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An Analysis of Burmese and Iraqi Resettlement Location and Assimilation in a Midsized City: Implications for Educational and Other Community Leaders

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AN ANALYSIS OF BURMESE AND IRAQI RESETTLEMENT LOCATION AND ASSIMILATION IN A MIDSIZED CITY: IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL AND OTHER COMMUNITY LEADERS

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Doctor of Education

By
Donna Schiess Renaud

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AN ANALYSIS OF BURMESE AND IRAQI RESETTLEMENT LOCATION AND ASSIMILATION IN A MIDSIZED CITY: IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL AND OTHER COMMUNITY LEADERS

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Refugees face different circumstances than other immigrants regarding housing in initial resettlement in the U.S. Refugees have no choice of their initial residence as this is determined in advance by the resettlement agency. Refugees who belong to minority ethnic groups and who have little education or skills may experience discrimination and hostility from local citizens. Resettlement areas that are high in population density, rental units, minorities, crime, unemployment, inadequate transportation, and low income may present additional barriers to cultural and economic assimilation.

This mixed-method study had a twofold purpose. The first was to describe quantitatively how the initial resettlement address affects the refugee assimilation within a mid-sized city allowing for neighborhood demographics. According to assimilation theory, refugees would normally move out of the initial housing into better housing when possible. Using the local resettlement agency database combined with demographics from the 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census, Burmese and Iraqis who arrived between January of 2008 and February 2011 were identified through mapping with GIS geospatial data. Maps were created and combined with Census block and block group level data for
neighborhood demographics. Two primary, two secondary, and two tertiary clusters of Burmese and Iraqi housing were identified and evaluated through Kernel Density in 3D.

Total numbers of household moves are tracked within the study period by use of Environmental System Research Institute (ESRI) ArcObjects programming. The researcher found that Burmese often stay within the original resettlement complex or move to those clusters inhabited by other Burmese. The GIS data for the Iraqi refugees was incomplete. However, interviews revealed that Iraqis move quickly and break contact with the refugee agency, resulting in minimal movement data for the second group.

The second purpose was to identify needs, strengths, gaps in services, and projects for refugees by conducting a qualitative analysis through semi-structured interviews of educational and community leaders. Nineteen interviews were conducted among leaders in education, health, social work, and spiritualism. Needs reported were English language, transportation, skills, and cultural knowledge, in particular for the Burmese. Strengths included workforce, diversity, and positive attitudes. Both groups report innovative projects in progress.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Refugees are people who “have a well-founded fear of persecution in their country of origin because of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion and who migrate to another country” (Chang-Muy & Congress, 2009, p. 262). Refugees legally enter the United States in search of freedom, peace, and opportunity for themselves and their families. The U.S. refugee admittance ceiling from 2002 to 2007 was 70,000 per year, and that was adjusted upward in 2008 to 80,000 to allow for anticipated arrivals from Iraq, Iran, and Bhutan, although that ceiling was not met (Migration Policy Institute, 2004). In 2009, 74,602 refugees were admitted to the U.S., representing a 24.1% increase compared with 2008 (60,107). This number of refugees is the largest admitted since 1999 (85,285), according to the Migration Policy Institute. More than 67% of refugees that came to the U.S. in 2009 were from Iraq, Burma, and Bhutan (Batalova & Terrazas, 2010).

Significance of the Problem

Kentucky is experiencing the result of changing patterns of refugee resettlement patterns in the U.S. Cities in coastal states such as New York and California typically receive high numbers of refugees, but these cities in recent years have been replaced by 16 inland cities in areas such as Kentucky and Missouri. Between 1990 and 2000, the percentage of foreign born in Kentucky and other states increased by 75% or more (Brown, Mott, & Malecki, 2007). While most of this growth is Hispanic immigrants, a portion is refugees. Many of these refugees are “free cases,” meaning they have no preexisting family arrivals, allowing agencies to select nontraditional locations with better job or housing potential (Brown et al., 2007, p. 58). Once the refugees are
established, future migration chains of secondary arrivals may leave original sites of resettlement to join family or friends in Kentucky or other states.

In Kentucky, the current trend of increasing numbers of refugee arrivals reflects the national trend in numbers and ethnicities. Refugee resettlement agencies are located in Louisville, Bowling Green, and a new branch office that opened in Owensboro in 2010. Between 2007 and 2009, 3,836 refugees arrived in Kentucky (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2007). Out of that number, 1,080 were Burmese and 564 were Iraqi, representing 42% of all state arrivals. Kentucky has experienced exponential increases in these two populations since 2007. In two years, Iraqi arrivals increased from 6 in 2007 to 335 in 2009, and Burmese arrivals doubled from 230 to 584. Although 2010 numbers are not available at this time from the Department of Homeland Security, the trends are expected to continue to increase at a rapid rate.

Problem Statement

The problem addressed in this study is the potential impact of initial resettlement location on refugees and on their community service providers. Many studies and theories address immigrant assimilation experience, but few separate the distinct refugee population that faces additional challenges in assimilation. Immigration is a broad term that refers to the movement of people into a new country to become permanent residents (Chang-Muy & Congress, 2009). Most immigrants make a choice to move that may be based on economic or other reasons. Refugees arrive under very different circumstances that do not involve choice. They arrive under a condition called forced (or involuntary) migration. Often they do not want to leave their country, but due to persecution related to war and violence, they are forced to become displaced to a second country of refuge or a
refugee camp. One might visualize an immigrant as “pulled in” to a country, whereas a refugee is “pushed out” of another (Rose, 1993, p. 8).

**Assimilation Literature Summary**

The United States of America was created and built by its earliest immigrants who migrated to a strange and dangerous land to begin new lives. Many were escaping political or religious persecution while others were seeking fortune and adventure. Cultural differences existed from the beginning from the Puritans in Massachusetts to the Germans and Dutch in Pennsylvania (Parrillo, 2003). New Netherland, site of today’s Manhattan, was reported by its Dutch governor in 1660 to have 18 languages spoken by its citizens. Although immigrants brought their own cultures and lifestyles to the New World, to survive early settlers were forced to adapt to a new and challenging environment (Parrillo, 2003).

Early immigrants were necessary to build civilization and were strongly encouraged to migrate to America by the founding fathers. Presidents from Washington to Tyler expressed the necessity of populating the nation, resulting in minimal restrictions to immigration in favor of recruiting new members to the “family” (Daniels, 2004, p. 6-7). The need for immigrants was not without reservations. In a letter written in 1798 to John Adams, George Washington expressed his concern that immigrants living together in separate communities would maintain their ethnic identities rather than assimilate (Parrillo, 2003). During this period, there was not a legal distinction between an immigrant and a refugee.

The gates for certain immigrants began to close as America became more populated. Limitations on numbers of immigrants to America are viewed by most
historians as marked by the adoption of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, and continuing until 1921 beginning with regulations, and later followed by restrictions intended to keep out ethnic groups deemed to be undesirable or “inferior” (Daniels, 2004, p. 3). Regulations and restrictions increased until 1943, followed by the onset of a temporary era lessening immigration ethnic restrictions (Daniels, 2004).

America has a long history of immigration assimilation concerns. Assimilation is defined as the “level of functioning within a society of any racial or ethnic minority-group members who lack any marked cultural, social, or personal differences from the people of the majority group” (Parrillo, 2003, p. 62). Two major waves of immigration occurred in the United States, and both waves encountered initial resistance. Established residents wanted complete assimilation by immigrants into the dominant culture, while immigrants struggled to maintain cultural identities.

The first wave of immigration in the United States was during the Pre-Civil War period, from 1820-1860, and included groups arriving from Northern and Western Europe. The two largest groups of the 9.6 million immigrants were Irish fleeing from the potato famine and Germans from a failed revolution, although 20% of all immigrants were Africans forced into slavery. Many native Protestant groups openly opposed the great numbers of Irish and German Catholic arrivals (Parrillo, 2003).

The second wave began at the turn of the 20th century with the onset of the Industrial Revolution that drew throngs of Germans, Irish, Italians, Swedish, Jewish, and Polish immigrants. These immigrants were expected to assimilate in a linear trajectory by discarding their home country’s culture, values, and language, while completely adopting the new country’s language, middle-class values, and cultural norms (Schleef &
Cavalcanti, 2009). Concerns with assimilation following these waves reached a peak following World War I with the advent of the “Americanization movement.” The large number of immigrants coming to the U.S. raised concern in members of the dominant culture who questioned immigrant commitment to their new country. Government agencies began a strong push toward immigrants’ immediate adoption of American practices, citizenship, the English language, and reverence for American institutions (Parrillo, 2003, p. 63).

An influx of immigration in the United States due to changes in policy began in 1965 in conjunction with an increase in globalization and service industry jobs, which occurred simultaneously with a decrease in industrialization (Schleef & Cavalcanti, 2009). Unlike the previous waves, this wave included immigrants from Asia, Africa, and Latin America, whose ethnic cultures, values, and religions conflicted with those of the dominant White and Christian-based class. In place of the “industrial surge” of earlier decades, immigrants were faced with a “bipolar informational economy” consisting of “higher end jobs and a large low-end service industry (Schleef & Cavalcanti, 2009, p. 25). These new immigrants did not follow the same linear pathway to assimilation as those of European descent in the first wave. As a result, many new assimilation theories were developed to try to explain the differences in minority assimilation experiences of the second wave.

Scholars came to see the previous linear assimilation theory as ethnocentric and an example of internal colonialism, which served to push a perceived superior culture over a perceived inferior one (Feagin & Feagin, 2003). One new theory developed, segmented assimilation theory, suggests that immigrants adapt at differing levels due to
barriers, such as racial discrimination and situations of poor economic and living conditions (Feagin & Feagin, 2003). In spite of these difficulties, some groups have become successful economically. However, contrary to those who managed to gain financial security in the future, these new groups maintain their native cultures as opposed to adopting that of the mainstream. A related theory, enclave theory, describes a situation where immigrants create social and economic neighborhoods within cities to help combat inequality and discrimination. This perspective stresses the development of small businesses and “specialized ethnic economies” (Feagin & Feagin, 2003, p. 40). A more thorough discussion of various assimilation theories follows in Chapter 2.

Although people have often sought refuge throughout history, refugees as a protected social category emerged in post-World War II Europe as a response “to manage mass displacements of people” (Malkki, 1995, p. 497). The global crisis required that a set of legal standards and procedures be created to define the “institutional domain” of refugees and the administration of refugee camps (Malkki, 1995, p. 498). The military was the first group in charge of developing a model for refugee camps, setting up their spatial designs and procedures, often utilizing military barracks and former labor and concentration camps in Germany.

In 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the United Nations as well as the Genocide Convention as a response to the desperate plight of millions who had tried to escape the Holocaust and were refused entry into other countries (Malkki, 1995). The United Nations offers protection to refugees through both its 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was created to oversee the global implementation
and compliance with the UN accords and is the foremost body charged with
documentation of refugees (Malkki, 1995). Out of 191 UN member states, 145 have
signed one of these documents (UNHCR, 2006). This means that cooperating member
states must give refugees either temporary or permanent status and agree not to return
them to a country where they might be persecuted.

The first pieces of legislation in the U.S. directed toward refugees as a protected
class of immigrants were the Displaced Persons Act of 1948, The Immigration and
Nationality Act of 1952, and the Refugee Escapee Act of 1957 (Chang-Muy & Congress,
2009). These Acts were primarily directed toward those displaced due to war or
communism. Waves of refugees following the Vietnam War spurred legislation to
improve the organization and efficiency of the refugee resettlement process. To comply
with International Law, the U.S. signed the UN treaty at the 1967 Protocol Relating to the
Status of Refugees and incorporated the following definition of refugee for purposes of
asylum into the Refugee Act of 1980 as follows:

Any person who is outside any country of his nationality or in the case of any
person having no nationality, is outside of any country in which he last habitually
resided, and who is unable or unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that
country because of persecution, on account of race, religion, nationality, and
membership of a particular social group or political opinion (Refugee Act of

Changes continue in refugee and human rights legislation today. See Appendix A
for a listing of significant refugee policies. In addition to changes in policy and ethnic
background, primary locations for refugee resettlement have changed from large to mid-sized cities.

**Significance of expedited numbers to mid-sized cities.**

The increased volume of refugees is significant for several reasons. Expedited volumes of refugees increase the community’s visibility of refugees and their assimilation may divert community resources and personnel from other areas. Scholars suggest the volume of refugees should be related to the “refugee-to-total population ratio” because high volumes will affect subsequent resettlement activities (Lanphier, 1983, p. 7). When working with cohorts of refugees, service providers attempt to manage the needs of the current group while preparing for the following cohort. There is always the potential for disequilibrium in resources and quality of resettlement. The United States agency resettlement model is based on a high volume/high priority for economic adaption (Lanphier, 1983). Under current policy refugees are expected to be “absorbed” within 30 days into the manual labor workplace with little or no consideration of education or previous job experience (Lanphier, 1983, p. 10). Other countries such as Canada and France consider cultural adaptation paramount to economic adaption and may decrease refugee volume and increase financial support and adaptation time for English or French language instruction and survival skills (Lanphier, 1983). Larger volumes of refugees may be more easily absorbed into a metropolitan area, but more studies are needed to assess the effect on mid-sized cities such as Bowling Green.

The Western Kentucky Refugee Mutual Assistance, also known as the International Center (IC) is a Voluntary Agency (VOLAG) operating under the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). A VOLAG is a voluntary, nongovernmental agency that
operates to resettle refugees through federal grants awarded per refugee (Brown et al., 2007). According to the International Center Comptroller, Chris Kantosky, the IC received 1,466 refugees between 2008 through 2010. Of this number, 940 arrivals were Burmese and 224 were Iraqi, or approximately 79% of all arrivals when combined (C. Kantosky, personal communication, February 14, 2011). The numbers of arrivals are expected to continue at similar or even increased rates in the future.

**Purpose of the Study**

The assimilation of the Burmese and Iraqi groups will be the focus of this study. The twofold purpose of this study is to first, spatially examine the residential mobility of Burmese and Iraqi refugees in Bowling Green, Kentucky by first assessing demographics of initial location of resettlement and subsequent moves, combined with existing research and data on each group’s human capital. The second purpose is to conduct interviews with educational and community leaders to identify services, strengths, needs, and gaps.

**Significance of the Study**

This study is significant because although much research has been conducted on immigrants as a group, little has been done on refugees as a specific subgroup of immigrants. Most data sets do not present the researcher the ability to solely focus on refugees. Refugees face a unique set of challenges preceding and during arrival to the host country. The initial resettlement circumstances are critical indicators of a refugee family’s chance of successful integration, as refugees in the U.S. face a 30 days to self sufficiency expectation with a 90-day window of limited agency oversight. Researchers suggest that a key indicator of a successful resettlement is “adequate, affordable housing” because from this location, the refugee must look for employment, obtain education, and
establish social connections (Carter, Polevychok, & Osborne, 2009, p. 305). Furthermore, “refugees are more likely to suffer from housing distress than immigrants” (Carter et al., 2009, p. 306).

The importance of this study is the potential benefit to community leaders, educators, support providers, and the refugee population by identifying spatial patterns of residential migration and assimilation to determine factors that impede or improve assimilation. The data gathered will, in turn, inform educational and community leaders who are engaged in planning programs and services to better serve this population. Educational leaders can focus their efforts within the resulting ethnic communities to assist these diverse immigrants as they struggle to maintain their own cultures and identities while becoming acculturated to the American way of life (Armstrong, Nabb, & Czech, 2007).

Pre-school through high school leaders and teachers will benefit from the specific knowledge gained regarding the community and sociocultural experiences of their students. “(To) effectively teach and raise students, they [schools] must understand those students. Understanding students involves understanding the cultural and geographic communities from which they come” (O’Haire, McLaughlin, & Reitzug, 2000, p. 414). Undeniably, communities must understand themselves to determine what areas need to be focused on for improvement both within the school systems and in the community at large. Community and educational leaders can help to provide guidance as well as the needed research for the transformational process to take place. This current project is an attempt to help accomplish just that.
The comparison of two specific groups, Burmese and Iraqi, will explore the ways in which these groups assimilate spatially into the community due to potential differences in human and social capital. These groups are significant because they are the largest groups arriving both nationally and within the Bowling Green area (J. Robinson, personal communication, Feb 14, 2010). Furthermore, this specific area of study will contribute to the understanding of the impact of these refugees’ migration to medium-sized metropolitan areas. Refugees who are initially resettled and then remain in ethnic enclaves may face increased barriers to integration as areas intended for temporary resettlement turn into ghetto areas for permanent underclass residents (Muller, 1998). As the ethnic and economic dynamics of our permanent international population change, new challenges emerge, and new strategies are needed to drive this population toward successful integration within the larger native-born community.

Bowling Green, Kentucky is a mid-size city in South Central Kentucky. According to the 2010 Census results, Warren County’s population was 113,792, with Bowling Green itself containing 60,000. Furthermore, the Census Bureau estimated in the July 2010 count that the Bowling Green metropolitan statistical area (MSA) was 120,595. An MSA is a large population nucleus, with adjacent communities having a high degree of social and economic integration with that core, and can contain several counties. In the latest 2010 Census count, Bowling Green’s MSA grew 15.7% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011).

In the past, refugees were typically resettled in larger metropolitan areas such as Chicago or Detroit into existing areas of ethnic enclaves (Singer & Wilson, 2011). Because Bowling Green is smaller than those cities, refugees from many countries are
resettled into smaller, more condensed areas, so there may be many different ethnic
cultures in adjacent housing. When a refugee family arrives, housing is obtained by the
resettlement agency ahead of their arrival, and the families do not have a choice of
location. The ability to choose where they live is a major difference between immigrants
and refugees, and a potential factor in assimilation success or failure.

