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Matthew Allen
An Exploration of the Nepali-
Bhutanese Community from
the Adolescent Perspective

ABSTRACT

This study was undertaken to explore the strengths and needs of the Nepali-Bhutanese refugee community from the adolescent perspective. As research suggests that the Nepali-Bhutanese population has a higher rate of suicidality than the general population of the United States, this study examines underlying community and systemic issues and barriers to integration, and community strengths that might help overcome them.

A focus group of 11 Nepali-Bhutanese adolescents was held at an Asian Pacific Islander community health organization in Washington State. They responded to and discussed ten questions about the strengths and needs of their community.

Major findings included the participants' definitions of "community," and how and where this community could be found, the participants' conflict and confusion around their sense of identity in relation to the community at large, and intergenerational differences in the community as a result of immigration to America. Further, the participants wanted their parents to "work with the times," and to have a more open mind to American culture, society, and rules. The participants wanted their community to gossip less. The participants desired to eliminate discrimination about caste, class, and gender in their community at large. The participants experienced a wish for less conflict about religion. The participants expressed a number of problems and barriers that their parents and grandparents faced as first-generation immigrants. Finally, the participants had suggestions for how professionals could engage the community.

**AN EXPLORATION OF THE NEPALI-BHUTANESE COMMUNITY FROM
THE ADOLESCENT PERSPECTIVE**

A project based upon an investigation at Asian
Counseling and Referral Service, Seattle,
Washington, submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Social Work.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

In 2013, a study published in the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* found that adults within the Nepali-Bhutanese refugee population had higher rates of suicidality, suicidal ideation, and potentially higher rates of undiagnosed mental illness than the general population of the United States (Suicide and suicidal ideation among Bhutanese refugees — United States, 2009–2012, p. 534). The CDC's report called attention to the Nepali-Bhutanese people's situation and sparked a discussion about culturally appropriate treatment. Although mental illness is a significant issue within this particular refugee community, an emphasis on sickness has missed important conversations about systemic issues in the United States for those who seek resettlement and integration. Some of the strengths and the resilience of this refugee group have been overlooked in conversations about this population as well. Consequently, the CDC's 2013 study brought to light questions about how helping professions could give voice to the Nepali-Bhutanese refugee group, instead of objectifying them as sickly or problematic.

In the fall of 2013, Hye-Kyung Kang began the larger study within which this research project took place. Her work with the Nepali-Bhutanese people was in collaboration with an Asia Pacific Islander community health organization. However, while the larger study's focus was on the empowerment of the larger community, this study sought to analyze the adolescent perspective of the community. Over 50 percent of the world's refugee population consists of children under the age of eight. Despite this there is little research about the youth after resettlement (Presse and

Thomson, 2008, p. 97). Via one adolescent focus group, this study focused on the Nepali-Bhutanese refugee adolescent population and their interpretations of the presenting issues for the larger refugee population. The purpose of this exploratory study was to assess the strengths and needs of Nepali-Bhutanese refugee community that had resettled in the state of Washington from the adolescent perspective.

Information was also sought as to the adolescents' views on what contributing factors might have exacerbated the refugee population's situation in the United States. This study sought to find out what the adolescents had to say about mental illness in their parents and grandparents' generations, and how helping professionals could encourage and partner with the older generations to empower their community. Acculturation theory is a tool of little utility with racist implications for integration policy and local community practice; different definitions of integration have been presented here, with a reframing of the immigrant narrative.

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

This literature review provides an overview of the Nepal-Bhutanese refugee situation and prior research regarding this population. The review includes a history of this population's displacement from Bhutan, living conditions in Nepali refugee camps, and the population's resettlement and difficulties in the United States. This review also includes broader issues of integration of adolescent refugees and intergenerational conflict within refugee families. Lastly, this review will look at acculturation theory and definitions around the concept of integration.

History of Nepali-Bhutanese Refugee Population

Who are the Nepali-Bhutanese? Much of the research on Nepali-Bhutanese refugees has focused on the history of the Bhutanese crisis that the older generations experienced. However, many of the younger generations resettled in the United States and have never seen Bhutan. It is important to review both the older generations' experiences and displacement from Bhutan, as well as the younger generations' role and experience living in Nepali refugee camps.

The previous generations were born in Bhutan or emigrated there as laborers from Nepal or from Darjeeling in West Bengal, India (Evans, 2010, p. 27). After emigrating to Bhutan, most people settled in the southern part of Bhutan on the border with India. Some of the earliest immigrants were 60,000 laborers brought over from Nepal in the nineteenth century by a prominent Bhutanese political Dorji family (Kharat, 2001, p. 39). During the 1900s, the Bhutanese government in Thimphu allowed sections of the country to be settled by the Nepali-speaking peoples for clearing land and commercial logging (Sinha, 2001, p. 165). This land was mostly

undeveloped territory to the south that the majority Ngalung Mangloid group didn't have the population, interest, or capacity to develop. As immigration increased, the people known as the Lhotshampas increasingly characterized the south. These people are now sometimes called *Nepali-Bhutanese*, loosely translated as *southern dwellers* (Evans, 2010, p. 27). Research suggests that the country would be very different in terms of economy and infrastructure, if this group had not immigrated (Giri, 2005, p. 348).

At the time, Bhutan consisted of multiple ethnic groups with different religions and languages. The Lhotshampas were the largest minority group in Bhutan and were predominantly Hindu. The majority group and ruling class was known as Drupkas, who practiced Mahayana Buddhism, and whose descendants came from Tibet. The Buddhist Drupkas or Ngalung Mangloid racial group ruled for hundreds of years and remains the majority ethnic group in Bhutan. In the southern region of Bhutan, there were a few other smaller Nepali-speaking groups who practiced Buddhism. "Despite these differences, 'in Bhutan we were all stuck together and we called ourselves Nepali-speaking Bhutanese people...'" (Refugee Man, 8 January 2009 as cited in Evans, 2010, p. 27).

Bhutan's government and policies regarding the Lhotshampas. The Wangchuck Dynasty of Bhutan started in 1907 and practiced hereditary monarchical rule. Five successive Wangchuck kings ruled throughout the years, and still rule to this day. Throughout the 1900s, Bhutanese rulers attempted to institute policies to mold and control the Lhotshampa people. However, the Bhutanese government's initial policy towards the south was isolation. Lhotshampas could not own land in the north, or marry northerners. The 3rd King Wangchuck did not tour the south until 1957, and the southerners largely managed their own affairs. This lack of government control led to little or no social or political integration, and the economy prospered without government sanctions or oversight. The disconnection between the regions also meant that many

Lhotshampa people did not learn the Drupka Dzongkha language. The disconnection also allowed for ideological influence on the part of India.

Under the third king Wangchuck, a number of changes for the good occurred. These included the 1958 Nationality Law of Bhutan, which (among other things) granted Lhotshampas citizenship. Under this king, the country “established the Tshogdu (a body of people’s representatives,” which created a development plan that began two decades of reforms (Evans, 2010, p. 28). These reforms encouraged Nepali-speaking people to identify with the nation, encouraged marriages between the north and south, and gave Lhotshampas some political representation. It also gave the people access to senior government, army, and police force positions (Evans, 2010, p. 28).

The 4th king Wangchuck assumed power in 1972, and it was under his reign that the discriminatory policies against the Lhotshampas were instituted. The king created a council that aimed to create a homogenous society. At first, the council tried to assimilate the groups by incentivizing marriages between the dominant Ngalung peoples and minority groups. They also encouraged conversion to the Buddhist religion. According to Giri, when the “coerced assimilation” effort failed, the 4th King Wangchuck proposed a number of policies that intended to reduce the Lhotshampas population through revoking their legal citizenship and via “mass eviction” (2005, p. 348).

In the mid to late 1980s, a predominant discourse about “overforeignization” emerged among the Ngalung elite (Giri, 2005, p. 349). This growing nervousness led to a citizenship law that required people to learn the Dzongkha language and prove residence in Bhutan through pre-1958 documentation (Giri, 2005, p. 349). This law took away citizenship from non-Bhutanese women who had received citizenship through their marriages to Bhutanese men. This decree also stripped their children of citizenship, even if one parent was Ngalung and they were born in

Bhutan. In total, citizenship was stripped from 10,000 Lhotshampa wives and 60,000 children, and 103,000 people were considered “illegal” or “economic migrants” (Giri, 2005, p. 350). In 1988, a census was done in an attempt to prove that minority groups were overtaking the country. The governing body found out that without action, the Nepali-speaking Lhotshampas would soon be the majority ethnic group in Bhutan (Kharat, 2001, p. 41).

Next, the “One Nation, One People” policy of 1989 asserted that the Drupka culture was the national culture (Bird, 2012, p. 23). The policy nationalized the Dzhongka language, and forbade the teaching of the Nepali and Sanskrit languages in schools. It enforced Driglam Namzha, a Buddhist traditional dress. The *gho* coat for men and the *kri* dress for females became mandatory dress for all Bhutanese (Bird, 2012, p. 23). The mandated dress was economically burdensome as the Lhotshampas and other minority groups had to buy new expensive clothes and were heavily fined for not doing so. The Hindu Lhotshampas were forbidden to wear their cultural and religious dress-- even for weddings and funerals. Also, the police were given authority to detain the Lhotshampas and take away their citizenship (Giri, 2005, p. 351). Some researchers posit that the period between 1989 and 1993 should be considered ethnic cleansing against the Lhotshampas (Bird, 2012, p. 23).

In response to the discriminatory policies, the Lhotshampas held peaceful protests calling for political reforms. The government responded by sending the Royal Bhutanese Army to stop them and their protests. (Evans, 2010, p. 31). In September 1990, the Bhutanese government killed 300 peaceful protesters. Others were jailed, detained, or harassed. Schools and hospitals were closed in many parts of southern Bhutan; refugees saw the closures as punishment for the protests. In 1992, another act was passed that gave police the leverage to detain, jail, torture, and kill individuals without accountability (Giri, 2005). When the Lhotshampas were detained, the Nepali-

speaking refugees reported that they were threatened with physical violence to sign voluntary migration forms (Association of Human Rights Activists, 1993).

During the mass eviction, the people encountered devastating gendered violence that represented the women's vulnerable state within Bhutan. Within the Nepali refugee camps, women had reported “domestic violence, child marriage, bigamy, and abandonment” as routine occurrences throughout Bhutan (Giri, 2005, p. 353). During the eviction, women had even less protection, as many males fled in fear of the government. Women were often interrogated as to their husbands' whereabouts, raped, and sometimes killed. In some cases, women were raped in front of their families to spread fear and to force them to leave the country (HRW, 2003). Additionally, men who remained in the Bhutanese villages were pressured to bring the women and young girls to the Bhutanese armed forces. (Giri, 2005, p. 363).

Nepali refugee camps.

The future is far from our eyes- we don't know about the future. I am always worried about the future- we have talents and knowledge and personalities, but having all this without a nation is like a flower without a garden (Evans, 2007, p. 184).

By 1992, 80,000 Lhotshampas were forced across the Bhutanese border into India and were transported in Indian army trucks to Nepal. In Nepal, the refugees were not considered citizens despite that many of them descended from Nepali heritage. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) stepped in and built seven camps in the southeastern districts of Jhapa and Morang in Nepal. A daily food ration was given to the refugees by the UN's World Food Program (Bird, 2012, p. 22). The camps themselves were considered "model" refugee camps due to the inclusion of the refugees in the camp administration and programs, as well as the quality of community facilities. Education was offered through grade eight (Evans, 2007, p. 177).

Refugees were elected annually to the management committee charged with interfacing with various agencies and coordinating the daily administration of the seven Bhutanese camps.

As can be expected, the transition to camp life was considerably difficult. The camps and programs, the camps' designation as "model" did not preclude potential issues.

For adults who played significant social and economic roles in Bhutan, becoming a refugee has been a marginalizing experience. Their sense of abandonment is acute. In contrast, children's lifeworlds have been transplanted relatively intact into the crowded context of the refugee camp. While adults express feelings of abandonment, many of the children show greater concern with the material aspects of the camp environment. (Hinton, 2000, p. 200)

Due to the long-term and seemingly unending nature of the camps, mental health issues, stressors, and domestic violence frequently occurred. These issues coincided with the experience of general discouragement due to the government's refusal to distribute work permits, and the population's lack of access to higher education.

