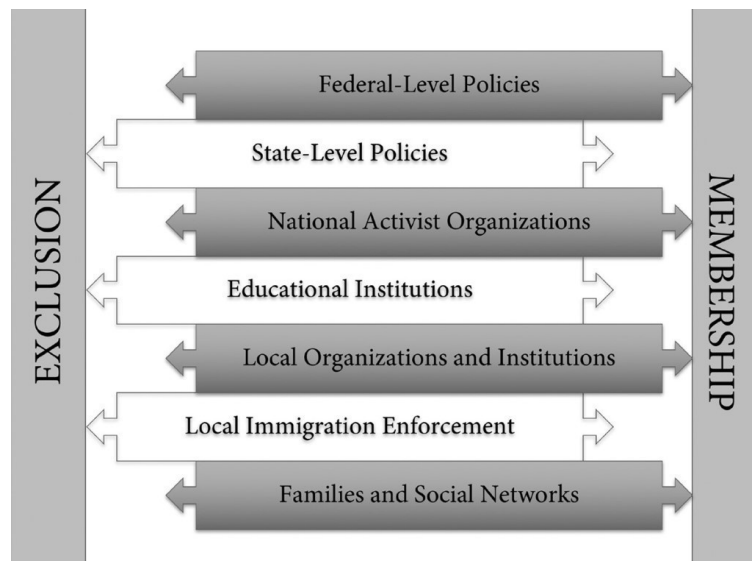
U.S. citizens.

Figure 3.1 Tectonic Incorporation Model

[112] Silver, Alexis M. *Shifting Boundaries : Immigrant Youth Negotiating National, State and Small Town Politics(* Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2018), 9.

A key example of rapid shifts in immigration policy can be seen with efforts to end the DACA under the 2016-2020 Trump administration. This administration circulated and endorsed discourses about refugees and immigrants, phased out DACA, enhanced immigration enforcement, decreased refugee quotas, increased vetting processes for legal immigration and downsized humanitarian programs. They cut the refugee cap to a historic low and caused many NGOs that aid in the resettlement and support process (at the local level) to lay-off to their paid staff. Some even closed their doors. Policy creation and implementation is not always a top-down, trickle-down phenomenon. Discourse also operates horizontally, whereby regional political-economic struggles or national emergencies, for example, result in anti-immigrant legislation. This horizontal spread occurs through nativist activist networks working to win state and municipal level positions of power in order to influence immigration policy and public opinion.

2.2 Arrival in the U.S.:

The historic traditions of exclusion outlined in U.S. immigration policies are experienced in the modern day lives of refugees as they resettle in the United States. Refugees, along with immigrants and asylees are assigned a permanent *alien* "A" registration number upon their arrival in the United States. While all U.S. citizens are assigned Social Security numbers to track citizen activities, refugees and other immigrant populations are identifiable by an "A" number which tracks people forever as an outsider. Having the mark of "alien" discursively marks refugees as "foreign" or belonging to somewhere else. Refugees also face hefty fees associated with ascending the ladder of

legal status. Refugees are required to apply for Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR) status one year after arriving in the United States. However, many factors which deter refugees under LPR status to apply for U.S. citizenship status once they are eligible. Both LPR and U.S. citizenship processes require hefty filing fees ranging from $725-$1,225 USD.[113] They also require a range of biometric proofs that entail multiple doctor's visits to receive immunizations. Combined, these limitations create conditions which make it increasingly difficult to change legal status. Refugee youth often become the hope of their parents to navigate institutional barriers they are unable to due to the emphasis placed on obtaining and maintaining a job. Given the limited time available to refugee youth's parents outside of work and parenting responsibilities, programs like the ADYD become necessary gateways to local assemblages of support needed to help students reach their academic goals.

Refugees arriving in the U.S. are assigned a sponsor, usually through a resettlement agency. Under the federal policies described above, the responsibility of refugee resettlement falls on three connected institutions under the executive branch of the U.S. government system: 1) The Department of Homeland Security (DHS); 2) The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and 3) The Department of Education. The leading institution within the governmental framework is the DHS. Founded in 2002, the DHS oversees 22 governmental agencies. Five of these 22 agencies have relations to refugee resettlement in the U.S. including: 1) U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP); 2) United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS); 3)

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[113] https://www.uscis.gov/archive/our-fees.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE); 4) Transportation Security

Administration (TSA) and 5) Discrimination Prevention and Response (DPR). Another

department involved in the refugee resettlement process is the United States Department

of Health and Human Services (HHS). HHS oversees 11 governmental agencies, one of

which, the Department for Children and Families in charge of a program called the Office

for Refugee Resettlement (ORR). A third offshoot of the federal system that impacts

refugee youth is the U.S. Department of Education, which manages governmental funds

for HE through the FAFSA, along with guiding who may access K-12 education.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, "Under Federal law, States and local

educational agencies are obligated to provide all children – regardless of immigration

status – with equal access to public education."[114] Since Federal law supersedes state law,

all U.S. states are required to offer access to K-12 education to everyone residing in the

U.S., regardless of legal status.

ADANC is directly supported by NCHHS, the U.S. Department of State, and

ORR. As can be seen above, the refugee resettlement process is carried out under a

complex assemblage of federal and local departments, agencies and programs. As

sociologist Alexis Silver points out, a transition has recently occurred transferring the

responsibility of immigration enforcement increasingly from the federal to state level.

The contradiction she points out and what I will outline in the proceeding section, is that

[114] https://www2.ed.gov/policy/rights/guid/unaccompanied-children.html.

non-citizens are simultaneously welcomed and marginalized, particularly in conservative states like North Carolina and localities with less immigration experience.[115]

3) <u>Local Policies</u>

In recent years, local policies in the Southeastern United States are often used to deter undocumented immigrants and other mobile minority populations from accessing public services, including higher education. Public and magnet schools are also a reflection of the longstanding history of the local regions in which they are situated. For example, the populations that comprise a school district are a direct reflection of the majority that has been permitted to reside generationally in an area, and who has been "integrated" over time. Integration of schools was not enacted until the 1970s in North Carolina and many surrounding Southeastern U.S. states. Like the tectonic plates of policies, refugee and immigrant youth also stand upon the ever-shifting plates of racialization and gentrification historically rooted in the South. The New South approaches issues of race and ethnicity in ways highly reminiscent of those of the Old South. The New South excludes and racializes populations that do not acquire English. Likewise, new immigration policies approach issues of immigration in ways highly reminiscent of old immigration policies to exclude populations on the basis of race, religion, social status or health.[116]

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[115] Silver, *Shifting Boundaries*, 3.

[116] Silver, 7.

The city of Unity has great historic significance as a location whose residents take the lead in enacting changes to these sentiments in North Carolina and surrounding Southern states. The New South residents of Unity, North Carolina do not sit in as an act of resistance, but rather have taken to the streets. Unity holds an annual Unity Walk in support of North Carolina immigrant communities to raise awareness of their lived experiences and plea for local law enforcement to cease aiding federal agencies such as ICE. This is reminiscent to historical acts of resistance between black vs. white and now racialized newcomers vs. U.S. citizens, whereby historically marginalized identity groups in the U.S. (LGBTQIA+, African Americans, immigrants and refugees) join in resisting "the System" through picketed protests. Local organizations such as ADANC sponsor this event, standing alongside the students and families they serve. Discourse of marginalized intersecting identity categories is often silenced by "the System," causing them take to the streets to demand space for their voices to be heard.

The biopower of local exclusion through racialization, for example, is experienced within intersecting identity categories. Kimberlé Crenshaw created the term intersectionality in 1989, which she defines as "infinite combinations and implications of overlapping identities from an analytic initially concerned with structures of power and exclusion."[117] Examples of identity categories are sex, age, gender, race, class, sexuality, religion, physical appearance, etc. Discourse has historically been used as a method "of power and exclusion." Identity categories (i.e. refugee, immigrant, criminal, alien, etc.)

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[117] Cho, Sumi, Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, and Leslie McCall. "Toward a Field of Intersectionality Studies: Theory, Applications, and Praxis." *Signs* 38, no. 4 (2013): 797. doi:10.1086/669608.

are direct examples of the utilization of discourse as performative acts of power and exclusion whereby historical structural inequalities in the United States are compounded. The overlapping identity categories refugee youth experience (i.e. African, newcomers, aliens, etc.) combined with dominate discourse in circulation, produce them as "abnormal" subjects in need of control and correction of conduct under assimilationist, monoglot English instruction to reach the point of communicative competency that results in their compliant performativity. At the same time, identity categories can also be reclaimed by groups and individuals they were intended to exclude, as a new form of sociopolitical or personal empowerment. Refugee youth engage in daily negotiations of their self-identified and given identity categories.

Alba Lucy Guerrero and Tessa Tinkler, for example, claim that there is an interplay between the assigned identities that the displaced inherit when they arrive to a new environment, and the performed, negotiated, and contested identities they construct as they navigate their way through the various challenges of resettlement.[118] Similarly, Stephanie Hemelryk Donald in her analysis of arrivals and negotiations through her detailed depiction of a British play, *Lampedusa*, reveals the stories of two main characters' lives who are impacted by their association with refugees. What I find most striking about her analysis is the fact that the refugees in the play do not act in a main character role, but rather, stand off to the side, in the shadows. Refugees are often the "invisible characters" that are represented by the "acting characters" of journalists,

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[118] Guerrero, AlbaLucy, and Tessa Tinkler. "Refugee and Displaced Youth Negotiating Imagined and Lived Identities in a Photography-Based Educational Project in the United States and Colombia." *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 41, no. 1 (2010): 55–74.

anthropologists, poets, and other such positionalities with greater access to power and social capital. The "audience" is only offered "a view of invisible characters formed and refracted through the needs of the speaking characters."[119] The main characters are reliant on an interplay of identity negotiation of those often anonymized, while rarely reflecting on their own sites of intersectionality, unless they also live at intersecting sites of exclusion.

