

ASSESSING REFUGEES' UNDERSTANDING OF AND RESPONSES TO U.S. RACE RELATIONS: A LITERATURE REVIEW

Henry J. Leir Institute for Migration and Human Security

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For much of its history, the United States has hailed itself as a welcoming land of opportunity, built by immigrants. However, this same nation contends with a lengthy history of racism, a social construct embedded nearly everywhere in American society. It is undeniable that migrants, including refugees, face many challenges in integrating into their new communities, but little research has examined how refugees learn about the particularities of American racism. As the United States undergoes a racial reckoning following George Floyd's murder, faces a rise in anti-Asian violence, and battles with the aftermath of the previous presidential administration's nativist immigration policies, more needs to be done to address this system of injustice so that state agencies, non-profit organizations, the larger public, and others can prepare recent refugee arrivals for the unfamiliar society they step into and will make a home.

Race has largely been seen as an arbitrarily constructed Western-concept, which places whiteness at the pinnacle. In the United States the phenomenon of "othering" refugees as threats uses this racial hierarchy in addition to the concept of nativism which gives superiority to natives over non-natives. The combination of these two ideas upholds the belief that white people are inherently native, which has serious consequences for refugees and other immigrants trying to enter the United States. Moreover, the colorblind racism highlighted by existing literature, further complicates the environment new refugees must navigate. Here, racial inequalities are reclassified as "cultural difference," minimizing racism and universalizing the white experience.

A refugee's understanding of racial constructs is highly context-specific, depends on many intersectional identities and experiences, and is an iterative process. Existing literature examining this topic is limited. However, findings may be the most illustrative when divided between the pre-migration, migration, and post-migration stages of the refugee journey.

- **Pre-Migration:** Current research focuses on how refugees encounter racism upon arrival to resettlement countries, but often fail to assess how home country norms contribute to one's eventual understanding of race in subsequent host countries. Often impacted by colonialist legacies, definitions of race vary vastly country to country. In regions such as Africa and Asia, the use of skin whitening creams or media outsourced from abroad

contribute to the significant issue of stratification based on lightness and darkness. Other regions, such as Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan, utilize cultural, religious, and physical characteristics as a means to practice discrimination amongst their populations. There is limited knowledge about how people from common refugee sending countries learn about American racism at this stage.

- **Migration:** One's overall understanding of racism evolves moving through various spaces on the migration journey. A refugee's country-specific racial experience contributes to how they interact with society at large and access various services at each point of transit. Again, minimal research exists about how refugees might learn about American racism, through sources such as media found in camps, during this process.
- **Post-Migration:** Race is most evident to the racialized and refugees find themselves thrust into new racial categories, previously not thought possible once they enter the United States. Housing, schools, language learning, and more all act as formal and informal "spaces of encounter" where rac-

ism shapes how refugees make meaning of themselves and their new society. However, refugee experiences are not monolithic. As the incorrect conflation of Islam and terrorism illustrates, individuals must carry multiple identities and interact with systems of oppression and privilege in a multitude of ways.

Continuing into the resettlement period, refugees respond to and cope with racism differently, contributing to their overall learning. With limited racial literacy for instance, some migrants to the United States may experience internalized racial oppression and develop beliefs supporting racism and the supremacy of the society's dominant group. However, research also shows that the development of collective solidarity through counterpublics can encourage the discussion and analysis of shared integration experiences used to respond to the US racial hierarchy.

Refugees face numerous obstacles as they transition into their new lives in the United States. Understanding how refugees learn about racism will be imperative so that more thoughtful programming and advocacy can be implemented to assist in the resettlement process.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Racial hierarchy is deeply rooted in the United States' history. Over time, the country has morphed from a chief facilitator of the transatlantic slave trade into a contemporary underwriter of structural racism. Whiteness remains at the pinnacle of the US' racial hierarchy, despite the country's long history of receiving migrants. Migrants, including refugees, have historically experienced the effects of this racial hierarchy. While much of the current research examines the ways in which immigrants and refugees experience racism in the US, relatively little research examines refugees' understanding of race prior to and immediately following refugee resettlement and, ultimately, how this understanding shapes refugee integration in the US.