Men, who had previously been active and productive back in Bhutan, languished in camps. Drinking and angry, they would come home and beat their wives and children.

You see, we're deeply ashamed of our lives in this dusty camp. We've lived here for 14 years. We were victimized [by Bhutan's government], but nobody is really helping us, not Nepal government, nor others especially influential [in Bhutanese affairs], India government is deaf towards our misery. We've no work or future. Even our [exiled] leaders do not get permission or visa to travel. So we are very angry and frustrated. This is probably why we've often been in difficult relations with our family and neighbors. And we unknowingly become addicted to bad behaviors. You may be thinking we are bad men,

but we can't stop being angry. Most of the time we realize (for instance after beating our child), and ask 'why did I do that act?' (Giri, 2005, pp. 361-362).

In turn, the camps were structured in a way that left the women vulnerable. Families were registered under the male head of household, which in some occurrences left women and children without basic necessities. In one instance, a refugee woman reported that her husband sold their families' rations to support his drinking (Giri, 2005, p. 360). Giri also cited a UNHCR investigation from November 2002 that showed that women within the camps were subject to "rape, attempted rape, sexual assault, child marriage, forced marriage and domestic violence" (2005, pp. 359-360).

Female students were trafficked by fellow refugees and aid workers, impregnated by teachers, and raped by aid workers and Nepali locals. Sometimes students were expelled after they became pregnant by the teachers. Some of these cases were resolved by marriage (Giri, 2005, p. 361). An UNHCR report in 2002 confirmed at least 18 cases of sexual abuse of women and children from June 2001 to October 2002 by 16 UNHCR agency employees (Giri, 2005, p. 359; Evans, 2006, pp. 185-186). As a result of the gendered abuse and assault, the Lhotshampa women suffered from depression, anxiety, flashbacks, and sleeplessness (Giri, 2003). Suicidality within refugee camps in Nepali-Bhutanese refugee women and girls was four times that of the general Nepali population (HRW, 2003, p. 21).

Role of children in the refugee camps. In 2007, Evans's study aimed to assess the role of Nepali-Bhutanese children and their perspectives about living in refugee camps in Southeastern Nepal. The research also explored "the compatibility of agency concepts of childhood, Bhutanese concepts of childhood, and the reality of Bhutanese children's experiences living in a refugee camp environment" (p. 172). Evans visited six of the seven refugee camps in Nepal, and utilized community based participatory research (CBPR) to observe and conduct interviews of the children

in a project called the “Children’s Forum” (CF). The CF consisted of groups of 10-12 children, and sought their opinions about likes and dislikes about their community in the refugee camp (p. 173).

Children were seen as active participants within their community within Nepali-Bhutanese culture and the refugee camps. However, there was delineation between how much responsibility children could take within their households, and how much they could take publicly in governance and the maintenance of community affairs. Privately, children helped the family do things such as “breaking stones to sell, weaving or making chairs,” -- whatever the family did to support their economic needs (p. 181). Children also took part within the home in collecting water and rations, caring for siblings, and cooking and cleaning (p. 181). Girls tended to take on larger responsibilities, especially in regard to household work. However, the Nepali-Bhutanese refugees saw their children as having a minimal role and capability to help manage the refugee camp or administer services in a public capacity. Consequently, the children’s voices were excluded from most public decision-making.

However, Evans’s research suggested that because of the children’s matriculation in the schools, as well as the high rate of illiteracy among the older generations, children’s ideas about healthcare and other things were sometimes accepted (p. 181). Caregiving, which might be seen as a parental role, was sometimes reversed. Children would comfort their parents by staying home with the parent when he or she was sick, or the child would help throughout the camp if a family member were in trouble. Also, children were aware of the issues occurring within the camps.

According to Evans, refugee children wanted support with

child protection and rights abuses, gender-related problems include[ing] girl trafficking, rape, early marriage (especially of teenaged girls to older men), discrimination in treatment

between boys and girls, domestic abuse of children, including hazardous labor, (which) is exacerbated by alcoholism and/or polygamy in some families. (p. 182)

Young people were upset that other kids dropped out of school due to lack of positive activities and due to drinking and drugs. They also complained about the lack of services for younger children, including having non-dirty nor hazardous places to play (p. 183). Older siblings were seen by the young refugee focus group (CF) as negative influences in terms of drugs and alcohol. Poverty, lack of work opportunities, and fighting due to crowded conditions in the camps were some of the other issues for the young camp refugees.

Last, lack of finances made it difficult to fund schooling for the refugee children. Recently, there had been only access to education through grade eight. Although there was a high rate of school attendance within the Nepali refugee camps, more and more kids quit school to help their families make an income or marry early (p. 184). Evans's research in 2007 also reflected that international child rights norms were sometimes in conflict with the traditional Bhutanese belief system. Examples included child marriage, which was "practiced because it is believed females go to heaven if they marry young, and young children are made to carry heavy loads because it is believed this will make them strong (CF1)" (Evans, 2007, p. 185). In Evans's study, one child also expressed the idea that the adults' superstitions caused conflict between the adults and young people (p. 185).

Evans' research in 2007 was integral to this research project, as it was the only one this researcher could find that looked at the children's perspective of life in the Nepali refugee camps. The research was also significant as Evans viewed children as active agents of social change within their communities, which was the lens and frame of this study. However, there were a couple of notable limitations to Evans's study in 2007. The ages of the children within the focus group were not specified, and the participants of the Children's Forum were referred to as "refugee

children” and “young people” (pp. 172-173). Also, interviews were done in a group context, and Evans did not follow up the group discussions with individual interviews. This approach could have led to the loss of some of the quieter children’s perspectives.

Nepali-Bhutanese Resettlement

Bhutanese refugees have suffered many health and mental health consequences of their mistreatment, and that they will experience significant challenges resettling in, and acculturating to, the host culture of western nations. (Benson et al., 2012, p. 540)

The Nepali-Bhutanese refugees spent nearly two decades in Nepali-refugee camps. By 2007 there were about 108,000 people in the seven camps due to natural growth. This was an example of a *protracted refugee situation*. According to Pressé and Thomson, “protracted refugee situations are emergencies that have been forgotten for way too long” (2008, p. 98). The UNHCR identified a protracted refugee situation as five years or more in camps with more than 25,000 refugees. Accordingly, this type of situation had a detrimental effect on human life. “The consequences of having so many human beings in a static state include wasted lives, squandered resources, and increased threats to security” (Loescher and Milner, 2009, p. 9). Pressé and Thomson added that because of these protracted situations, many of today’s refugees have problems that include severe physical and mental health issues, limited education or employability, and for children, developmental difficulties (2008, pp. 94-95).

In 2007, the United States Ambassador to Nepal, James Moriarty, negotiated a deal to resettle the Lhotshampas within several different Western countries. The resettlement countries included the U.S, Australia, Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, and Britain (Bird, 2012, pp. 22-23). According to Shrestha’s research, the main reason that many of the Nepali-Bhutanese refugees applied for resettlement was for “stable and secure employment, and to give their children a chance for better opportunities and secure life” (2005, p. 7). From 2008 to

2015, 84,800 of the 100,000 Nepali-Bhutanese refugees resettled in the United States. The task of resettlement began in 2008, and it was relegated to 10 agencies across the United States. It was the agencies' role to welcome and integrate the families socially, economically, and culturally into the new society. The agencies worked across state lines and in individual communities through branch offices and partner agencies.

The burden of resettlement was divided between United States Department of State and the local resettlement agencies. The government provided the refugees a diminutive one-time amount of \$450, and the refugees were supported for one to five years as part of state and federal welfare programs. Examples of such support included the Temporary Assistance Program and Food Stamps. The local resettlement agency provided support for the first three months in the form of rent, as well as transportation and food stipends. This support was given with the expectation that the refugee or refugee family would become independent and self-sufficient by finding stable employment, and the family would no longer be dependent upon the agency for survival. However, many of the Nepali-Bhutanese had no English language proficiency, and perhaps no literacy in any language, which made obtaining employment a difficult exercise.

According to Ager and Strang's research, when refugees have committed to live in a place, a goal of refugees is to "avoid dependence" and are "strongly motivated to contribute" (2010, p. 600). Ager and Strang also observed that it was in the refugee's best interest to contribute, as it is "important to regaining a sense of identity" (p. 600). However, the resettlement process was highly stressful because of unmet expectations for both the refugees and the resettlement agency. The refugees believed that self-sufficiency and independence was too much to ask after three months, while the staff believed that the Bhutanese refugees expected too much out of resettlement programs (Shrestha, 2011, p. 5).

Much emphasis has been put on the responsibility of the refugee to acculturate and integrate into American society. Shrestha explained that refugees are given messages about what it means to be American from the very start, and are micromanaged by institutions that require their obedience. The refugees are then judged through their obedience or disobedience as to whether they are considered deserving or non-deserving of America's support. Strang and Ager likewise saw the resettlement process, including "cultural orientation," as an othering process where the refugee was "assumed to be untrustworthy until proven innocent" (2010, p. 593).

Shrestha's research revealed that there were structural incongruities and systems of domination that led to an unbalanced power dynamic that heavily favored the agencies' staff. One example was a mandatory cultural orientation course where refugees were taught what it meant to be an American. This course included good values and behaviors, and participants were judged and penalized based on compliance, despite fundamental misunderstandings.

[For the staff] American culture indicated specific values and concepts such as individuality, independence, and self-sufficiency. These are supposed to help refugees understand the notion of American culture. In contrast, Bhutanese refugees associated the phrase American culture to material and tangible items, such as clothing, food, and specific behaviors and mannerisms. In addition, for refugees, integrating and belonging to American culture meant discarding 'bad' (Nepalese-Bhutanese) traditions and retaining only 'good' traditions from it. In other words, refugees become Americans by incorporating what they perceive as 'good' American behaviors. (2011, pp. 15-16)

The Bhutanese believed that becoming American would be beneficial, especially to their children in terms of language, but that they wanted to keep their family stayed rooted within their cultural identity.

Integration of Youth and Adolescents: Issues of Identity

Refugee children frequently spend years in camps prior to resettlement, where they have often experienced trauma, including witnessing the death of close family members and long periods of malnutrition and ill-health. Sexual violence and exploitation are common in conflict situations and in refugee camps. Some children arrive in destination countries with traffickers and smugglers who have exploited and harmed them. These factors make it difficult for refugee adolescents to adapt readily to their new lives and succeed in schools. (Melia, 2004, p. 134)

The unique situation of young refugees warranted special attention to how they were to be integrated into the United States. According to the UNHCR, the integration of young refugees was “vital,” and could “promote intergenerational understanding and harmony,” and “enhance the integration prospects of other family members and refugee communities” (2002, p. 261). Refugee and immigrant adolescents had an additional challenge that the adults did not experience, as they had to develop a personal identity and acculturate at the same time. At this critical stage of identity development, foreign-born adolescents became aware of their foreignness/minority culture, as well as the dominating majority culture, and experienced uncertainty as to where they belonged (Melia, 2004, p. 127). In contrast, the older generations had an easier time, as they tended to identify with the country where they were born (p. 127). These differences in generational identifications may have caused conflicts within families.

Melia’s 2004 research data was taken from a two-day conference, where “international migration scholars and professionals” gathered to discuss the greatest barriers and different ways nation states have tried to integrate immigrant children and adolescents. Melia’s study offered strong data about the larger picture of integration based on experts’ opinions and experience. However, one limitation was that the study did not note whether or not those affected, i.e.

immigrants, had a voice in the discussion, or whether they were just being talked about. Another limitation of the study was that there were no participants in the conversation from the global south.

Whereas most researchers have seen bicultural identity development as positive, Melia posited that when there was intolerance, associations with both countries might be detrimental (p. 127). If the youths voiced identification with the country where they were born, it could label them as the “perpetual foreigner,” or they could internalize unhealthy messages about their culture from school or the media (p. 127). This could cause self-confidence issues, which could lead to “delinquency” or a “hyper-nationalized identification with the country of origin” (p. 125). Additionally, in the highly racialized context of the United States immigrants and refugees of color have quickly acknowledged the privilege and power of white dominant culture. This was reflected in the following comments made in Melia’s study. “Whiteness is seen as preferable,” and “although immigrants try to be themselves, the dominant culture, reluctant to share its power and influence, erases their identity” (p. 128).