**Research Questions**

The following questions were addressed in this study:

RQ 1: What are the characteristics of initial neighborhoods where Burmese and
Iraqi refugees are resettled?

RQ 2: Do Burmese and Iraqi refugees remain at the initial resettlement locations
or move from the initial locations?

RQ 3: For those who moved, what are the differences between the characteristics
of refugee initial and destination neighborhoods?

RQ 4: What do educational and organizational leaders identify as issues related to
educating and serving Burmese and Iraqi refugees in schools and in communities?
Operational Definitions

Assimilation: The “level of functioning within a society of any racial or ethnic minority-group members who lack any marked cultural, social, or personal differences from the people of the majority group” (Parrillo, 2003, p. 62).

Cultural Capital: A form of social capital referring to standards of cultural practices and valued abilities that is characteristic of the socially and economically dominant class in society and considered as barriers to assimilation. In education, cultural capital refers to differential treatment to cultural minorities by educators and preference toward dominant member students (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1979).


Human capital (for refugees): The value of former employment, education level, English language proficiency upon arrival (Lamba, 2003).

Immigrants: People who move to another country with the intent to stay (Chang-Muy & Congress, 2009).

Integration: Societal participation, combining the quality of life aspect with the actual goals of the refugee (Valtonen, 1998).

Refugees: People who are outside their native country and “have a well-founded fear of persecution in their country of origin because of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion” (Chang-Muy & Congress, 2009, p.262).
Social Capital (for refugees): Social networks consisting of family members, friends, service providers, sponsors, or others who might be sources of assistance (Lamba, 2003).
CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

The problem addressed in this study is the potential impact of initial resettlement location on refugees and on their community service providers. Many studies and theories address immigrant assimilation experiences, but few focus directly on refugee populations that may face additional challenges. Most immigrants make a choice to move. Refugees arrive under very different circumstances; they have little choice. Often they do not want to leave their country, but due to persecution related to war and violence, they are displaced to a second country of refuge or a refugee camp. From there they may have little choice on where or when they are moved.

The relationship between assimilation and factors of location and education will be further examined through the segmented assimilation theory. Also a rationale about why this theory applies more directly to the refugee situation than other assimilation theories is discussed in this chapter.

Comparison of Segmented Assimilation Theory with Competing Assimilation Theories

Three major schools of thought form the basis for how immigrants and refugees should integrate into a community. This integration may be affected by the type of community and the values that are already held by its members. According to Parrillo (2003), the three major models are the Assimilation (Majority-Conformity), Amalgamation (Melting Pot), and Accommodation (Pluralistic).

Classic assimilation (majority-conformity).

In assimilation theory, the ethnic group abandons all previous cultural practices and norms while adopting the majority culture of the dominant group. Brown and Bean
(2006) compared classical and updated models as they pertain to various ethnic groups over time. Most early scholars (Alba & Nee, 2005; Gordon, 1964) argued that complete assimilation occurs over three generations and involve the adoption of the dominant class identity, including intermarriage and absorption by the dominant class. Members of the ethnic community would intermarry, adopt the religion, and join similar civic and recreational activities as the majority culture. In the U.S., the Anglo-Saxon heritage was assumed to be the dominant culture that immigrants would adopt. Early theorists of classic assimilation (majority-conformity) theory presumed that immigrants and refugees progressed uniformly toward assimilation in a straight line until absorbed into the dominant group (Parrillo, 2003).

Scholars today agree that this assumption was incorrect, as early immigrant arrivals such as the Germans and Irish took four or more generations to assimilate completely. Moreover, immigrants and refugees arriving since 1965 were less likely to follow the straight paths to assimilation, which encouraged a wellspring of new assimilation theories (Schleef & Cavalcanti, 2009; Xie & Greenman, 2005).

Segmented assimilation theory includes a pathway of straight line assimilation, but classic assimilation theory fails to address groups such as refugees who may follow bumpy paths to assimilation. Moreover, early assimilation models received criticism because “Immigrating groups were depicted as conforming to unchanging, middle-class, white Protestant values.” This criticism was based on the idea that white Protestant values were superior to all others (Brown & Bean, 2006, p. 4).
Amalgamation theory.

Amalgamation theory is also known as the *melting pot theory*. In this theory, new groups blend all physical and cultural aspects together resulting in a new American culture. Some critics say that while some aspects of culture have combined, other aspects remain distinct and most groups have combined simply to fit within the existing dominant culture. According to Parrillo (2003), the major theorists in amalgamation theory are Crevecoeur and Turner. The melting pot theory is often romanticized in discussions of the American immigration experience with metaphors describing struggles of frontier life or visions of Ellis Island; however, critics point out the flaws when this theory is applied to minority groups (Parrillo, 2003). The continued emphasis on English-only language, maintaining the dominant group cultural traditions, and controversy over bilingual education provides examples of pressures against coexisting cultural practices. Opponents of amalgamation theory discourage use of this theory to describe the minority American experience (Parrillo, 2003). Subsequent theorists suggest that instead of a melting pot, we should use the tossed salad as the dominant metaphor. This view is discussed by accommodation theory.

Accommodation theory.

Accommodation theory, also known as *pluralism*, suggests that a multicultural society can exist, allowing for subcultures, but maintaining these cultures within the larger social world. In this theory, all groups must adhere to the same small set of basic values. Two examples of successful pluralistic societies are the U.S. and Switzerland (Parrillo, 2003). Pluralism can be explained through the paradigm of structural pluralism. Young (1999) describes structural pluralism as the way the structure of a town or city
affects the residents within. Structure includes city services such as government and economic entities and how they affect experiences in the daily lives of the residents. Various levels (open or closed) of structural pluralism will result in differences in the ability of minority voices to be heard in community decisions (Young, 1999). Armstrong (2006) describes structural pluralism as the level of decentralization or centralization in the power structure of a community. Communities that are more decentralized would be considered high in structural pluralism. Communities with a dense centralized power structure would be low in structural pluralism. In a pluralistic community, all citizens have equal access to power regardless of race or ethnicity (Armstrong, 2006). Although citizens may continue to coexist peacefully with differing cultural and ethnic beliefs and customs, they are still more likely to live in similar neighborhoods, socialize together, and marry those in similar groups (Parrillo, 2003).

**Assimilation theory: The segmented assimilation model.**

The segmented assimilation theory, proposed by Portes and Zhou (1993), asserts that rather than adhering to straight line assimilation as asserted by past theorists, where the group would abandon their culture and totally adopt the dominant culture, many immigrants and refugees, especially non-white follow various segmented paths to assimilation. The question becomes not whether or when immigrants or refugees will eventually assimilate, but “into which sector of American society” (Portes & Zhou, 1993, p. 82). Three possible pathways to assimilation posited are:

- Gradual assimilation over time and integration into the [dominant group’s] middle class as described in the classic assimilation theory;
• Downward assimilation into poverty and the lower class [marginalized and blocked];


These paths describe both positive and negative outcomes while the rate of assimilation ties into factors such as neighborhood dynamics, social services, and other subgroups surrounding the immigrants (Schleef & Cavalcanti, 2009). Uneven assimilation may also be attributed to various levels of human capital, combined with the context and quality of reception into the U.S. and family stability. Immigrants with high human capital are more likely to follow the classic assimilation model. Unskilled immigrants who arrived during the industrial revolution could work in factories and obtain upward mobility into the middle class; whereas today’s immigrants are faced with polar economies on the low end of the minimum wage service industry compared with the high end technology sector (Portes & Zhou, 1993).

Another consideration affecting segmented assimilation is modes of incorporation, or the context of the reception into the community. Modes of incorporation include factors such as the politics between the sending and receiving countries, the current economy, values, and prejudices of the receiving community, and the structure and size of existing ethnic communities (Haller, Portes, & Lynch, 2011; Portes & Zhou, 1993). If existing ethnic communities are large and weak, they may be more damaging to immigrants than no existing community in terms of negative public sentiment (Haller et
al., 2011). In addition, the children of these refugees and immigrants face “additional barriers to education and occupational mobility” (Halle et al., 2011, p. 737).

Portes and Zhou (1993) further describe three factors that may accelerate downward assimilation of immigrant youth. They are “color, location, and the absence of mobility ladders” (Portes & Zhou, 1993, p. 83). Mobility ladders allow contact with the middle class that provide job possibilities and references. As the middle class moves out of neighborhoods, these opportunities are less prevalent (Wilson, 1990). Immigrants of color may be facing discrimination and racism for the first time (Brown & Bean, 2006). When placed into residential areas of poverty, immigrants are likely to be in close contact with native-born minorities and adopt the “adversarial subculture” often adopted by marginalized poor (Portes & Zhou, 1993, p. 83). Parents of immigrant youth are hard pressed to reach financial and cultural levels in time to provide higher education and resulting opportunities for children. It is assumed to be the same for refugees; although the authors describe the benefits available in the past to refugees in educational and business startup loans, they dried up years ago.

In summary, models of assimilation have surfaced since the first classical assimilation model through the realization that different groups may not assimilate in the same ways at the same speed. Although many theories of assimilation exist, these represent the three main schools of thought in the assimilation process. The following section discusses key factors related to assimilation.
Factors Involved in Assimilation

Community reception and assimilation.

Stoneall (1983) describes human ecology as a branch of sociology specializing in demographics, population statistics, migration, and human communities. This approach emphasizes the distribution of aggregations of human beings in relation to space and material resources in the study of community. Diverse aggregates compete for sustenance in a scarcity of space. In this competition, populations shift and reorganize to achieve a balanced capacity for sustenance. Human ecology considers both social and nonsocial forces as biology, geology, and physics as both can regulate human communities. An ethnic enclave would be the smallest unit of study in a human ecological community scenario. Human ecology began with Galpin’s (1918) studies of rural America and continued with Park and Burgess’s (1984) studies of urban Chicago. Studies of human ecology examine aggregates rather than individuals and also look at natural resources, including physical and spatial attributes of communities. Human ecologists also focus on competition, invasion, succession, and symbiosis as they are linked in adaptation and survival. Maps are often used to develop conceptualizations and analyze population distributions. Census and other government documents provide statistics for analysis.

Park and Burgess (1984) assert that a city may be studied through the lens of culture, politics, and traditions, as these and other human forces influence its growth and development. Change is seen as both biotic and social. If one observes the way that an individual is incorporated into a society, in terms of start location and resources, one may predict his or her rate of integration. The most common situation is to be born into a family that is already in the spatial and social milieu (Park & Burgess, 1984). When
growth in immigration occurs, added to the natural increase, a social disequilibrium results. The increased competition for space that ensues leads to increased industry, dislodged housing, and displaced families invading other neighborhoods.

Promotion of city growth is described by Logan and Molotch (1987) as a condition desired by the elites who profit from growth but not by those who live and work there. The phenomenon of city planning and growth throughout American history combined acquisition of land with government activity. Elites view the “growth machine” as a means to increase rents and advance wealth (Logan & Molotch, 1987, p. 50). Often, the side effects of growth are damaging to the residents in the forms of higher land costs, higher taxes, and fewer social support systems (Logan & Molotch, 1987). As a result, deterioration of neighborhood enclaves increases as well as changes of occupation (Park & Burgess, 1984). The larger the city, the more it can withstand these invasions of new individuals with less disruption. In addition, residents with higher status will enact barriers such as zoning restrictions to their own neighborhoods to protect social and property values.

Although city officials may design a physical city plan and order of streets, individual ownership will set land values, private enterprise and convenience, and personal taste will dictate city limits, residential locations, and industrial locations. These factors will control how the populations are distributed and organized. Groups of individuals band together to defend their sections of the city. Suttles (1972) describes a defended neighborhood as one protected by physical features, boundaries or covenants. Another neighborhood defense includes cognitive boundaries decided by the mental images of residents and where boundaries should be, whether or not they exist (Suttles,
Residents will further create social categories for which groups belong within the boundaries. Over time, these sections will take on various characteristics and qualities of residents. These sections will be called neighborhoods, and they begin to take on their own histories and continuities. Neighborhoods are first studied through proximity and neighborly contact (Park & Burgess, 1984). They may be seen as a social unit within the city, often with similar particular political and social interests.

Refugee ethnic neighborhoods are considered temporary housing, existing long enough for residents to move upward and out; ethnic neighborhoods behave more like defended neighborhoods and may stay together for years, unwilling or unable to assimilate (Suttles, 1972). The neighborhoods form a common identity and protection for the cultural inhabitants, especially for those groups who have too many barriers to assimilation with the dominant group (Suttles, 1972).

Once a neighborhood is established and stable, forces may enter to cause instability. Although ethnic enclaves may provide initial sources for support and networking, they may also provide barriers to success within the larger community. Lower status individuals may have a lack of mobility and communication with other classes within the same city. Wilson (1990) and Wirth (1995) suggest that those individuals who do not adapt to the moral regions within the neighborhoods of the city congregate into areas of vice and crime. The most acute forms of social problems, such as delinquency and divorce, are found in larger cities, where ethnic underclass enclaves are most likely to exist (Park & Burgess, 1984). The following studies illustrate the effect of location on integration.
Residential location and refugee assimilation.

People often live near people who are most like them, creating special relationships. Place-based resources and access to social networks are not evenly distributed; therefore, your neighborhood can positively or negatively affect your chances of success in life. Neighborhoods consisting of “low-income neighbors, female-headed households, male joblessness, residential instability, neighborhood poverty, and welfare-receipt” (Rosenbaum & Friedman, 2001, p. 337) are likely to negatively affect cognitive and behavioral growth. In these circumstances, there are fewer incidents of positive role models and child supervision.

Massey and Denton (1988) conducted a first study of residential segregation across five measures, including evenness, exposure, concentration, centralization, and clustering. Researchers developed a field of 20 indicators of residential segregation based on research in U.S. Metropolitan areas. Residential segregation means that various groups live apart from one another, resulting in separation at a variety of levels. Evenness refers to the distribution of minorities across areas. Exposure refers to contact with majority group members due to location. Concentration refers to the amount of space and level of crowding within housing units. Centralized refers to the location in the center, or core of a city, where minority groups may be spatially concentrated in compacted areas with little physical space compared with majority members. Clustering refers to minority residents grouped together in an enclave, or they may be scattered across the geographic area. Researchers surveyed the 20 indices and performed a series of factor analyses to confirm the distribution of minorities. Based on the analysis of data, the researchers found the five
indicators of evenness, exposure, centralization, spatially concentration, and tightly clustering did in fact reflect residential segregation in metropolitan areas.

**Racial and ethnic patterns in the attainment of suburban residence.**

Alba and Logan (1991) investigated determinants of 11 racial/ethnic groups in acquiring suburban versus metropolitan residency. Suburbanization has been seen as a sign of assimilation for minority groups. Family status, socioeconomic factors, and assimilation variables influence the suburbanization process. The suburban rings around cities differ in the relative affluence of the populations within those rings. The higher the affluence, the more barriers exist to assimilation. The authors submit that suburbanization may reflect a minority group’s success in assimilation. Asian and Hispanic groups have been studied together, which does not allow for distinctions between these ethnic groups in assimilation successes. The spatial assimilation model holds that (a) residential mobility follows from the acculturation of the social mobility of individuals and (b) residential mobility is an intermediate step on the way to more comprehensive assimilation. Suburbanization in this model is described by similar individual level variables. This also connects with another sign of assimilation, intermarriage. Residential mobility follows a gain in human capital. Black experiences do not fit into the residential assimilation model, possibly due to the long history of racism and discrimination. The stratification model of Bashi and McDaniel (1997) supplements the assimilation mode by explaining black segregation and practices that impede the free mobility of minorities such as steering by realtors, unequal access to mortgage credit, neighbor hostility, and exclusionary zoning. Massey (1996) discusses concentrated affluence and poverty in the 21st century. They are caused by increased urbanization, an increase of low paying jobs, a
decrease in middle class, globalization, computerization of white collar jobs, and the fragmentation of consumer markets.

Rosenbaum and Friedman (2001) conducted a study in the five boroughs of New York City to assess the effects of neighborhood on the success of immigrant children. The authors state, “Migrant children and the children of immigrants currently is the fastest growing segment of the under-15 population in the United States” (Rosenbaum & Friedman, 2001, p. 337). The ability of the children to overcome barriers is critical for the future of the adult population. The guiding theory of the study is the locational attainment model. The locational attainment model suggests that neighborhoods exist in a hierarchy, and individual/family characteristics determine the placement within the hierarchy. The researchers created a special data set using predictors of future achievement, including teenage fertility rate, the juvenile detention rate, families on Aid for Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), number of children with below-average math scores, and an index of neighborhood problems. Data sets used for the study included aggregate-level data from Infoshare and individual data from the New York City housing and vacancy survey, the New York City Police Department, the New York City Board of Education, and the New York City Human Resources Administration. Data analysis included a bivariate and a multivariate analysis of the differences in the locational attainment of neighborhood combined with the crime rate, teen fertility, and other factors noted above. Several theories weave together within the study.

Considerations affecting assimilation include family-based structures, sources within the ethnic community, and “the intersection of racial stratification and special segregation” (Rosenbaum & Friedman, 2001, p. 338). Immigrants most likely to face
added barriers in urban areas are of African and Hispanic ancestry. These immigrants often carry the stamp of history and years of discrimination and may adopt an “adversarial” stance toward middle class culture (Rosenbaum & Friedman, 2001, p. 338).

Refugee ethnic enclaves, sometimes called ethnic neighborhoods, are defined by Burowoy, Burton, Ferguson, & Fox, (1991, p. 316) as “a concentrated form, especially geographically, of a refugee ethnic community … consisting of people of a single ethnic origin who share their country of origin, language, resettlement experience, values and norms.” In refugee ethnic enclaves, the decision for the location of initial resettlement is made by the resettlement agency before the family arrives. This would typically be viewed as a temporary address until families begin working and can move out of the multiethnic neighborhood to a place of their choosing.