This literature review aims to explore refugees' racialized experiences. This review begins by examining the social construct of race in the United States and the ways in which racism is instrumentalized against refugees. Next, this review examines the ways in which refugees learn about race relations and racism throughout the migration journey (pre-migration, migration, and post-migration). Next, we outline how refugees respond to racism and how such responses shape their experiences as victims, perpetrators, or both. We conclude by highlighting areas of future inquiry.

2.0 RACE AS A SOCIAL CONSTRUCT

The term "race" lacks a widely-accepted definition. Social constructivist theorists confirm that there is "as much genetic variation within racial groups as there is between them,"¹ defying the formerly-held notion that race is embedded in biological differences. Race is a social construct, a subjective tool of discrimination used to ostracize members of an out-group. According to anthropologist Katya Gibel Mevorach, race is "a metonym" and "a human invention whose

criteria for differentiation are neither universal nor fixed but have always been used to manage difference."² Race is commonly regarded as an arbitrary Western-formulated concept. Though humans' physical characteristics have varied since the beginning of time, race as a concept is a very recent formulation. Though the ancient Greeks noted differences between men based on "air, water, and place,"³ racial assumptions were ambiguous. In fact, the word "race" only emerged in Western languages during the 1500s, primarily to denote familial lineage or ethnic group.⁴ As the Enlightenment Movement furthered European philosophy in the 17th century, philosophers aimed to classify the physical differences between humans, thus establishing race in its current context. Eventually, as the idea of "whiteness" permeated beyond Anglo-Saxon lineage, race became a concept used to differentiate "savages" (i.e. Indians and Africans) from the "civil" (Europeans and white-passing ethnic groups). For example, Africans who commonly identified as Ibo, Yoruba, etc., "were rendered 'black' by an ideology of exploitation based on racial logic."⁵ Furthermore, in Thomas Jefferson's *On the Notes of Virginia*, Jefferson hired scientists to classify racial groups into three categories (Caucasoid, Negroid, and Mongoloid), and falsely asserted the biological inferiority of the latter two groups in order to justify slavery and preserve white supremacy.⁶ The classification system designated in 18th century propaganda work continues to define the concept of race in the United States as ethnic lines have blurred to establish broader black, white, and Asian "races."

3.0 A HISTORY OF RACISM TOWARDS REFUGEES IN THE UNITED STATES

Although US immigration law did not allow for distinct refugee status until the Displaced Persons Act of 1948, created to admit Europeans displaced by World War II, many immigrants

1 Robin O. Andreasen, "Race: Biological reality or social construct?" *Philosophy of Science* 67 (2000): S653-S666.

2 Katya Gibel Mevorach, "Race, racism, and academic complicity," *American Ethnologist* (2007): 238-241.

3 Ivan Hannaford, *Race: The history of an idea in the West*, (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1996).

4 *Ibid.*, 8.

5 Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial formation in the United States*, (London: Routledge, 2014).

6 Thomas Jefferson, "Notes on Virginia," *The life and selected writings of Thomas Jefferson* (1944), 280.

fleeing persecution could have been labeled “refugee” under contemporary standards. Since then, US legislation, including the 1980 Refugee Act, has developed a refugee resettlement system, which has enabled more than 3.1 million⁷ refugees to immigrate to the US since 1980.⁸ This literature review highlights the resettled refugees who arrived in the United States after 1980, in addition to those who arrived briefly before the Act’s passage.

3.1 “Othering” Phenomena and Refugees as Threats

Historical anxieties surrounding immigrants have vilified refugees as threats to the United States. Racism and the “othering” of non-native populations frame refugees as threats to the American way of life. Refugees have been portrayed in media and policy as risks to both national security and white Christianity.⁹

Nativism, or the belief in the superiority of natives over non-natives, largely mirrors the framework of racism.¹⁰ In the United States, whiteness is closely linked to a dominant national identity which upholds the belief that white people are inherently native, in contrast to non-native “others.”¹¹ This othering has serious consequences for refugees and other immigrants; Mexican immigrants, for example, have been consistently

dehumanized and portrayed as criminal invaders in the media.¹² Similarly, one study found that some Iranian immigrants, although classified as white on US documents, feel they are perceived differently from the hegemonic white norm as Americans are unfamiliar with the “illegible” labels of Iranian and Persian.¹³ Host communities have likewise depicted Vietnamese refugees as invaders, further separating these immigrants from the dominant white culture.¹⁴ Nativists fear that refugees’ linguistic differences threaten the national American identity. These ideas underpin the belief that government policy positions itself against white people, and that immigrants threaten the availability of resources for “true” Americans through their exploitation of welfare, education, and healthcare systems.¹⁵