However, in the United States, anti-discrimination laws have given young immigrants and refugees some space to sort through their identity formation process. Melia explained that the state had a role in protecting spaces where young people can explore the self beyond their religion or identity through the promotion of “religious tolerance,” “outlawing discrimination,” and culturally sensitive institutions. These practices were also seen to reduce “antagonism” towards minority groups (p. 129).

Yet while there were vestiges of protection for immigrants and refugees, the participants of the “Transatlantic Dialogue” that Melia documented saw a need for institutional change. One of these proposed areas of change included “detachment” from the host society’s associations to any specific religion, versus being a nation of “co-existing religions” (2004, p. 131). This was done

via the state embrace of the similarities of other religions, or by the “softening of the religious symbolism invoked by the host society.” Melia equated “softening” with “an empathy for newcomers’ religion” (p. 130). For the Nepali-Bhutanese refugee youth who entered the U.S with different or confused religious identities, this softening could help them to freely identify with one religion or another without the additional pressures of belonging or not belonging to the host culture.

Criminality as a consequence of identity issues. Historically, immigration has been heavily associated with crime due to the influx of young men immigrating to the country (Melia, 2004). There have been generational differences in terms of immigrant crime as well. Crime attributed to the first generation has been connected with similar criminal behavior back in the country of origin. Melia purported that behaviors and habits, such as gambling and prostitution, may have transcended boundaries and arrived in the host country with the newcomers. Crime in the population of second-generation immigrants tended to be worse, whereas the third generation had a lower rate of criminality than the prior generations (2004, p.131).

Additionally, crime attributed to refugee and immigrant populations may have been the result of reenacted traumas experienced by those groups. In terms of identity formation, systemic rigidness and oppression led to frustration for young immigrants and refugees, the rejection of the host country, and motivated them to look for identity and belonging within the violent cultures of gangs (Melia, 2004, p. 131). Melia explained that the leaders of that minority group or community would typically deal with intracommunal violence so that the police and the larger community would not get involved. An example of this was domestic violence. Families, or the community, dealt with the situation for fear of losing face if the police became involved. If a member of a minority or immigrant community committed a violent act that affected members of the

mainstream culture, typically the minority group or minority group member received a disproportionate amount of attention (p. 132).

At the community level, elders oftentimes tried to more closely monitor their young people when youth violence was encountered. However, this extra supervision had gendered implications, as it caused the men in the more traditional immigrant and refugee groups to become even stricter with their daughters and the amount of freedom they were allowed. At the systemic level, some countries asked for more engagement from their institutions (Melia, 2004, p. 133). Police responsiveness to immigrant communities, and increased minority group hiring practices, were two examples of the host society engaging immigrant communities, as opposed to ignoring them.

Education's role in integrating youths. Melia observed that education and language learning was key in the integration of children and adolescents. The participants of in her 2004 study, titled “Transatlantic Dialogue on Integration of Immigrant Children and Adolescents,” discussed the importance of education in the introduction of “social norms” in the host country and culture, as well its role in building of skills that could lead to job acquisition and the upward mobility of immigrant populations (p. 125). The participants stated that when there was a lack of engagement of immigrants and refugees by the host society and culture that it created a “disenfranchised” population with few skills, low integration, and few ties to the host society (p. 126). Also, low levels of achievement among immigrant and refugee youth were attributed to the downward social and economic mobility that many families faced when they immigrated to a new country (p. 126).

Another potential barrier was that the parents didn't know how to advocate for their children in the new school system. This could have been due to cultural misunderstandings, language barriers, or the schools' failure to explain to the parents early on how they could be involved (p. 135). These circumstances were disastrous when combined with school systems that

were unaccustomed, ignorant of, or under-financed to accommodate the needs of immigrant and refugee populations and cultures. Lastly, foreign-born youth were sometimes tracked as non-English speakers, and were not evaluated again later. “This resulted in the "overrepresentation of foreign-born students in special education programmes” (p. 135).

Intergenerational Conflict in Refugee Families

In refugee research, intergenerational conflict has been one of the most consistent issues for children and their parents. In 2003, Ong wrote about Cambodian refugees and citizenship in her book *Buddha is Hiding*. Although the book focused on the history and lived experiences of Cambodian refugees, Ong explained that the book was also about “the wider implications of American citizenship for the poor, and on the country’s shifting sense of who are deserving and underserving citizen-subjects (p. xviii). Ong explained that “conflict between parents and children became a recurring theme for some families” (p. 168).

Mainly, Ong reported on the divide that was sometimes created between parents and children due to their differing ways and rates of acculturation, changing familial power dynamics, and the impact of the American refugee establishment. More specifically, Ong stated that:

Asian newcomers in particular experience a continuity of policy and practice that promotes ‘ethnic cleansing,’ in the sense of reviving the features of immigrants’ supposedly primitive cults that are socially determined to be undesirable. Institutional policies of assimilation, ethnic reformation, and erasure are variously taken up by social workers, nurses, the police, church workers, and teachers, who make available the opportunity to enact what count as American values- personal autonomy, self-centeredness, greed, and materialism- in a land of many possibilities. Although Cambodian refugees come from a historical and cultural trajectory that is radically different from those of other Americans, there are remarkable continuities and similarities with the experiences of stigmatization

and regulation experienced by generations of poor African Americans and immigrants from Latin America as well as those from Asia. (p. xviii)

As there are few resources that specifically speak to the Nepali-Bhutanese refugee intergenerational conflict, Ong's book was fundamental for this research project. Although the two populations' situations were not similar in apparent ways, Ong grouped the two Asian refugee groups as examples of "disadvantaged newcomers," and "other Asians," which were distinguished from "affluent Asian immigrants (p. xiv).

In her research, refugee parents saw their kids transform through their exposure to the U.S dominant culture, media, and interaction with American middle class norms taught in schools. The parents became afraid that their kids would lose their cultural roots. This exposure was powerful, and immigrant children and adolescents felt a strong pull to conform to the American middle class norms and values being taught. These values and norms were many times in direct conflict with the more traditional parental practices infused into refugee parents by their countries of origin.

Children and adolescents were also deeply frustrated with the intergenerational conflict. "To the teenagers, the parents' home culture did not seem to have much relevance to their desires and problems, and they complained that their parents could not help them understand or sort through their experiences of growing up in America" (Ong, 2003, p. 169). The kids often lost respect for their parents' inability to help them negotiate their new surroundings; in fact, the roles were often reversed, with the parents relying on the kids.

This parental dependence was experienced in a number of ways. Parents relied on their children, who were absorbing the host language at a far faster rate, for "translation," "(to) read street signs," "handed chores as dealing with the building supervisor, paying utility bills, and mediating with people outside the family in countless ways" (pp. 169-170). Ong described that the "children's capacity to adjust rather quickly to American language, media, markets, streets,

neighborhoods, and institutions, increased their social power relative to their parents” (p. 168).

This changing power dynamic made it increasingly difficult for the parents to continue their authoritarian parenting styles that had been previously used to control their children. Adolescents wanted the freedom to explore this new American world in terms of dating and friendships, and were restricted by their parents who followed more traditional and cultural beliefs.

In turn, the Americanization of the adolescents caused problems for the parents and how they were viewed within their community. The community, specifically the older generations, placed a high value on the virtue of maidenhood. The family was disgraced if proper courtship was not followed. Ong's research with Cambodian families found that the parents felt shamed if their daughters were seen with boys unsupervised.

Yet the parental reaction to what they saw as *losing face* or *acting out* differed among mothers and fathers. Mothers used the gossip mill in their communities to control and restrict their children's movement, whereas fathers sometimes resulted to physically beating their daughters.

Acutely aware of their eroding power, Cambodian American women resorted to old strategies-gossip and fear-mongering-as a way to curb their children's more outlandish desires and adventures. Anthropologists have noted that women in agrarian societies exert social power by producing and shaping public opinion, often as a way to direct and control unacceptable behavior such as wife beating and premarital sex. (p. 173)

The fathers' attempts to save the honor of the family (and the virtue of their daughters) through physical punishment sometimes caught the attentions of social workers. In some of these cases, Child Protective Services was called and the daughters were taken away from their families until the parents could prove that their parenting practices were dismissed, and new parenting practices were in place that gave the young women more freedom were established. Within this framework,

the children were given increased power in the relationship, and the parents were increasingly humiliated at their lack of authority.

From their perspective the loss of their child seemed like an excessive punishment for the child's abuse: they had been thrice humiliated, first by Anita's concealment of her dating, then by the gossip mill in the Cambodian American community, and finally by the entire assemblage of church, court, and clinic. Not only had they lost face, they had been associated with a mental-health facility, which Cambodians viewed as a place for crazy people. (p. 190)

Lastly, Ong suggested that the refugees were often treated differently by the social workers because of their minority status.

In dealing with other American families, social workers might have been more worried about balancing the need to provide supportive, preventive service with trying not to undermine parental responsibility. But in the case of poor minority families, they were more ready to impose specific norms and constraints on the parents' treatment of their children. (p. 182)

Consequently, social services added insult to injury by negating the immigrant culture and the parents' authority simultaneously.

Acculturation Theory and Integration

What is acculturation theory? Acculturation theory is most known by the four different ways that foreigners adjust to differing cultural norms of the host society. This is sometimes known as the four-fold theory, or the taxonomy of acculturation processes. As Rudmin put it: "As intelligent and adaptive cultural beings, all humans have some likelihood of adopting or otherwise reacting to aspects of alien cultures they encounter" (Rudmin, 2003, p. 3) The four fold theory attempts to measure how much of the new culture is acquired, and how much of the culture of

origin is retained in a migrant's transition to the new society, and whether one way or ways are more psychologically beneficial. The four categories within this acculturation framework include *assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization*.

Assimilation is the way when there is little interest in cultural maintenance combined with a preference for interacting with the larger society. *Separatism* is the way when cultural maintenance is sought while avoiding involvement with others. *Marginalization* exists when neither cultural maintenance nor interaction with others is sought. *Integration* is present when both cultural maintenance and involvement with the larger society are sought. (Berry et al., 2006, p. 5)

In the history of acculturation, the pathway to citizenship for immigrants and refugees was through the process of losing one's cultural heritage to blend into the larger national culture. This process was called assimilation. The "melting pot" tradition in the U.S was based on the assumption that one national identity was preferable to the coexistence of multiple cultures, or *cultural pluralism*. "Other processes involved in subordinating assimilation were the control and removal of ethnic 'tendencies' slaves and immigrants were assumed to have brought with them from their 'primitive' cultures" (Ong, 2003, p. 73). Currently, assimilation has given way towards integration, where immigrants hold on to parts of their cultural practices and heritage, as well as assumed cultural traits of the values of the larger society.

Critique of acculturation theory: sociological roots of acculturation. One aim of this research project was to find a definition for integration that differed from the one that Berry et al. had set forth in 2006. Rees' fourfold theory in 1970 was a strong place to start. Rees understood integration as a measure of "cooperation and interdependence" and the extent to which "ethnic groups interlock in a common network of rights, duties, and obligations" (p. 487). Rees also understood the differences in power dynamics between immigrant and host communities, which

could lead to further segmentation versus immigration. Rees described integration as “the degree in which segmentation is put aside for cooperation” (p. 487).

In 1970, Rees reviewed the terms “accommodation, adaptation, acculturation, integration, and cultural pluralism” and connected them to a “tradition of sociology” that “see(s) society as an integrated system,” in which processes of “homeostasis” kept society’s “social equilibrium” and social needs in check, and “social action is analyzed in terms of the contribution that it made to maintenance of the system as a whole” (p. 481). Rees termed this conceptualization of society “The Equilibrium Model of Society,” or the “equilibrium tradition” (pp. 481-482).

An underlying assumption of this model was that society was based on certain “functional problems,” “such as the allocation of resources, socialization of the young, preservation of internal order, defense against external aggression, etc., which any society has to solve if social equilibrium is to be maintained” (p. 482). In this theory, “social roles and institutions” were created in response to these societal needs (p. 482). In a society based on these constructs of shared values and norms, any deviation from them would be considered a threat, and a “step towards a destructive social chaos” (p. 482). “Social change” in this context could not be done too quickly, or the system would be jolted and some of these societal agreements would dissolve (p. 483).