**Economic Assimilation.**

Negative public sentiment can result in hostility toward immigrants, especially in economic downturns. White and Liang (1998) found that immigrants were perceived to be either taking native-born jobs away, or taking jobs nobody wants. Refugees are required to work, and may edge illegal immigrants out of the workforce.

Vigdor (2008) utilized a quantitative research method combining U.S. Census data with the American Community Survey to measure and predict immigrant assimilation progress and stability at various times in United States History. This model could predict immigrant progress and stability when birth country is not available. The Probit Regression Model utilizes the U.S. Census enumerations of 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930, 1980, and 1990, and the American Community Survey samples of 2000 through 2006. The population in this sample includes males and females between the ages of 22
and 65, and a second version of the index incorporates males and females between the ages of 12 to 24, representing immigrants who arrived in the United States at age five or less and who received their education in the United States. The model is developed by using data with the immigrant status temporarily deleted and comparing those data with the assimilation index to make a prediction or inference about which individuals are foreign born. Three theoretical case studies show possible combinations of respondent answers to establish probability of foreign birth (Vigdor, 2008). Three categories of assimilation identify the immigrant’s levels of economic, cultural, and civic status. Each category contains specific measures, such as educational attainment, home ownership, naturalization, and intermarriage. The resulting scores produce an assimilation composite index score between 0 and 100. In addition, different ethnic cohorts show varying rates of assimilation in the U.S. (Vigdor, 2008). Vigdor found that by comparing immigrant cohorts over history and across categories, the greatest area of assimilation is in the economic category with a score of 87, and the area of least assimilation is found in the civic participation category with an index score of 41 (Vigdor, 2008).

Vigdor found that the similarity between the native born and foreign born has held steady since 1990. Immigrants for the past 25 years have assimilated more rapidly than from 100 years ago although recent immigrants are more distinct. The assimilation index since 1990 has remained stable, even with many arrivals. New arrivals often pull the numbers of assimilation down, but not in this case (Vigdor, 2008).

Enclaves can provide prime settings for refugee entrepreneurs to capture the market for ethnic goods, products and services, as they have more information about and understanding of tastes and preferences of their own groups (Toussaint-Comeau, 2008).
However, enclaves may be economically poor areas, where residents have lower purchasing power, limiting potential for economic growth, and established immigrants may erect barriers to new immigrants who enter competitive businesses. Enclaves may help create ethnic networks and mobilize financing opportunities such as informal loan activities. Measuring the size of ethnic enclaves is difficult because most data sets do not provide information on the enclave’s geographic boundaries.

**Human and social capital.**

Another area that can increase or decrease the rate of refugee integration is the area of individual human and social capital. Human capital consists of individual knowledge and skills, such as host country language ability, knowledge of the culture, and education level. Human capital can translate into economic and social success for refugees (Borjas, 1994). Social capital refers to connections to networks of those who can provide assistance and accelerate assimilation (Lamba, 2003).

Borjas (1994) predicts that certain third-generation immigrants who arrived in the United States during the turn of the 20\(^{th}\) century and who had at least one foreign-born grandparent will take 100 years (or five generations) to assimilate economically. The study established human capital as a determinant for predicting accelerated success in assimilation of immigrant groups. Human capital for immigrants consists of the educational and literacy levels an immigrant brings upon arrival. Borjas describes ethnicity as “sticky” and predicts a longer assimilation time for current arrivals due the greater variations in ethnicity. Alba, Lutz, and Vesselinov (2001) found several questions problematic in Borjas’ study and replicated his study controlling for the difficulty of determining ethnicity with the moving country borders during the Second Great
Migration from Southern, Central, and Eastern Europe. Alba et al. (2001) found no significant relationships between the human capital of immigrants and their third-generation ancestors.

Research shows that refugees who learn English and naturalize more quickly often earn higher wages (Bratsburg, Ragan, & Nasir, 2002), and suffer less depression and social isolation, (Ben-Porath & Yossef, 1987; Colic-Peisker, 2005). Foreign-born ethnic groups that differ more culturally and ethnically from native-born groups often live in segregated communities (Cutler, Glaeser, & Vigdor, 2008). Refugees often hold lower status jobs and usually do not reach native country levels of employment (Colic-Peisker, 2005).

Valtonen (1998) defines the integration process for refugees in her study in Finland as societal participation, combining the quality of life aspect with the actual goals of the refugee. Social relations include understanding one’s place in the social environment in relationship to other members of society. Social roles are the patterned expectations and obligations, or social norms. Social role can be seen as the link between social structure and culture. This researcher studied Middle Eastern refugees in Finland who identified their three main goals as “employment, opportunity to study, and maintenance of culture, including religion” (Valtonen, 1998, p. 45). The subject’s well-being is determined by the gap between desired and achieved goals. Refugee participants desired high levels of autonomy in the resettlement situation. Common complaints were feelings of disempowerment, stressor consistency (high levels of stress), and lack of robust roles. Here, integration is hoped for first with assimilation as a long term goal.
Refugees described the host culture as very friendly at work, but that they were never invited into homes or to extracurricular activities.

The label of refugee can become a challenge as individuals are put into a particular category by government and society. Consequently, stereotypes are imposed on refugees that can take away the self identity of individuals and replaced by a predetermined stigmatized identity that must function within society (Zetter, 1991). Refugee is a term that has many meanings, often different to the individual than the agency or person bestowing it. In its broadest sense, it means displaced person, but it may also have legal ramifications. One can be a refugee in one’s own country, as in the example of internally displaced victims of floods or hurricanes. The symbolic meaning of refugee can be related to powerlessness and a non-participative nature in the decision-making process. Psychological stressors increase for refugees who often have flight-producing experiences and no time for preparation (Valtonen, 1998). Post-traumatic stress disorder may accompany poor nutrition, disease, culture shock, and home sickness for these people.

**Language Development and Assimilation**

Alba, Logan, Lutz, and Stults (2002) studied the effect of the loss or the preservation of the immigrant native tongue over generations. Based on Fishman’s Model of Anglicization (Fishman, 1972), immigrants go through a three-generation cycle of language use. Typically, the first generation learns English but prefers to speak their native language at home. The second generation is bilingual, and they prefer to speak English at home with their children. The third generation loses most of their
grandparent’s native language, and they adopt the host culture’s language and customs. In effect, the third generation and later become monolingual.

Alba et al. (2002) looked at third generation or later immigrants from China, Cuba, and Mexico, as they had a longer history of immigration. Although economic success for immigrants hinges on English language ability, Alba et al. (2002) assert some immigrant families try to teach and reinforce the mother tongue with children and that being bilingual is more beneficial for the children. Children who live near ethnic conclaves are often bilingual. The researchers studied children in their homes, as this is the most likely place to find the mother tongue spoken. The primary data source for the study was the 5% Integrated Public Use Microdata Sample (IPLUMS) of the 1990 Census. The multivariate analysis controlled for several factors such as parental education, ethnic niche employment, intermarriage, presence of preschool children, presence of other non-English speakers, and proximity to group residential concentrations. Data were compared with second-generation children, using the 1990 census. Results were compared with typical European immigrants from 1940 and 1970 census data, and researchers found that only Asians had comparable rates of moving rapidly toward monolinguisum by the third generation. Mexicans were most likely to preserve their native tongue, and Chinese were more likely to retain bilingualism than other Asian countries. In addition, researchers found ethnic enclave geographic location for Cubans and Mexicans had the effect of an increase in bilingualism among third generation children.

Drake (2008) studied the importance of language skill development, educational attainment, and political participation between 15-year-old students using the Program
for International Student Assessment (PISA). The PISA assesses language, mathematics, and science abilities, and identifies student immigrant and ethnic status. When comparing scores in the United States between German native-born and Hispanic foreign-born students, a large gap in ability emerged, particularly with native-born English-speaking students, versus foreign-born students who speak a foreign language at home. Language skills provide an indicator of successful assimilation that translates to the effect of parental language skill. Drake (2008) found parents who possessed low English-speaking skills resulted in a decrease of English proficiency in children from preschool through high school.

**Barriers to integration.**

Refugees and immigrants face many barriers to integration in society. Not only do they face economic, cultural, and language barriers, many foreign-born immigrants face racial and segregation discrimination (Brumberg, 1986). Host agencies and service providers may have little or no advanced notice to prepare for arrivals, and resources become stretched (Lanphier, 1983). During times of war and economic downturns, native-born levels of hostility increase toward immigrants, resulting in judgment of whole groups rather than individual characteristics (Brumberg, 1989). Newer models of assimilation are moving away from the straight line model of assimilation toward segmented assimilation (Portes & Zhou, 1993). Segmented assimilation describes alternate pathways toward integration that take racial and residential influences into account. Residential segregation places more barriers on immigrants, especially those of color, and affects the well-being of their children, quality of education and community resources, and chances for success (Alba & Logan, 1991).
Although there are many theories about why people move, and immigrants in particular, no known theories take into account how a refugee experience is different from an immigrant. Refugees are forced into migration and do not have a choice in their initial resettlement location. They may be artificially placed into an ethnic enclave whether or not that is their desire. Although ethnic enclaves can help offer support and even opportunities for jobs within the community, they may also slow refugee contact with the dominant culture and retard integration.

**Refugees and school-age children.**

School attendance is important because it is based on where refugees live, which will affect a child’s social and cultural capital. If refugees live in a poor area, the cultural capital, resources, and tastes will influence children as they grow up. Other influences for immigrant children include overcrowding and school resources (Sassler, 2006).

One out of five of all youth in American schools are immigrants (Feliciano, 2006; Schmid, 2001). The numbers of immigrant children have grown at seven times the rate of non-immigrant children since 1990 (Schmid, 2001). Out of the 20% projected growth of all school children between 1990 and 2010, 50% will be children of immigrants (Schmid, 2001). The rate of educational progress is highly uneven among immigrant groups. According to the Office of Refugee Resettlement 2007 report to Congress, the average number of years of education for adult refugees from Southeast Asia was 6.3 years, representing the lowest education level of all refugees, and the highest average number of years was 12.2 from Latin Americans. Out of all refugees that same year, about 14.5% of refugees reported fluency in English compared with 57.7% who spoke no English upon
arrival. Only 10% of the current literature addresses immigrant issues in education (Schmid, 2001).

Refugee children who can adapt successfully have a better chance of becoming contributing citizens (Feliciano, 2006). Refugees have larger numbers of children than other immigrants (Huyck & Fields, 1981). In fact, refugee families are often prioritized based on large family size (UNHCR, 2005). Many teachers and administrators are not aware of the differences between refugee ethnic groups and their particular challenges. Refugee groups vary in their eventual socioeconomic attainment. Pre-immigration factors such as parents’ education level, social economic status (SES), ethnicity, expectations, initial context of reception to the U.S., and residence may affect levels of educational attainment (Feliciano, 2006).

**Aspirations and status attainment.**

Refugees and immigrants bring differing levels of aspirations for status attainment to the resettlement process (Portes, McLeod, & Parker, 1978). Sociological studies of aspiration typically involve teenagers and how they develop individual aspirations during maturation. Refugees and immigrants present a unique situation because they have a background history of education, skills, and financial resources (Portes et al., 1978). Achievements may influence the formation of present aspirations that influence future achievements. To predict refugee aspirations, one should also include “early family influences and parental status variables, such as education level, occupation, English Language Proficiency (ELP), class background, cultural patterns, school segregation, ethnic discrimination, context of the reception, and urban-rural residence” (Portes et al.,
The higher the levels of achievement combined with higher levels of ELP should result in higher aspirations for student achievement.

Aspirations may be related to motivational needs, intensity of religious beliefs, and psycho-social modernity (Portes et al., 1978). In this view, achievements can be related to individual personality traits such as “ego-strength and tolerance of ambiguity” (Portes et al., 1978, p. 244). As refugees enter a host society, those individuals with stronger levels of identity, need for achievement, and intensity of religious beliefs may propel individual goal setting. Desire of advanced consumption goods, termed “modernity,” and readily found in the U.S. culture, may drive refugees who desire these items to increase efforts and aspirations (p. 244).

Therefore, Iraqi children whose parents held higher levels of education and skills before becoming refugees would hold higher aspirations and expectations for their children, when compared with Burmese children whose parents had much lower levels of education and skills due to camp experiences (Feliciano, 2006; Stevenson & Willott, 2007). Although many studies show that Asian parents typically have high aspirations for children, premigration experiences, such as refugee camps and involuntary migration, may weaken collective self-identity and parental aspiration (Feliciano, 2006). According to the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL), Burmese parents who arrive from camp conditions have a difficult time seeing the relationship between education and future employment. This is because camp education was very limited and work was not allowed in the camps over three generations (CAL, 2007).

Burmese refugees practice Buddhism as well as lesser degrees of Animism and Christianity, and their worldview is primarily passive (CAL, 2007). They possess little
knowledge of modern goods of consumption due to life spent in refugee camps. Iraqi refugees are predominantly Muslim with higher levels of assertive worldview. Higher levels of knowledge about consumerism due to experiences in a more progressive Muslim country would suggest a group more desirous of consumer items. Although both Burmese and Iraqi cultures place a high value on education, other factors listed previously would predict lower levels of aspiration by Burmese children.

**Social capital and school success.**

Other theorists suggest that social capital explanations of immigrant school outcomes are too simplistic and possibly harmful to immigrants (Bankston, 2004). Academic success and social ties formed in the academic community could lessen time spent within the family group, resulting in strained relationships within the family and immigrant community (Sennett & Cobb, 1972). Immigrant children typically excel even when placed in disadvantaged schools. Other factors such as teacher perception and differential treatment could affect students’ initial reception and student outcomes (Bankston, 2004).

Students who arrive from cultures that hold strong values and practice them within knitted family relationships could overcome other deficiencies and should be viewed as holding social capital. Vietnamese students who typically show high levels of achievement spend more hours per day on homework (Bankston, 2004; Portes & MacLeod, 1996). Vietnamese children live in networks that not only espouse but also practice “respect for elders, cooperation, and acceptance of authority” (Bankston, 2004, p. 177).
Immigrant children who live in disadvantaged areas may thrive in protected pockets, relatively uninfluenced by the negative community environment. Conversely, the fact of the preexisting marginality of new arrivals suggests that parents hold higher expectations for children because they are not bound by the same situations that they personally experienced in their lifetimes (Bankston, 2004). Researchers found that national background has certain group characteristics such as persistence and optimism. Parents and communities operate in either a positive or negative manner, reflected in differing outlooks on success or failure. For example, Vietnamese neighborhoods work together to support common parental rules for all children, whereas Mexicans as a group are not tightly knit and do not function as a community (Portes & MacLeod, 1996). This may be attributed to higher amounts of human capital and aspirations that varies between ethnic groups.

Rosenbaum and Friedman (2001) found immigrant households with children, when compared with native-born households with children, lived in lower levels of housing; however, Black and Hispanic children lived in lower levels of housing when compared with either native-born households or foreign-born White households. Native-born and foreign-born Blacks lived in the most disadvantaged households, with Hispanic households between Black and White foreign-born households.

In Chapter 3, the research methodology will be presented with justification for selection. In addition, the data analysis approach, population and sample will be discussed. Issues of reliability, validity, and representativeness of this study will be detailed.
CHAPTER III: METHOD

The problem addressed in this study focuses on the potential impact of initial resettlement location on refugees and on their community service providers. Many studies and theories address immigrant assimilation experiences, but few focused directly on refugee populations that may face additional challenges. Most immigrants make a choice to move. Refugees arrive as forced migrants; they have little choice. Often they do not want to leave their country, but due to persecution related to war and violence, they are forced to become displaced to a country of refuge or a refugee camp. From there they may have little choice on where and when they are moved.

This study is significant because although much research has been conducted on immigrants as a group, little had been done on refugees as a specific subgroup of immigrants. Most data sets do not present the researcher the ability to extract refugees from other groups. Refugees face a unique set of challenges preceding and during arrival to the host country. The initial resettlement circumstances may be critical to a refugee family’s chance of successful integration, as refugees face a 30 days to self sufficiency expectation with a 90-day window of limited agency oversight.

This chapter provides information on the research methods utilized to analyze potential impact of initial resettlement location on refugees and on their community service providers. It further provides information on the residential mobility of the two refugee groups, Iraqi and Burmese. The chapter is organized as follows: The first section presents the main research questions along with the corresponding hypothesis followed by details of the mixed methods design approach. The study area and the data collection and analysis tools are discussed as well as various methods for each question outlined.
Next, the population and sample set are described as well as the agency that provided the secondary dataset for analysis. The cultural profiles for both Iraqi and Burmese groups are presented, as well as a cultural comparison. After that, the limitations of the study and the secondary dataset are discussed and the confidentiality safeguards are included. Finally, the discussion of the reliability and validity of the data collection by the International Center completes the chapter.

**Research Questions**

The following questions were addressed in this study:

**RQ 1**: What are the characteristics of initial neighborhoods where Burmese and Iraqi refugees are resettled?

**H1**: Burmese and Iraqi refugees are initially resettled into neighborhoods with low rent, high concentrations of rental units, high density, high crime rates, high concentration of non-native English speakers, diverse ethnicities, high poverty, low incomes, and low education levels.

**RQ 2**: Do Burmese and Iraqi refugees remain at the initial resettlement locations or move from the initial locations?

**H2**: Burmese and Iraqi refugees remain at the initial resettlement locations within the study period, especially more so for the Burmese group.

**RQ 3**: For those who moved, what are the differences between the characteristics of refugee initial and destination neighborhoods?