In harmony with Alexis Silver's Tectonic Incorporation Model introduced above, sociologists Tanya Golash-Boza and Zulema Valdez developed a framework called nested contexts of reception.[120] They argue that overlapping scales: federal, local and societal contexts of reception directly impact immigrant and refugee youths' access to HE. Golash-Boza, Valdez and Silver collectively claim that the process of integration expected of newcomers is directly affected by unique, intersectional contexts of reception (tectonic plates) each youth navigates. Importantly, all three scholars note that factors influencing newcomer success is far from uniform; requiring local organizations to assess each context of reception on a case-by-case basis to tailor navigation of "the System" to their unique compounded intersectionality (which will be explored in the upcoming chapter).

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[119] Stephanie Hemelryk Donald, "Debt, the Migrant, and the Refugee: Lampedusa on Stage." (*Research in Drama Education, 2018),* 193.

[120] Golash-Boza, Valdez. "Nested Contexts of Reception: Undocumented Students at the University of California, Central." *Sociological Perspectives* 61, no. 4 (August 2018): 535–552.

3.1 North Carolina's Official Language:

North Carolina formally declared English as the state's official language in 1987 under session law §145-12. The purpose of this law states:

English is the common language of the people of the United States of America and the State of North Carolina. This section is intended to *preserve*, *protect*, and *strengthen* the English language, and not to supersede any of the rights guaranteed to the people by the Constitution of the United States or the Constitution of North Carolina.[121]

English is not the official language of the United States but is increasingly treated as such. 27 U.S. states have declared English as their official state language. Out of those 27 states only South Dakota, Hawaii and Alaska recognize indigenous languages as official. As mentioned throughout this chapter, the United States has historically erased the lived experiences of minority and/or indigenous populations. This Eurocentric priority continues to prevail in our modern day under active declarations of English as lawful, official language.

Such a monoglot standard language ideology attempts to contain actual linguistic diversity through compartmentalization, which recalls a diglossic situation explored in earlier studies of language contact. Diglossic policies are based on claims that two

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[121] https://www.ncleg.net/enactedlegislation/statutes/html/bysection/chapter_145/gs_145-12.html.

languages are used for different purposes in a community and are often unequally valued (i.e. Spanish as the language of the home to communicate with co-ethnic relations and English as the language of public spaces). Linguistic ideologies are utilized by institutions to promote the diglossic compartmentalization of English as aiding in the racialized production of white public space, especially education.[122] Languages reserved for private spaces are highlighted by Jeff Siegel[123] social and regional linguistic repertoires, such as AAE.[124] Those who use marginalized varieties are often encouraged to use standardized varieties of English. Success is equated to the degree in which students are able to adopt imagined regional standardized versions.[125] This notion of success falsely equates English language acquisition as creating a "level playing field," the belief that anyone can be successful in education (and in life in general) if they work hard and acquire standard varieties.[126] This belief is accompanied by thinking that anyone who tries to learn English can and that, if they learn the regionalized standardized variety (mostly focused on lexicon and grammar) they will have equal educational and economic access as their peers in that region.

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[122] Reynolds, Orellana. "New Immigrant Youth Interpreting in White Public Space." *American Anthropologist* 111, no. 2 (June 2009): 211–223.

[123] ESL and linguistics professor at the University of New England.

[124] Siegel, Jeff. "Language Ideologies and the Education of Speakers of Marginalized Language Varieties: Adopting a Critical Awareness Approach." *Linguistics and Education* 17, no. 2 (2006): 158.

[125] Siegel, 158.

[126] Siegel, 160.

3.2 School Policies and School Experiences:

Under this declaration, local resettlement agencies and schools are tasked with creating self-sufficient neoliberal citizen-bound refugees who demonstrate English language proficiency as a means of strengthening the Eurocentric stronghold maintained via immigration legislation. By extension, all youth upon arrival are required to attend an intensive English Language Acquisition Program. Director of the National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy, Margie McHugh reports, "Schools are arguably the institution most heavily relied upon to create social inclusion and economic mobility for immigrant and refugee families and thereby ensure the long-term success of federal immigration policies."[127]

The refugee youth I spoke with told me they were required to attend such a program for six months to one year. In Y'all County, the Magnet school for English Language Instruction is New Arrivals School (NAS). It is no coincidence that English Language Acquisition is made refugee and immigrant youth's central subject of instruction upon arrival. This process once again encourages refugee youth on the pathway towards assimilation and citizenship, since proficient knowledge and the ability to use English effectively in conversation is required to pass the U.S. citizenship test. Although policies exist granting equal access for refugee youth to public education, they still face many more obstacles than their U.S. citizen youth peers. Refugee youth noted

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[127] McHugh, Margie. "In the Age of Trump: Populist Backlash and Progressive Resistance Create Divergent State Immigrant Integration Contexts." (*Migration Policy Institute*, 2018), 8. https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/TCM-StateLocalResponses_Final.pdf.

being placed with students of all levels of immigration status, in a small community learning environment for six months to one year.

Refugee youth offer multiple perspectives regarding the deciding criteria as to who is required to attend Newcomer's school. The first student described placement in Newcomer's school as, "if you are underage *they* took you there to learn English". Another student described those who attend Newcomer's school as "Any immigrant who came from out of their country they were *asked* to go there to *experience* the language." A third student said: "I mean, if you are an ESL student who doesn't really know much about English as the language then you go there for about a year."

In all three of these examples, refugee youth articulated the criteria in which they were chosen to attend Newcomer's school. Collectively they described those in attendance as underage immigrants who are ESL students. I was unaware that the Newcomer's school was part of each student's resettlement story until the first student I interviewed brought it to my attention. All but one of the 16 students I interviewed were required to attend Newcomer's school because they were determined upon arrival as needing English language instruction. A question that remains for me as a researcher is who is the invisible hand, the "they" who are responsible for deciding who goes to Newcomer's school?

On the official school district website where the Newcomer's school is located, the following mission statement is posted:

We strive to empower students and families through challenging academics and language learning to help them become independent lifelong learners with the knowledge and skills *necessary to be successful in American schools and society* while honoring all cultures and heritages.[128]

This statement, in combination with the selected excerpt, brings to life the above claims in academic discourse, that English is used as a tool of assimilation, in attempts to create compliant youth on the pathway to U.S. citizenship and adoption of regional verities of standardized English as their rite of passage to success. To speak English and to have legal status are both requirements for successful navigation through "the System." In reality, language is deployed in institutional ways (especially through the social institution of the U.S. public education system) as a biopolitical standard of language, in which refugee and other migratory groups are measured against.[129] Schools, both secondary and post-secondary, become sites where inequalities of social structure and cultural order in the United States are reproduced.[130][131]Take for example this account below from a 20-year-old college student from Kenya.

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[128] https://www.gcsnc.com/Newcomers_School

[129] Collins, James. "Migration, Sociolinguistic Scale, and Educational Reproduction." *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 43, no. 2 (June 1, 2012): 193.

[130] Collins, 193.

[131] Siegel, "Language Ideologies and the Education of Speakers of Marginalized Language Varieties," 157.

Table 3.1 The Expectation to Speak English:

1	Oh my god it was so hard because we wasn't speak English at all and you know
2	people they always wanna talk to us, but you don't know how to respond to
3	them. When I see back I be like oh my gosh thank god because even though like
4	you have be like I wanna know English it's kinda hard because your whole family
5	speak another language so. But since we was going to school it helped and it
6	helped but it was hard because I think the reason we even know how to speak a
7	little English is because we went to school. The teacher would speak English,
8	the student, everybody was speaking English so you have to be like I have to
9	speak English too cause there's nothing I can do. But it was so hard.

Students like the one above informed me that they experienced these sentiments

through their required attendance for one year at the Newcomer's School. In lines 1-5 of

the excerpt above, the student shared with me that being in the Newcomer's School was

difficult for them because they did not speak any English with their family. Since the

expectation is to learn English, instead of U.S. citizens learning the languages of

incoming students, refugee youth feel pressure to learn English quickly to be understood

and attend public schools. In lines 5-7 the student cites school as the reason they know

how to speak English. The student closes in lines 8 and 9 by showing that if refugees

chose not to learn English, they will not be able to communicate with their peers and

make their way through "the System's" which utilize the English language to convey social and cultural knowledge.

Refugees are not the only group defined discursively as threats to American culture and society raciolinguistically. Raciolinguistics studies interrogate the sociohistorical production and construction of race and racial logics which in turn, are evinced in and through discourse and social interactions. Linguistic anthropologist, Jonathan Rosa, notes that "Latinas/os are often described as a highly racialized, stubbornly unassimilable group that must be managed carefully in order to prevent them from undoing the nation's cultural fabric."[132] In the case of Rosa's study, he found that shifts in language from Latinas/os native language of Spanish to English is seen "as a sign of progress" in white public space.[133] Similarly, refugee youth describe how emphasis is placed on learning English as a crucial step in the process of assimilation into "American society." Speaking the standard variety of English is seen as leveling the playing field to being successful. Contrary to the normative assimilationist narrative, scholars such as Rosa state that acquiring the English language has done little to guarantee equal access to these institutional settings for the millions of U.S. Latinas/os, African Americans, and other racialized peoples who might be U.S. citizens and identify as monolingual English users, also continue to face profound forms of exclusion.[134]

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[132] Rosa, Jonathan. "Racializing Language, Regimenting Latinas/os: Chronotope, Social Tense, and American Raciolinguistic Futures." *Language & Communication* 46 (January 2016): 107.

[133] Rosa, 107.

[134] Rosa, 116.

Simultaneously, when asked to compare their experience at NAS to high school, refugee youth signaled an ambivalence by marking their preference for the small community environment of NAS, fostered through learning alongside peers who have lived their own process of migrating to the United States, and who are collectively acquiring a new skill. Many students critiqued the U.S. education system for placing them in a short-term intensive language learning program and then dispersing them into U.S. public high schools where they are separated from peers who better understand the lived complexities of being new to the United States and the layered expectations to assimilate. After attending Newcomer's school, refugee youth are separated from their co-ethnic peers and funneled into the U.S. public school system. Y'all County, NC has 34 possible high schools refugee youth will be assigned based on the address of their permanent residence. Refugee youth are separated from familiar faces they have spent the last 6 months to one year getting to know, while the majority of U.S. citizen youth follow through their K-12 education experience with a set of familiar and racially homogenous faces.