In particular, immigrants posed a threat to society's equilibrium because they deviated from the dominant culture and its norms. Examples of this deviance included differences in language, religion, and dress. The divide in social norms and values between immigrants and established residents caused a “state of mutual incomprehension,” which needed to be reconciled enable for society to function properly again. Rees described different stages of acclimatization to the host society as an ideal progression from “accommodation” to “integration,” wherein immigrants or minority group’s attitudes shifted towards an acceptance of the host culture's norms, and relied less

on their insular ethnic communities. Rees described “accommodation” as “the least degree of adaptation and acceptance that is consistent with peaceful co-existence between immigrants and the receiving society” (p. 484). However, in his analysis the deciding factors of an immigrant group’s integration were the attitudes of the migrating and host communities.

At minimum, refugees and immigrants were expected to “obey the laws,” “accept native working practices and customs sufficiently for its members to earn a livelihood,” and “a rudimentary acquaintance with the native language by some members” (p. 485) Beyond these minimal requirements, the shared norms and values of a society seemed subjective and subject to much variance. This argument shifted the responsibility of integration towards the host nation and its attitudes. A successful outcome “is not the orientation of the migrant group (one might say the degree of acculturation which has taken place), but the behavior of the host society, ” which “places on them the responsibility for bringing migrant groups within the wider community” (p. 486).

Segmentation, which Rees related closely to *cultural pluralism*, signified “where a variety of ethnic or cultural groups co-existed harmoniously within the same social framework, maintaining a wide degree of separation in a number of institutional spheres” (p. 486). Integration was placed on a spectrum of “assimilation” between the aforementioned segmentation/cultural pluralism of the cultural groups and the integration of the immigrants and refugees within the larger social framework of the host society (p. 487).

Problems with acculturation theories and models. Other authors critiqued aspects of the four-fold acculturation theory. In particular, Escobar and Vega suggested that we do away with acculturation theories altogether, as they are “ambiguous,” “lack predictive power,” and were “based on assumptions about culture that any anthropologist would find incredulous” (2000, p. 5). Rudmin added “the psychological study of acculturation has been diminished and possibly

marginalized from useful applications by isolating itself from related scholarship in the legal disciplines” (2003, p. 16). Rudmin argued that the history of acculturation theory contained original ties to the law, and that researchers had cited other four-fold theorists’ research without looking at historical perspectives on acculturation.

For example, researchers generally accept that *integration* is the most beneficial to migrants, and that other types of acculturation could lead to pathology. However, this widely accepted truth was historically unproven and unreliable. “The contemporary fourfold paradigm has attempted to define one type of acculturation as distressful, but the history outlined here shows that there is considerable disagreement about which types of acculturation correlate with negative social or psychological conditions, and which ones correlate with positive conditions” (Rudmin, 2003, p. 18).

Racial implications of acculturation theories. In 2010, Ager and Strang spoke to the systemic difficulties of integration. “In the context of the USA, however, race, major inequalities in wealth distribution, [...] are all significant influences the terms of social cohesion” (2010, p. 592). Differences between the host culture and immigrants may give rise to prejudice and hatred.

Hate gives identity. The nigger, the fag, the bitch illuminate the border, illuminate what we ostensibly are not, illuminate the Dream of being white, of being a Man. We name the hated strangers and are thus confirmed in the tribe. (Coates, 2015, p. 60)

The history of acculturation theory has been steeped in racism. Even with the trend towards the acceptance of cultural difference within acculturation theory, Rudmin criticized the “fourfold paradigm of its excessive focus on minority groups” (2003, p. 5). Rudmin, referencing Johansen’s work (2002), explained:

To suggest that minorities are psychologically reactive to intercultural contact and that dominant groups are not almost implies that minority people are a different species of

psychological being, one distinct from the majority. This is one step down the road to racism. (p. 6)

Ong saw acculturation as a subjectifying process, if not also a racial one, as well.

Poor refugees and immigrants are subjected to a series of determining codifications and administrative rulings that govern how they should be assessed and treated, and how they should think of themselves and their actions. These actions of being subjected by objectifying modes of knowledge/power, and of self making, in struggling against imposed knowledges and practices are central to my understanding of citizenship as a sociocultural process of 'subject-ification.' (2003, p. 16)

Conversely, Rudmin observed "few fourfold studies, if any have examined how the dominant majority adopts aspects of the minority culture" (2003, p. 6).

In an article about biculturalism in 2010, Shwartz and Unger recommended assimilation when it came to certain monocultural societies, as immigrant behaviors, tradition, and language could cause a backlash of discrimination. This recommendation was less about ways to acculturate, and more about ways to survive and adapt to interpersonal and institutional racism. The need to assimilate was about perseverance and resilience in an unequal and broken society. Such recommendations reflect a strong need for a framework for integration policies that make the U.S more livable for many different ethnicities and religions. Rudmin went further by saying that the four-fold acculturation may have been harmful to minority group social movements. "It is plausible that acculturation research has hindered rather than helped acculturating minorities by shifting the focus of discussion away from their rights and from their need to have effective political voices advocating for their rights" (2003, p. 8). In his recommendations, Rudmin suggested that "researchers motivated by desires to understand acculturation should presume in

their theories, research, and writing that acculturation is a normal, universal human process that occurs regardless of minority or majority status” (p. 30).

Reframing the immigrant narrative. In the past, immigrants and refugees have been viewed as a problem, instead of as a positive challenge that could benefit the host society. “To define migrants (economic or forced) as ‘other’ immediately locates them as the ‘problem’ (Ager and Strang, 2010, p. 593). According to Melia, this negative perception of immigrants and refugees has been due to nations’ emphasis on security, which created “mixed messages” for the incoming population (2004, p. 138). An unspoken fear of integrating foreign populations has been that it would increase fear and dilute the overall sense of nationalism of a country (p. 124). This focus on security created anxiety not only for the immigrants, but also for the host society. Ager and Strang suggested that

policy, emphasizing limitation and control, undermines integration by communicating a negative message to the public that refugees are damaging to society. This negativity in turn powerfully conflicts with policy aimed to promote the integration of those who are granted refugee status. (2010, p. 595)

Narratives of immigration and integration require change to assign appropriate levels of responsibility. Identifying new narratives and frameworks will be useful in supporting immigrants' vulnerable positions in society.

The former Secretary of Labor, Robert Reich, created a video that explored a number of myths that portrayed immigrants as detrimental to American society. Some of the arguments included “immigrants take away American jobs,” “we don’t need any more immigrants,” “immigrants are a drain on public budgets,” and “illegal and legal immigration is increasing” (2016). In response to these myths, Reich’s video provided facts to correct these faulty narratives. Reich responded that immigrants actually “add to economic demand and thereby push firms to

create more jobs.” In response to the assumption that “We don’t need any more immigrants,”

Reich stated

The U.S population is aging. 25 years ago each retiree in America was matched by five workers. Now for each retiree there is only three workers. Without more immigration, in 15 years, the ratio will fall to two workers for every retiree, which is not nearly enough to sustain our retiree population.

Reich (2016) also said that the argument “immigrants are a drain on the public budget” is incorrect.

Immigrants pay taxes. The institute on taxation and economic policy released a report this year showing undocumented immigrants paying 11.8 billion state and local taxes in 2012. And their combined state and local contributions would increase by another 2.2 billion under comprehensive immigration reform.

Lastly, Reich explained that the legal and illegal immigrant population is actually decreasing, not increasing.

According to Melia, an integrated immigrant and refugee population may also be beneficial in the creation of “economic benefits,” “regeneration of neighborhoods,” help fill “labor needs,” “greater citizen participation,” and “better global understanding” (2004, p. 138). It is important to understand the positive benefits of immigration, and reframe the immigration narrative to push for needed reform and buy-in from the government and the host society.

Definition of integration. In the past, the United States leaned towards a policy of assimilation with the goal of a homogenous society or culture. In recent times, United States policy has shifted to a policy of integration, where the goal is to create a people and society with “a shared sense of values with differences” (Melia, p. 127). Melia wrote that integration has been understood in terms of “the establishment of baseline legal protections to the creation of a shared

set of values (p. 126). Another definition in Melia's research included "a way wherein immigrants can maintain their cultures and beliefs within respect for the legal system" (p. 127). Furthermore, successful integration was defined as maintaining a respect for country/culture of origin while "flexibly maneuvering" through the new context (p. 128). Within Melia's conceptualization of integration, immigrants' and refugees' behavior/projected identity differed depending on their environment (p. 128). In public, the host nation's culture was more apparent in the identity or behavior of the immigrant or refugee, whereas in a more private environment such as the "neighborhood, religious institutions, and ethnic community-based organizations," there was an inclination to adopt the culture of origin (p. 128).

According to the UNHCR's "Refugee Resettlement: An International Handbook to Guide Reception and Integration," integration should be a two-way process.

Integration is a mutual, dynamic, multifaceted and on-going process. From a refugee perspective, integration requires a preparedness to adapt to the lifestyle of the host society without having to lose one's own cultural identity. From the point of view of the host society, it requires a willingness for communities to be welcoming and responsive to refugees and for public institutions to meet the needs of a diverse population. (UNHCR, 2002 as cited in Pressé and Thomson, 2008, p. 96).

Melia (2004) also spoke of the mutual responsibility of both the host society and immigrants in the integration of immigrants and refugees: "The transformation of public institutions underscores the dynamic nature of integration, a process in which the host society evolves as much as the immigrants themselves" (p. 128). This has transferred some of the responsibility to the host nation, rather than problematizing refugees or their efforts at assimilation.

Toward a new conceptualization of integration. With mounting criticisms about acculturation theory, there has been an attempt to reinvigorate and redefine the concept of

integration. Ager and Strang found that integration policy for refugees was problematic as the negative narratives about refugees made the policies counterproductive to the overall purpose of successful integration and cohesion.

It seems more plausible that policy, emphasizing limitation and control, undermines integration by communicating negative messages to the public that refugees are damaging to society. This negativity in turn powerfully conflicts with policy aimed to promote the integration of this who are granted refugee status. (2010, p. 595)

In response to the prevalent narratives, they believed that for successful integration to occur “perhaps what is needed is to strengthen anti-discrimination and equal opportunities training for the established citizens” (p. 595). The focus thus shifts to the problematization of the host society, where nationalized citizens are educated and must conform instead of the other way around.

Consequently, Ager and Strang put together a framework for the integration and better cohesion of refugees with the main society. Ager and Strang first came up with the framework in 2002 when they searched for the indicators of integration, which they called domains and wrote about in their 2008 article “Understanding Integration: A Conceptual Framework.” These domains included “markers and means,” “social connection,” “facilitators,” and “foundation.” This framework attempted to “operationalize processes of integration” and gave it “broader relevance” with a special emphasis on “refugee settlement” (Ager and Strang, 2010, p. 590). This framework has also been called “mid-level theory” and “is an explicit attempt to bridge between such theorization and local programmatic practice” (p. 590). Although Ager and Strang have not solved the systematic oppression or oppressive narratives for refugees and immigrants, the researchers’ framework has been an appropriate expression of the term integration. This framework more closely represented Rees’ definition of the term as a measure of “cooperation and

interdependence,” and the amount that “ethnic groups interlock in a common network of rights, duties, and obligations” (Rees, 1970, p. 487).

The first of the Ager and Strang’s four categories was “markers and means.” Markers and means were seen as “recurrently key issues in analysis” in integration, and have been four important ways that refugees have engaged with society (2008, p. 170). The four markers and means within this integration framework were “employment,” “housing,” “education,” and “health” (p. 170). See Figure 1 for a visual representation of this theory.

According to this framework there were two main obstacles to employment for refugees: employers that didn’t recognize refugees’ skills or work experience, and “under-employment,” which was defined as “holding a job which does not require the level of skills or qualifications possessed by the job holder” (2008, p.170). Duke et al. suggested that for refugees "successful resettlement depended on programs that allowed them to find a place in the new society, for example by converting their skills and qualifications so that they could be used in the new situation” (1999, p. 106). Ager and Strang suggested that “vocational training” and “education” were ways to overcome the obstacles to employment (2008, p. 171).