After the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the US, racist tropes morphed into anti-Muslim sentiments. Muslim refugees were portrayed as threats to America’s white, Christian identity. Anti-Muslim discourse depicted Islam as oppressive, backward, anti-intellectual, and violent, in contrast to the “civilized whiteness” of the United States. Such Islamophobic stereotypes extended to Muslim refugees.¹⁶ Evangelical churches framed refugees as “Black and Brown Muslim terrorists from the ‘Third World.’”¹⁷ This framing has been used to promote anti-refugee legislation, such as South Carolina’s 2016 bill S-997,

7 US Department of State, “About Refugee Admissions,” Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, <https://www.state.gov/refugee-admissions/about/>.

8 The Refugees Act amended the earlier Immigration and Nationality Act and the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act, and raised the annual ceiling for refugees from 17,400 to 50,000 and required annual consultation between Congress and the President. The Act created a process for reviewing and adjusting the refugee ceiling to meet emergencies. It also changed the definition of “refugee” to a person with a “well-founded fear of persecution,” a standard established by United Nations conventions and protocols. It also funded a new Office of U.S. Coordinator for Refugee Affairs and an Office of Refugee Resettlement and built on already existing public-private partnerships that helped refugees settle and adjust to life in their new country. See National Archives Foundation, “Refugee Act of 1980”, <https://www.archivesfoundation.org/documents/refugee-act-1980/>.

9 Lindsay Perez Hubner, Corina Benavides Lopez, Maria C Malagon, Veronica Velez, and Daniel G Solorzano, “Getting Beyond the ‘Symptom,’ Acknowledging the ‘Disease’: Theorizing Racist Nativism,” *Contemporary Justice Review* 11, no. 1 (2008): 39–51, <https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.tufts.edu/10.1080/10282580701850397>.

10 Ibid.

11 This dichotomy between natives and non-natives in relation to whiteness serves to link racism and nativism, creating a system of racist nativism, which has been defined by Hubner et al. as “the assigning of values to real or imagined differences, in order to justify the superiority of the native, who is to be perceived white, over that of the non-native, who is perceived to be People and Immigrants of Color, and thereby defend the right of whites, or the natives, to dominance.”

12 Leo R. Chavez, *Shadowed Lives: Undocumented Immigrants in American Society*, (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1998); Leo R. Chavez, *Covering Immigration: Popular Images and the Politics of the Nation*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Otto Santa Ana, *Brown Tide Rising: Metaphors of Latinos in Contemporary American Public Discourse*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002).

13 Neda Maghbooleh, “From White to What? MENA and Iranian American Non-White Reflected Race,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 43, no. 4 (2020): 613–631, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2019.1599130>.

14 Perla M. Guerrero, “Yellow Peril in Arkansas: War, Christianity, and the Regional Racialization of Vietnamese Refugees,” *Kalfou* (Santa Barbara, Calif.) 3, no. 2 (2016): 230–252, <https://doi.org/10.15367/kf.v3i2.103>.

15 George J. Sanchez, “Face the Nation: Race, Immigration, and the Rise of Nativism in Late Twentieth Century America,” *The International Migration Review* 31, no. 4 (1997): 1009–https://doi.org/10.1177/019791839703100409.

16 Edward W. Said, *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*. (New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2015); Breanne L. Grace, Rajeev Bais, and Benjamin J Roth, “The Violence of Uncertainty – Undermining Immigrant and Refugee Health,” *The New England Journal of Medicine* 379, no. 10 (2018): 904–905.

17 Breanne Leigh Grace, and Katie Heins, “Redefining Refugee: White Christian Nationalism in State Politics and Beyond,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 44, no. 4 (2021): 555–575, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2020.1767799>.