As one student told me, "We separated, everybody goes to their own high school. Depends on where you live." Whereas 15 out of 16 refugee youth had the shared experience of attending NAS, they were separated into seven different high schools within Y'all County. As noted by the student above, high school placement in the U.S. is geographically based on the location of one's permanent residence. This part of the education system can be problematic as some students are placed in high schools with greater resources for students over neighboring institutions.

Further, U.S. public schools have many problems with disproportionate student to teacher ratios. The specialized attention refugee youth were able to receive while at NAS is not available once attending U.S. public schools. The inability of U.S. public high schools to meet the individual needs of refugee youth was recognized by the ADANC and a central reason why the ADYD was founded.

Refugee resettlement agency staff, such as those at ADANC network with local institutions on behalf of refugee youth as a result of their unequal access to institutions in comparison to their citizen peers. ADANC staff are in conversation with surrounding resettlement agencies who do not have programs focused on youth success, such as Churches International (CI), to recruit refugee youth and provide them with the support they need while attending high school to achieve upward social mobility through HE. As one student critiqued, "Churches International they don't really help you if you're under 18. They don't take you anywhere college or volunteering." A second student who was originally sponsored by CI further critiqued, "There was a time when I told that I needed to postpone my education because I was told that I am new here and I should learn the System before going to school. But that all changed when I met the staff and I joined the ADYD program." These students' statements emphasize the gap in support the ADYD fulfills, making the goal of attending a HE institution something practically attainable.

More specifically, ADYD staff partner with volunteers from the community to provide group trips to tour local colleges, act as mediators between refuge youth and school counselor's to resolve conflicts or miscommunication, expose students to career choices, promote participation in the U.S. census, promote hygiene habits for COVID

prevention, as well as provide FAFSA, scholarship and resumé assistance. Participating students in the ADYD noted that staff encourage them to apply to local colleges the agency has partnered with to promote limited student loan debt and reinvestment in the organization.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, refugees are required to apply for LPR status after one year of residing in the U.S. Under LPR status, refugee youth have equal access to in-state tuition rates if they have resided in the state for at least 12 months. As a result, many refugee youth are encouraged to attend local HE institutions, given the assumed affordability of in-state tuition. On the other hand, many of their U.S. citizen peers have received financial support to the extent that grants them the power to choose out of state, and even out of country HE institutions of prestige. Out of the 16 refugee youth I interviewed, ten are in college and six are wrapping up their high school education. All ten refugee youth currently attend a local community college which have historically been education centers that offer lower tuition rates for persons of lower SES to have access to HE with educating for the workforce and community reinvestment as their priority.

4) <u>Why the ADYD Program is Needed</u>

For many students, support outside the family becomes central to academic success as not everyone migrating to the U.S. had equal access to education in their country of origin. Youth generally reported that their parents face challenges with employment given their past educational experiences in their home countries where not all have had equal access to primary or secondary school education, let alone HE. While

youth face setbacks in accessing HE, their parents often do not have the option to pursue HE since they are pressured by "the System" to become financially self-sufficient. Generally, if you are over the age of 18 upon arrival, you have aged out of the American public school system where equal access to education is federally mandated. Then there is the issue of applying to and being eligible for HE. Take for example this student who told me, "My family uh does not help me at all because unfortunately my mother is illiterate. You know, she never went to school at all. So, they don't help me with my school just only with something else but they don't help me with my education." As they signal above, their family is able to offer them encouragement and support in other equally important ways but are unable to provide at-home tutoring by parents and siblings many U.S. citizen youth have to their advantage.

Many parents, like the example above, upon arrival to the U.S. had emphasis placed on securing a job above education. Most students' parents work at meat processing facilities or factories producing food and/or personal hygiene products. There is a broad literature that discusses how refugee resettlement policies and programs funnel people into low-paying, physically-demanding jobs. A leading scholar in this area, Jessica Darrow, argues that refugee resettlement agencies often have contracts with granting institutions, such as ORR, who have performance standards in which organizations are incentivized to meet and "to get clients employed as quickly as possible" even if the contracted employers have a reputation of exploiting their laborers.[135] Further, Darrow finds that both staff within resettlement agencies and the

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[135] Darrow, J. H. "Getting Refugees to Work: A Street-Level Perspective of Refugee Resettlement Policy." *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 34, no. 2 (2015): 106.

clientele they serve are rewarded, whether it be by promotions, recognition or by being granted access to limited resources for performing as compliant to "the System."[136]

Refugee youth, in many cases, want to get their relatives out of working at poultry plants as those jobs came to be accompanied with shame. By extension, many students also shared with me that their education goals are in hopes to help their parents so they don't have to work factory jobs anymore (their labor being exploited for "the System") and can shoulder the financial and temporal burden necessary for them to be able to learn English and if they wish, to pursue a HE. As Alexis Silver highlights, meat- processing work is physically demanding and often results in crippling injuries from taxing and repetitive labor.[137][138]

A high school student offered an example that points to the shame often associated with these jobs, "So, she never, like in Africa they never go to school like that you know yeah. So, she was like you guys you can't be like me, you know. You guys have to go to school and maybe in your future you can get a good job you know you don't have to go to [chicken processing plant] cause [working at the chicken processing plant] is hard, it's hard." This student is repeating something her mother said to her and her siblings. "You guys" places the directive on each of the three siblings. This mother,

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[136] Darrow, 83.

[137] Silver, *Shifting Boundaries*, 44.

[138] This is well documented in the applied anthropology literature. Fink (1998) Cutting into the Meatpacking Line, Donald Stull and Michael Buroway (eds.) (2004) Slaughterhouse Blues.

much like the mother of the student who received no academic guidance from family (in the previous example) never attended school in Africa. As a result, their parent could only get a physically demanding and dangerous job at a chicken processing plant. The student trails off at the end by emphasizing through stating twice that working at a chicken processing plant is hard. What makes factory jobs like this hard? Why are resettled refugees funneled into factory jobs? What cracks within "the System" does a critique about manufacturing industries illuminate?

A third student helped me answer these series of questions. She stated: "I don't know why but they (chicken processing plants) *need* refugee people. I know in [chicken processing plant] stuff in company, to be honest if you go to, just like if you visit and they *need* African people more than Americans. The manager they will accept you if you are African. They will not ask you anything because they know African people work hard." At the beginning of this chapter, I outlined the history of federal immigrant policies which are laden with concerns linked to racial and moral degradations. The discourse of these outdated policies are still very much alive today in the likeminded ideologies which drive individuals, such as those who manage chicken processing plants. hiring process. This student is utilizing discourse in this example to critique a point in "the System" they recognize as an indicator of inequality. In this instance the student emphasizes that agribusiness companies such as chicken processing plants *need* African people more than Americans. As the interview progressed the student added, "Most people (African refugees) they come here they don't go to learn the language, they just start working. So when they (chicken processing plant managers and co-workers) tell them go do this, they do everything. I swear the companies need us." This insight reflects

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longstanding, industry-wide practices which produce ethnically segmented mobility traps. Only those who cannot leave remain, which is why the companies "need" refugees.

The limited jobs refugees are able to secure, such as those at chicken processing plants, are often located two hours away from their homes, requiring four hours of commute time per day. After working 8-10 hours and commuting four additional hours, no time remains to invest in an education or to learn English. In this way, refugee youth's parents are strategically kept from attending HE institutions, which would improve their access to higher paying careers.

Thus, refugee youth have an incredible amount of pressure placed on them to pursue HE in the ways their kin do not have access to. Education becomes a marker of status within "the System." The attainment of each HE degree is in pursuit of achieving upward social mobility in hopes of finally receiving equal recognition as their peers with whom they constantly compete against and are cultural educators of as a result of "the System."

Many of the youth I interviewed revealed this to be true of their experiences speaking to the difficulties in learning "the System" upon resettling in the United States. The first example is given in the table below from an 18-year-old high school senior from Eritrea.

Table 3.2 Support in Navigation of "the System:"

1	The government or organizations sometimes they just forget you so yeah
2	that's why to live in America is hard. But good thing is like we have our culture,
3	our people. They really help us when we come here. So, in our church they say
4	there are new people come visit them. Take them to hospital, bring them to
5	church, give them some money for food. So, when somebody come new they
6	give you food, they tell you about what you should do. So, *if you know*
7	American system it's easy but if you don't know the system no. You get lost.
8	So, if Eritrean people wasn't here, I don't know what would happen to us because
9	they really forgot about us and then it was our fault too because we didn't tell
10	them. But we did not know the laws. We was just doing everything by ourselves.
11	In America you can change your life *if* you know the system. Like America is
12	easy to be honest. But like when you're new. You need someone to tell you the
13	system.

In the example above, the student points out in lines one and two that organizations scalarly tied to larger institutions, run the risk of forgetting about "clients" they are working with. In lines 2-6 and 7-9 the student gives credit to the diasporic communities of other resettled refugees and religious communities as being sites of

support in navigating the "tightly plaited structures of sociality."[139] The organizations were secondary sources for support to the diasporic communities. In lines 9-13 the student places a caveat to being a successful subject on the social support of persons more knowledgeable of "the System."

5) Conclusion

Throughout this chapter I have teased apart the ever-shifting tectonic plates making up "the System" upon which refugee youth stand: federal and local policies to how they are implemented on the ground through the work of local schools and NGOs. I have argued that the process of attaining citizenship is historically rooted in assimilationist ideologies favoring Eurocentric cultures and language. Expressions of hegemonic discourses, identified by youth as "the System," overdetermine the identification of refugee and immigrant youth as suspect, in need of inspection, and methods of integration. Additionally refugee youth are not treated like individuals outside of their co-ethnic and ADYD interactions, but either as a source of capital or some foreign biomedical agent until they perform prescribed neoliberal forms of self-sufficiency such as getting their education, learning English, and/or becoming marketable laborers. In the next chapter I will analyze how refugee youth take up these charges of "the System" to perform as cultural educators and are simultaneously pressured to constantly prove their non-alien status.

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[139] Smalls, "Fighting Words," 357.