For the second marker and mean, housing, Ager and Strang made the assumption that the quality of the facilities was the most important factor of housing for the integration of refugees (2008, p. 171). However, social and cultural impacts of housing were found to be the most important factors to the refugees (p. 171). It was important that refugees experienced housing permanence, so that they could establish long lasting relationships (p. 171). Refugee neighbors and neighborhoods were considered favorable housing, and “providing opportunities for learning from established members of the community” was also important (p. 171). Lastly, safety, security, and stability were other components of favorable housing in the refugees’ perspective.

According to Ager and Strang, schools have been the most important point of engagement for refugees in terms of establishing the relationships needed for integration (2008, p. 172). Barriers within the education marker included “insufficient support for learning in a host society language,” “isolation and exclusion (bullying, racism, difficulty making friends, etc.),” and “lack of information about the school system” (p. 172). Health was also seen as an underemphasized component of refugee integration. Barriers to refugee access and engagement with health-based institutions included difficulties communicating to doctors and nurses because of language difficulty as many refugees not utilizing services or utilizing the wrong services because of lack of information about the services available (p. 173).

As one of the “connective tissue(s)” between the foundational and marker and means’ domains, the social connection domain was “considered a defining feature of an integrated community,” and “(drove) the process of integration at a local level” (2008, p. 177). The researchers originally opted to solely study “social connection” from the refugees’ point of view, but reconsidered as they attempted to conceptualize integration as a “two-way process” (p. 177). The researchers decided that this two-way process “points to the importance for integration to be seen as a process of mutual accommodation, and thus the need to consider means of social connection between refugees and those other members of the communities within which they have settled” (p. 177).

Certain words seemed important to the defining characteristics of the “social connection” domain. These words were “tolerance,” “mixing,” and “belonging.” It was also important that there was an “absence of conflict,” which was created by the “tolerance of different groups.” Tolerance was seen as the most foundational need within the domain of social connection. “Mixing” and “belonging” related to further “expectations,” and were defined as “mixing of

people from different groups,” and having “links to family, committed friendships, and a sense of respect and shared values” (2008, pp. 177-178).

The domain of social connection was split into “social bonds,” “social bridges,” and “social links.” These three categories of social connection were based on Woolcock’s 1998 article on those terms. Social bonds were defined as those with family and co-ethnic, co-national, co-religious or other forms of group, social bridges was defined as bonds with other communities, and social links were defined as those with other structures of the states (p. 178). Social bonds were seen as an important way for the refugees to feel settled in the host community. This included involvement with co-ethnic refugee organizations. Being close to other family was also very important. “Many refugees in Malta were very distressed because they were unsure of the fate of their family members, and made it clear that they could not begin to think about integration until they knew that their families were safe” (Ager and Strang, 2010, p. 596).

Ager and Strang suggested that social bonded networks provided resources in three key areas: information and material resources, emotional resources, and capacity building resources (2010, p. 597). Another potential way to a social bonded network is through refugee organizations.

The refugee organizations provide a ‘voice for refugees,’ contact points for isolated individuals, expertise in dealing with refugee issues, and flexible and sensitive responses to the needs of the large populations. They also provide cultural and social activities that offer refugees the chance to maintain their own customs and religion, talk in their own language, celebrate their traditions and exchange news of their home countries. (Duke et al, 1999, p. 119)

Ager and Strang posited that a socially bonded network was critical, but without bridging to the host community, it would lead to “the emergence of spare, very bonded but disconnected communities” (2010, p. 598). They also suggested that enable to establish strong bridging ties to

the host community, “emotional support, self esteem, and confidence” acquired through the social bonds were really helpful (p. 598).

Shared community activities of different that could serve as bridges included “sports, college classes, religious worship, community groups, and political activity” (2008, p. 180). Ager and Strang also emphasized the need for reciprocity, as “in order to build ‘bridges’ between ‘bonded’ groups there needs to be opportunities for people to meet and exchange resources in ways which are mutually beneficial” (2010, p. 599). The exclusion of refugees from shared spaces through “poverty,” “no right to work,” and “lack of language skill” were seen as legal and systemic barriers to this bridging (p. 599). The function and definition of social links seemed to overlap with the definition of the next domain “facilitators.” Both seemed to point to the process of overcoming structural barriers.

The role of the facilitator’s domain is to get past institutional and structural obstructions to integration. The removal of these barriers was seen as the role of the state (Ager and Strang, 2008, p. 181). Ager and Strang identified two categories within this domain: language and cultural knowledge, and safety and security. Language was seen by many to be integral to integration, and “critical to early stages of settlement” (p. 181). Lack of language for the refugees was also seen as a big challenge for host communities, specifically in regard to healthcare, and Ager and Strang recommended an increase in translated material for the refugees. There was also a great need for “broader cultural knowledge,” as well as the desire to share their culture with others (p. 182). This included knowledge of “local and national procedures, customs, and facilities,” as well as “cultural expectations” (p. 182).

Ager and Strang saw the definition of citizenship as the starting point in the conversation about integration policy for refugees. The researchers explored the idea that different nations have different conceptualizations about their nationhood and what it meant to belong to that country

(2008, p. 173). The researchers thought “that to develop an effective policy on integration, governments need to clearly articulate policy on nationhood and citizenship, and thus the rights accorded to refugees.” The rights that could be included were “human dignity,” “equality,” “freedom of cultural choice,” “justice,” and “security and independence” (2008, p. 175). Although some researchers (O’Neil, 2001) believed that government should lead in protecting the rights of the refugees, Ager and Strang believed that successful integration depends on the contributions of all areas of society (2008). Ager and Strang stated “that having a secure status is, in itself, instrumental in enabling integration, emphasizing once more the foundational place of policy on ‘rights and citizenship’ on refugee integration outcomes and ‘belonging’” (2010, pp. 596).

Ager and Strang’s framework was a strong start to creating a supportive, inclusive, and empowering integration policy. The framework was useful, straightforward, and attempted to utilize an understanding of integration as a two-way process. It took into consideration systemic/structural barriers to integration and recommended facilitators to overcome them. It emphasized the host societies’ resistance to refugees, and shifted some of the burden of integration on to the host society. Another strength was that the framework allowed for the different ideals of nation states as the foundation for integration. However, the theory was uncertain as to how those different ideals of nation and nationhood would influence or affect the rest of the frameworks’ domains.

One critique of the framework presented by Ager and Strang would be that even though the authors state that the framework was based on a two-way process, the majority of the data collected was based on interviews and opinions of refugee community members. However, it could be argued that to make way for a two-way integration process one must intentionally seek out and favor the refugee perspective.

Also, further work could also be done to distinguish the different domains. For example, a more concrete way of distinguishing “social links” from the “facilitators” domain might allow for a clearer connection between the two. This in turn could lead to a clearer pathway to study the ways that social links relate to facilitators in overcoming structural barriers to integration.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

The purpose of this exploratory, qualitative, and cross-sectional study was to assess the attitudes and opinions of Nepali-Bhutanese adolescents about their community in King County, WA. This study was the subset of a larger study of the Nepali-Bhutanese population in the area, which was titled “Social and mental health needs of the Bhutanese refugee community: Community-based participatory research.” The guiding questions of the larger study were the following: What are the social and mental health needs of the Bhutanese refugee community in King County, WA? Do community members believe there are good ways to meet the challenges that their community faces? In contrast, this study honed in on the ongoing focus group with Nepali-Bhutanese adolescents. Much of the literature has focused on the mental health needs of the older generation (Ao et al., 2015; Ellis et al., 2015), and few studies have taken into account the young people’s perspective of their communities’ challenges and needs. My study sought to explore this area of deficiency in the literature. The guiding questions for my research were: How do the adolescents view their community? What were the common struggles they and their community deal with in their day-to-day life?

The cross-sectional nature of this research also differentiated it from the larger study within which it took place. A qualitative approach was selected to best explore the complexity and nuance of the Nepali-Bhutanese refugee community and culture within the context of the United States. A quantitative method may have lost some of the details that the community deemed important, as well as the reasons why. In the context of a cross-cultural study, a qualitative method allowed for

greater accuracy, fewer possible misunderstandings, and greater capacity to overcome language difficulties. Though one focus group of adolescents, this study generated insight into what could be happening in other Nepali-Bhutanese refugee communities throughout the United States.

Recruitment

The study was conducted as Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR). CBPR is a way of collaborating with community members in a study's target population, often a marginalized population, in attempts to benefit of all parties involved (Nygreen et al., 2006, p. 109). In CBPR, community members may be both participants/sources of data as well as researchers, collaborating to collect data from their community:

Community-based participatory research is a collaborative research approach that is designed to ensure and establish structures for participation by communities affected by the issue being studied, representatives of organizations, and researchers in all aspects of the research process to improve health and well-being through taking action, including social change. (Viswanathan et al., 2004, p. 6)

The primary rationale for using CBPR was that it allowed “a deeper understanding of a community's unique circumstances, and a more accurate framework for testing and adapting best practices to the community's needs” (Viswanathan et al., 2004, p. 2). Exploring the strengths and needs of the Nepali-Bhutanese refugee population made CBPR an appropriate method of research.

In the larger study, the Nepali-Bhutanese adolescents were recruited as Youth Participant Researchers (YPRs) from a research camp that they participated in at an Asian Pacific Islander community health organization. The Participants were given consent and assent forms to sign, and returned to participate in weekly focus group/research meetings when they had signed the consent and assent forms. Recruitment for the larger study was done by a co-Primary Investigator (PI), who invited young Bhutanese people from her agency's program to a research camp to learn about

CBPR. The camp lasted one and a half days, during which the adolescents involved were given the opportunity to become youth participant researchers (YPRs). The role of YPRs was to collaborate with the PIs and agency to develop specific research questions, interview community members about the issues affecting their community, analyze data, produce recommendations, and decide dissemination methods. A camp was deemed the best method of recruitment as it offered an educational opportunity, and gave individuals the option to volunteer for the study after learning about what it would look like to be a participant and a researcher.

The larger study took place over the school year, from late October 2013 through May 2014. In contrast, this study utilized one focus group session.

Sample

This study utilized purposive non-probability sampling. Purposive sampling was necessary to select participants that would be appropriate to serve as YPRs. The inclusion criteria for the sample were the following: (a) The participant was a Bhutanese refugee or a child of a Bhutanese refugee parent; (b) The participant lived in King County, WA, at the time of the study; (c) The participant was between the age of 15 and 21; and (d) The participant was a participant of one of the agency's programs. Age was an important criterion since this study aimed to explore the viewpoints of adolescents in the Nepali-Bhutanese community who might offer a unique perspective.

The youths' unique perspectives and willingness to talk were necessary elements in this exploratory study of the community. The Nepali-Bhutanese refugees are a relatively small community of about 1000 people, which in turn makes the community difficult to access. The PI's previous connections to the agency allowed access to a small number of adolescent participants, which in turn allowed access to the entire community.

Data Collection

The data used for this study only includes information gathered from the adolescents' first focus group. It excludes data gathered by the YPRs in the community as part of the larger study. The data collection was done in collaboration with an Asian Pacific Islander community health program in the state of Washington. The primary PI, Hye-Kyung Kang, PhD, and her team collected the data.

The focus group of Nepali-Bhutanese refugee adolescents met weekly. The initial focus group meeting that this study reflects was held at the agency for a period of two hours. The interview questions were open-ended, which allowed the participants ample time to discuss the issues that were important to them in the community. The focus group facilitator repeated and rephrased questions for further engagement and understanding when needed. Participants were given a chance to answer each question, but participants were also given the option to pass if the question made them feel uncomfortable or they had nothing to say about the topic.

Ten questions were asked of the 11 participants throughout the focus group. The questions for the focus group can be found in Appendix A: Focus Group Questions, which included eight questions that explored demographic material. The initial focus group was videotaped. This researcher transcribed all the responses for the purpose of data analysis.

Informed Consent Procedures

Approval for this research was obtained on September 28th, 2013 from the Smith College School for Social Work Human Subjects Review Committee (see Appendix B). In keeping with procedures set out by the Committee, and as noted above, consent from participants was obtained before they are interviewed in the study (see Appendix C).