the supporters for which synonymized Islam with terrorism.¹⁸

Anti-refugee legislation in 2017 and 2018 further framed refugees as: 1) national security threats; 2) welfare system burdens, and 3) a danger to white Christian Americans' well-being.¹⁹ The campaign and administration of former President Donald J. Trump amplified and transmitted similar messages about refugees and race. In 2019, Trump's Executive Order on Enhancing State and Local Involvement in Refugee Resettlement authorized local governments to reject resettlement in their area. The accompanying 2019 document, *President Donald J. Trump's Humanitarian and Responsible Approach On Refugees Protects the Welfare of American Citizens*, reiterated the fears of earlier anti-refugee bills, arguing that refugees drained the American economy via the welfare system.²⁰ Former President Trump displayed nativist rhetoric in his anti-immigration speeches and social media posts, and he notoriously labeled migrants as dangerous criminal invaders and outsiders.²¹ Trump also employed gendered stereotypes around Islam, which framed Muslim men as terrorists and Muslim women as helpless victims of oppression in an inherently tyrannical, violent, and patriarchal religion.²² Trump's Facebook posts about Syrian refugees frequently conflated refugees with national security concerns, even likening the admission of Syrian refugees to importing Nazis during World War II. Christian rhetoric separated the "inferior" and "evil" Islam from a superior and "moral" Christianity. Such discourse depicted Syrian refugees as dangerous sub-humans unworthy of being "saved" by the United States.²³

3.2 New Racism: Colorblindness

Recent research highlights a form of "new racism" or "colorblind racism" in which migrants' differing cultural practices are used to justify their oppression. For example, in Arkansas, members of host communities have called Vietnamese refugees "unassimilable" due to cultural differences such as multigenerational dwelling and differing hygienic practices.²⁴ When cultural differences are described negatively without the explicit mention of race, race becomes disconnected from structural inequalities, thereby universalizing the white experience and excluding cultural "others" through seemingly implicit racial bias.²⁵

Colorblindness enables white Americans to ignore and minimize racism by reclassifying racial inequalities as "cultural differences."²⁶ Former President Trump's rhetoric and the discourse surrounding his presidency created a hybrid of new and old racism, simultaneously applying overt and covert racist language.²⁷ Undisguised "old racist" descriptions of immigrants as invaders coexisted alongside more indirect forms of racism associated with colorblindness.

3.3 Racist Undertones in Differential Treatment Toward Refugees

Refugees encounter racism differently within the US depending on their racial and cultural backgrounds. Several studies report that Americans are inclined to have negative perceptions towards Muslims. However, Rita Nassar argues that the white Americans' attitudes towards Syrian refugees is more closely related to prejudice than actual national and societal

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid.

21 Amy N. Heuman and Alberto González, "Trump's Essentialist Border Rhetoric: Racial Identities and Dangerous Liminalities," *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research* 47, no. 4 (2018): 326–342, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17475759.2018.1473280>

22 In this way, he "appropriates violence against Muslim women by Muslim men to justify the targeting of all Muslims...as security threats and condones their collective punishment." Banu Gökarkınel, "The Body Politics of Trump's 'Muslim Ban,'" *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 13, no. 3 (2017): 469–471, [10.1215/15525864-4179133](https://doi.org/10.1215/15525864-4179133).

23 Sarah Pedigo Kulzer and Ryan Phillips, "Those Who Must Die: Syrian Refugees in the Age of National Security," *Human Rights Review* (Piscataway, N.J.) 21, no. 2 (2020) <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12142-020-00582-1>.

24 Guerrero, "Yellow Peril in Arkansas: War, Christianity, and the Regional Racialization of Vietnamese Refugees."

25 Grace, and Heins, "Redefining Refugee: White Christian Nationalism in State Politics and Beyond."

26 Ibid. Guerrero, "Yellow Peril in Arkansas: War, Christianity, and the Regional Racialization of Vietnamese Refugees."

27 Heuman and González, "Trump's Essentialist Border Rhetoric: Racial Identities and Dangerous Liminalities."

threads.²⁸ Americans' attitudes towards Muslim refugees may affect refugees' resettlement experiences. Further, discrimination towards Muslims is deeply related to race, as white Muslim immigrants face less discrimination compared to their non-white counterparts. For example, Bosnian refugees in the US report minimal levels of discrimination²⁹ whereas black Muslims encounter both racially-charged and religious prejudice.