**H3**: Destination neighborhoods will differ between Burmese and Iraqi groups.

**RQ 4**: What do educational and organizational leaders identify as issues related to educating and serving Burmese and Iraqi refugees in schools and in communities?
Research Design

The two primary objectives of this dissertation research are as follows:

1) To study the initial resettlement neighborhood and movements so that the following structural and spatial integration of Burmese and Iraqi refugees could be understood via a set of geographic maps created using Geographic Information Systems (GIS). This objective mainly addresses RQ 1, 2 and 3;

2) To identify issues related to educating and serving the Iraqi and Burmese populations by conducting a series of semi-structured interviews of educational and community service leaders. Interviews were recorded for accuracy, coded, and analyzed for common themes. Direct quotes were selected to provide in-depth examples of common themes. This objective mainly addresses RQ 4.

GIS-based analysis.

GIS is a “computer system for capturing, storing, querying, analyzing, and displaying geospatial data” (Chang, 2010, p. 1). GIS enables researchers to combine spatial and attribute data to identify and study social concepts and relationships, as in this study. In GIS, geospatial data, also known as “geographically referenced data,” combine location with demographic information, such as census data to give the researcher a multidimensional view of the population and neighborhoods under study (p. 5). Researchers can easily manipulate spatial data into various forms to extract useful information, crossing disciplines. Specifically in this study, geographic maps were created in commercial GIS software by the Environmental System Research Institute (ESRI), ArcGIS version 10, to show the following:
1) The initial and destination resettlement locations of both Iraqi and Burmese refugees: by federal regulation, refugees are required to report their whereabouts to the Bowling Green International Center (referred as IC hereafter) the first 90 days following their arrival. The IC maintains follow up records well beyond that format when available to them. The dataset maintained by IC thus includes address information of refugees, which was then utilized in this study to be address-coded in GIS. In densely populated apartment complexes, the resulting point locations were confirmed by the fieldwork use of an on-site Global Position System (GPS) unit for precision.

2) The moves made by those families who chose to move from the initial location: these movements were mapped with straight lines connecting each pair of origin and destination locations in GIS.

3) The spatial distribution of demographic, socio-economic, and housing characteristics of both initial and destination neighborhoods in the Bowling Green area: both Census 2000 and 2010 were utilized. At that time, Census 2010 redistricting data were the only tables released by the U.S. Census Bureau. So the maps of population density and race were created using the Census 2010 at the block level while all the other maps were based on the detailed tables in the Census 2000 Summary File 3 (SF3). Since the smallest geographic units for the socio-economic and housing variables in the U.S. Census are the Census block groups, all these maps were created at block group level. In addition, crime data were obtained from the Bowling Green Police Department (BGPD) to generate crime statistics at block group level while information on rent is directly from the
dataset maintained by the IC. To show and compare the characteristics of both initial and destination neighborhoods, the initial and destination locations of refugees were overlapped in GIS with these maps and basic summary statistics were generated.

**Variables of interest.**

Variable of interest for this study include those at both the neighborhood and household level. Neighborhood level variables will be obtained from the 2000 Census, SF3 and 2010 Census at both the block and block group levels, and BGPD, depending on availability of the data sets. Household level variables will be obtained from the IC data set as follows:

**Neighborhood level variables identified were**

- Renter- occupancy;
- Minority concentration;
- Non English speaking in the home;
- Median household income;
- Unemployment;
- Population density;
- Educational attainment; and
- Crime (burglary rates).

**Household level variables defined were**

- Initial resettlement address;
- Times moved;
- Rent paid;
- Ethnicity;
- Status (Refugee); and
- New addresses.

**Semi-structured interviews.**

Semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face using a predetermined list of questions (See Chapter IV). The questions were read in the same order, but were open-
ended in format, allowing for probing and follow-up questions. Face-to-face interviews provided opportunities for rich results with “little or no missing data” (Weirsma & Jurs, 2005, p. 195). The interviews were recorded and coded. Participants were given assumed names and the codes consist of the assumed name, date, and tape number.

Qualitative research methods are utilized by those researchers who study behavior in a variety of contexts in natural settings. Because qualitative methods do not use the scientific method, they are classified as nonexperimental methods. Examples of qualitative methods would be interviews, focus groups, and direct observation.

Triangulation is a method of combining both qualitative and quantitative techniques to overcome potential weaknesses inherent in choosing only one method (Neuman, 1997). According to Neuman (1997) further reasons suggested for triangulation are “It increases the sophisticated rigor of their data collection and analysis; that is, it makes their methods more public or open to scrutiny. Second, triangulation helps reveal the richness and diversity of social settings” (p. 336). Data from various sources, including IC data, police crime data, Census Data, and structured interviews are combined in this study to study the social settings of newly-resettled refugees.

**Study area.**

The City of Bowling Green is a mid-sized city in Warren County, Kentucky, 60 miles north of Nashville, Tennessee and 110 miles south of Louisville, Kentucky (See Figure 1). It is the third largest city in Kentucky, and the countywide area is 545 square miles (Bowling Green Visitor and Convention Bureau, 2010). According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the population of Warren County was 113,792, a 23% increase from the
population count in the 2000 Census (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). Warren County had 208.7 persons per square mile compared with the state average of 109.2. Bowling Green and surrounding towns are designated as a metropolitan area, but have separate city and county government systems. Bowling Green is also home to the state’s third largest university, Western Kentucky University. Leading industries in the Bowling Green/Warren County area are the GM/Corvette Assembly plant, Fruit of the Loom/Russell Athletics, Houchen’s Industries, Camping World, and Holley Performance Products (Bowling Green Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, 2010).

In 2009, the median household income in Warren County was $43,316, higher than the state’s average income of $40,061, and 17.1% of people lived below the poverty level, compared with 18.4% of the state poverty level (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). Out of 46,321 housing units, 25.3% were multi-unit structures, above the state percentage of 17.5%. The number of foreign born reported in Bowling Green and Warren County from 2005-2009 was 6.4%, compared with the state level of 2.8%. Bowling Green and Warren County have a higher percentage of residents speaking another language than English at home with 8.4% compared with 4.4% at the state level (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011).

**Data collection and analysis.**

The primary data are from an existing database of clients maintained by the IC located at 806 Kenton St., Bowling Green, Kentucky. The IC is required to keep arrival and other demographic data by the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) for the first 90 days following initial resettlement.
ORR is located within the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Although the IC is only required to maintain records for 90 days, follow-up records may continue well beyond the mandated period. Data input may be entered by various case workers as time permits. The IC also retains information on rent amount, employment, and changes in jobs. Neighborhood characteristics will be analyzed by utilizing both 2010 Census redistricting data (the only 2010 Census data released at the time), the 2000 Census data, and crime data from Bowling Green Police Department.

GIS will be utilized to create maps to display the demographic, socio-economic and housing data. Again with the initial and destination locations superimposed on these maps, RQ 1, 2 and 3 will be answered as previously mentioned.

Factors that theoretically influence the distribution of population within a city include the following: the sources of the population; the percentage of natural increase (due to excess of births over deaths); the number of native versus foreign stocks; distribution of population affected by economics (land values) and sentimental interests (education, race, etc.); areas of the city that are declining in population; areas that are expanding in population; and the sizes of families correlated with births and deaths, marriages and divorces, house rents, and standards of living (Park & Burgess, 1984).

The refugee initial address of resettlement was identified and compared with times each family moved. Clusters of families within neighborhoods were further identified and coded through fieldwork use of an on-site GPS mapping for precision in densely populated apartment complexes. Address locations were photographed and coded to document field work. All data were examined for missing variables. Summary statistics were calculated to determine the differences between initial and destination
neighborhood. Maps were generated to visually define the movements within the study areas well as the movements out of the study area.

**Population and Sample**

The population for the GIS-based study included all Iraqi and Burmese refugees who arrived and were resettled in Bowling Green/Warren County, Kentucky area from January of 2008 through February of 2011. The reason for selecting this time span is that this is when both groups were arriving in Bowling Green. Burmese who arrived from 2004-2007 were discarded from the database as the Iraqi comparison group did not start arriving until 2008. Although some Burmese who arrived during this period were resettled through the branch office in Owensboro, Kentucky, a neighboring city, they were few in number and were eliminated from the database as they were outside the area of study. A previous group of 29 Burmese families (total of 42 individuals) listed in the IC database that arrived between 2000 and 2002 were also discarded as they all left Bowling Green to be near family members in other places, according to the IC Director (J. Robinson, personal communication, June 7, 2011).

The population for the qualitative semi-structured interviews was a purposeful sample of educational leaders and community service providers whose organizations served the Iraqi and Burmese populations in Bowling Green and Warren County school districts. The educational leaders consisted of principals, assistant principals, and central office administrators. The community service providers were administrators or leaders in health, social work, religion, and public safety.

The Western Kentucky Refugee Mutual Assistance Association (WKRMAA), also known as the Bowling Green International Center has participated in the resettlement
of refugees since 1982. The agency has served an average of 300+ clients per year over the past 10 years. Ninety percent of employable refugees are working and are self-sufficient within 90 days of arrival. The IC is located on I-65 about 120 miles Southwest of Louisville, Kentucky and about 65 miles northeast of Nashville, Tennessee. The IC is the only refugee resettlement agency within South Central Kentucky serving both refugees and immigrants living in areas ranging from North to Louisville; South to Nashville; West to Paducah, KY; and East to Somerset, KY. Most of the clients live within a seven-mile radius of the IC. They are near each other and, due to that, are supportive to each other, which is conducive to developing community and self-support (J. Robinson, personal communication, Feb 14, 2010).

Cultural Profiles

Burmese cultural profile.

Burma has been under military rule since 1962 and is one of the least free and most underdeveloped nations in the world (CAL, 2007). Burma is also called Myanmar; however, refugees prefer to be called Burmese as a way to protest the military occupation. As of June 2007, approximately 150,000 Burmese were living in refugee camps in Thailand, plus another 20,000 in Bangladesh, some for up to 20 years (CAL, 2007). Burma is one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the world, with eight ethnic groups and more than 130 distinctive subgroups (CAL, 2007). This country of mountains and plains is bounded by China, India, and Thailand. Burmese can be thought of in two main groups, the valley-dwellers and the hill people (CAL, 2007). Seventy percent of the population is Buddhist, Buddhist-animist, or animist.
The Burmese population is diverse in many aspects including educational history; employment history; social experience with modern amenities such as Westernized utilities and appliances; socialization and community interaction behaviors and related areas that directly affect both the assimilation and self-sufficiency rates of the community members once they arrive in the U.S. (CAL, 2007).

James Robinson, Director of the International Center, reported his agency is resettling Burmese from five different ethnic communities, who have a vast difference of experiences, faiths, opinions, traditions, and other life changing events that occurred both before and during their refugee experiences. Due to the aforementioned factors, the resettlement of the Burmese population is challenging and are a “hard to serve” population. Though some refugees from Burma are educated and have experienced living in a more Westernized community, most of the population lacks the skills to thrive when first arriving in the U.S. (J. Robinson, personal communication, Jan 13, 2010).

Although the Burmese community is making progress in Bowling Green, Kentucky, they have more of a learning curve than other refugee populations do on specific levels. Many Burmese have lived in designated camps in Thailand and Bangladesh for more than 20 years without the benefit of basic living and social skills that Americans take for granted (CAL, 2007). Some have never seen or operated indoor toilets or acquired basic life skills, such as turning on a light switch or operating a stove (CAL, 2007).

**Iraqi cultural profile.**

Many Iraqi refugees have recently lived in secondary countries of asylum such as Lebanon and Jordan temporarily. They leave Iraq for a variety of reasons, including
Sunni-Shi’a violence, political persecution, some are single women without male protection, and they are targets for kidnapping (CAL, 2008). They are unable to safely return to Iraq, and the countries of asylum cannot accept them permanently. Unlike the Burmese, Iraqi refugees have not lived in camps; they lived in neighborhoods, and most have limited financial resources. Educational opportunities are more available to children, although levels may vary from country to country. Iraqis historically possess high literacy skills, and the more highly educated speak English well. Many refugees suffer impaired physical and mental health due to years of stress during war. Many have lost limbs and have exhibited higher levels of trauma and exposure to rape and torture than normal refugee populations (CAL, 2008).

Since the 2003 invasion of Iraq, more than one third of the schools have been damaged by bombing, looting, and burning (Cal, 2008). Although no studies exist, a 2004 United Nations survey found that “only 55% of young people between the ages of 6 and 24 were enrolled in school, and the literacy rate for youth between 15 and 24 is 74%” (CAL, 2008, p. 24). Schools around Baghdad were usually closed due to security concerns, and children are often afraid to go to school.

**Cultural comparison of two groups.**

The Iraqi began arriving in Bowling Green in mid-2008. They are often more knowledgeable than the Burmese about Western culture, are resourceful, and are open to the existence of differences between cultures. Most Iraqis can read and write, and some hold professional degrees. Iraqis often have unrealistic expectations about housing and jobs, and often prefer to wait for higher paying jobs. Some Iraqis have relatives in the
U.S. who can help them. Many show evidence of war-related injuries and post-traumatic stress syndrome (CAL, 2008).

Burmese who come from refugee camps have more difficulty adjusting to American culture when compared with Iraqis. Unfamiliarity with electricity and running water requires immediate basic survival training (CAL, 2008). Cold weather is a shock, as well as misunderstandings of American laws, such as drinking and driving and licensing for hunting and fishing. The system of money and banking must be learned. The Burmese culture is extremely polite to a fault; they will often say what they think one wants to hear rather than express their feelings on the truth. The Burmese hold a strong work ethic following years of idleness in refugee camps. Most Burmese refugees do not know English (CAL, 2007). Families have a problem with understanding American styles of parenting. Little supervision was needed in camps, and young children could be found standing or playing in the street with no adult nearby. Parents often send their children to school barefoot or in pajama-type clothing. Boys and men may be dressed in bright colors such as pink and lavender (CAL, 2007). Poor nutrition and health concerns from years of living in camp conditions are a major concern (UNHCR, 2011).

Immediate and extended family are the most important factors in both Iraqi and Burmese lives. Children typically continue to live with their families after marriage; family structure is a patriarchal hierarchy, meaning males dominate the family structure. Education is highly valued in both cultures, and refugee camps have at least a primary school with some middle schools. Teachers are refugees within the community who are paid a small sum from nongovernmental organizations (CAL, 2007). Camp conditions are overcrowded with limited textbooks and poor facilities. The challenges of learning
under these conditions have led to a high dropout rate. A 2006 UNHCR survey reported two-thirds of Burmese refugees had received some schooling, while one-third had no education (CAL, 2007). Work is forbidden in refugee camps, and children reported in an interview that their two choices for occupations were “medic or teacher,” the only two professions in the camp (CAL, 2007). The lack of work opportunities in the camps has added a great deal of psychological pressure as well as lack of vocational skills.

Iraqis often bring a variety of skills ranging from trained professionals and merchants to skilled workers, semi-skilled, and unskilled workers (Cal, 2008). They usually have a high level of understanding of Western culture, have work experience, and are regarded as valuable employees. Iraqis share many American values such as achievement, progress, freedom and equality (Cal, 2008). Iraqi refugees often resettle near other Iraqis with similar cultural and religious backgrounds. Iraqis have high expectations and are sometimes disappointed in the types of entry-level jobs offered. They also wish to improve their English to higher levels than may be offered in ESL classes, which are geared toward non-English speakers (Cal, 2008). Many suffer from post-traumatic stress syndrome and should be referred for mental health support. Iraqis are not accepting of counseling; they prefer to consult with a parent or authority within their family. Differences in gender may lead to passive interactions from young women in school (Cal, 2008).

Limitations of the Study

Limitations of the data from the IC include the concern that as federal regulations do not require follow-ups after 90 days from the date of arrival, refugees may change addresses without notifying the agency. This could have contributed to minimal data for
Research Question 2 on movement after initial resettlement. The agency reports that if refugees move out of state, they are more likely to provide information to the agency even after the 90 days to receive any funds left in their resettlement accounts. Another limitation is the limited period of the study. Longitudinal data would give a more comprehensive picture of refugee movement.

**Confidentiality**

The confidentiality of the IC dataset relied on government human subject protection committees to ensure that no personal information was used in the study in a form that identified a respondent without consent. To increase data confidentiality and to minimize the risk of indirect identification, the researcher excluded names and social security numbers from the dataset. The researcher applied for and received approval from the Internal Review Board (IRB) for conducting the research. The procedures described the confidentiality clause for the research study. All research team members signed confidentiality agreements on site at the IC designed to protect refugee personal information.

**Reliability and Validity of the Data**

To generalize conclusions from a sample to a population, the sample must represent the population. The preferred sampling method in this case is a total population sample of both refugee groups over the study period. Another limitation is that this study was conducted within a midsized city with a smaller area than a metropolitan area and therefore would not be generalizable to large cities.

This study utilized secondary data. To check for validity, a discussion was appropriate for how and why the data are collected by the IC. The IC is a federally
funded 501(c) (3), and is accountable for maintaining specific records for refugees to stay in compliance with governmental regulations. These specific records included all of the variables of interest for the first 90 days following the initial date of resettlement. The IC undergoes a yearly audit of records, and must remain in good standing to continue operations as a preferred status refugee resettlement agency. The only record of interest in the study after 90 days was number of times moved from the original address of resettlement. The rigor of the audit supported the authenticity and accuracy of the dataset.
CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

This chapter presents the findings from the research questions identified in Chapter 1. The combination of GIS mapping of original locations and subsequent moves along with qualitative interviewing of educational and community leaders provide a holistic description through a bird’s eye view of locations and demographics where refugees are initially resettled. To enhance the demographic information and provide additional insight, interviews from educational and community leaders who regularly interact with refugees will follow. First, research questions are reintroduced and addressed, and second, the results of the interviews are presented. Finally a summary of the findings will complete the chapter.

Findings Related to Research Question 1

RQ 1: What are the characteristics of initial neighborhoods where Burmese and Iraqi refugees are resettled?