Participants from ages 15 to 21 that attended the educational camp were invited to take part in the study. Those 18 and older were given a consent form to sign. Those under 18 years of

age were given both an assent form to sign and a consent form for their parents to sign. A Bhutanese interpreter translated the parental consent forms, and an audio recording of the translation was offered to the parents to review when needed. In instances where parents/guardians did not understand something from the consent forms, Bhutanese-speaking agency staff members were available to answer any questions. The co-PI described the process and the assent and consent forms to the YPRs fully to make sure they were understood. For the study, participants were instructed to keep confidentiality. Absolute confidentiality was not assured as YPRs interacted with each other in the focus group and at the weekly research group meetings.

Data Analysis

The focus group was videotaped to allow for accurate transcription in assigning responses to the correct participants. This researcher then transcribed all the responses for the purpose of data analysis. During the transcription, participants' names were deleted and coded for confidentiality purposes. The video recording and transcription have been password protected and will be stored securely for three years following the completion of the study as required by federal regulations.

After the transcription, common themes and differences of opinion among the participants were compiled and cross-referenced to illuminate themes and patterns in the sample group's responses. A non-numerical form of data analysis was used to interpret the participants' responses. The open-ended nature of the questionnaire allowed for unexpected data to emerge as well. These findings are presented in Chapter 4 with illustrative quotes.

CHAPTER IV

Findings

This chapter contains findings from the initial focus group with the Nepali-Bhutanese adolescents about their community. Participants were asked open-ended questions about their community, what issues their community faced, and what they wished for their community at large. Participants were free to elaborate on any answer if needed. A variety of themes surfaced in the consequent discussion. One major theme that presented itself was the participants' definition of "community," and how and where this community could be found. Other findings included the participants' conflict and confusion around their sense of identify in relation to the community at large.

Also apparent were some themes that reflected intergenerational differences in the community as a result of immigration to America. The adolescents wanted their parents to "work with the times," and to have a more open mind to American culture, society, and rules. The participants wanted their community to gossip less. They expressed a desire to eliminate discrimination about caste, class, and gender in their community at large. The participants also experienced a wish for less conflict about religion. Another major finding was that the adolescents expressed a number of problems and barriers that their parents and grandparents faced as first-generation immigrants. Last, the participants had suggestions for how professionals could engage the community.

As previously stated in the Methodology chapter, participants ranged from 15 to 21 years of age. All participants were members of the Nepali-Bhutanese community. Approximately half were Hindu, and half were Christian.

Nepali-Bhutanese Adolescents and Their Community

A number of the focus group questions revolved around the idea of community. The focus group questions can be found in Appendix A. Primarily, the questions inquired about how the adolescents defined their community, and where this community could be found in their lives. The findings cultivated from the data are presented in the following sections: Adolescents' Definition of Community; Community Strengths; Adolescent Identity in Relation to the Community at Large; First Generation and Second-Generation Differences; Barriers and Issues For The Older Generations; Religion; and, Adolescents' Suggestions on How to Engage The Nepali-Bhutanese Community.

Adolescents' definition of community. From the adolescents' point of view, community was where they could find support and guidance when they had problems. The adolescents predominantly saw community as those people who supported them, or where they could find support. The term "community" defined in terms of both the Bhutanese community and Nepali culture.

A sense of belonging was reflected in the idea of community as well. One participant said, "I don't have to feel like I'm the only one. There are people in community that can help me, and are there for me whenever I need help." Overall, proximity was important for the majority of the participants. However, one respondent stated that community did not depend on ethnicity or proximity. For this one respondent, community could cross state lines or even across nations.

Community strengths. The participants spoke of a number of strengths in reference to their community. They said that their community was supportive, helpful, “always there,” “inclusive,” and “respectful.” One participant mentioned that as a member of the community one could participate in any activity, and that these activities ranged from football to festivals. Community was seen not just a source of emotional support, but also a resource where one could “share talents” and learn. Participants mentioned “school,” “dancing,” and “drawing” as examples of talents they could share in the community.

“Support” was by far the term used most when describing the role of community, but the participants also used words and phrases such as “help,” “guiding,” “learn [from],” “consult,” “be there for me,” and “listen to my problems.” The top two places participants cited as sources of this support were school and family. Interestingly, “school” was cited as the number one source of support over “home” and “family.” A school club called the “Bhutanese Youth Resource Center” was a close third. The participants' neighborhood or area was the fourth place cited as a source of community support. Last, community was seen as a place for material support, where participants could “fund raise” for causes.

Adolescent Identity in Relation to the Community at Large

Ethnic and national loyalties and identities were a focus group topic that sparked passionate discussion from most of the adolescents. Overall, the participants expressed conflict and confusion about how to identify.

Generational differences: identity as relates to country of birth. Whereas the parents' generation mostly identified as Bhutanese, many of the adolescents identified as Nepali. They mentioned a variety of reasons for these identities. One participant responded that her parents identified as Bhutanese, as they were given citizenship there. However, she was born in Nepal, and had never been to Bhutan, so she identified as Nepali.

The younger generations had similar reasons for their sense of Nepali identity.

[...] for us, our generation, we think we are Nepali. And then for our parents, they think they are Bhutanese. Because, they were born in Bhutan, raised in Bhutan, and then, like, Bhutanese, and then we were born in Nepal, and are used to calling it [ourselves] Nepali.

However, identity was a complicated issue for the participants. Many of them expressed outright confusion. Many had difficulty identifying with the Bhutanese nationality, as their parents were forcibly kicked out of the country.

Similarly, the adolescents and their parents had found themselves unwelcome in Nepal. The families were not given Nepali citizenship despite their Nepali origin, and had to resettle in another country. One respondent found identifying with either country or nationality difficult for this exact reason. "I won't call myself anything," the respondent stated. Another participant said, "It's kind of hard to say if we're Nepali or Bhutanese." For adolescents who might be categorized by a layperson as second-generation immigrants, their sense of national identity was much more complicated than it had been for their parents.

The participants also stated that they had arguments with their parents about how their sense of identity. In some cases, participants stated that their parents thought they should identify as Bhutanese. Another participant said, "I will get my own [identity]." Most of the adolescents agreed that the notion of culture was complicated, and that they would agree to disagree.

Intergenerational differences and social norms. One major finding of this focus group was that the adolescents wanted their parents to be more open-minded to American culture. A few of them stated, "We aren't in Nepal anymore" or "This is America," when discussing their parents' traditional views. The participants also stated, "They don't know anything," and, "They don't know the rules in the U.S." These sentiments reflected that the participants viewed their parents as relatively unknowledgeable about American society, in contrast to the adolescents' superior

knowledge. For example, the participants stated that their parents were “afraid of going [anywhere] outside” the community, and that the parents seemed “afraid” of the community itself. In contrast, the adolescents believed that America was safer than Nepal or Bhutan where their parents had grown up, and that they should have more freedom to “hang out with friends.”

Also, the adolescents believed that their parents’ traditional views on dating and women were outdated. “Back-biting” or gossip was seen as a major issue in the Nepali-Bhutanese community, particularly as it affected young women. For example, the community was prone to gossip if any of the female participants dated. The community especially gossiped if a young woman was seen with a male, but without a chaperone. Their parents’ fear was that they would “lose face” as a result of the gossip. The young women in the focus group also stated that they were supposed to live with their parents until they were married. Also, their parents believed that it was their role to make sure that the women had suitable matches. For the parents, this meant the traditional approach of arranged marriages. Participants also commented that parents and grandparents wanted to make sure that the girls “(didn’t) cut their hair” and that they didn’t wear short dresses. According to the participants, short shorts were not acceptable for girls, and boys should pull their pants up. One’s manner of dress was a big issue for the older generation.

Additionally, the adolescents commented on how focused their parents were on education. Both generations valued education and school, but differences and conflicts existed in discussions between generations about these topics. For example, one participant wanted to become a teacher but her parents discouraged her, as it wasn’t considered a “valued profession.” The participants felt that their parents needed to trust them more, as they “knew what they were doing.”

Finally, caste was reflected in the discussion of intergenerational differences around social norms. One young woman commented that she wasn’t allowed to date below her “caste.” Many of the participants believed that everyone should be treated equally-- “everyone has the same blood,

everyone is the same"-- and that caste shouldn't matter when it came to dating or marriage. In short, while the parents subscribed to the idea of caste, the focus group participants viewed the concept as outdated.

Language and Multiple Identities. For many of the participants, language played a large role in the way they identified as well. Many identified as Nepali precisely because they spoke the language. As the discussion continued, more and more of the participants settled on "Bhutanese-Nepali," or "Nepali-Bhutanese," and even "Nepali-Bhutanese American." This way of identifying allowed room for the participants to express multiple identities. The adolescents seemed to feel fine with the resulting ambiguity and ambivalence.

Barriers and Issues for the Older Generations

Another theme that emerged in the focus group was the problems that the parents and grandparents faced in American society. One adolescent stated, "I think for us it's really, like we already fit into this diverse society, but still our parents, they go to old home, same thing [...] It's really hard for them to fit in this society well."

Language barriers and employment. In particular, the adolescents talked at length about how their parents could not find jobs. The participants stated that the older generation wanted citizenship, but that a barrier existed (or was thought to exist) as a result of the older generation's language barrier. Primarily, the inability to acquire jobs was influenced by the parents and grandparents' lack of English language proficiency.

Isolation and mental health consequences. The adolescents also reflected on the fact that some of their parents were depressed and would spend the day at home watching television. The adolescents explained that their parents were "lonely" and had "relatives in different states." Some parents still had relatives back in Bhutan. The participants reflected on the fact that some of their parents were angry or depressed because of the lack of acceptance from Bhutan, Nepal, and now

the United States. One participant stated, “Sometimes they just get mad without reason, just get irritating. And when whenever you say something, they be like yelling at us. Sometimes they cry and cry. You know they just get too much stress.”

Consequent dependence on adolescents. Many participants noted that the older generations depended on them as a result of the aforementioned barriers. One parent had trouble taking the bus, as the parent could not talk to the driver. Many of the other parents had to ask the kids how to turn on the television, how to use the phone, how to use the computer, and so forth. Generally, technology was an area that required the adolescents' help.

Religion

The last theme that surfaced in the focus group was religion. The group was evenly divided between Hindus and Christians. The adolescents stated that this sample was an accurate representation of their community's religious constitution as a whole.

Many of the adolescents were tired of the conflict between Nepali Christians and Nepali Hindus in their community. They just wanted “peace.” One participant stated that, “It’s really the main conflict in our community” and another said, “They always fight about religion.” Others mentioned that the Hindus and Christians were always comparing themselves to each other in the community. One participant stated,

There’s like two different groups and even sometimes Christian people don’t want to hang out with Hindus and same thing with Hindus. For me, I’m a Hindu, but [...] I don’t really believe in God. That’s me, ‘cause my parents, they do ask me to go to temple [...] Well, I do. I go. I don’t go for myself. I go for them, because for me, I’ve never seen God.

Some of the Nepali-Bhutanese adolescents identified with their parents' religions. Other participants saw the conflict and divide religion created within their community, and questioned the validity and value of having a particular faith at all.

Adolescents' Suggestions on How to Engage the Nepali-Bhutanese Community

The adolescents reflected on the fact that they wanted doctors and social workers to “talk to lots of people for info,” and said that professionals should “believe what people are saying.” They said that those outside their community should “respect our community. They’ve been through a lot.” Participants wanted people from outside of their community to learn about their culture and way of life. In short, the adolescents wished that people outside the community, particularly those in authority, would engage in active listening and show respect towards their community.

CHAPTER V

Discussion/Conclusion

This discussion section includes what the study's findings confirmed and disconfirmed. It also discusses the strengths and limitations of the study. This chapter discusses the findings in the following order: Strengths and Weaknesses Presented by the Sample Size; Comparisons to Prior Research; and, New Findings. Finally, this chapter discusses the implications of this study for future clinical practice in a section titled Researcher's Recommendations for the Field and Suggestions for Further Research.

Strengths and Weaknesses Presented by the Sample Size

The use of an adolescent sample group was both a strength and limitation for this study. Prior research had underutilized the perspective of younger members of refugee groups, or failed to encompass those perspectives at all. This study filled that gap in the literature. As very little research had been done with Nepali-Bhutanese refugee adolescents in the United States, much of their insight was new. The adolescents defined their community in a number of ways, but many saw it as the place where they received emotional support and guidance. This sense of connection was emphasized over material support. The adolescents mentioned a number of different places that they found community, and school was mentioned more than home or family.