CHAPTER 4

PERFORMING SCALE: REFUGEE YOUTH'S LIVED ENGAGEMENT WITH AND RESISTANCE TO "THE SYSTEM"

1) <u>Introduction</u>

Refugee youth enrolled in the ADYD program are expected to achieve upward social mobility through HE but have varied access to HE in comparison to their U.S. citizen peers. Many refugee youth are dependent on connections to organizations such as ADANC to achieve academic success. Dominant discourse surrounding refugees, as laid out in the previous chapter, shape the lives of refugee youth every day in profound ways. They are pressured to act in performative manners (i.e. cultural educators or language brokers) to conform to the rules/expectations of institutions and its supporting organizations. These pressures are manifested, in some ways through the social ties established with staff at ADANC wherein forms of expected reciprocity are made explicit with emphasis on civic/community engagement. In addition to pursuing a HE, refugee youth are expected to simultaneously learn to perform, resist and rework dominant discourse produced about refugees by taking on roles as cultural educators, self-presenting and self-managing to repeatedly prove themselves.

In this chapter, I take up "performances of scale" to mean how the ambivalent positions that refugee youth occupy, manifest in the stories they tell, which do not merely reflect their realities but produce them through their acts of storytelling. Refugee youths' performances of scale are at times actively engaged in and at times in resistance to hegemonic discourses that refugee youth identified as part of "the System." By this I mean youth acting as cultural educators to their U.S. citizen peers to perform and resist refugee as a socio-political identity category, as well as navigate assemblages of support to pursue their education goals. It should be noted that all people, not just those under the sociopolitical identity category of refugee, perform in this way all the time. The difference though, is that refugees keenly experience exclusion (as addressed in the previous chapter through U.S. immigration policies and the conversation surrounding intersectionality). This reality, in turn, requires refugee youth to have access to broader assemblages of support in seeking out HE. Refugee youth frame their experiences under a presupposition that "the System" and by extension, their U.S. citizen peers, reinforce scalar positions of power by placing pressure on refugee youth. These pressures require refuge youth to perform as cultural educators while being bullied in schools on the basis of differences outlined in immigration policies and local discourse about refugees or having their lived experiences of discrimination or exclusion ignored by school administrators.

In addition, this chapter outlines multiple ways in which refugee youths' daily lives require various performances of scale in attempts to resist decades of erasure and/or exclusion implicated by "the System." Their lived experiences provide embodied evidence that can serve to make active critiques of "the System." This supports that discourse is utilized as a form of social action by both U.S. lawmakers to present immigrants and refugees as criminal, diseased or in need of integration *and* by refugee youth by presenting distinct characteristics of their cultures, their countries and their lived experiences. Through a multivocality of lived experiences, I seek to demonstrate the ways in which "the System" has created the conditions in which refugee youth are required to bear the weight of additional responsibilities (i.e. cultural educators) that U.S. citizen youth are not pressured to perform, as well as the way refugee youth perform language as a social action of resistance to "the System."

2) Modes of Performativity

Linguistic anthropologists study language and other multimodal discourse practices as performing social acts and social orders. One such performance of social acts is through communicative competence, whereby refugee youth are expected by educators and assemblages of support to demonstrate an understanding of the English language and "the System" (outlined in the previous chapter) to the point that the speaker can use it to effectively *and* appropriately perform discourse. This harkens back to the language of North Carolina law makers in declaring English as NC's official state language to

"preserve, protect and strengthen" the English language. Judith Butler's approach to performativity argues that language is a performance of self-management and self-presentation. Through her approach, the body becomes a site of reproduction or resistance to the historical and current discourses of power.[140] For example, "those who fail to *do* [perform] their gender (race, legal status or class) *right* are regularly punished."[141] Refugee youth carried out acts of performativity as cultural educators. In doing so some students shared lived experiences of bullying for not performing their race or legal status as refugees "right" as I demonstrate in the following section. Later in this chapter I illustrate additional critiques refugee youth bring to expectations to perform their sociopolitical identity category as refugees, their access to assemblages of support and their pursuit of HE.

3) <u>Cultural Educators to Americans: Homelands, Geography and Culture</u>

Refugee youth often critique U.S. citizen youth by stating that they have freedom and privilege to be ignorant of the shifting tectonic plates and compounded intersectionality refugee youth are required to navigate. In other words, U.S. citizen youth have the power of choice in what they learn, whereas, refugee youth are forced to learn

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[140] Butler, Judith. "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory." *Theatre Journal (Washington, D.C.)* 40, no. 4 (December 1988): 519.

[141] Butler, 522.

English, "the System" and the racialized history of exclusion each stage of resettlement is steeped in. As a result of "the Systems" failure to educate U.S. citizen youth on the layered complexities of immigration policies, refugee youth take on the responsibility to be cultural educators to their peers as an active form of resistance to the historical layers of erasure enacted on their various identity categories. In addition, refugee youth, in many cases, are separated from their families and as presented in the previous chapter, their co-ethnic peers.

Many U.S. citizen youth are unaware of the additional challenges refugee youth experience even prior to stepping foot in the United States. As one 17-year-old high school student outlined: "We had to sign lots of papers, and they have to ask a lot of questions yeah and they have to do a lot of vaccinations." As this student outlines, refugee youth face bureaucracy and medical interventions as exercises of biopower to test their intentions of coming to the United States. In this way, before refugee youth even arrive in the United States they are set up to perform as neoliberal citizen-seeking subjects who do no harm to the U.S. Similarly, U.S. citizen youth are expected to perform allegiance to the U.S. through reciting speech acts such as the Pledge of Allegiance, donning the American flag or celebrating patriotic holidays. However, U.S. citizen youth's knowledge of the United States are not formally tested via exams, interviews and biomedical screenings to the extent that their immigrant and refugee peers are. In North Carolina, for example, high school students are required to take one U.S. history course

to graduate.[142] However, the institutionalized assessment of knowledge of U.S. history is very different and does produce high stakes for U.S. citizen youth. They might not complete the class with a high grade but will not be prevented from graduating or receiving access to safety as a result.

3.1 Lived Experiences of Exclusion and Erasure in U.S. Public Schools:

Once resettled in the United States, refugee and immigrant youth continue to be tested daily via the Panoptic gaze of their local communities and the policing of their U.S. citizen peers. Every refugee youth I interviewed cited language as the central point of criticism they receive from their peers. A 20-year-old refugee youth pointed out that her accent caused her U.S. citizen peers to critique her, "At school when they hear your accent they just call you an African." As she, and many other students pointed out, Africa is a continent, comprised of 54 diverse countries, yet their U.S. citizen peers homogenize Africa (all countries, languages and African peoples as the same). Another student directly addressed this concern by telling me, "There are differences in Africans. And there was a man I work with he know a few countries and I told him most Americans don't know African countries and he said most of them they don't know because they have the education, or they don't know, know the world history. Nobody cares

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[142] https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/high-school-graduation-requirements.

about." These examples highlight what linguistic anthropologist Krystal Smalls calls, "…the erasure of recent African histories, contemporary cultures, and languages."[143]

As I began analyzing my data for saturation points in content, it became clear that the experience of being critiqued for having a less-than-purified presentation of the English language (and its regional varieties) is shared among most refugee youth. Being a white American citizen myself, I have the same phenotypic makeup as historical figures who founded attitudes towards immigration as something only for other white populations. By extension, most of my identity categories do not target me as a subject for exclusion. I began to wonder if refugee youth came into our conversations assuming that I too 1) Did not know about the diverse cultural composition of Africa and/or 2) Did not care to learn about their individual experiences and cultural background from their cultural mistrust of other U.S. citizen peers who have many things in common with my background.

It bothered me on a personal level that these had been the dominant experiences of refugee youth in the U.S. public school system. I also recognize that if they held those assumptions, they were correct because I, like many of their U.S. citizen peers, did not have equivalent knowledge of Africa as they do of the United States. As someone who attended U.S. public schools from Kindergarten through 12th grade, I was never once

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[143] Smalls, "Fighting Words," 358.

instructed on the geographic, historic or cultural background of Africa's many countries. Without the patience of the 16 refugee youth I corresponded with, once again performing the role of cultural educators, telling me about their countries of origin, cultures and languages, I would remain unaware of the complex composition of a handful of African countries. I entered each conversation sincerely interested in learning from each other and listening more than I spoke. In this way, I cannot deny my underlying expectations that refugee youth would perform as cultural educators for me, a researcher, and in many ways also a peer, given our proximity in age.

My lack of knowledge as a U.S. citizen stems from "the System" which intentionally erases and/or excludes knowledge of African's lived experiences and geographic placement. Erasure and/or exclusion are both examples of discursive violence, whereby researchers, governmental leaders, policy makers, historians, etc. intentionally exclude the lived experiences of specific intersecting identity categories (i.e. African queer youth) from the historic record. I hope to demonstrate through the following examples, that understanding the context of refugee youths lived experiences brings clarity to the way knowledge and power are wrapped within federal and local policies and/or discourse.

Within the public-school system, refugee youth are often bullied by their U.S. citizen peers based in their intersecting identity categories which mark them as "outsiders" or "undesirable." Refugee youth criticized that they are used to being ignored

by school administrators when they report instances of being bullied. The example below, from a high school student, illustrates a lived experience of being bullied and then ignored by "the System." The table visualizes both the intersectional position of refugee youth in-between the various grouping of "'us" and "them" through the use of three columns, as well as line by line shifts in those positions:

Table 4.1 I, We, Them:

	I	We	They
1			They don't know about me, where I'm from.
2			They make fun of other people.
3	That's very sad but I can't really talk.		
4			Like they make fun of you.
5	Yeah I will not judge cause even though Eritrean people have that mind that if people		

	want to do bad things it will be paid back.		
6	Which I know is not right but most Eritreans that's what they believe.		
7		We are working and don't have our whole families	
8			so if they curse us just
9		we not do nothing	
10			cuz that's their country, they can do anything to us.
11	So, when I was on bus there was people who sit behind us and there was one Eritrean person with me		
12		but we don't talk to them.	
13			They don't even know us

14	I never talk to them.		
15			They just throw some food at us.
16	If I get mad-mad I just go to office and then I tell them.		
17			But they do nothing.
18	I used to tell the office		
19			and they don't do nothing.
20	Even if I tell them, nothing's going to happen.		

In the personal narrative provided above, the student is performing an analysis semiotically linking scales which depict their lived experiences of exclusion at a U.S. public high school. In the process they also typify and personify the aggressiveness of American ignorance in the figure of the bully. In this narrative, the patterns of pronominal reference I, we and they, are one means to socially locate the moral positioning of actors and acts. "I," in this transcript is the student referring to themself.