H1: Burmese and Iraqi refugees are initially resettled into neighborhoods with high renter occupancy, high population density, high crime rates, high concentrations of non-English speakers, high minority concentrations, low median incomes, and low educational attainment levels.

Burmese and Iraqi refugees who arrived between May of 2008 and February of 2011 were resettled into four neighborhoods of the city. Two were on the west side, and two were on the east side. The following map shows overall locations of original settlement of these two groups (See Figure 2).
Figure 2. Initial Resettlement of Burmese and Iraqi Refugee Families Jan 2008-Feb 2011
**Kernel density estimation of clusters.**

To visually present areas of density, 3D kernel density estimations were applied to the initial resettlement location study area (See Figure 3). Chang (2010, p. 336) defines kernel density estimation as “a local interpolation method that associates each known point with a kernel function in the form of a bivariate probability density function.”

There are six identified clusters of resettlement location, divided as follows: two primary clusters, two secondary clusters, and two tertiary clusters. A cluster is an area defined for the purpose of this study as a high proportion of families within a bandwidth of 1900 ft., such as an apartment complex or apartment-based neighborhood. A high-density primary cluster contains 20 or more families, an intermediate-density secondary cluster contains 10 or more families, and a low-density tertiary cluster contains 4-9 families. The 3D map shows the density through the thickness, or height at the complex locations.

The maps show the largest concentration of families in the Lover’s Lane complex, with the second highest concentration in Creekwood Apartments complex (See Figure 4). Lovers Lane has a secondary apartment located behind the complex on Bryant Way. The third largest complex is in the Rock Creek area, which is diffused over a larger area consisting of many separately owned duplex, Fourplex, and Eightplex apartments. Rock Creek is more interspersed with various ethnicities (See Figure 5).
Figure 3. A 3D Kernel Density Analysis of the Initial Resettlement
Figure 4. Density Clusters of Initial Resettlements (Burmese and Iraqi).
Figure 5. Primary and Secondary Clusters of Burmese Households
Neighborhood evaluation with census data, crime data, and GIS.

Renters occupancy 2000 census block group level.

Burmese and Iraqi residents are initially located in one of the highest rental areas of the city with a concentration in areas between 17 and 41% renter occupancy (See Figure 6). The average renter occupancy across block groups is 16%, putting Burmese and Iraqi above the average. Rental property is dense on the west side of the city, but is plentiful throughout much of the city.

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, multi-unit structures made up 25.3% of Warren County compared with 17.5% for Kentucky. Home ownership for Warren County is 62.6% compared with 70.2% for Kentucky.

Unemployment rates census 2000 block group level.

The Burmese and Iraqi refugees are located in areas of low to medium unemployment from 4-12% (See Figure 7). The average rate for the 2000 block group was 7%. The highest levels of unemployment are in the student sector of Western Kentucky University, followed by the housing authority, north of Morgantown Rd. and west of Adams St.
Figure 6. Renter Occupancy Census 2000 Block Group Level.
Figure 7. Unemployment Rates Census 2000 Block-Group Level.
**Population density 2010 census.**

*Block group level.*

The average population density for 2010 was 2,684 persons per square mile in block group level and 1,987 persons per square mile in block level. The highest density is located within the Western Kentucky University campus rental area with more than 7,501 persons per square mile. Most of the Burmese and Iraqi refugees in both the west and

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, Warren County reported 8.1% of the population spoke languages other than English at home compared with 4.4% in Kentucky. East-side clusters live in areas from 3501-7500 persons per square mile category (See Figure 8).

*Block level.*

The population density in the city at the block level is 1987 persons per square mile (See Figure 9). The Rock Creek cluster shows a high density of 25001-60000 persons per square mile, Creekwood is in the 2685-1000 density, Lovers Lane is in the 1-2684 range, and Bryant Way is in the 1001-25000 density range. The population of Warren County grew 23% from 2000 to 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011).
Figure 8. Population Density Census 2010 Block Group Level
Figure 9. Population Density Census 2010 Block Level
Burglary rates, 2010, Bowling Green Police Department.

Block Group Level.

Clusters in the west side of the city are in areas with moderately high burglary rates of 6-10 and 11-15 per 1,000 persons in the Census 2010 block group, above the city’s block group average of 5 burglaries per 1,000 persons (See Figure 10). The Lover’s Lane cluster is located in a low burglary rate of 0-5 per 1,000 persons. The Bryant Way cluster is in a higher burglary rate of 6-10 burglaries per 1,000 people.

Block Level.

At the block level, clusters are not in areas of the highest crime. Those areas when narrowed appear in industrial areas and within public housing, such as near Gordon Avenue (See Figure 11).

Concentration of non English speakers Census 2000 block group.

Most of the non-English speakers in the 2000 Census block group are located in the west side of town (See Figure 12). The average concentration of non-English speakers in the city at the block group level is 3%. There are four categories as follows; Speaks no English, Speaks English not well, Speaks English well, and Speaks English very well. Clusters on the west side of the city range between 4 and 19% of non-English speaking Lovers Lane apartments in 2000 shows 0-1 concentrations, while Bryant Way had 4-7 concentrations of non-English speakers.
Figure 10. Burglary Rates 2010 Block Group Level
Figure 11. Burglary Rates Census 2010 Block Level
Figure 12. Concentration of Non-Native-English Speakers 2000 Block Group Level
Minority concentrations 2010 Census.

Block group level.

Bowling Green’s minority populations are densely located on the west side of the city (See Figure 13). The average concentration across block group levels is 19%. Burmese and Iraqi who live in clusters on the west side are in concentrations where between 26-70% of the population is non-Caucasian, including Hispanics. Lover’s Lane is listed as 20-27% concentration, and Bryant Way is 28-47%. The highest area of minorities at the block group level is northwest of Adams Street in the traditionally Hispanic section of the city.

Block level.

The average minority concentration at the block level for the city is 11% (See Figure 14). Within this narrowed scope, Lover’s Lane is in the 89-100% minority concentration and Bryant Way is in the 23-44% range, but directly adjacent to the 45-88% range. Clusters on the west side of town range from 23-88% minority concentration.

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, 81.6% of the city is White Non Hispanic, compared to 86.3% for Kentucky. The average minority in blocks is 11% and 19% in block groups. Every area for the refugees is above average to high minority concentration.
Figure 13. Minority Concentrations 2010 Block Group Level
Figure 14. Minority Concentrations 2010 Block Level
**Median household income 2000 Census block group level.**

According to the 2000 Census, the median household income across block groups in the city is $34,067 (See Figure 15). Clusters in the west side of the city live in areas with the range of $15,001 to $34,067 dollar per year. Lover’s Lane area in the block group shows an income level more than $50,000, while Bryant Way is much lower at $15,001-25,000. I would expect these numbers for Lovers Lane to be much lower in the block level analysis if that were available.

**Educational attainment level 2000 Census block group level.**

According to the 2000 Census, the average level of residents in Bowling Green who hold a high school diploma is 77.9% (2000 Census). Burmese and Iraqis who are resettled in the west side of Bowling Green are in areas from a low of 16% to a high of 40% when compared with the overall average of 22.1% who do not hold a high school diploma (See Figure 16). Refugees in Lover’s Lane and complexes on the east side live in areas that range from 0 to 23% of residents without a high school diploma or GED.
Figure 15. Median household income 2000 Block Group Level
Figure 16. Educational Attainment 2000 Block Group Level
Refugees are initially resettled into neighborhoods with one of the highest renter occupancy, relatively low unemployment levels, high population density, medium to low burglary rates, high concentrations of non-native English speakers, high minority concentrations, low household income (except for the misleading Lover’s Lane district), and lower educational attainment levels. Lover’s Lane is located in an area with higher overall educational levels and higher household income.

**Findings Related to Research Question 2**

RQ 2: Do Burmese and Iraqi refugees remain at the initial resettlement locations or move from the initial locations?

H2: Burmese and Iraqi refugees remain at the initial resettlement locations within the study period, especially more so for the Burmese group.

**Analysis process of movement.**

After refining the database with Environmental System Research Institute (ESRI), ArcGIS version 10, 113 (Burmese and Iraqi) family household records were identified by initial location during the specified period. Out of 109 families, 65 were Burmese and 21 were Iraqi families for a total of 86 families that did not report any moves. A total of 113 records showed a total of 27 moves by the remaining 23 families as follows (See Table 1):
Table 1. Movement of Burmese and Iraqi families after Initial Resettlement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stayed in same residence</th>
<th>Burmese N</th>
<th>Iraqi N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moved once from initial residence</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moved twice from initial residence</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moved twice from initial residence</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most Burmese families stayed at the initial resettlement location. Of those who did move, most moved from one Burmese cluster to another Burmese cluster. Three families moved into a government subsidized housing area (See Figure 17). Figure 18 shows the movement of those families who moved twice. A local Burmese monk indicated that Burmese families were trying to move into areas of lower rent. Some Burmese moved to other states (See Figure 19).

The Iraqi family chart appears to show that Iraqis are not moving, but these results may be misleading. The interview results show that community leaders have observed much initial movement by the Iraqi, but also that they do not report their movements to the International Center, suggesting the data set for Iraqis was missing data. Many sources interviewed expressed their opinions that many Iraqi families and children were moving right away due to dissatisfaction with places of initial resettlement and employment, which was often at the chicken processing plant. Iraqis who reported moving out of state are shown in Figure 20.
Figure 17. Burmese Who Moved Once in Bowling Green
Figure 18. Burmese Families Who Moved Twice from Jan 2008-Feb 2011
Figure 19. Burmese Movement Out of Kentucky
Figure 20. Iraqi Movement Out of Kentucky
Findings Related to Research Question 3

RQ 3: For those who moved, are there any differences between the characteristics of refugee initial and destination neighborhoods?

H3: Destination neighborhoods will differ between Burmese and Iraqi groups.

After identifying the number of families who moved, contact ID’s were used to calculate the differences between rent following each move. Five families who showed address changes within the first 10-30 days of arrival were discarded as these moves were regarded as initial shuffling by the IC within complexes and not by the families. Nineteen Burmese families moved once, and out of those, four moved twice. Seven Burmese families moved out of state. Three Iraqi families reported moving out of the state and therefore, were discarded for this question. The remaining 15 Burmese families were analyzed for this question.

Out of 15 Burmese families, five made upward moves in amount of rent paid (See Table 2). Two of those moves were $25 and $30 more per month, which could be considered lateral, as rent might increase in small increments over time for the same type of residence. One family paid $80 more per month more while another family moved into a single family residence in a nicer middle class neighborhood. Although rent was not available, upon a visual check, the residence is an upward move and better neighborhood.

Ten Burmese families experienced a downward movement in rent paid. In these cases, two families moved in together into a single family residence, cutting rent from $600 to $300 per family. Three of the 10 families moved into government assisted housing. Although rent amounts are not available, this would be considered downward
assimilation and not self-sufficiency. The remaining five had decreases in rent from $50 per month to $250 per month.

Table 2. *Burmese Moves and Rent Change Analysis*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Times moved</th>
<th>Rent Details</th>
<th>Direction of Rent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sharing house with another family/down $300 per month</td>
<td>downward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Down $125 per month</td>
<td>downward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>$100 more per month</td>
<td>upward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Public housing</td>
<td>downward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Public housing</td>
<td>downward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Down $120 per month</td>
<td>downward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sharing house with another family/down $300 per month</td>
<td>downward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Public housing</td>
<td>downward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Down $50 per month</td>
<td>downward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Down $115 per month</td>
<td>downward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Down $250 per month</td>
<td>Downward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Up $25 a month</td>
<td>Upward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>$80 more per month</td>
<td>Upward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>$30 more a month</td>
<td>Upward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Moved into single family residence/no rent available but nice neighborhood</td>
<td>Upward</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings Related to Research Question 4

RQ 4: What do educational and organizational leaders identify as services, strengths, needs, and gaps of educating and serving Burmese and Iraqi refugees in schools and in communities?

Interview process and questions.

The researcher conducted nineteen 30-minute semi-structured interviews of principals, assistant principals, and district office personnel from schools within two school districts at the elementary school, middle school, high school and the central office levels. The county school district reported approximately 350 Burmese and 100 Iraqi students within the school district; the city school district reported 22 Burmese and 7 Iraqi students. These numbers agree with findings from settlement data from initial location mapping.

Other community leaders interviewed were representatives of the agencies providing health, social, safety, and spiritual guidance. The recorded interviews were analyzed and common themes identified. Each interviewee signed a consent form from Human Subjects Review at Western Kentucky University before conduction of the interview and each interviewee received the same six questions. The interview questions were as follows:

1) How does your organization interact with Iraqis and Burmese?
2) Can you give me a few examples of projects or things that you do?
3) What strengths or assets do they bring into the community?
4) What needs do they have as a group?
5) What gaps are there in services?
6) Do you have any other thoughts you would like to share?

In the past, many refugees were resettled in the city school districts. Changes over the past 10 years in apartment availability have shifted the refugee resettlement area to apartments in the city annex. Former resettlement areas in the city have increasingly been settled by Hispanic populations. Apartment complexes in the city annex receive city services such as police and fire protection, but attend school in the county district. Although most city schools have a long history of experience with large populations of Cambodian, Laotian, Vietnamese, and Bosnian refugees, for the last three years many county schools have been scrambling to develop resources and programs for new Burmese and Iraqi refugee populations.

**How agencies interact with Iraqis and Burmese.**

The following section describes the various interactions and services provided to Iraqis and Burmese from educational leaders and other organizational leaders in areas of health care, social work, police protection, and faith-based agencies. The answers reveal the variety of services and points of interaction with these two refugee groups ranging from infant to adult.

School leaders report common themes as to initial interactions with refugee students. The first point of contact begins with school enrollment following the first round of vaccinations. Teachers first assess new students for placement via the World Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT)™ test. The WIDA Consortium consists of 25 partner states, including Kentucky, and serves “approximately 940,000 English language learners at a variety of levels” (WIDA, 2011). ACCESS stands for Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English
State-to-State for English Language Learners. This placement tool is for English Language Learners (ELL) and assesses listening, speaking, reading, and writing. A longer version of ACCESS may be used yearly to track academic and social proficiency levels.

Following initial screening, students are placed either into regular classrooms with English for Second Language Learners (ESL) teachers or assistants, an ESL classroom, or into a comprehensive language learning classroom. A comprehensive language classroom only allows English spoken and is a total immersion for those students who have limited English proficiency (LEP) or no English proficiency. Schools without comprehensive or ESL specific classrooms pulled students out of regular classrooms for a few hours a day to work with the ESL teachers. Others have ESL assistants in the back of the regular classroom during class. Fourth through sixth grade were always pulled out, Kindergarten through third grade usually stay in the room with the ESL teacher in the back of the room with them so they can see and hear the sounds. Teachers find that K-3 students pick up English much faster than older students.

The exact procedure for placement varies across schools according to overall numbers of the ESL population, available budget, and district. Each school in the county school district had at least one teacher who is ESL endorsed and more in schools with larger populations. One school reported a 52% ESL population and has four ESL teachers on staff. Across the county district there are four intensive English classes designed to provide students who have never been to school one-year sheltered instruction to increase their proficiency enough to attend ESL classes. These classes begin with numbers, shapes, and colors. One middle school reported that due to budget cuts, these classrooms
would not be available, so all students will go into ESL classrooms. The county district has an art therapist staff member who works with children who have post traumatic stress disorder and that’s been focused on students who do not have enough English to work with the ESL teacher. Some schools have translators for large populations on site; others share translators across districts or use a phone translation service.

Usually, between six months and two years, refugee students become socially conversational and will interact at a basic level. One elementary educator, Shelly, describes the process for her beginning students as follows:

The younger elementary students with no English usually have some English language base after they’ve been here about six months. Their initial phase is silence, so you can not initially determine what they’re able to say and what they’re not able to say. … But by around Christmas, they are usually able to communicate … that’s just the ability to communicate, but not to truly understand what’s going on. (SH620, 8)

Schools also provide the services of helping families to help their children be good students through providing family resource center support. Transportation, athletics, clubs, college readiness and all the usual services that go along with being in a public school system are provided to refugee students. County schools with many Limited English Proficiency (LEP) have after school tutoring. Some schools offer summer school for fourth grade through high school to keep them speaking English during the summer. Evening language classes for parents are offered during the school year twice a week at night for some schools.
Social service agencies provide initial resettlement needs, such as preparing and furnishing a home ahead of the family’s arrival. They also help with registration for social security, employment, physicals, community, and social orientation. Initial ESL classes along with training in healthy diets and cleanliness help refugees begin to adapt to the new culture.

Police personnel respond to calls for service as for other citizens. In addition to routine calls such as to report crimes or accidents, refugees might call 911 for reasons such as lack of heat. Officers work to build a positive image with refugees through an international liaison to provide translated materials on school safety and emergency procedures.

Health service caseworkers provide appointments for initial required shots and immunizations. Refugees qualify for family planning, cancer screening and WIC, a program for women with children. Nurses are employed by the county schools for minor illness.

Many refugees attend local Protestant and Catholic churches, the Buddhist temple, and the Islamic mosque. Most provide transportation on days of worship and prayers. Religious instruction, prayers, meditation, and counseling needs are some initial services provided by spiritual leaders. Services are conducted in multiple languages at some locations for Burmese members. The Islamic Mosque conducts all prayers in English. All religious leaders interviewed also provide for other needs of their members as well be discussed in the appropriate sections.
Needs.