Societal responses to the Afghan and Ukrainian refugee crises in 2021 and 2022 highlight a double standard in the acceptance and treatment of refugees. Two vastly different migration processes exist between these two groups.³⁰ Though Ukrainians and Afghans both fled grave situations, the US' legal response largely favored Ukrainians. Just a month after the Russian invasion, the US expanded its Temporary Protected Status (TPS) designation to Ukrainians, enabling Ukrainians to avoid deportation, obtain work visas, and waive humanitarian parole processing fees. Afghan refugees received the same designation seven months after the Taliban takeover, despite months of grassroots advocacy.³¹ Title 42 further highlighted entry discrepancies along the US-Mexico border. Title 42, a pandemic-era policy which enabled the US to expel migrants along its southern border in the name of public health, eased as an influx of Ukrainians appeared there. These refugees were allowed to enter the US with relatively little pushback, compared to Afghans and migrants from the Northern Triangle region who had been waiting for extended periods of time. "Generosity fatigue" may partially explain this differential treatment; the longstanding crisis in Afghanistan has led to short-lived and unsustainable support, whereas the newer Ukrainian crisis highlights a peaked interest in refugee resettlement.³²

4.0 HOW REFUGEES LEARN ABOUT RACE

Racial constructs are context-specific and dependent upon refugees' region of origin, socio-economic status, appearance, and one's own racialized experiences. As such, an individual's understanding of race is an iterative process that, dependent on lived experiences, changes over time. Refugees' racial constructs may change throughout their migration journeys, which ultimately impacts their understanding of race within countries of resettlement. The subsequent sections of this review will be divided into three stages of the migration journey (pre-migration, migration, and post-migration), to examine how refugees come to understand race within the United States.

4.1 Pre-Migration

Few studies have explored the ways in which pre-existing home country racial norms replicate within host societies; most current research explores how refugees encounter racism *upon* arrival. The status of race in the pre-migration context is especially important to assess, as home country norms may contribute to refugees' eventual understandings of and encounters with race within host countries. However, because concepts of race vary greatly between home and host societies, such home country racial norms are often difficult to contextualize.

Due to colonization, "Western discourse of race [was] mapped onto local social categorizations,"³³ thus resulting in more ambiguous definitions of race. In Rwanda, Belgian colonizers developed the Hutu and Tutsi "races" to maintain colonial order; though both Hutus and Tutsis shared the same culture and language, race was arbitrarily applied to denote contrived physical features like height, weight, and face

28 Rita Nassar, "Threat, Prejudice, and White Americans' Attitudes toward Immigration and Syrian Refugee Resettlement." *Journal of Race, Ethnicity, and Politics* 5, no. 1 (2020): 196-220.

29 John RB Palmer, "Patterns of settlement following forced migration: The case of Bosnians in the United States." (2018) https://repositori.upf.edu/bitstream/handle/10230/34262/GRITIM_WP_35_2018.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

30 As these crises are very recent, peer reviewed academic literature on this subject is non-existent or just emerging. Reputable news articles are used here to illustrate a point and further academic study is needed to investigate this phenomenon.

31 Abigail Hauslohner, "Biden welcomes Ukrainian refugees, neglects Afghans, critics say," *The Washington Post*, April 28, 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2022/04/28/biden-refugees-ukraine-afghanistan/>.

32 Natalia Banulescu-Bogdan, *From Fear to Solidarity: The Difficulty in Shifting Public Narratives about Refugees* (Migration Policy Institute, May 2022), https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/refugee-narratives-report-2022_final.pdf.

33 Harry Garuba, "Race in Africa: Four Epigraphs and a Commentary," *PMLA* 123, no. 5 (2008), 1643. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25501967>.

shape. Such racial constructions varied greatly from other Western countries, where skin color is commonly used to denote race. Although the United States now officially classifies race along ethnic lines (i.e. persons with origins in Europe, Africa, Asia, the Americas, or the Pacific Islands), the idea of race varies greatly between societies. The concept of racial oppression is thus difficult to define, as “ethnic tensions” in one society may be classified as “racial tensions” by another. This definitional opacity makes refugees’ pre-departure racial attitudes difficult to assess, as some refugees may see their oppressors as a different race (when, under American standards, their oppressors may actually belong to a different ethnic group) or may have vastly differing definitions of race prior to their arrival in America.

The sections below highlight the contrasting viewpoints of race within narrower region-specific contexts. These regions are most pertinent to the current study.