"We," is in reference to the student and their co-ethnic peer. "They," refers to the U.S. citizen youth peers performing the act of bullying and later, to the school administrators who, according to the student, failed to correct the U.S. citizen youth's actions.

This example begins at a general level, from lines 1-10, and then shifts to a personalized narrative which illustrates, through the outlining of their lived experiences, in lines 11-20, the specificities of their generalizations. In lines 1-10 the student sets up a dichotomy of us versus them. In lines one, two and four the student outlines "them" as their U.S. citizen peers as the instigators of bullying. Importantly, in lines three, five and six the student marks a point of separation from their co-ethnic relations by stating that they do not believe what most Eritreans do by stating "that's what *they* believe." The belief being that people will be paid back for the harm they cause to others. In lines seven and nine the student reiterates that refugee youth are rarely the instigators of discursive and/or physical violence by emphasizing that they are focused on working to pay the bills and in hopes of supporting their families, from whom they are separated. Lines eight and ten set up the proceeding narrative example to note that their U.S. citizen peers get away with their acts of bullying because it is "their country."

In line 11 the student moves into providing a narrative account marked as a shift in information by the conjunctive adverb "so." The personal narrative account the student provides in lines 11-20 parallels the generalized background setup in lines 1-10. In line 11 the student sets up their account by providing crucial contextual details, that they were

sitting on a school bus with a co-ethnic Eritrean peer and behind them sat U.S. citizen

peers (whom they did not disclose the demographics of). In lines 12 and 14 the student

parallels what they set up in the background account by saying "I" and "we" never talk to

"them" in this specific situation, just as they stated in lines seven and nine, that refugees

are focused on working rather than instigating violence. Line 13 offers another

emphasizing statement to mark that their U.S. citizen peers had no relationship to the

student and their co-ethnic peer.

Line 15 marks the act of degradation/disrespect committed by the U.S. citizen

peers seated behind them on the bus; throwing food at them. In line 16 the student takes

legitimate agency by following the protocol of the public school system to report the

incident to their school administrators. Lines 17 and 19 critically reveal a failure within

"the System." School administrators are tasked with the responsibility to protect the

safety of their students and to reprimand students who perform acts of violence and

exclusion, such as the student illustrated above. In this example, the school administrators

tacitly supported the native U.S. citizen instigators as an extension of "the Systems" long

held support of natives over those marked as "outsiders." Lines 18 and 20 display the

student's revelation that even if they do or say something in a systematically appropriate

way, they still run the high risk of being ignored due to their intersecting identity

categories. The parallels between the background information and the lived experience

create layers of repetition to emphasize a point of failure within "the System" on a local

level, based on years of exclusionary discourse in North Carolina and at the national level. In this way, the student demonstrates the complex dichotomy of "doing nothing" whereby refugee youth "doing nothing" means not breaking the rules. On the other hand, when "the System" does nothing, it is when U.S. citizen youth have broken the rules as an active form of erasure of refugee youths lived experiences.

Below is a second example illustrating an instance in which a refugee youth high school student performed as a cultural educator to their U.S. citizen youth peers and critically reflect on the United States' expectation of refugee and immigrant youth to effectively perform knowledge of American language, history and culture in the face of immutable American ignorance. They also demonstrate, in contrast, that U.S. citizen youth are not expected to perform knowledge of the language, culture or history of refugee youths' countries of origin.

Table 4.2 Cultural Erasure:

1	Yeah, the most thing that I don't like is like	
2	so I'm from Africa	
3	so like I think American they know everything and	
4	so when we are in Africa we know there are seven continents, there's like different countries	

5	so we know everything about geography before I came here.	
6	So, like I knew there are 50 states,	
7	like there's Mexico and different countries around United States, like Canada.	
8		But they don't know nothing about Africa.
9	So like, when I came here	they were like "speak African"
10	and I was like I can't *speak* African	or they'd be like do you know,
11	so like mostly I tell them I'm from Eritrea	so they be like, what's Eritrea
12	and like I'd say, it's in East Africa	and some people would say, "do you know this guy? I used to work with him."
13		Or "he was here."
14	And I'd say, "I don't even know him."	
15	I would be like "where is he from"	and then like they'd say, "He's African".

16		And they'd say, "Speak African or write Mayan stuff".
17	Even if you tell them about it	tomorrow they will say the same thing.
18	So yeah. Like I tell them there's 54 countries in Africa. My country is different. My language, my culture, my religion and stuff. To be African does not mean we are all the same.	

This excerpt performs a comparison of refugee youth to American citizen youth. In lines 1-5 the student reveals that she expected that her U.S. citizen peers would have a general education and understanding of Africa's geographic and cultural diversity. This expectation appears to be coming from the student's own education experience in Africa where they were instructed on the geographic and cultural attributes of the Americas. Upon interacting with her peers, the student revealed that "they don't know nothing about Africa." She outlines in lines 5-11 the assumption from American citizen youth that Africans are culturally and linguistically homogenous. As Smalls points out there is

"…diligent avoidance and erasure of race from most school curricula and discourse."[144] This could also be extended to include a "diligent avoidance" of instruction of racially excluded groups' geography and culture. To return to an earlier discussion of Michel Foucault, those with darker skin and refugee, immigrant or asylee status become categorized as abnormal while lighter skinned populations with the status of citizen are categorized as normal.

Africans have historically been violently abused in the United States and continue to be abused from the undertow of discursive violence as pointed out in the immigration policy history of the U.S. outlined in the previous chapter and above in the present day by Krystal Smalls. The profound silence regarding the enduring legacy of racial logics, which continue to operate through how refugee, asylum and immigration policies, enables aggressive American ignorance in the guise of American exceptionalism. The gaps in citizens' knowledge are then asked to be filled in by the refugee cultural broker as depicted in lines 11-13.

Thus, refugee youth utilize language as social action through the performance of educating their U.S. citizen peers in their countries' cultures, languages and geography. This student articulates, contrary to "the Systems" long held attempts to erase "abnormal" or "foreign" histories and lived experiences, that Africans are *not* culturally and

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[144] Smalls, 358.

linguistically homogenous. In this way, this student performs Smalls claim that: "'Youth critique the very institutions and practices that adults take for granted and question those behaviors, institutions, policies, and practices that seem most natural in mainstream adult society.'"[145]

A supporting comparative example of this common lived experience can be found in Alejandro Paz's ethnography of unauthorized Latin American immigration to Israel.. In this study, Paz explores the complex socio-political negotiations unauthorized Latin@ immigrants undertake. As Paz illustrates, Latin@ immigrant youth, like African refugee youth experience multiple pressures to act as actively engaged subjects of the new nation states in which they reside. One way this is accomplished is by being active participants in youth organizations which prepare youth to participate in public as citizens.[146] Through these organizations Latino immigrant youth are carefully watched under a State influenced panoptic gaze. They are instructed to erase their differences and adopt acceptable ways of public speech and action in their host country of Israel.

Thus, refugee youth, like Latin@ immigrant youth, are faced with extreme pressures to conform to purifying, assimilationist State policies of receiving countries

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[145] Smalls, 360.

[146] Paz, Alejandro I. *Latinos in Israel Language and Unexpected Citizenship* Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2018. 83.

while also attempting to maintain the cultures of their countries of origin. As Paz demonstrates, many points of intervention are utilized by the State to ensure movements away from a liminal status (i.e., immigrant or refugee) into more permanent ones through either deportation or citizenship. In the end, "it was Latino youth who could produce a compelling performance of belonging to the nation, and thus be recognized as citizens."[147] Youth in Paz's ethnography and refugee youth I consulted with must perform their right to belonging, their public allegiance to the State discursively, while simultaneously attempting to maintain knowledge and perform as cultural educators.

4) "Refugee" Identity

As outlined above, "refugee" is one of the many identity categories refugee youth grapple with. In each interview I posed the same question to refugee youth: How do you feel about the word refugee and how has your experience been as a refugee in the United States? Most students responded that they were proud to be a refugee and/or African while simultaneously signaling that being a refugee and/or African in the U.S. is incredibly "hard" or "tough". Only two students signaled that they do not like the term refugee and try to avoid associating themselves with it.

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[147] Paz, 80.

The leading reasons refugee youth described their experiences in the U.S. as hard is having to learn the English language and "the System" while also having to deal with criticism from U.S. citizen peers about their accents or appearance (such as the examples above). Two students who were siblings told me, "At the beginning when we came to the U.S. it was hard for us like the couple first months we didn't speak the language like English and stuff, and it was hard for the other people to understand us especially in the school like the teacher. But then like in a couple of years you get used to it. Like you're gonna speak the language and you're gonna be doing all the stuff."

I would like to begin by providing an example from a 20-year-old student, who outlines why he does not like the label "refugee":

Table 4.3 Rejection of "Refugee" as a Political Identity:

R:	1	How has your experience being a refugee in the United States been?
S:	2	Yeah you know being a refugee you know I will never wish you to be a
	3	refugee. I will never wish you to be a refugee. I've been a refugee for
	4	like since when I was like nine years. Now I'm 20. So, I too much
	5	experience about being a refugee. Refugees get treated different, not the

	6	same and there's no nobody will tell you that being a refugee good thing,
	7	it's not. Some country if you are a refugee you are not allowed to work, you
	8	are not allowed to travel. You just have to stay in a camp and depend on
	9	UNCR helping. I'm glad that at this moment I'm in America. By name I am
	10	a refugee. But if we meet outside you will not know that I am a refugee.[148]
R:	11	Thank you for sharing.
S:	12	No problem.
R:	13	So, when you when someone calls you a refugee, how do you feel about the word refugee?
S:	14	I don't like it.
R:	15	Why don't you like it?
S:	16	Because it makes me think a lot. I think for me to like leave my country
	17	was not my choice, it was not my choice it was that was the only way like

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[148] Note here the shifter "you" - same form, different indexical connection - away from "you" the interlocutor or "you the general US citizen" being addressed by this story but the typified refugee. This use of you in discourse analysis is referred to as invoking a historical present which enables the time frames of the event of the telling to blur with the event being told.