Many schools only service Burmese or have few Iraqi students. Schools with student populations of both Iraqi and Burmese report that the two groups have different needs. Although Burmese are very needy, they will not ask for help; it must be discovered through investigation. Iraqis do not ask for help and are not perceived by educators as needing much assistance other than with English. Many needs voiced by interviewees are targeted toward the Burmese population. After coding and transcribing the interviews, responses from needs and gaps were combined resulting in thirteen needs and gaps. They are ranked in the order of greatest, or most often mentioned by interviewees, to least often mention. The top ten needs for Burmese and Iraqi refugees are as follows:

1. Lack of English (19/19).
2. Lack of understanding of American cultural norms (18/19).
3. Transportation (13/19).
4. Do not understand how to apply for services or health care (10/19).
5. Need more than 90 days for resettlement assistance (Burmese) (10).
6. Clothing, hygiene, health, and material needs (Burmese) (10/19).
7. Lack of onsite translators (8/19).
8. Deficit in learning on arrival (Burmese) (8/19).
9. Timely immunizations (7/19) and Adult community is isolated and need skill training (7/19).

Lack of English.

All of the 19 interviewees mentioned lack of English as a need for Burmese and Iraqi refugees. Most of the new arrivals from Burma speak little or no English and they need intensive language instruction. Many Burmese females have never attended any school, and those who have are often not competent in their own languages. Conversely, many Iraqi children and parents speak some English upon arrival. Many entry-level ESL classrooms have 30 students when the number should be no more than 15 (BR712, 17).
Educators feel that measuring gains through progress would show great results; however, students are measured against native English speakers after only one year to 18 months in most cases. In comparison, educators report that many native English speaking children in low socioeconomic homes are not proficient, but refugees are expected to become proficient in 12 to 18 months when no English is spoken at home. Educators report that seven years are typically required to reach full proficiency in English.

Burmese and Iraqi students are losing English language learned over the summer break because they are living in homes in neighborhoods where they do not hear English. “Students can lose up to one year’s instruction over the summer” (BE630, 14). Educators at some schools report that budgets for their summer schools have been cut, leaving students isolated. The lack of English on the part of refugee parents presents a barrier to parent-teacher communication as well as the ability to help children with homework at home. Educators noted that when Iraqi parents need translators, they will bring one along with them to meet with the teacher at school.

The Burmese speak as many as five or six distinct languages, adding to the challenge of communicating with parents and children. They also face difficulties because they cannot communicate with each other. Educators report that many Burmese adults are struggling with English, even after two years. Susan shared her views comparing the educational needs of these two groups:

The Burmese are an extremely needy community. They’ve been in refugee camps for 30 years so there’s an element of learned helplessness there, not being assertive to make your own decisions because you’re contained, almost like in a prison type situation for three generations…anything they get in the U.S. is better
than what they had living in a refugee camp, so there’s a real complacency in satisfaction with what we consider to be substandard…. The Iraqis that we are getting have been to school, most of the Iraqis speak at least some English…they need the opportunity to get here, learn English, get acculturated to the community and then they’ll move forward. (SU624, 12)

The lack of English skills presents barriers to refugees when obtaining drivers licenses and better jobs. Church leaders report they try to step in to help with training on written and driving tests, a necessary step toward independence and better employment. Some Burmese have been victimized by scam artists in states such as Arizona and Colorado who would sell driver’s licenses for $500 without taking a written or driver’s test.

Lack of understanding of American cultural norms.

Eighteen out of nineteen interviewees cite the lack of understanding of American cultural norms as a problem for both Burmese and Iraqi refugees, although in different areas. Educators suggest that Burmese students must learn the basic expectations of following policies and procedures. Not only do many have difficulties with basic toilet use, they do not wear underwear. Families often do not see a problem with truancy, and would rather have their children have lice than not visit those family members who carry them. Parents of Burmese children are very happy and thankful, but they do not show concern for levels of learning or safety issues.

One school that has many both Burmese and Iraqi students has experienced intercultural tensions between the two groups with name calling and harassment. Others
have cursed teachers and received discipline. One leader discovered the student was trying to get kicked out so he could get a job.

Iraqi students often have different attitudes toward females and education. For example, parents do not understand why girls who get married at very young ages such as 14 or 15 must still attend school. Educators described instances of disrespect toward female educators and other women beginning around the fourth grade. They further explained this trend is also true with others of Islamic faith in the school system, as discussed by Matt:

A lot of times, and I won’t say it’s Iraqi as much with children who are of Islamic belief and discipline in regards to respect to women…we will have a huge problem with students who are very disrespectful to women. That’s one of those things we have to get on top of and teach them that it might be their culture and customs, but here, that’s not how it works. (MA620, 2)

Transportation.

Thirteen out of nineteen interviewees expressed that the difficulties incurred particularly by Burmese were with transportation. Three schools that did not specifically mention transportation were located in the city district, with few numbers of these two groups, while the organizational leaders who did not name transportation were those such as home care services who typically make home visits.

The current routes provided by GO BG, Bowling Green’s public transportation system, do not offer enough routes at enough times and days to provide reliable transportation to jobs, shopping, doctors, or schools. The IC provides some transportation to jobs at the chicken processing plants and to ESL classes. Difficulty arises when trying
to figure out transportation to another workplace. Although an increase in routes and hours could be helpful for transportation to doctors, schools, and shopping, this still does not address needs for permanent, stable transportation for employment.

County schools report the most difficulty with transportation, especially when children are sick in school. Burmese in particular have a hard time getting transportation to the school and might even walk many miles, taking two hours to try to get there. In comparison, Iraqi parents are reported to be at school within 15 to 20 minutes, even if they do not own a car yet. Helping students find transportation back to school for extracurricular events in the evening such as ballgames and dances was mentioned as an issue.

One educational leader was able to get the bus line extended to the apartment complex in his school district when he found out they were stopping just short of the area as follows:

We talked to GO BG people because their bus line stopped about a mile before the apartments where many Burmese lived. They did not have any problem walking that mile, but when they’re packing a baby…There’s a Save A Lot [grocery store] they walk to that’s about one half to a quarter of a mile one way, so they’ll go get their groceries and they’re walking back with that. We talked with GO BG and they extended their route a couple of times a day to a convenience store that’s real close to the apartment complex, but it’s only on a couple of runs. That’s been helpful for them. (WA614, 2)
**Do not understand how to apply for services or health care.**

Ten out of nineteen interviewees expressed a need for help for refugees with applying for a variety of services. Although there are many services available, even with an address and paperwork, leaders in both groups explain that Burmese may have difficulty understanding things such as waiting in line and follow-up visits. In cases of emergencies, volunteers have been mobilized within the community to offer assistance. One Burmese employee mentioned to his spiritual leader that he had never received any money for working. On investigation, it was learned that the employee did not understand what a paycheck was, and had been throwing it in the trash can. The employer then set up direct deposit in a checking account for him.

Many leaders mentioned they heard instances of refugees going without food because they didn’t know how to apply for food stamps. Several organizational leaders identified concerns for Burmese after a medical crisis as follows:

There are a number of our parishioners that if we did not help them out, they would be sunk. There was one Burmese who was in a very serious accident and was airlifted to Vanderbilt, and was in the hospital for about six weeks. They do not speak English. Americans have a hard enough time understanding insurance, much less a refugee who doesn’t speak any English and we got them help for their adopted family who basically became their power of attorney. A local parishioner who is an attorney helped them get the insurance that was available to them and disability, so they were helped a lot because we helped. Without that, they would not have a clue what to do. (TO618, 15)
*Need more than 90 days for resettlement assistance (Burmese)*.

Ten out of nineteen interviewees felt that refugees, especially the Burmese need much more than 90 days to adapt to develop survival skills in the U.S. Six educational leaders and four organizational leaders gave examples of how they needed help with translators or with transportation of sick children but were unable to get help. Most leaders expressed their understanding that the IC is unable to provide services after that time, but feel it is unfair to such a needy and struggling group.

*Clothing, hygiene, health, and material needs (Burmese)*.

Eight interviewees out of nineteen report an issue with inappropriate clothing and hygiene. All respondents except one were educational leaders. Some problems include wearing the same clothes every day, wearing flip flops, and wearing brightly colored pajamas. For example, males might wear hot pink or purple clothing, which could facilitate teasing from others. Several schools gave tennis shoes to students for gym class, but students returned in flip flops and had to sit out of class. Burmese are likely to wear clothing that is inappropriate for the weather as well. They will not wear coats and jackets when it is cold outside.

One school purchased a washer and dryer so they could change and wash their clothes while at school. Some problems with bed bugs can be explained because they sleep on the floor and leave food out as described by Erin:

A lot of them, in their apartments, they do not sleep on beds they sleep on the floor and that’s where a lot of the bed bugs come from. They will leave their food on the table and then they’ll go back and eat it later. It doesn’t seem to make them sick. They are also very caring and will offer you food and drink. It’s almost like
an insult if you do not eat or drink. So I’ve sipped on and tasted a few things.

(ER621.9)

*Lack of onsite translators.*

Eight of nineteen interviewees see lack of translators as a need. Most schools do not have translators on site, but must share across the district. One reason for this is the difficulty with finding translators with diplomas and who speak several different Burmese languages. Although many organizations use the language line, some reported that it can be problematic, particularly in situations where time is an issue. Schools who have tried to recruit volunteers face difficulties because parents cannot ride the school bus, and often they would also need car seats for their other children. During dental care service only provided for second grade children, teachers learned about more serious problems from the translators provided as reported by Erin:

With the translators, we have learned about more serious problems with child who had seizures and another couldn’t hear out of one ear… Things that we did not even know and they’ve [the students] have been here and we did not know.

Screenings do not catch it because they are only given on periodic years.

(ER621.9)

*Deficit in learning on arrival (Burmese).*

Eight educational leaders and one organizational leader felt the Burmese have a great need to overcome due to the challenges of coming from refugee camps where most have lived their whole lives in a primitive situation. As stated in the cultural profiles in Chapter 3, they have little or no formal education or work skills because working was not allowed in camps. Matt shares his experience working with both groups:
The Burmese are different that the Iraqis due to the differing levels of social economic capital and educational levels. Although the Iraqis may not have English yet, they are educated at higher levels and come with skills. The Burmese must acquire all these levels. (MA620, 2)

**Timely immunizations.**

Five educational leaders and two organizational leaders out of nineteen interviewees expressed issues with both refugees and adults who do not get timely follow-ups on immunizations. This keeps children out of school and employees from work. It could take up to four months to get caught up at one-month intervals, and the IC is only responsible for the first round. Organizational leaders also found barriers to helping some Iraqi adults who did not realize they needed shots. Wayne described the gaps he sees with children and immunizations in his school as follows:

> We have a problem with immunizations and keeping them caught up. They (IC) only have a certain number of days of service. That also poses a problem with the cycle, as it takes a minimum of four months to get kids caught up on their shots. They can come to school with the first round, but they need to have more at one month intervals to get caught up. That’s a child that’s had no shots…. (WA615, 3)

**Adult community is isolated and need skill training.**

Four educational leaders and three organizational interviewees feel there are several critical issues within the adult Burmese and Iraqi community. First, females usually do not work, and they stay isolated in their apartments where they are not learning English or job skills. They may learn some basic conversational English, but educators and organizational leaders alike voiced concern that they are staying within
their communities and may also be targeted for victimization. Burmese are often complacent, and interviewees feel that they will stay within their apartment complexes, creating a group of people who are disengaged within the larger community. Iraqi women also often stay home without many freedoms that other Americans enjoy. Ben related his concerns for adults who are isolated within the complexes:

If this is a continuing trend, we will need to do more for the [adult] refugees who are not in the school category. The adults are not assimilating and are not being engaged by the community. They are isolated in their apartments and are creating a group of people who are disenfranchised. They are not engaged in the political process, they are often afraid of the police, and we are missing out on that group. We can win over and draw into the community the children who are in schools through making friends outside their groups. (BE630, 14)

**Need better jobs.**

Two educational leaders and three organizational interviewees expressed the need to find better jobs for Burmese and Iraqis. Better jobs include jobs with better working conditions and pay. Nearly all of the Burmese go to work at one of two chicken processing plants and stay there. Working conditions at these plants are challenging, and one plant is located two and a half hours from Bowling Green. One plant in Ohio County is currently not hiring, according to one interviewee. It was reported that Iraqis try to move away from the plants because of the conditions and the smell. Tom, an organizational leader describes the situation within the Burmese group he has contact with:
Most of them have jobs, a few are still looking. They need better jobs or job opportunities. The ones who work at Perdue drive one hour, the ones who work at Tyson drive 2 ½ hours one way to work every day. They do not usually want to move because their families are here. When they first came here, they were all getting jobs at Perdue. Perdue has somewhat stopped hiring at the moment, so Tyson has picked some up. (TO618, 15)

Reluctant to report incidents to police or other agencies.

Five interviewees split between three educational and two organizational leaders mentioned that Burmese and some Iraqi are reluctant to report incidents to police and other governmental agencies. Many are afraid of authority due to experiences in former countries. Some educational leaders report that they often make home visits because parents are afraid to come to school. Organizational leaders submit that Iraqi women might not report abuse, and Iraqi men will be more comfortable speaking with a male officer than a female officer. Interviewees report that these groups have a high risk of victimization due to fear of authority and lack of knowledge concerning personal rights. Dave discussed his experiences with Burmese refugees and their inability to access needed legal services in the following example:

They [Burmese] do not know how to work the system and there are some issues that happen socially within the…families that wives left husbands…and caused a lot of devastation in some families. Wives [and kids]…went to live with somebody else, and they [husbands] did not know how to handle that and it happened to more than one family. The wife [found someone who] provided them with [a bigger place] to stay and more to eat and not having to work hard and not
having to do things and the husbands lost everything and his kids, is unable to see his kids and unable to see his wife and unable to work in the system to [know his legal] rights. (DA725, 17)

**Affordable health care.**

Three organizational leaders discussed the lack of health care for adults, especially those who have been laid off or work part time and have no medical card. An organizational health care worker expressed difficulties for families who have a sick child but no transportation to go to a private doctor. No educational leaders directly mentioned affordable health care, possibly due to the children are eligible for medical cards when they arrive. Another organizational leader, Alex, related the following story of a recent birth to an unemployed Burmese family without insurance:

There are gaps in service for refugee families who work part time and have no medical card. One family had a baby born in the hospital and they have a $22,000 bill. How can they pay? …He has only been here [about] two months and no money. (AL622, 11)

**Projects.**

Educational and community interviewees described projects underway to address the needs of these two refugee groups. Eight project areas were defined in progress across the two interviewee groups. Items were ranked according from highest occurrences to lowest occurrences. The top seven projects underway by educators and community leaders are as follows:

1. Intercultural events (10/19).
2. Improved ESL and CLIMBS Training (8/19).
3. Improved teaching techniques (9/19).
4. Intake Center and GEO Academy (8/19).
5. Moving resources between schools (5/19).
7. Drivers Training (3/19).

The most commonly mentioned projects across both educational and organizational leader were intercultural events. Seven educational leaders and three organizational leaders reported a variety of intercultural events designed to provide an educational setting for learning about food, dress, dance, and customs. One school places international flags on display to celebrate the numbers of countries represented. No interviewees mentioned events that specifically addressed only Burmese or Iraqi groups, but an all-encompassing event for all from countries outside the U.S. Some educators report the widening of the event by discussing other cultures in social studies and one principal reported dressing in a different costume as available every day during their International Week. Another goal of International Night is to bus parents to school to meet the teachers. Some parents bring food and cultural artifacts. Organizational leaders also reported various events such as the International Festival designed to share intercultural events with community groups and individual congregations. Chris described her school’s International Week as follows:

When planning international week, the school featured a different continent each day. The principal dressed in different traditional days, but many students were uncomfortable with dressing. In the morning, students would bring information they had researched about different countries and share and what she noticed initially was that students did not seem that interested. But as the week went on, the students became excited about the international event night. It helps when the teachers get on board with enthusiasm and planning assignments around the
theme. Some teachers assigned groups to create a poster and if they came that night, they scheduled them to stand by their display and help answer questions.

(CH616, 6)

**Improved ESL and CLIMBS Training.**

Four educational leaders and four organizational leaders reported improvements in teaching ESL, and four educational leaders reported using and receiving CLIMBS Training. All schools have ESL teachers, but all interviewees did not report improvements in their programs, some even reported cuts in funding which resulted in losing their comprehensive ESL classroom.

The county schools conducted district wide CLIMBS Content and Language Integration as a Means of Bridging Success (CLIMBS)® training this year to help teachers realize how to modify for kids according to their language level and make realistic expectations. CLIMBS help ESL and non ESL teachers learn how to apply fair standards in the classroom according to tiered level scale. Specific learning proficiencies are related to each tier for what a non-English speaker should be doing. It helps students modify lesson plans for all students to reach all children in different ways.

All three spiritual leaders reported that they are teaching ESL within their places of worship. One church leader shared that they have recruited ESL teachers and have established ESL at beginner and intermediate levels. Improvements have followed trial and error learning.

**Improved teaching techniques.**

Eight educational leaders and one organizational leader mentioned that each new refugee group brings the opportunity for faculty and administrators to stop and reassess
the ways of content delivery. The necessity of working closely with new refugees often results in closer teacher/student relationships. One principal gave an example of one exceptional ESL teacher who was so conscientious and concerned about Burmese learning that he worked extra hours in the evening and on weekends to develop pre-and post-teaching materials to assist in learning. He would meet with the classroom teacher to obtain the curriculum, put together study materials, and then meet with the students both before and following the classroom teaching sessions to answer any questions from the students. The same educational leader reported purchasing a series of materials that are textbooks at different levels of the same content to assist the ESL teacher. Chris explained how her school received a classroom of out-of-district children and is having a good experience:

After redistricting, the school that was overcrowded had an extra classroom. This classroom began a model for an intensive classroom for primarily the Burmese. This was in response to a need, particularly at the fourth through sixth grade levels with children who cannot speak or read and they are thrown into difficult subject matter. Visitors come in to see how the program is working. We developed a “do the math program” to help the kids catch on. (CH616, 6)

**Intake Center.**

Eight educational leaders, all in county schools reported involvement in the new intake center. In response to the growing numbers of Burmese and Iraqi refugee arrivals, the county school system is implementing a centralized intake center to serve as the first contact for refugee children and parents with assistance for processing paperwork and enrollment forms. The center will also provide the second round of immunizations, vision
and eye screenings, along with any other health issues that might keep children out of school.