The generalizability was small for this study. The sample size was 11 adolescents in a focus group located in King County, Washington. As the findings were based on one focus group with the adolescents, assuming similar results in a different region of the country would be

unwise. However, the findings were a first step in identifying the needs and barriers of this refugee group. Assessing the Nepali-Bhutanese refugee community from the adolescent perspective was also an effective method for studying this community because of the younger generations' English proficiency. Language barriers were obstacles in prior attempts to access the community's population.

One limitation of the study design was the inability to follow-up with participants via individual interviews. As the data was collected in a group setting, some people were more outspoken than others. At times, it was unclear whether the less talkative members of the group genuinely shared the others' opinion, or were just repeating what the other person was saying.

Overall, the study was able to assess the adolescents' perspectives about the needs, barriers, and different issues that their community was experiencing. Although one purpose of the study was to assess the needs and strengths of the community, the focus group tended to concentrate more on the needs and weaknesses of the community. This finding could point to the vulnerability of the Nepali-Bhutanese refugees. Partnering with the adolescents was an effective way to help the younger generations build leadership skills as a first step in supporting the larger Nepali-Bhutanese refugee community.

Comparisons to Prior Research

Intergenerational differences in integration as a source of conflict. Some of the Nepali-Bhutanese adolescent refugees' perspectives and insights into their community confirmed observations made in the prior literature. Much of the research has noted differing acculturation rates as a source of family conflict. This appears to be supported by adolescents' perspectives that they fit into American society more readily than their parents. This perception of differing acculturation rates was also supported by their parents' reported lack of skills, including language skills, technology skills, and a general inability to navigate American society. School was one

primary place where children and adolescents received support and exposure to American mainstream culture and society. The older generation did not have this point of engagement to acquire some of the needed skills.

Social norms and intergenerational differences. Findings about the phenomenon of “back-biting” or gossip within the community were similar to findings from Ong’s research (2003). Ong discussed agrarian societies where women used gossip as a means for social control, especially as a means to prevent unacceptable behavior on the part of their children. Participants in this study reported instances where gossip was used in a manner that seemed congruent with Ong's discussion. For example, the community used gossip to control the youths' manner of dress and hairstyles, and to push the younger generation to conform to more traditional dating practices.

Older generations and barriers to integration. This study's findings also agreed with the literature in that language was one of the biggest barriers for the older generations of the refugee population. Adolescents report that a lack of English proficiency was a major reason that their parents could not get work. The adolescents also reported that many in their parents’ generation were learning at a slower rate than their children, or were not learning at all.

Consequent mental health issues for older generations. The adolescents' responses also confirmed findings that members of the older generations experienced symptoms of depression, including anger and crying. The adolescents observed that their parents were lonely, and that their parents were also worried about the fact that they did not necessarily know where their other family members were. These findings confirmed Ager and Strang’s (2008) research on how socially bonded relationships are integral to the integration process for refugees. The older generations could not concentrate on the process or task of integration so long as they were separated from and worried about their other family members. Although this study affirms the

existence of depression, it was only one of a number of issues that the older generation was dealing with from the adolescents' perspectives.

New Findings

Hyphenated identities. This study offered new information about how the adolescents identified. The participants were often confused as to whether to identify as Nepalese or Bhutanese. Many were comfortable taking the hyphenated Bhutanese-Nepali or Nepali-Bhutanese identity. Their confusion was mostly due to the lack of acceptance that their people experienced in both Nepal and Bhutan.

Also, the adolescents who reported they identified predominantly as Nepali said that this identification was a source of conflict between them and their parents. Many adolescents reported that they identified as Nepali because they were born in Nepal and spoke the Nepali language. In contrast, their parents mostly identified as Bhutanese. A few adolescents remarked that they were proud to identify as refugees, as they were proud of the struggles their families had overcome.

Social norms as relates to isolationism. The adolescents viewed the parents and grandparents as afraid of the uncertainties and dangers outside their community. The participants also saw the elders as afraid of losing face or losing the respect within their community as well. In the adolescents' perspective, the older generation was fearful of losing face, especially when the adolescents went out unsupervised with individuals of the opposite gender. The adolescents perceived the elders' general sense of fear as a result of the trauma and hardships they experienced in Nepal and Bhutan.

Religion. Prior research focused on the Nepali-Bhutanese refugees as a predominantly Hindu group. This study showed that major religious tensions between Hindus and Christians were present in the community. The sample was approximately half Hindu and half Christian, and the participants reported that this sample reflected the religious makeup of the community's

population at large. According to the adolescents, this religious divide was one of the main issues confronting their community. Some of the adolescents also reported that they were questioning their religious beliefs as a result of the effect that religion was having on their community.

Caste and gender. Similarly, the participants disagreed with the older generations' notions of class/caste in regards to dating and marriage. The participants also believed that girls and boys should be treated equally by their parents, and that both boys and girls should experience the same amount of freedom.

Researcher's Recommendations for the Field

In the adolescents' perspective, many of the issues within the Nepali-Bhutanese community were in some way influenced or created by their parents. For example, the parents' lack of English proficiency affected their ability to find employment and integrate into American culture and society. However, the host community and systems of oppression have had a role in the Nepali-Bhutanese community's issues and in the population's lack of integration into the United States. According to Hye-Kyung Kang,

Most of the Bhutanes-Nepali refugees in King County were settled (by the resettlement agencies) in very poor areas... These areas have disproportionately high unemployment rates even for non-refugees, which exacerbates employment problems for refugees who do not speak English proficiently and have no U.S.-based job experience or references. (H. Kang, personal communication, May 9, 2016).

As described in Rees' research (1970), the host community must accept and support immigrants and refugees if successful integration is to happen. Consequently, advocacy work is one way to help reframe the immigrant and refugee narrative for the host community. Another recommendation is to educate the public at large about the Nepali-Bhutanese community and the

general plight of refugees in America. Part of this education would be via anti-discrimination courses.

Related to the adolescents' assessments of the needs and support for their parents, this research recommends making skills training available to the older generations so that they will not be as dependent on their children. For example, adults could learn how to operate the computer, TV, radio, and other technologies that present problems at the present. A further recommendation is for resettlement agencies to provide language acquisition services for the adults. Last, this researcher recommends the training of para-professionals and interpreters within the Nepali-Bhutanese community so that the elders do not have to rely on the children as much in the future.

Suggestions for Further Research

The review of literature and the focus group of Nepali-Bhutanese adolescents sparked a number of questions and ideas for further research. Within this study, the adolescents identified religious conflict as one of the main issues in the Nepali-Bhutanese community. Future studies might examine ways to diffuse the Hindu-Christian conflict within this community. Also, future research might examine whether there are ways to create stress-free spaces within which the adolescents of this community can develop their religious identity.

Another question that this study raised was how the dominant culture influences the treatment of the older generations when it comes to social services and social workers. As Ong (2003) has suggested, social services may contribute to undermining the parent-child relationship and shifting power to the child's side of the relationship in its treatment of refugees. Reframing the refugee narrative may aid in overcoming this particular issue. Instead of looking at the older generations as lacking in acculturation, which denotes a lack of culturally appropriate knowledge and practices, one can view the differences as a result of the fact that the younger generation has

more exposure, support, connection, and guidance within the dominant society and culture. This in turn gives the children more confidence, encouragement, and skills.

Future research might look at how social services could create more points of exposure and support for older refugees in American culture and society at large. Ager and Strang's (2008) integration framework brought up the question of how social services and resettlement agencies could partner with the Nepali-Bhutanese to build social bonds, bridges, and links. Future research might look at how local communities in the United States could contribute to interdependence and cohesion that Rees (1970) attributed to greater integration. This would help the elders acclimate to American culture and society. It could also prevent or reduce the mental health consequences of isolation and social barriers, such as depressive symptoms and anxiety.

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APPENDIX A

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

1. Who (or What) do you consider your community?
2. Where is your community?
3. What do you like about your community (or what are some good things about your community)?
4. What do you not like about your community (or what are some not so good things about your community?)
5. What are some issues or problems in your community that are important to you or to other young people?
6. What are some issues or problems that your parents or other older people in your community face?
7. When people in your community are having a difficult time or have problems, what do they do?
8. What are your hopes for your community's future? What would you like to see happen?
 - a. What will take to make that happen?
9. What are some things about your community that people such as social workers, teachers, service providers, doctors, etc., should know?
10. Anything else that you think is important to talk about?

APPENDIX B: HSR APPROVAL LETTER



School for Social Work
Smith College
Northampton, Massachusetts 01063
T (413) 585-7950 F (413) 585-7994

September 28, 2013

Hye-Kyung Kang

Dear Hye-Kyung,

Thank you for making all the requested revisions to your application. Your project is now approved by the Human Subjects Review Committee.

Please note the following requirements:

Consent Forms: All subjects should be given a copy of the consent form.

Maintaining Data: You must retain all data and other documents for at least three (3) years past completion of the research activity.

In addition, these requirements may also be applicable:

Amendments: If you wish to change any aspect of the study (such as design, procedures, consent forms or subject population), please submit these changes to the Committee.

Renewal: You are required to apply for renewal of approval every year for as long as the study is active.

Completion: You are required to notify the Chair of the Human Subjects Review Committee when your study is completed (data collection finished).

Best of luck with your very interesting project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Elaine Kersten'.

Elaine Kersten, Ed.D.
Co-Chair, Human Subjects Review Committee

APPENDIX C: CHILD AND PARENT ASSENT AND CONSENT FORMS

**Consent to Participate in a Research Study
Smith College School for Social Work • Northampton, MA**

.....

Title of Study: Social and mental health needs of the Bhutanese refugee community: Community-based participatory research

Investigator(s): Hye-Kyung Kang, Ph. D.

Smith College School for Social Work

Tel: xxx-xxx-xxxx **Email:** hkang@smith.edu

.....

Dear Potential Participant,

You are being asked to be in a research study about social and mental health needs of the Bhutanese refugee community. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a participant of the Asian Counseling and Referral Service (ACRS) Child, Youth and Family program; are between the age of 15 and 21; live in King County, WA; and are either a Bhutanese refugee or a child of a Bhutanese refugee parent. We ask you that you read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

The purpose of this study is to learn about the issues that the Bhutanese refugee community is facing and what people in the community hope to see happen to make the community stronger and better. This information will help us understand the needs of the community from the view of the people in the community and help social workers or other service providers to plan better way to serve people in this community. This research may be published or presented at professional conferences.

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to become part of the research team to carry out this research as a youth participant-researcher (YPR). The research team will meet every week for 2 hours except during school or agency breaks. As an YPR, you will be asked to work with me (Hye-Kyung Kang) and a research associate (RA) who will be coordinating the research to learn more about how to carry out a research study. Next, you will be asked to talk about what you think about the issues your community is facing and what you hope to see happen with other YPRs in a focus group. Next, you and other YPRs will be asked as a team to come up with some interview questions that you would like to ask adults and elders in the community about your community's issues and hopes. Next, you will be asked to interview community members using the questions that the research team came up with. As you are interviewing community members in the community, you will be asked to bring what you are finding out to the research team so that we can

make sense of what we are finding out together. You will also be asked to take part in deciding how to get the word out about what we have learned from this study to other people. Although the research team meetings will continue only until the end of May, you may choose to stay on with this study to help get the word out.

This research may have the following risk. Talking about and asking about the issues that your community is facing may make you feel uncomfortable or upset. I will give you a list of counselors who can help you if this happens and you would like to talk to someone about it.

The benefits of participation are that you will receive valuable training and education in how to carry out a research, including critical thinking, interviewing, analysis, problem-solving, and writing skills. By becoming full partners in this research, you will have an opportunity to gain insight about your community's needs and hopes and to help develop solutions that can benefit your community.

The benefits of participation for me are that this study will help me understand social and mental health needs as well as the strengths and resiliency of the Bhutanese refugee community from the community's point of view. This study will also allow me to work with the community partner and community youth to find specific local, community-based solutions.

The benefits to social workers and other service providers are that this study may help them understand social and mental health needs and strengths and resiliency of the Bhutanese refugee community from the community's point of view. The results and recommendations from this study may help them develop services that are culturally appropriate and innovative for this community.