18	to save my life. But another one because you know ah I had to move and go
19	to different countries. I would not be here. You know? I am so glad to be in
20	this country, America. So being a refugee you know sometime you being
21	called a refugee some country they really see a refugee as like as the
22	other people. If you ever go in a camp and see the way a refugee people
23	live I promise you you will cry. So being a refugee is not really good. I'm
24	not like it makes me think about where I came from a lot. I don't like that
25	being called a refugee. I mean as we are talking I can tell you about refugee
26	stuff but being called a refugee I don't like it you know?

In the example above, the student structures their discourse as a generalized

advice-giving account. When I asked the student about their experience under the label of

"refugee" in the United States they immediately expressed, in lines 2 and 3, that they

would not wish me to be a refugee, a statement they repeat twice for added emphasis. See

also the interlocutory aside lines 22-23 so these are both affective and intensifying

moments directed at "you" the interview, but also the general "you" U.S. citizens who do

not know what refugees go through. The student provides me with reasons why I would not wish to be a refugee in lines 3-9 in stating that this label has been part of their identity since the age of nine and that much of their childhood was spent in a refugee camp. In lines 10 and 11 the student iterates that the only reason they are placed in the refugee category in this instance of an interview, is because of their association with the ADYD and my connection as a researcher which necessitates labeling those I corresponded with as refugees, even though some of them do not personally identify with that label outside of particular settings where they are expected to identify with that label.

They continue providing reasons for their stance in lines 17-20 stating that being labeled as a refugee was not their choice, that there were driving forces that temporarily stripped this student of their discursive agency; where they were given a label and were now, through this interview, taking up space to discursively perform resistance to it. In lines 22 and 23 they state, "some country they really see a refugee as like as the other people." The "other people" being the citizens of that country. The student does not offer any personal examples to illustrate their generalized claims, however, one possible interpretation of this excerpt is that the United States does not see refugees as their own citizens, therefore shaping students views of "refugee" as a label associated with negative lived experiences.

Conversely, the majority of students who take pride in the refugee label offered a few different examples. One college student told me, "as a refugee myself I take nothing

but pride in that you know. Fuck, I'm a survivor." Another current high school student

told me, "I'm very proud to be who I am. I'm very proud to be a refugee." Both of these

students also included examples from lived experiences where they had faced difficulties

based on their categorization as refugees, but still took pride in the label because of their

own reclamation of it as something positive.

Below is a more extensive example adding to the short quotes above, providing an

analyzed account of a student who raised awareness as to why they were proud to be a

refugee:

Table 4.4 Reclamation of the Refugee Beyond a Political Identity:

R:	1	How do you feel about the the word refugee like do you do you personally
	2	like identify with that or do you um yeah like what are your feelings about
	3	the word refugee?
S:	4	Yeah so actually I'm comfortable with that cause you know we you know
	5	we didn't make ourselves be a refugee because you know there was things
	6	going on in our countries that's why you know we used to leave our countries
	7	it's not you know it's not what is it called, we are not the reason for that. The
	8	census is going on so you know we used to leave our countries so you know
	9	we used to leave our countries and you know just go to the other countries
	10	and all that but you know I'm proud I'm a refugee cause you know I

11	remember 2017 there was a what's it called there was at the college the
12	Saudi leader yeah the leader yeah I went there and there was some people
13	sitting and I was like you know we're communicating and asking about
14	where I'm from and I'm like I'm from Eritrea. So, you were born in Sudan?
15	So, you're a refugee? Yes. I. Am. I am very proud. Yes I am! (laughter)

In lines 1-3 I as the researcher, "R," asked an open-ended question to the student, "S," to inquire if they personally identify with the "refugee" label. In lines 4-7 the student is in agreement with the student in the extensive example above who does not identify with the refugee label, by saying that they are not the reason they had to leave their countries. In lines 8-14 the student provides a specific example when they were asked if they were a refugee at a college event. In line 15 the student states that they told the Saudi leader, who was inquiring that yes, I am a refugee and that they are proud of it. In the previous example, the student told me they did not associate themselves with the identity "refugee" because of the many traumatic experiences it is tied to. In contrast, this student, rather than avoiding being associated with the sociopolitical label of refugee, reclaimed the label to emphasize their pride in performing resiliency.

5) Assemblages of Support[149]

Another question I posed to students across the board was: "Who are your main supporters in reaching your personal academic/education goals?" Through their responses, students signaled that assistance was offered through an assemblage of support comprised primarily of ADYD staff, family, friends and instructors (see figure 2.4 below). Family members referenced by refugee youth as providing assistance included mothers, fathers, siblings, aunts, uncles and cousins. This wide array of family members were able to offer encouragement to refugee youth as they pursued their HE goals. In addition, many students noted that their families provide financial support to pay for tuition and/or additional fees associated with HE.

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[149] Ong, Aihwa, and Stephen Collier. "Global assemblages." *Technology, politics and Ethics as Anthropological Problems*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005.
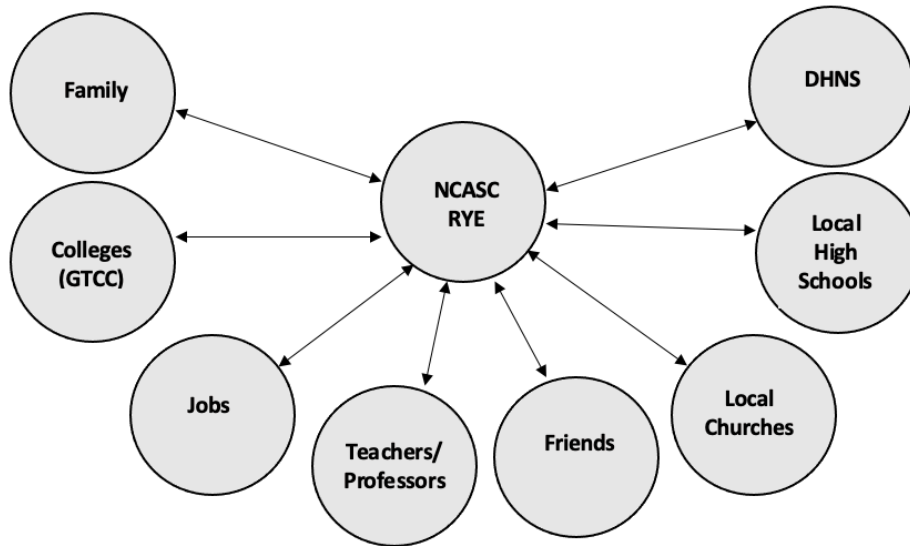
Assemblages of Support

Figure 4.1 Assemblages of Support

One college student told me when asked the question above:

> Okay so, especially my dad. He, he's one of the biggest supporters, like, you
> know, he support us, you know if we, if you wanna do something, like you know,
> for instance when I was you know thinking that I'm gonna be a nurse you know at
> first, I told my dad that I'm gonna be a nurse he say nursing is good. Keep
> working for it and you know it's good. He supports us a lot.

A second student had this to say about the role her mother plays in supporting her pursuit
of HE:

I would say my mom cause every time I try to go down she push me up. She's like, you have to do this I'm not letting you down. Oh my gosh I would say my mom because *sigh* my mom is is like everything for me. She's, to support me she even do everything for me, and she don't want me to live as she live now cause she want me to be like she want me to be like something that she wasn't able to be. You know what I mean?

In both examples students noted that their parents encourage them to pursue a HE and when they feel bogged down by "the System" to not give up. These two students, in addition to many other refugee youth, told me that their parents do all they can to ensure their children have access to HE, in hopes that they will obtain a HE degree to work in higher paying jobs than the often exploitive and physically demanding jobs their parents are funneled into given their status as refugees. The second student emphasizes this above by saying that her mom supports her because "she want me to be like something that she wasn't able to be." In other words, refugee and immigrant youth have greater opportunities to pursue HE due to policies in "the System" that grant immigrant and refugee youth the same right to a K-12 education as their U.S. citizen peers. It should be restated that some states still have policies which create barriers for refugee and immigrant youth to pursue a HE, meaning that even with their parents emotional and financial support, they still lack equal access to HE as their U.S. citizen peers.

In addition to familial support, refugee youth revealed that their co-ethnic peers and friends were another source of support. Many refugee youth referenced connections to religious organizations and/or church communities who offered them advice in navigating "the System" as well as psychosocial support when they were new to the United States and in the process of adjusting to local cultural and societal expectations. Many students cited the Newcomer's school as being an additional site for support, being surrounded by peers who each had their own experience of migration to the United States. As one student praised, "We will never forget the days we spent there (Newcomer's school) with our friends and teachers and how we support each other and speak to each other about our cultures. And yeah it was good the Newcomer's school."

While family and friends were able to offer financial and psychosocial support to refugee youth in navigating "the System" they were still in need of supporters who knew "the System" well enough to network and advocate on their behalf; to be allies who amplify their voices, rather than be their voices. The ADYD program staff are able to offer refugee youth guided support from an insider's perspective. In this way ADYD program staff network with local HE institutions to provide refugee youth assisted access to their first step into HE. In real life, students shared with me that ADYD program staff provided them assistance with: filling out their FAFSA, the census, COVID-19 related hygiene practices, building a resumé, transportation to jobs, college tours, assistance in

filling out college and/or scholarship applications, providing volunteering opportunities, mediate between teachers and students, expose students to career choices, etc.

In this way, ADYD program staff seek to remove barriers placed in the path of refugee youth by "the System" in pursuing HE. ADYD program staff are able to make themselves available to the needs of students throughout the day since it is their job when refugee youth's other sources of support are busy working or taking classes of their own. Additionally, students referenced staff members who have specifically assisted them. When asked to describe the ways in which the ADYD staff and volunteers have been able to support them, students collectively responded in gratitude as shown in the responses from seven of the students' responses:

Table 4.5 Support Offered by the ADYD Program:

1	Whenever I have a question I just call them and they just help me, so you know, they are great. They help a lot.
2	They really care about us.
3	I really like working with them. They really did a good job. I like them. They're so nice.
4	I couldn't go to school if it wasn't for them.
5	Without them I would not make it, I don't think I would make it.

6	Without them, none of us would have came or be successful cause they are really helping us.
7	I think it is very helpful for anyone, for any refugee who come to the U.S. Especially those who don't have anybody who know the system very well. I mean I don't have anybody. I was by myself, me and my family. So, it is really important to have, to give any refugees this type of program.