**Moving resources between schools.**

Five educational leaders reported involvement in a project involving bussing LEP Burmese students between schools. A large group of Burmese arrivals to an elementary school resulted in a creative solution to help both school personnel and students. The school district implemented an intensive ESL classroom for the lowest level of English learners, primarily Burmese. An empty classroom in another school with little diversity became the new destination as these students are bussed every day to a different neighboring elementary school. When students reach a predetermined language level, they will return to the original school. Erin described additions to the original school in the meantime as follows:

> In 2012 they plan to add six new classrooms. The school currently has a full ESL morning preschool classroom mostly Burmese students with plans to add complete ESL classrooms for first and second grades with an ESL certified teacher. (ER621, 9)

**Technology.**

Four educational leaders reported new programs in technology adopted to help low-level ESL students learn. One educator described the implementation of an Ipad program. The initial results were slow as Burmese children were unfamiliar with technology use that slowed their adaption to the device.
Drivers Training.

Three organizational leaders mentioned taking on drivers training as projects. Classes on passing the written exam and practice in driving exists at different levels due to the numbers of volunteers available at each of these three spiritual centers. One church reported having 50 Burmese sign up indicating interest in participating in this ongoing program. Tom explains below:

Getting them [Burmese] licenses is a big one…. We are going to have classes to help them, and we had 50 adults sign up, along with some high school students. …We had a guy who got into an issue driving with an invalid license and we helped him with court. (TO618, 15)

GEO Academy.

Four educational leaders indicated they will participate in Fall 2011 in a new academy designed to serve the needs of refugees over the age of 18 who arrive in the U.S. for school but do not have enough time to learn English and complete the credits necessary for a high school diploma before the age of 21. Typically these students will drop out after a few months. All students will be bused to a central location where they will be in a classroom together and work toward a diploma or a GED in partnership with the vocational school. According to Susan:

The only groups who will attend classes in the GEO academy are students 18-21 who cannot complete enough credits to graduate by 21. So far, the Iraqi kids, even if they exited Iraq, went to school in Syria or Jordan and have transcripts and this is not a problem for them, but many of the Burmese students have never been to school. This idea came from the High School principals because the concern is
this group of students enrolls in a big high school, they last about two months and then drop out and they count as a dropout for *No Child Left Behind*. If we can put them in a separate school that’s more in tune with their needs, we 1) will keep them longer than two months and 2) they won’t count as a dropout for *No Child Left Behind* for our big high schools. (SU624, 12)

**Strengths.**

Diversity as a strength was mentioned by 18 out of 19 interviewees, making it the first-ranked of seven strengths mention by three or more leaders. Some offshoots of diversity surfaced in the next three highest rankings with 12 out of 19 mentioning broadened worldview, builds cultural sensitivity, and brings world events to life for others. The top seven strengths reported by educational and community leaders are as follows:

1. Diversity (18/19).
2. Broadened worldview (12/19).
4. Brings world events to life for others (12/19).
5. Caring people (Burmese) (10/19).
6. Respect for teacher authority (Burmese) (9/19).
7. Good for the work force (5/19).

These were mentioned by most of the educational leaders. Only one educational leader did not mention these three as a perceived strength. Leaders gave many examples of classrooms that were traditionally white and Caucasian now look like the United Nations building or a major airport. The following are expressed as strengths by Susan:

I think diversity is the biggest asset they bring into the community…) the refugees that come in help set Bowling Green apart for a city of this size. With the university trying to go with an international theme, it supports that theme for the
university. In terms of the school system, they are absolutely delightful kids…they are very appreciative of the educational experience and that education is free and it can set you on the track to a better life. They are hard working delightful kids and our teachers really, really love working with them. (SU624.12)

The third ranked strength, builds cultural sensitivity, is named by 11 educators and one organizational leader as a help for other students. Students who have questions about the Iraq war and Saddam Hussein have learned from students who lived through the war, which makes it feel more real. Closely related to cultural sensitivity is the fourth-ranked strength, brings world events to life for others with 11 educational leaders and one organizational leader listening this as strength. Brad shared a hurtful incident between two students at his school and how he turned it into a positive learning experience:

When Osama Bin Laden was killed, we had one of our rural students turn to one of our Iraqi students and say, aren’t you upset that one of your Gods was killed? It was very hurtful and made the girl cry and the crazy thing was, when she first arrived in America, she did not know who Osama Bin Laden was, and it gave me an opportunity to talk to that student. [I told her] You know Osama Bin Laden was from Arabia and he actually hated Saddam Hussein, so if anything, the Iraqis disliked him as much as Americans dislike him. It gave me an opportunity to educate this American kid, and she said I had no idea. The young girl was very apologetic and wanted to apologize to the Iraqi girl. I think her ignorance and lack of knowledge was a shame and it teaches students and, then they have a chance to see that these kids have emotions and they can learn from them. (BR712, 17)
The fifth strength was mentioned by eight educational leaders and two organizational leaders, caring people. This was targeted toward the Burmese population and many mention of how both the Burmese students and parents are always smiling and caring for each other and others. The sixth strength, respect for teacher authority was mentioned by nine educational leaders and was also targeted toward the Burmese community. Leaders say that teachers are highly respected and parents always follow their requests. Many educators wish all students were as attentive and appreciative as these students. They set a good example according to Susan:

The [Burmese] families have a different outlook toward teacher authority and they really respect the authority of teachers, and back the schools, almost unquestioning what the teachers says, X, then that’s just the way it is. It’s a lot easier for teachers as well. (SU624, 12)

The last strength mentioned is that both Iraqi and Burmese refugees are good for the work force. Three educational leaders and two organizational leaders discussed factors such as what hard workers Burmese employees are and how Iraqis bring some skills with them to the U.S.

The final question was an opened-ended question related to comments. Due to the nature of the question, selected responses and comments add additional dimension to the questions that may not have been asked but on which the interviewee wished to comment.

Growing our own resources.

One school discussed how they have encouraged many employees to get ESL certification. The county school district reports that enough time has passed for some
Burmese students to earn a high school degree. They are in the process of interviewing and hiring one to work in the schools as a bilingual assistant as described by Susan:

[We have] a Burmese girl who graduated from one of our high schools who we plan to hire to be a bilingual assistant in the fall, and I think it’s great when we can grow our own because she will understand the community and has been in our schools so she’ll be a great cultural broker. It’s really hard to find Burmese who have a high school diploma. To grow one and be able to hopefully employ her is great. (SU624, 12)

**Finding hidden ability.**

Several schools reported discovery of talents and abilities in different areas such as playing musical instruments and singing. Although several educators listed math ability as a talent, Chris found a way to celebrate the talents of three Burmese students when staff found out about their chess playing abilities:

The translator found out that some of the students played chess. The translator started playing chess with them, and then he asked the chess coach for his best chess player. The best player was a teacher’s son, and it was easy for him to stay over and play chess with these three sixth-grade Burmese students. They beat the best player on the chess team easily…we will find a way for them to play in the chess club next year after school…Anything we can do to help the English speaking students see the Burmese in a more positive light is welcomed.

(CH616.6)
**Integrated friendships.**

Some Burmese have been in Bowling Green for several years and have started making friends with the native-born students. One educational leader observed some Burmese students who were attending birthday parties and beginning to make friends with others outside their community. This is reflected in the discussion of Chris on integration:

> The first time they came, no one sat by them in the cafeteria. That doesn’t happen now and they are accepted. Each Burmese has been assigned a buddy to sit by them at lunch, to get them for an assembly or other activity. Most buddies do well, but some lose interest, and the Burmese would then gather together. We want to get them more fully integrated. There is a sixth grade boy who is totally integrated and the girls said he’s our boyfriend. (CH616.6)

**Burmese networks.**

Tom, a spiritual leader, reported that the Burmese in his parish have strong networks with Burmese in other cities. Some examples he gave were:

> There’s a Burmese network around the country with a good bit of communication, both between the Catholic Burmese and the other Burmese. One of the largest groups in the Eastern U.S. is in Atlanta. Our people went down to Atlanta for Christmas to join a few other Catholic communities. Some of our parish went to Indianapolis to take part in an all-Burmese soccer tournament. (TO618, 15)

In conclusion, the highest levels of needs for Burmese and Iraqi as reported in educational and organizational leaders interviews were English, understanding of cultural norms, and transportation. The strengths of these two groups were the contribution of
diversity, a different worldview, and lessons in cultural sensitivity. Projects most often mentioned were intercultural awareness events, enhanced ESL instruction, and improved teaching techniques. Most projects were reported by educational leaders.
CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The twofold purpose of this mixed-methods study was to describe how the initial refugee resettlement address location affects refugee assimilation within a mid-sized city when allowing for neighborhood demographics. Assimilation theory suggests that resettlement areas that are high in population density, rental units, minorities, crime, unemployment, inadequate transportation, and low income may introduce additional barriers to cultural and economic success (Massey & Denton, 1988). Refugee resettlement data were combined with 2000 and 2010 Census Data with Environmental System Research Institute (ESRI) ArcGIS version 10. Locations were high in population density, rental units, minorities, inadequate transportation, and low income. Locations were not high in unemployment or crime. The researcher found that Burmese often stay within the initial resettlement cluster. Although Iraqi data were incomplete, qualitative interviews revealed that Iraqis often move quickly and break contact with the original resettlement agency.

The second purpose was to identify issues related to providing educational and community services for Burmese and Iraqi refugees by conducting 19 semi-structured interviews among two groups consisting of educational and community leaders who provide services to these refugee groups. The primary needs reported were English language, transportation, skills, and cultural knowledge, in particular for the Burmese. Strengths included increased workforce, diversity, and positive attitudes. Both groups interviewed report innovative projects in progress.

Bowling Green and Warren County have offered a safe haven to refugees since the first Laotian “boat people” arrived in the 1970’s. Since then, the cultural landscape of
this mid-sized city has become home to many ethnicities from around the globe. Most of
the refugees in the past were resettled on the west side of town, virtually on the “other
side of the tracks.” Intentionally lowered visibility resulted in less controversy from
residents on the more affluent east side of the city. In the recent past, changes in available
housing and shifts from other existing minority residents have resulted in the resettlement
of refugees in a very visible part of the city on the east side.

The shift in housing has also moved populations into new schools that had little or
no experience with these groups. Educational leaders have been scrambling to create
learning environments suitable for many non-English speaking students within a
framework of increasing budget cuts. Often, challenging events may bring creative
solutions, as demonstrated by several proposed and ongoing projects underway at these
schools. One principal explained that when new populations arrive, everyone must step
back and evaluate the educational process, which may help the whole student population.

**Discussion of Findings**

The Burmese and Iraqi refugee groups bring a variety of challenges and needs
into this equation. The Burmese suffered years of isolation within primitive refugee
camps, resulting in a state of learned helplessness, and they are a group very dependent
for the long term on others for survival in the United States. The cultural learning curve is
immense, beginning with the most basic need to understand modern electricity and
modern plumbing. Minimal or no education for many years combined with the inability
to work in the camps adds to their struggles to adapt and survive. Of all the groups
arriving in Bowling Green’s history, this may be the most hard to serve population. This
group is also the most likely to be victimized by others due to their passiveness and ignorance of the world.

The findings relate to the segmented assimilation theory of Portes and Zhou (1993), discussed in Chapter II, who assert that non-whites would follow a more segmented path to assimilation than early white immigrants and refugees. Rather than following a gradual assimilation over time, the Burmese may be following a stagnated or downward assimilation into poverty and the lower class. The results showed that most Burmese stay in the original lodging in large apartment complexes or move into less expensive housing, including government-subsidized units. Although this may be beneficial in the short term for support, it is arguably damaging in the long term as the community becomes increasingly isolated and disenfranchised from the dominant society.

Massey and Denton (1988) found in their study of residential segregation that the following measures contribute to segregation: evenness, exposure, concentration, centralization, and clustering. This study finds four out of the five measures apply to the original resettlement addresses of Burmese and Iraqi refugees. The initial resettlement addresses of refugees are areas where high proportions of minorities reside across the area in evenness, where little chance exists for exposure to the majority group members, and ethnic groups are concentrated within specialized areas. The measure termed centralized by Massey and Denton (1988) refers to the area of an inner city and would not be applicable as Bowling Green is a mid-sized city, and refugees are resettled into the city annex on the fringes of the city limits and within the county school district. Finally, refugees are resettled by the IC into enclaves or clusters, where Burmese majority remains, and the Iraqi majority leaves.
Portes and Zhou (1993) discuss three factors that may accelerate downward assimilation; “color, location, and the absence of mobility ladders (p. 83). Mobility ladders are critical in terms of providing contact with the middle class who can provide job possibilities and advice. Those refugees who remain in the initial location of resettlement have fewer opportunities to interact with those who could help them. Although churches reach out to groups and help as they can, the location remains a barrier to assimilation. One spiritual leader reported that they are paying rent for those Burmese who are unable to survive otherwise. Educators and community service providers lamented in interviews that the adults are not learning English after many years, and they are not developing job skills outside the chicken processing plant. The Burmese communities become targets for those who would victimize them due to their ignorance or fear.

The Iraqi refugees appear to assimilate according to the third suggested possibility of Portes and Zhou (1993) with more rapid economic advancement while maintaining close community values and solidarity. Interviewees report that Iraqis arrive with more money and education than Burmese; they are more likely to purchase a vehicle quickly and move into a better neighborhood. Iraqis have the benefit of advanced education, some English speaking ability, knowledge of our culture and a job skill set, but are slower to assimilate culturally due to differences in Islamic traditions in a predominantly Christian community. Cultural differences may arise in the treatment and respect of women, both in the home and with respect to female authority figures. Iraqis may also experience discrimination related to the U.S. war with Iraq and misunderstandings of the
Islamic faith. Their ability to move ahead with minimal assistance from the International Center suggests economic assimilation.

**Implications for educational leaders.**

**State Level**

The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) has an accountability system in place that rewards high performing schools based on gains from achievement test results (KDE, 2011). New refugees are given approximately one year, depending on their date of arrival, to reach academic readiness. Schools that previously had few limited English proficiency (LEP) students must try to bring children up to an academic testing level for accountability within two years or the school could receive poor evaluations. In this situation, teachers are held accountable for their students’ progress. Refugees who have limited English proficiency (LEP) also feel pressure to achieve at high levels. Although principals try to alleviate the stress this causes for teachers, staff, and students, it is a source of concern. Perhaps another method of accountability could be formatted for this special population.

Educational leaders within the county school district have initiated programs to help streamline refugee arrivals through school registration with the new Intake Center in Fall 2011. This will help get children in school quicker and possibly alleviate some difficulties with the second and third rounds of vaccinations that occur outside the International Center 90-day window. The new GEO center for older high school new arrivals will help give a more realistic track for those who would otherwise be unable to complete all credits and may need to work toward a GED.
Another creative solution is the bussing of Burmese children to another school with extra room and resources. Perhaps this could serve as a beginning of a model of bussing within the county district to share these hard to serve populations with other schools that have few or no ESL students.

**Implications for community leaders.**

**National level.**

At the national level, policy makers must begin to reset the time needed to resettle groups realistically. Some ethnic groups may integrate economically more quickly than others, but most groups need more time to adapt to the language and cultural norms. Some groups, such as Burmese need much more time than the 90-day window allots. Rather than lump all refugees and resettlement needs together, a formula of survival timeline could be calculated based on current knowledge of cultural, educational, and skill levels. A six-month window would be more realistic, with an assessment of each family’s progress by the resettling agency at the five-month mark. At that time, further appropriate services could be suggested on a personalized need basis. Federal agencies must consider whether it is ethical to bring a whole ethnic group to the U.S. to exist in poverty for generations in one of the richest nation in the world.

**Community level.**

Although several churches, the temple, and the mosque, are taking a stab at helping the Burmese community on a continuing basis, there is not an orchestrated effort to build a long term solution for both the refugees and the community at large. The gap between when the International Center ends services and the time Burmese refugees need to become self sufficient is too large. The whole Burmese community is dependent on the
continuance of the chicken processing plants for survival. If the plants close or lay off employees, they have no other options for employment at this point. The following is the first suggestion for building a long-term solution.

**City/County Board**

A task force should be created jointly by the Mayor and the County Judge Executive to represent the Bowling Green/Warren County international population with the purpose of establishing a permanent organization to oversee the international residents’ needs within six months after arrival. An Executive Director should be hired and a board of directors selected to oversee the organization. Members of the board should include representatives such as: International Center Director, the ALIVE Center Community Partnership Center at Western Kentucky University, Community Education, the Kentucky State Workforce Investment Board, leaders from ethnic groups, spiritual leaders, educational leaders, and others, both public and private who work with these populations. The executive director would be responsible for fundraising, grant applications, and coordination of communication among all participating members. He or she would also serve as the liaison for city and county government officials, the IC, the State Refugee Coordinator, and the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). Although many services are offered by different organizations, there is not a clearinghouse to prevent duplication of services or attend to issues or special needs.

The director should hold monthly meetings with the interested parties, and should ask for quarterly reports from the IC Director. Information should be provided about expected refugee arrival dates, ethnic orientation, and areas of intended resettlement, school districts, and any health concerns that could be relevant to the community. The
sharing of information will enable service providers to prepare in advance, rather to react after the fact.