The records of this study will be kept strictly confidential. Research records will be kept in a secured file, and all electronic information will be coded and secured using a password protected file. If video or audio tape recordings are made, the tapes will be kept in a secure location, and only the research team will have an access to them. The audio or videotapes will be destroyed after three years. We will not include any information in any report we may publish that would make it possible to identify you. The data will be kept for at least three years according to Federal regulations. They may be kept longer if still needed for research. After the three years, or whenever the data are no longer being used, all data will be destroyed.

You will receive \$500 for stipend. Also, all meals and snacks during research team meetings will be provided.

The decision to participate in this study is entirely up to you. You may refuse to take part in the study at any time up to November 30th without affecting your relationship with the researchers of this study or Smith College. Your decision to refuse will not result in any loss of benefits (including access to services) to which you are otherwise entitled. You have the right not to answer any single question, as well as to withdraw completely up to the point noted below during the study. Because I cannot separate your contribution from others' in the focus group or during team meetings, I cannot guarantee not to use that information. However, as with any data, there will be no information that can be linked to you in the report. You must notify me of your decision to withdraw by email or phone by November 30, 2013.

You have the right to ask questions about this research study and to have those questions answered by me before, during or after the research. If you have any further questions about the study, at any time feel free to contact me, Hye-Kyung Kang, at hkang@smith.edu or by telephone at xxx-xxx-xxxx. If you like, a summary of the results of the study will be sent to you. If you have any other concerns about your rights as a research participant, or if you have any problems as a result of your participation, you may contact the Chair of the Smith College School for Social Work Human Subjects Committee at (413) 585-7974.

Consent

Your signature below indicates that you have decided to volunteer as a research participant for this study, and that you have read and understood the information provided above. You will be given a signed and dated copy of this form to keep, along with any other printed materials deemed necessary by the study researcher.

.....

Name of Participant (print): _____
Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____
Signature of Researcher(s): _____ Date: _____

.....

1. I agree to be audio or video taped for this interview:

Name of Participant (print): _____
Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____
Signature of Researcher(s): _____ Date: _____

2. I agree to be interviewed, but I do not want the interview to be taped:

Name of Participant (print): _____
Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____
Signature of Researcher(s): _____ Date: _____

**Consent to Participate in a Research Study
Smith College School for Social Work • Northampton, MA**

.....

Title of Study: Social and mental health needs of the Bhutanese refugee community: Community-based participatory research

Investigator(s): Hye-Kyung Kang, Ph. D.

Smith College School for Social Work

Tel: xxx-xxx-xxxx Email: hkang@smith.edu

.....

Dear Potential Participant,

You are being asked to be in a research study about social and mental health needs of the Bhutanese refugee community. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a participant of the Asian Counseling and Referral Service (ACRS) Child, Youth and Family program; are between the age of 15 and 21; live in King County, WA; and are either a Bhutanese refugee or a child of a Bhutanese refugee parent. We ask you that you read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

The purpose of this study is to learn about the issues that the Bhutanese refugee community is facing and what people in the community hope to see happen to make the community stronger and better. This information will help us understand the needs of the community from the view of the people in the community and help social workers or other service providers to plan better way to serve people in this community. This research may be published or presented at professional conferences.

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to become part of the research team to carry out this research as a youth participant-researcher (YPR). The research team will meet every week for 2 hours except during school or agency breaks. As an YPR, you will be asked to work with me (Hye-Kyung Kang) and a research associate (RA) who will be coordinating the research to learn more about how to carry out a research study. Next, you will be asked to talk about what you think about the issues your community is facing and what you hope to see happen with other YPRs in a focus group. Next, you and other YPRs will be asked as a team to come up with some interview questions that you would like to ask adults and elders in the community about your community's issues and hopes. Next, you will be asked to interview community members using the questions that the research team came up with. As you are interviewing community members in the community, you will be asked to bring what you are finding out to the research team so that we can make sense of what we are finding out together. You will also be asked to take part in deciding how to get the word out about what we have learned from this study to other people. Although the research team meetings will continue only until the end of May, you may choose to stay on with this study to help get the word out.

This research may have the following risk. Talking about and asking about the issues that your community is facing may make you feel uncomfortable or upset. I will give you a list of counselors who can help you if this happens and you would like to talk to someone about it.

The benefits of participation are that you will receive valuable training and education in how to carry out a research, including critical thinking, interviewing, analysis, problem-solving, and writing skills. By becoming full partners in this research, you will have an opportunity to gain insight about your community's needs and hopes and to help develop solutions that can benefit

your community.

The benefits of participation for me are that this study will help me understand social and mental health needs as well as the strengths and resiliency of the Bhutanese refugee community from the community's point of view. This study will also allow me to work with the community partner and community youth to find specific local, community-based solutions.

The benefits to social workers and other service providers are that this study may help them understand social and mental health needs and strengths and resiliency of the Bhutanese refugee community from the community's point of view. The results and recommendations from this study may help them develop services that are culturally appropriate and innovative for this community.

The records of this study will be kept strictly confidential. Research records will be kept in a secured file, and all electronic information will be coded and secured using a password protected file. If video or audio tape recordings are made, the tapes will be kept in a secure location, and only the research team will have an access to them. The audio or videotapes will be destroyed after three years. We will not include any information in any report we may publish that would make it possible to identify you. The data will be kept for at least three years according to Federal regulations. They may be kept longer if still needed for research. After the three years, or whenever the data are no longer being used, all data will be destroyed.

You will receive \$500 for stipend. Also, all meals and snacks during research team meetings will be provided.

The decision to participate in this study is entirely up to you. You may refuse to take part in the study at any time up to November 30th without affecting your relationship with the researchers of this study or Smith College. Your decision to refuse will not result in any loss of benefits (including access to services) to which you are otherwise entitled. You have the right not to answer any single question, as well as to withdraw completely up to the point noted below during the study. Because I cannot separate your contribution from others' in the focus group or during team meetings, I cannot guarantee not to use that information. However, as with any data, there will be no information that can be linked to you in the report. You must notify me of your decision to withdraw by email or phone by November 30, 2013.

You have the right to ask questions about this research study and to have those questions answered by me before, during or after the research. If you have any further questions about the study, at any time feel free to contact me, Hye-Kyung Kang, at hkang@smith.edu or by telephone at xxx-xxx-xxxx. If you like, a summary of the results of the study will be sent to you. If you have any other concerns about your rights as a research participant, or if you have any problems as a result of your participation, you may contact the Chair of the Smith College School for Social Work Human Subjects Committee at (413) 585-7974.

Consent

Your signature below indicates that you have decided to volunteer as a research participant for this study, and that you have read and understood the information provided above. You will be given a signed and dated copy of this form to keep, along with any other printed materials deemed necessary by the study researcher.

.....

Name of Participant (print): _____
Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____
Signature of Researcher(s): _____ Date: _____

.....

1. I agree to be audio or video taped for this interview:

Name of Participant (print): _____
Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____
Signature of Researcher(s): _____ Date: _____

2. I agree to be interviewed, but I do not want the interview to be taped:

Name of Participant (print): _____
Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____
Signature of Researcher(s): _____ Date: _____

**Parental-Guardian Consent to Participate in a Research Study
Smith College School for Social Work • Northampton, MA**

.....

Title of Study: Social and mental health needs of the Bhutanese refugee community: Community-based participatory research

Investigator(s): Hye-Kyung Kang, Ph. D.

Smith College School for Social Work

Tel: xxx-xxx-xxxx Email: hkang@smith.edu

.....

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Your child/child you are guardian for (referred to as ‘your child’ in this form) is being asked to be in a research study about social and mental health needs of the Bhutanese refugee community. S/he was selected as a possible participant because s/he is a participant of the Asian Counseling and Referral Service (ACRS) Child, Youth and Family program; is between the age of 15 and 21;

lives in King County, WA; and is either a Bhutanese refugee or a child of a Bhutanese refugee parent. We ask you that you read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

The purpose of this study is to learn about the issues that the Bhutanese refugee community is facing and what people in the community hope to see happen to make the community stronger and better. This information will help us understand the needs of the community from the view of the people in the community and help social workers or other service providers to plan better way to serve people in this community. This research may be published or presented at professional conferences.

If you decide to allow your child to participate in this study, s/he will be asked to do the following things. S/he will be asked to become part of the research team to carry out this research as a youth participant-researcher (YPR). The research team will meet every week for 2 hours except during school or agency breaks. As an YPR, s/he will be asked to work with me (Hye-Kyung Kang) and a research associate (RA) who will be coordinating the research to learn more about how to carry out a research study. Next, your child will be asked to talk about what s/he think about the issues the community is facing and what s/he hopes to see happen with other YPRs in a focus group. Next, your child and other YPRs will be asked as a team to come up with some interview questions that they would like to ask adults and elders in the community about the community's issues and hopes. Next, s/he will be asked to interview community members using the questions that the research team came up with. As s/he is interviewing community members in the community, s/he will be asked to bring what s/he is finding out to the research team so that we can make sense of what we are finding out together. Your child will also be asked to take part in deciding how to get the word out about what we have learned from this study to other people. Although the research team meetings will continue only until the end of May, s/he may choose to stay on with this study to help get the word out.

This research may have the following risk. Talking about and asking about the issues that his or her community is facing may make him or her feel uncomfortable or upset. I will give him/her a list of counselors who can help him/her if this happens and if s/he would like to talk to someone about it.

The benefits of participation are that s/he will receive valuable training and education in how to carry out a research, including critical thinking, interviewing, analysis, problem-solving, and writing skills. By becoming full partners in this research, s/he will have an opportunity to gain insight about the community's needs and hopes and help develop solutions that can benefit the community.

The benefits of participation for me are that this study will help me understand social and mental health needs and strengths and resiliency of the Bhutanese refugee community from the community's point of view. This study will also allow me to work with the community partner and community youth to find specific local, community-based solutions.

The benefits to social workers and other service providers are that this study may help them understand social and mental health needs and strengths and resiliency of the Bhutanese refugee community from the community's point of view. The results and recommendations from this study

may help them develop services that are culturally appropriate and innovative for this community.

The records of this study will be kept strictly confidential. Research records will be kept in a secured file, and all electronic information will be coded and secured using a password protected file. If video or audio tape recordings are made, the tapes will be kept in a secure location, and only the research team will have an access to them. The audio or videotapes will be destroyed after three years. We will not include any information in any report we may publish that would make it possible to identify him/her. The data will be kept for at least three years according to Federal regulations. They may be kept longer if still needed for research. After the three years, or whenever the data are no longer being used, all data will be destroyed.

Your child will receive \$500 for stipend. Also, all meals and snacks during research team meetings will be provided.

The decision to participate in this study is entirely up to you and your child. You are welcome to observe the interview if you wish. Your child may refuse to take part in the study *at any time* without affecting your relationship with the researchers of this study or Smith College. Your/your child's decision to refuse will not result in any loss of benefits (including access to services) to which you/your child are otherwise entitled. You/your child have the right not to answer any single question, as well as to withdraw completely at any point up to November 30, 2013, during the study. Because I cannot separate your child's contribution from others' in the focus group or during team meetings, I cannot guarantee not to use that information in the final report. However, as with any data, there will be no information that can be linked to him/her in the report. You must notify me of your decision to withdraw by email or phone by November 30, 2013.

You have the right to ask questions about this research study and to have those questions answered by me before, during or after the research. If you have any further questions about the study, at any time feel free to contact me, Hye-Kyung Kang, at hkang@smith.edu or by telephone at xxx-xxx-xxxx. If you like, a summary of the results of the study will be sent to you. If you have any other concerns about your rights as a research participant, or if you have any problems as a result of your participation, you may contact the Chair of the Smith College School for Social Work Human Subjects Committee at (413) 585-7974.

Consent

Your signature below indicates that you have decided to allow your child to participate as a research participant for this study, and that you have read and understood the information provided above. You will be given a signed and dated copy of this form to keep, along with any other printed materials deemed necessary by the study investigators.

.....

Name of Parent/Guardian (print): _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Researcher(s): _____ Date: _____

.....

1. I agree to let my child be video or audio taped for this interview:

Name of Parent/Guardian (print): _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Researcher(s): _____ Date: _____

2. I agree to let my child be interviewed, but I do not want the interview to be taped:

Name of Parent/Guardian (print): _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Researcher(s): _____ Date: _____