Many students specifically referenced their appreciation for the open availability of the ADYD staff. Even in the wake of COVID-19 ADANC as an organization regularly convened to make necessary adjustments to the ways they operate to be able to continue to offer the best support they could. This included shifting ADYD program meetings to a virtual Zoom platform, communicating with students via WhatsApp group and individual texts as well as providing socially distanced volunteering opportunities to sew masks (one of which I attended) to protect refugee youths families, friends and the surrounding communities' frontline workers.

Surrounded by the collective assemblage of support outlined above, refugee youth are able to pursue their personal academic goals. The ADYD program is the primary way in which refugee youth learn "the System" and are supported in their navigation of it to pursue HE. As one student stated, "In America you can change your life *if* you know "the System." Like America is easy to be honest. But like when you're new. You need someone to tell you the system." Another student explained, "You have to have support

to be successful. Sometimes it is hard when you don't have the right support around you." In both examples, students reinforce that navigation of "the System" is not an individual task, but a collaborative effort.

6) <u>Personal Academic Goals</u>

When asked why pursuing a HE was important to them, refugee youth provided a variety of responses that all circled back to goals of personal improvement and/or improving the quality of life for their own assemblage of support. The following are professions refugee youth told me they either intend to or are currently studying as a result of internal motivations and assemblages of support: nursing, pharmacy technician, surgeon, human services, judge, business, carrier pilot, accounting, social work, fashion design, cosmetology and pediatrician. One high school student shared their future goals with me: "I want to go to college of course. Get scholarships, travel and study different cultures." This student sees HE as an opportunity to engage in migration by choice, rather than migration by force, along with educating themselves on cultures they have not been able to learn about. In this way, the student is making it their responsibility to learn about cultures apart from their own, rather than expecting members of that culture to carry the weight of instruction. "If I go to college people will respect you if you have a higher education. People will like me because I have education. They will respect you more."

Another student responded to my question, viewing HE as a pathway for alleviating the expectation of their mother to work in a meat processing facility, to support their assemblage of support beyond the childcare they already provide to their mother for their younger siblings:

> Umm my goal is to finish college like to finish college and to to be a medical as I want. You know, I want to be a medical so I want to finish college first so I can be a medical and help my mom. You know, she not gonna have to work at [a chicken processing plant] anymore. I think if I can do medical you know a good job the way, like if I work in office like a good job nice job for me. That's my goal.

A final more extensive example comes from a student who was set to begin their college studies in fall 2020:

Table 4.6 Academic Goals:

R:	1	Why is going to college important to you?
S:	2	Well um, I think it makes my life better and it also helps me to achieve
	3	my dreams. Like I said my dream is to work with refugees so that is the
	4	best way to work with refugees and it will me the opportunity to connect

	5	with refugees. For example, if I want to to work with refugees before I
	6	graduated or just like the way I am right now, I can help them but I
	7	wouldn't get much opportunities. But if I graduated from college and if I am
	8	legal, like the agencies and case workers then I will get a lot of
	9	opportunity to work with refugees and I will have a big power to make
	10	differences, you know.
R:	11	Mhmm. Do you hope to work in North Carolina or somewhere else in the
	12	future when you graduate from college?
S:	13	Yeah so my plans right now if I don't change them is by any way, if I can
	14	make any difference in the refugee camps you know, I will. Like I said, I
	15	grew up in the refugee camps and I have seen a lot of mistakes and uh things
	16	that are not supposed to happen. So, by any chance if I get the power to
	17	make changes, that is the plan. You know some people they were waiting
	18	for their cases to be settled in the U.S. and they waited for 20 years and

	19	their case was sorted to another person who doesn't know it and they
	20	are like we are waiting to go to America and then after twenty years
	21	they are able to go to America and this is uh what you call, corruption, I
	22	think corruption in English. They sort our cases to other people. That is
	23	because nobody is checking on them, you know. So, this hurts a lot of
	24	refugees in the refugee camps and these are the power that I need to achieve
	25	my goals and continue working with refugees.
R:	26	Yes, um I can hear that you're very passionate about making a difference
	27	and changing things. And I think that's, whatever you do in life, I think
	28	that's most important is like the passion--
S:	29	Yes it is.

For this student, as seen in lines 2-5 HE is seen as a locus of power that stands between them and their goal of making any sort of lasting change to the structure and system of refugee camps. In lines 5-7 the student notes that if they tried to become an advocate for refugees "as they are right now" (in other words, as someone with a high

school diploma), they do not believe they will have as many opportunities with their current education level to make lasting changes. In line 8 the student adds a condition to their ability to enact change, becoming a citizen. Legal status in conjunction with attaining a HE degree is marked by students as the pathway to agency, of finally being valued for what they have to say. This student recognizes that within "the System" education, including the ability to communicate effectively (in English) and citizenship status grant individuals greater access to resources and opportunities. Lines 13 and 14 mark the fourth time in this excerpt the student emphasizes their desire to work as an advocate making changes in refugee camps. In line 15 the student briefly inserts a narrative line speaking to their own experience living in refugee camps and the mistakes they observed being made and the effects those had on their personal life. In lines 17-22 the student switches to the use of "they" to provide supporting examples of other lived experiences they heard of, referencing the extensive length of time they had to spend waiting to come to the U.S. They then switch to grouping themselves with the others by saying "They sort *our* cases to other people." In this line, "they" is in reference to "the System." In lines 23-25 the student signals the result of their examples through "so," reemphasizing, once again, that the only way to attempt changing the "corruption" of "the System" is to conform in some ways to "the System" by learning English, pursuing a HE and becoming a U.S. citizen.

Beyond this excerpt, this student went on to tell me that they spent most of their life growing up in an Ethiopian refugee camp after fleeing from Eritrea. As part of the interview process, as sketched out in the previous methods section, I asked students to share images with me they had taken of their home country, their families and/or their culture. This student took a screenshot from Google maps displaying a drone view of the refugee camp they lived in. To explain the context of this image the student illustrated, "You can see some white things, some white buildings. It's very separated. That is my school. And my house is at the other end, you know, the opposite. So, I walked 30 minutes on foot. So, I walked 30 minutes to get to school." In their explanation, the student emphasizes the distance they had to travel on foot to reach the makeshift school available to them in the refugee camp.
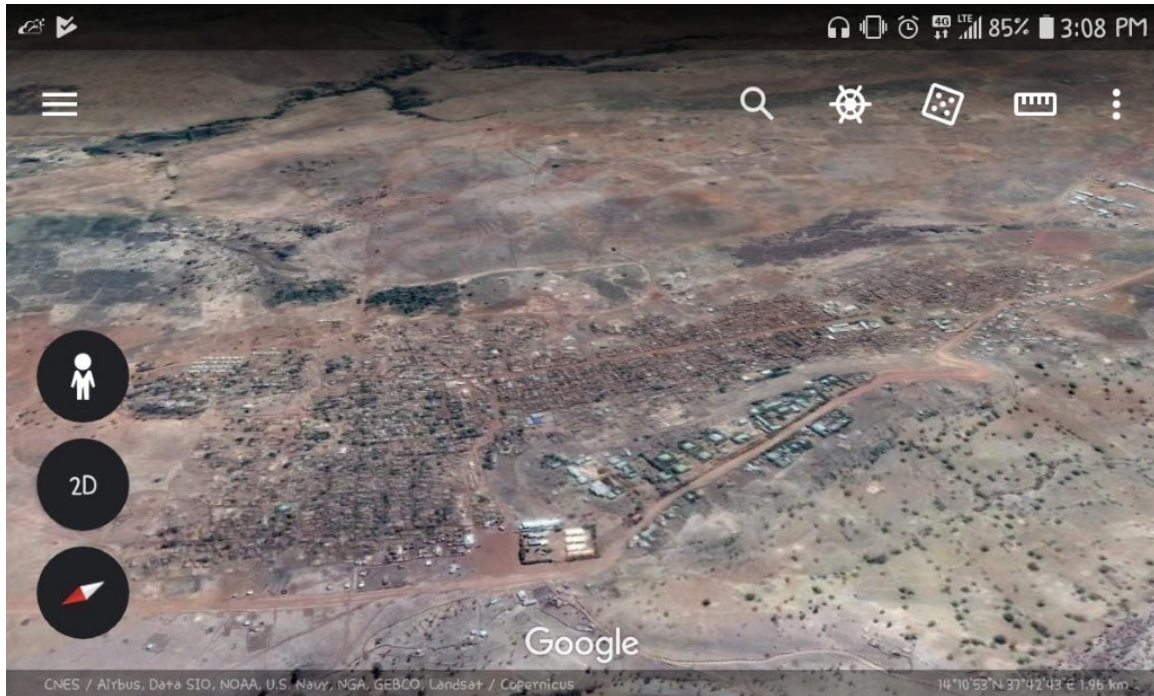
Figure 4.2 An Ethiopian Refugee Camp

In order to access better quality education than what was offered within the camp, this student was eventually separated from their family and taken by bus to school where they lived during the school year. They were only able to visit their families on designated school breaks. The student carried a mobile phone with them and took pictures of their various travels. The text embedded in the image reads the name of the refugee camp, Shimelba. As of January 17, 2021, over 400 buildings in the refugee camp were reported as being destroyed, leaving the camp inaccessible by the UN to provide emergency medical and food supplies.[6] The student came to the U.S. with their mother in

2018. This reality emphasizes this students and other refugee youth's earlier claims that refugee camps as well as "the System" are in need of major reforms to protect refugees and other forcibly displaced peoples access to safety and education.

Figure 4.3 Journey "Home": A picture a student took on a ride from their school to the refugee camp where their mother lived.

Earlier in this chapter, in an analysis of the transcribed text of table 4.1, a student offered as a critique of "the System," a narrative account in which they were excluded through an act of bullying by U.S. citizen peers while sitting on a school bus and the response of erasure they received when they reported the incident to school

administrators (an extension of "the System"). The narrative example above ends with an image of a bus which was on its journey back to the camp where a different student lived. Both of these students were in motion, en route to "home." An interesting juxtaposition between these two accounts is the physical distance refugee youth had to traverse to access education while living in camps and, in contrast, the social, discursive barriers utilized by "the System" to limit refugee youth's equal accessibility to education in the United States.