**Potential Programs**

Some of the most formidable barriers related by interviewees were lack of English language skills, problems with transportation, lack of employment skills and lack of Western cultural knowledge (of Burmese), and isolation of adult women (both Burmese and Iraqi) within clusters. Some of the following suggestions might begin to address these issues:

**Fast-track advanced English classes.**

Educational leaders stressed the importance of advanced English skills for the adult population. Because of the combination of services within the City/County Board, a coordinated effort to reach out to adults within clusters could help adults learn English at more advanced levels.

Lutheran Social Services of South Dakota (2011) offers continuing ESL languages at beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels during the morning afternoon, and evening. Classes are free for refugees and child care is provided. Once refugees progress to at least the intermediate level, they may also opt to take classes in computer literacy, pre employment training, and citizenship (LSSD, 2011).

A program such as this could also benefit students as adult parents are better able to read and understand communication from health workers and schools. Adults who can learn English can reassume the parental role and not rely on children to serve as interpreters. These learning opportunities can only strengthen the community and help lead refugees toward independence.
Improved transportation.

Transportation is one of the most often listed barriers to refugee integration after English language. The lack of affordable access to transportation makes refugees dependent on others for rides to work, to the doctor, for grocery shopping, and for visiting family members. The lack of adequate transportation can limit options for jobs and may slow or stop integration. Many refugees work nights and weekends and travel up to 2½ hours to one chicken processing plant. If one family member owns a car, it is then not available for the rest of the family while out of town. The current bus system, GOBG, has limited routes only during the day with five fixed routes and two routes on Saturday once a month (Community Action of Southern Kentucky, 2011). Organized programs to help refugees learn how to drive and then obtain drivers’ licenses could help increase their mobility and chances for integration.

Job skills training.

Simple craft training for adult women.

Training in skills could be offered to isolated adult women such as basket weaving, sewing, pottery, ceramics, arts, and other home-based activities. These could be a source of income for this population, and could be offered through Community Education. Grants and fundraising could help fund the instruction. With the limitations of transportation, classes could be offered in the community building in the community room hubs at the apartment complexes.

Identify other teachable job skills.

The City/County board and the Workforce Investment Board could collaborate to identify potential job skills training areas of need such as nursing assistants, laundry
workers, roofing, cleaning services, and other jobs requiring little training. Other possibilities include cooperative farm work or industries such as catfish farming or sustainable organic farming that would appeal to the Burmese communal lifestyle. The Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) has refugee agriculture grants available to help refugees start farms with assistance for land acquisition and technical training (National Institute of Farm and Agriculture, 2010).

**Housing improvement information.**

The City/County board could work with residents who have not moved out of their initial resettlement location by providing information on other housing opportunities in the area. Families who have some contact outside their own culture can integrate into the greater community. The intended purpose of the initial residence is that it is temporary until the family can move into better housing and into the greater community. Without assistance, families may stay and be unable to integrate. Groups such as Habitat for Humanity provide opportunities for refugees across the U.S.

**Limitations**

Limitations of this study are that the data set only includes a part of all refugees in the area. The data set is further limited due to the 90-day limited timeline required by the government for record keeping. These numbers should be viewed as trends and are not generalizable to other cities or urban areas.

Other limitations are sources of funding for the suggested board and programs. Many existing agencies jostle to keep funding at present levels raising competition for new programs. Refugees do not usually have much political power as they cannot vote in elections for many years and are trying to survive.
Implications for Further Research

Although this study only covered two groups, many more refugees from various ethnicities have resettled through the same agency since the 1970’s. Further research could look at the migration patterns of other ethnicities over time within the same study areas. A longitudinal study rather than a snapshot would aid in generalizability outside this area. However, cultural orientation and educational materials issued by the Center for Applied Linguistics (2007, 2008) and related to the Burmese and Iraqi refugee groups agree as to challenges faced by these groups in resettlement and in sync with the findings of this study.

Interviews of refugees in the form of a case study could help explain reasons for moving patterns between apartment clusters more fully. More research is needed to examine the effect of resettlement on the social structure of the family unit. Areas of interest could focus on the ways families cope and the effects on the marital relationship, discipline of children, and hope for the future.

Findings indicated a great deal of participation and assistance from spiritual organizations. For Iraqi and Buddhist families, how does resettlement in a mid-sized predominantly Christian city affect family practices and practice of Islam and Buddhism? Do females stop wearing head coverings due to discrimination and harassment or because of assimilation?

Summary

The purpose of this study was to spatially examine the residential mobility of Burmese and Iraqi refugees in Bowling Green, Kentucky by first assessing demographics of initial location of resettlement and subsequent moves, combined with existing research
and data on each group’s human capital and internal states. Six residential clusters were identified, two primary, two secondary, and two tertiary. Movement was tracked both within the study area and out of the study area.

The second purpose was to conduct interviews of educational and community leaders to identify issues related to educating and providing community needs. Nineteen educational and community leaders participated in the 30-minute semi-structured interviews. Educational leaders consisted of principals, assistant principals, and administrators. Community service leaders were located in the sectors of health care, social services, and spiritual direction. Leaders all identified barriers for Burmese and Iraqi refugees as English language skills and transportation. They further identified Burmese as a very needy population that requires much care.

Conclusion

Refugees from Burma and Iraq are initially resettled into areas high in rental property, minority population, low education levels and median income, and high in population density. Refugee clusters are in areas that are low in unemployment and crime, due in part to the overall low incidence of crime in Bowling Green. The unemployment results seem to indicate that refugees who live in these areas are working.

In conclusion, refugees from Iraq and Burma share some similarities but many differences. The similarities between refugees involve the psychological feelings of loss of homeland and family. Many have lived in times of war and persecution. Both groups need to learn or improve English skills and cultural awareness. Women in these groups are often isolated at home and lacking in job skills.
Differences between the groups are that the Burmese are often passive and not ask for things they truly need. Sometimes they do not seem to understand what they need to thrive in U.S. culture. They need assistance with the most basic survival skills and with understanding American culture. Service providers should expect to provide Burmese families more home-based visits due to transportation difficulties. Burmese as a whole are more at-risk for mistreatment by others due to their vulnerability and lack of knowledge.

Iraqis are often more assertive and hold high expectations for their children’s education, better jobs, and living conditions. They are much more familiar with American culture, but not as open to women’s equality. Educators and service providers should take differences in culture into consideration, especially when working with female children or adults.

Resettlement agencies and other service providers who expect the same results with different populations may not serve the refugee’s specific needs for integration. One challenge of moving toward long-term assimilation requires a concerted coordinated effort by agencies to address the refugee’s individual and group needs.
References


### APPENDICES

**Appendix A.-Significant U.S. Refugee Policy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Act</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Displaced Persons Act of 1948</td>
<td>The first U.S. legislation enacted regarding refugees following the entry of more than 250,000 Europeans displaced due to World War II. It allowed for an additional 400,000 European refugees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refugee Relief Act of 1953 and the Refugee Escapee Act of 1957</td>
<td>These acts provided for those who were displaced due to war or fleeing from communist regimes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952</td>
<td>Intended to combine previous laws. It included a modified quota system that favored Northern and Western Europeans, those with higher education and skills, and those with American relatives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refugee Task Force (1975)</td>
<td>An ad hoc task force that enabled the U.S. to resettle hundreds of thousands of Indochinese through allocation of temporary funding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refugee Act of 1980</td>
<td>Served to incorporate the United Nation's definition of refugee and created standardization for all refugee admissions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B. – Institutional Review Board Approval

In future correspondence, please refer to HS11-298, June 2, 2011

Donna S. Renaud
C/o Dr. Smith
Sociology
WKU

Donna S. Renaud:

Your research project, An Analysis of Burmese and Iraqi Resettlement Location and Integration in a Mid-sized City: Implications for Educational and Other Community Leaders, was reviewed by the IRB and it has been determined that risks to subjects are: (1) minimized and reasonable; and that (2) research procedures are consistent with a sound research design and do not expose the subjects to unnecessary risk. Reviewers determined that: (1) benefits to subjects are considered along with the importance of the topic and that outcomes are reasonable; (2) selection of subjects is equitable; and (3) the purposes of the research and the research setting are amenable to subjects’ welfare and producing desired outcomes, that indications of coercion or prejudice are absent, and that participation is clearly voluntary.

1. In addition, the IRB found that you need to orient participants as follows: (1) signed informed consent is required; (2) Provision is made for collecting, using and storing data in a manner that protects the safety and privacy of the subjects and the confidentiality of the data. (3) Appropriate safeguards are included to protect the rights and welfare of the subjects.

This project is therefore approved at the Expedited Review Level until January 1, 2012.

2. Please note that the institution is not responsible for any actions regarding this protocol before approval. If you expand the project at a later date to use other instruments please re-apply. Copies of your request for human subjects review, your application, and this approval, are maintained in the Office of Sponsored Programs at the above address. Please report any changes to this approved protocol to this office. A Continuing Review protocol will be sent to you in the future to determine the status of the project. Also, please use the stamped approval forms to assure participants of compliance with The Office of Human Research Protections regulations.

Sincerely,

Paul J. Mooney, M.S.T.M.
Compliance Manager
Office of Research
Western Kentucky University

cc: HS file number Renaud HS11-298
Appendix C.-Interviewee Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

PROJECT TITLE: AN ANALYSIS OF BURMESE AND IRAQI RESETTLEMENT LOCATION AND INTEGRATION IN A MIDSIZED CITY: IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL AND OTHER COMMUNITY LEADERS

Investigator: Donna S. Renaud, Doctoral Candidate, Dept. of Educational Leadership, Western Kentucky University, 270 745-5880.

You are being asked to participate in a project conducted through Western Kentucky University. The University requires that you give your signed agreement to participate in this project.

The investigator will explain to you in detail the purpose of the project, the procedures to be used, and the potential benefits and possible risks of participation. You may ask him/her any questions you have to help you understand the project. A basic explanation of the project is written below. Please read this explanation and discuss with the researcher any questions you may have.

If you then decide to participate in the project, please sign on the last page of this form in the presence of the person who explained the project to you. You should be given a copy of this form to keep.

1. Nature and Purpose of the Project: The problem addressed in this study is the potential impact of initial resettlement location on Burmese and Iraqi refugees and community service providers. Many studies and theories address immigrant assimilation experience, but few separate the distinct refugee population that faces additional challenges in assimilation. Most immigrants make a choice to move that may be based on economic or other reasons. Refugees are different from other immigrants because they are victims of forced resettlement and are fleeing persecution. By the nature of their situations, they do not have a choice of where they will be resettled. Initial location of resettlement may increase or decrease the rate of assimilation of each refugee group.

2. Explanation of Procedures: Participants will first agree to and sign this consent form before beginning the interview. Each interview consists of a predetermined list of questions designed for organizational leaders who have contact with Burmese and Iraqi refugees. These structured interviews should last around 30 minutes and will be recorded for accuracy.

3. Discomfort and Risks: None are anticipated.

4. Benefits: The importance of this proposed study is the potential benefit to community leaders, educators, support providers, and the refugee population by identifying patterns of residential segregation to target areas that impede or improve integration. The data gathered will, in turn, inform educational and community leaders who are engaged in planning programs and services to better serve this population. Organizational leaders can learn from other leaders in the community by comparing common strengths and
challenges confronted while providing services to these two groups.

5. **Confidentiality**: All interviews will be combined into one report with common themes observed, and no participants will be identified by name, school, or organization.

6. **Refusal/Withdrawal**: Refusal to participate in this study will have no effect on any future services you may be entitled to from the University. Anyone who agrees to participate in this study is free to withdraw from the study at any time with no penalty.

You understand also that it is not possible to identify all potential risks in an experimental procedure, and you believe that reasonable safeguards have been taken to minimize both the known and potential but unknown risks.

______________________________  ________________
Signature of Participant  Date

Witness  ________________
Date

THE DATED APPROVAL ON THIS CONSENT FORM INDICATES THAT
THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY
THE WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
Paul Mooney, Human Protections Administrator
TELEPHONE: (270) 745-4652
DONNA S. RENAUD
Department of Communication
FAC 194, Western Kentucky University
1906 College Heights Boulevard, #21029
Bowling Green, KY 42101-1029
Phone: 270-745-5880 Fax: 270-745-1029
e-mail: donna.renaud@wku.edu

Education

Ed.D. Educational Leadership, Western Kentucky University, December 2011
Dissertation “An Analysis of Burmese and Iraqi Resettlement Location
and Assimilation in a Midsized City: Implications for Educational and
Other Community Leaders”

M.A. Communication, Western Kentucky University, 2001

B.A. Communication, Western Kentucky University, 2000.

Teaching Experience

Instructor, Department of Communication, Western Kentucky University, 2002-
present
Teaching Assistant, Department of Communication, Western Kentucky
University, 2001

Research and Grant Experience

Department of Health and Human Services, Ethnic Community Self-Help Grant #HHS
by D. Renaud, Feb, 2010.

Development and implementation of certification program standards for International
Listening Association, Certified Listening Professional (CLP). 2008-2010

Parking Needs Survey and Focus Group consulting project, Western Kentucky University
Department of Transportation. Developed an online survey instrument designed
after leading a session with the WKU transportation committee leadership. Led
focus groups and prepared a narrative report of findings from the focus group to
the committee. 2007

Regional Business Needs Assessment consulting project – DELO, Western Kentucky
University, served as a consultant, including design, piloting, and administration
of a survey instrument for regional companies. Evaluated the data results via
SPSS and presented to DELO planning committee. 2006
Survey design, SPSS evaluation, and 360 analyses, Leadership Strategies Incorporated, 2001-2002

Book research and editing, Dr. Randall Capps, Leadership Strategies Incorporated, 2001-2002

National Science Foundation Grant Application as Research Assistant, Western Kentucky University, 2000

Publication


Presentations


Renaud, D. (2011). *Listening barriers in the classroom*. Faculty and student panel from Western Kentucky University Critical Listening class and Western Missouri University on the topic of listening barriers in the classroom held March, 2011 at the International Listening Association convention in Johnson City, TN.


Renaud, D. (2008). *Listening as a citizen: A roundtable discussion devoted to exploring the meaning and implications of connecting citizenship and listening*. Presented to the International Listening Association Conference, Portland, ME.

**Honors and Awards**

IABC International Student Chapter Award of Excellence (as faculty advisor), San Diego, 2010.

ILA Special Recognition Award, Albuquerque, 2010.

Western Kentucky University, IABC Student President’s Award, Western Kentucky University, 2000.

Leadership Position Paper Student Award, Communication Forum, Western Kentucky University, 2001.

Pelino Graduate Student Award, Western Kentucky University, $1,000, 2001.

Faculty Student Advisor, International Association of Business Communicators student chapter, Western Kentucky University, 2003-2010.

IABC Conference Cleveland, as IABC faculty/student sponsor, traveled with students, 2009

Grant Proposal, PCAL, IABC Student Travel to IABC Heritage Conference, Cleveland, OH, $1,000.00, 2009

IABC Conference Covington, as IABC faculty/student sponsor, traveled with students, 2007

Grant Proposal, PCAL, IABC Student Travel to IABC Heritage Conference, Covington, KY, $2000.00, 2007

Grant Proposal, PIE 06064, IABC and LPE student trip to the National Communication Association meeting in Boston, MA, 2005

NCA Conference Chicago, as IABC faculty/student trip sponsor, traveled with students, 2004

Grant Proposal - Provost’s Initiatives for Excellence Report Request #05-70, Service Learning Project between Critical Listening Class and Girls Inc., $501.00, 2004-2005

NCA Conference Miami as IABC faculty/student sponsor, traveled with students, 2002
Grant Proposal - Project: #04-45, Support for Student Travel to National Convention, $2000.00, 2003

Chair, Department of Communication Alumni dinner and Communication Week activities, Western Kentucky University, 2002-2009

University Service

College of Education Doctoral Regalia committee, 2008-2011

Dean’s Committee member, Potter College of Arts and Letters, Western Kentucky University, 2002-2003

Discipline Related Service

Convention site selection committee, International Listening Association, 2011

Editorial Board, International Journal of Listening, 2010

International Listening Association Albuquerque conference, 2010

International Listening Association Milwaukee conference, March, 2009

International Listening Association Certification committee (CLP) planning workshop, Western Kentucky University, June, 2009

International Listening Association Milwaukee Fall Board meeting, Sept, 2008

International Listening Association certification education committee meeting, July 2008

Editor, Listening Education, 2009-2010

Chair, Listening Certification Committee (CLP), International Listening Association, 2010-2011

Chair, Conference Site Proposal Selection Committee 2014, International Listening Association, current

Member, Conference Site Proposal Selection Committee 2012, International Listening Association, 2010-2011

Board of Executives MAL, International Listening Association, 2008-2010

Reviewer of conference proposals, International Listening Association, 2008-2009
International Listening Association conference, Portland, Maine, 2008

Chair of awards committee, International Listening Association, 2008-2009

International Listening Association conference, Portland, Oregon, 2006

Reviewer of South Carolina Golden Quill contest submissions, International Association of Business Communicators, 2006


Community Service

Primary Grant writer for Burmese Ethnic Community Self-Help Grant Program (ACF-HHS) written for The Bowling Green International Center and submitted on Feb, 2010

Participant, Bowling Green, Kentucky, Strategic Planning Initiative, 2007

Candidate for Bowling Green City Commission, 2006

Board of Executives, Bowling Green International Festival, 2002-2005

Professional Memberships and Offices

International Association of Business Communicators (IABC, 1998-2009)  
Vice President Programs (student) 1999

International Listening Association 2006 -current  
Special Projects, Board of Directors, 2008-2010  
Chair, Certification Committee, 2008-current

National Association of Multicultural Education - current

Kentucky Communication Association current

National Communication Association, current

American Business Women Association, 2010

American Association of University Women, 2010

The Women’s Network, 2007-2009  
Vice President, 2008-2009