7) <u>Conclusion</u>

In this chapter I have outlined multiple ways in which refugee youths' daily lives require various performances of scale in attempts to resist decades of erasure and/or exclusion implicated by "the System." Their lived experiences provide embodied evidence that can serve to make active critiques of "the System." This supports that discourse is utilized as a form of social action by both U.S. lawmakers to present immigrants and refugees as criminal, diseased or in need of integration *and* by refugee youth by presenting distinct characteristics of their cultures, their countries and their lived experiences. Through a multivocality of lived experiences, I have demonstrated the ways in which "the System" has created the conditions in which refugee youth are required to bear the weight of additional responsibilities (i.e. cultural educators) that U.S. citizen youth are not pressured to perform, as well as the way refugee youth perform language as a social action of resistance to "the System."

CONCLUSION

Over the course of my research collaboration, I had the privilege of hearing each of the 16 students' stories- where they came from, where they are at and where they plan on going in their lives. I would like to outline one of these stories here to illustrate an example of how a student has navigated "the System" with the support of the ADYD Program and to bring to life my concluding remarks. Twenty-two-year old Amir came with his mother and younger brother to the United States in 2015 with the sponsorship of the ADANC. Like his peers in the program, Amir began his education journey at New Arrival School (NAS) where refugee youth are expected to learn English to begin their process of integration into "the System." After one year of intensive language instruction, Amir was separated from many of his co-ethnic peers when he transferred to a local high school. Throughout high school Amir was connected with the ADYD Program and served as a peer mentor at times to other students in the program. He was successful in high school, graduating early in January 2018. To ADANC, Amir's actions were seen as an example for upcoming youth to follow in the footsteps of. Amir told me that all the documents required to enroll in HE institutions is "really confusing" and that the program staff personally helped him fill out paperwork such as the FAFSA or to inform students about potential scholarship opportunities. With the assistance of the ADYD Program staff, Amir secured thousands of dollars in scholarships to attend a local college program in Structures Assembly, leading him to pursue the Carrier Pilot Program at a local

community college. When asked what lead Amir to pursue a career in aviation he responded:

> It's a long story. Um, it's always been fascinating to me you know? Even when I was back in Africa I uh I used to see you know helicopters coming in you know all hot, bringing food and everything. I mean like wow, it's really amazing. I was like, who's that guy doing that thing? Yeah uh I was pretty interested early on, but it wasn't possible over there. So, when I got here I was like I can do it, I can really do this. So yeah. That's pretty much it. That's the small version of it.

Amir, being one of the first students to graduate as a member of the ADYD Program, demonstrates the complex layers of "the System" individuals like Amir are expected to navigate once they resettle. Not only did he undergo intensive language instruction and school transferring, he also was required to "be interviewed by people from Washington D.C." As Amir puts it:

> They come here just sit you down, ask you a couple of questions uh in the vast majority. They get everyone involved. Yours [my research collaboration] might be voluntary but with theirs you're here so you have to show up. But they mainly focus on let's get everybody and know you so we can fund you more.

Amir points out how refugee youth are often expected to perform as cultural educators to bolster support, through funds, for federal and local resettlement agencies and/or organizations. There is an interesting dichotomy at play here that Amir had to live through as he has been and will continue to be affected by federal and local governments

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at large in the ways demonstrated above (education and the securing of funds). More specifically, his lived experiences are affected discursively through exclusionary governmental policies which have encouraged Amir to no longer associate himself with the label "refugee" in most public settings, given the perception of the label.

In this thesis, I have outlined the ways in which refugee youth, like Amir, recognize the importance of having programs, such as the ADYD Program of the ADANC, to help them navigate the complexities of "the System." In particular, I focused on what youth told me with regard to *why* the program is necessary from their lived experiences and how they performatively reassert their complex positioning and presence. My aim was to tease apart the particulars of the U.S. Southeast region, the receiving assemblage, as well as the lived experiences of resettled refugee populations, while also charting what is common across other places as reported in the literature.

In the introduction and theoretical sections, I incorporated anthropological understandings/readings of Foucauldian concepts- discourse as knowledge/power, panopticism, and biopower to outline the complex layers of regulation refugee youth are subjected to. For example, the multiple sites in which refugee youth are expected to perform as "refugees" as Amir had to in the initial interviews before coming to the U.S. and once again as a member of the ADYD Program. In addition, I summarized anthropological approaches to citizenship and refugee studies-especially those that focus on the phases of resettlement and education within the U.S. such as Amir beginning at the Newcomer's school and transitioning to a local high school. I continued by investigating the ways in which HE institutions are more exclusionary than U.S. public (K-12) schools

as there are no federal policies in the U.S. which protect refugee youth's equal access to HE. Amir chose to stay in-state to pursue HE, for example, because out-of-state tuition rates were too expensive. I argue, keeping populations such as refugee youth from being able to access HE in ways equal to their U.S. citizen peers, is an act of intentional exclusion of access to knowledge.

I emphasize that Foucault's theories (with the support of Agamben) illustrate the ways in which refugees are marked in a state of exception, defining certain populations as those who should be excluded from services or opportunities reserved and protected for U.S. citizen youth. Through Foucault's conceptualizations I argue that some ways in which discourse is used as knowledge and power is through deficit frameworks in education literature, exclusionary policy creation and maintenance, both federally and locally, as well as mass media portrayals of refugees and other migratory populations as increasingly criminal. This is reflected in the example through Amir's avoidance of associating himself with the label "refugee" in many settings.

Further, I argue that the creation and maintenance of the aforementioned modes of discourse uphold refugee youth (asylees, immigrants and/or other migratory populations to the U.S.) as "abnormal," rather than emphasizing their strengths-based resilience, or lived performances of agentive resistance to "the System." "The System" being the term which refugee youth repeatedly used in interview conversations to depict the complex layers of exclusion in the United States that have been implemented historically and reinforced in the present.

The U.S. Southeast has only recently grown to be a leading region in refugee resettlement. The region is known for exclusionary policies that resist resettlement of "the abnormal" and to restrict access to the same services or privileges extended to birthright citizens (i.e. local tuition rates at HE institutions). This was recently the case in North Carolina but has since been overturned. I argue how youth experience resettlement is partially contingent on the various ways policies are implemented-some top down-some horizontal- through particular institutions and are interpreted and emphasized in ways to determine who should be excluded from access to NGO's or aid. For example, students like Amir are often hindered in their pursuit of HE, requiring the support of programs such as the ADYD Program.

As a result, I argue that local diasporic refugee resettlement agencies such as ADANC, and more specifically, programs such as the ADYD program are needed because policies and local sites of exclusion push parents of refugee youth to prioritize working for "the System" in low-paying exploitative jobs (such as meat processing plants) which keep them from having the time or resources to help their children navigate said "System." Capitalism, which the United States utilizes as their exploitative economic assistant, keeps certain individuals in generational positions of power or marginalization. This includes those who head U.S. governmental offices, financial resources at federal and local levels, CEOs and owners of multinational corporations, those in control of who qualifies to fill tenured positions at HE institutions, etc. As a result of compounded sites of generational power or exclusion, individuals such as refugee youth rely on the assistance of co-ethnic resources, such as the ADANC to navigate "the System."

Refugee youth simultaneously display resistance to, while also being actively engaged with expectations of performativity within "the System" to perform expected narratives of "success" or following rules to be seen as "good refugees." Such as, Amir's participation in the Washington D.C. interviews or arguably, in this research. In this way, refugee youth are expected to overcompensate through their actions and discourse to appear as resilient, rather than deficient, "normal" rather than "abnormal", law abiding, rather than criminal in attempts to silence negative discourse compounded within "the System." They become actively engaged in "the System" by attending school, doing what it takes to be perceived as a good student and entering the workforce thereafter.

Through attending HE institutions refugee youth are able to gain greater positioning to understand "the System," secure careers that afford them similar positions of power to their U.S. citizen peers with hopes of re-writing the United States historic narratives of exclusion and erasure of African diasporic populations, to carve out space of recognition and change. Amir, after completing the Carrier Pilot program will have more credibility and skills to enter the workforce and advocate for the rights of those labeled "refugees." This research has revealed, across examples of many lived experiences of refugee youth that they cannot be resistant to "the System" without first being actively engaged in performing contra to every script of damning discourse surrounding the socio-political label of "refugee" - they must understand "the System" in order to reform i

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Intro:

Thank you for taking the time to be interviewed today. This interview will take up about 30 minutes to an hour of your time. If you feel uncomfortable answering any questions you are asked, you may tell me you'd like to skip them. Okay, great, let's begin!

Interview questions:

For students:

1. What's your name?

2. How old are you?

3. What year of high school or college are you in? Or, are you in the stage of transition between?

4. Where country are you from?

5. Tell me about your experience with the resettlement process.

6. What feelings do you associate with the resettlement process?

7. Tell me about your family. How many siblings do you have?

8. What are your main interests and/or hobbies?

9. When did you begin attending U.S. public schools?

10. Tell me about your high school years. What stands out?

11. Why did you choose to join the ADYD?

12. Can you describe in detail the members of the ADYD (staff, volunteers, peers)?

13. How many times a week do you attend ADYD related activities under normal circumstances during the school year? In the summer? How has the Corona virus effected these activities?

14. Can you describe in detail the activities you regularly participate in as a member of the ADYD?

15. What are your academic related goals?

16. How is the ADYD helping you reach your academic goals?

17. What is something you wish the ADYD would do to help you reach your goals that they currently are not doing?

18. Are there any events you have attended that are linked to your goals such as a college fair, campus tours, or ADYD organized meetings to connect you with local universities?

19. What are the various motivators in your life to pursue a college education?

20. Why is pursuing a college education important to you?

21. What activities do you normally perform to be successful academically?

22. From your perspective, how is the goal of pursuing college education sought? How is it achieved?

23. What objects do you use to help you in achieving your goals of pursuing higher education? For example the use of technology to achieve higher education.

24. How do you use these objects to help you reach your goals?

25. How would you describe the order of steps a refugee student must take to achieve the goal of pursuing post-secondary education?

26. Can you describe in detail your goals for the next 5 years?

27. What do you want me to know about being a refugee in the United States?

28. Is there anything else you would like to tell me?