4.1.1 Africa

General Pan-African Views of Racism in the US

A current research deficit inhibits a more complex formulation of Africans’ pre-existing views on American racism. African views towards the United States are complex; many Africans idolize the United States as a quintessential land of opportunity without social integration issues. A 2018 survey indicated that 69% of Nigerians and 71% of Kenyans believe the United States “respects the personal freedoms of its people,” and lacks real socio-ethnic divides.³⁴ Contrarily, upon their stateside arrivals, many Africans “hold negative stereotypes of black Americans” due to negative American news media surrounding American black communities. Some Africans associate black Americans with “guns,

drugs and violence”³⁵ and view black Americans as threatening. While Africans may briefly learn of certain racial movements (i.e. Black Lives Matter) pre-arrival in the US, most negative media images of black Americans are conjured in the United States, after arrival. In addition to the media, one article noted that some pre-arrival learning about racism may occur by way of those who studied in the US taking encounters with racism back home.³⁶

Colorist Norms within African Societies

Skin whitening creams are common throughout regional African beauty markets. Despite the negative side effects of these creams, many African women bleach their skin “to be White, ‘beautiful’, more European-looking and to satisfy and impress peers.”³⁷ While racism towards darker-skinned individuals is not common within African countries, lighter skin is viewed as more attractive and desirable.

Given the general attitude towards skin color and racism described above, a few specific countries that send a significant number of refugees to the United States (Cameroon, Rwanda and Somalia) are highlighted below to better illustrate how some communities understand racial and ethnic divides in their countries of origin.

Cameroon and Rwanda

Cameroonian and Rwandan discriminatory racial stigmas are typically tied to “class warfare” and arbitrary ethnic and linguistic divides,³⁸ as opposed to race itself. In Rwanda, discrimination was constructed by the Belgian colonial regime and was ethnicity-based (i.e. Hutu vs. Tutsi), culminating in the eventual Tutsi genocide. Likewise, within Cameroon, ethnic Anglophones (i.e. the Bamilekes) often hail from poorer, less educated areas.³⁹ As a result, Bamilekes face higher lev-

34 Christopher Williams, “How South African students see the United States: Reflections on teaching US foreign policy at the University of the Witwatersrand,” *Africa Portal*, 7 October 2020, <https://www.africaportal.org/features/how-south-african-students-see-united-states-reflections-teaching-us-foreign-policy-university-witwatersrand/>.

35 Ohimai Amaize, “The ‘Social Distance’ Between Africans and African-Americans,” 14 July 2020, <https://daily.jstor.org/the-social-distance-between-africa-and-african-americans/>.

36 Respondents were mostly from Nigeria, Trinidad, Tobago, Senegal, and Haiti. Nnenna Lindsay, “Racial Identity Development of Somali Refugees In The Midwest,” (PhD diss., University of North Dakota, 2018), 55-81, <https://commons.und.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3272&context=theses>

37 Charlie Brinkhurst-Cuff, “What it means for Rwanda to have Banned Skin Bleaching Creams,” *Dazed Beauty*, <https://www.dazeddigital.com/beauty/body/article/42912/1/rwanda-banned-skin-bleaching>.

38 Francis B. Nyamnjoh, “Racism, Ethnicity and the Media in Africa: Reflections Inspired by Studies of Xenophobia in Cameroon and South Africa,” *Africa Spectrum* 45, no. 1, (2010): 57-93. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/000203971004500103>

39 Anita Pant, “Fanning the Flames: Hate Speech and Elections in Cameroon,” *Rights for Peace*, 17 November 2020, <https://www.rightsforpeace.org/post/fanning-the-flames-hate-speech-and-elections-in-cameroon>.

els of persecution than their “elite” Francophone counterparts. Such divides have fueled Cameroon’s current Anglophone Crisis, where “cam-nogos”⁴⁰ (i.e. Anglophones) are labeled as “ethnic strangers.” While Rwanda eliminated all forms of ethnic classification post-genocide, certain labels still permeate through present-day Rwandan society, where discourse centers around genocide “victims vs. perpetrators.”⁴¹ This victim-perpetrator divide projects similar pre-genocide ethnic stigmas. However, Congolese and Burundian refugees are viewed as sustaining a “socially cohesive, inclusive and peaceful environment” within Rwanda,⁴² and refugees within the Rwandan state are typically viewed as positive contributors to Rwandan society.

Somalia

Most prejudice in Somalia, amongst Somali people, is linked to caste and clan. A University of North Dakota (UND) doctoral dissertation reflected that Somalis reported living in a largely homogenous context, where clan affiliation is far more important in identity formation than race.⁴³ However, a 2014 *Journal of Somali Studies* publication on prejudice in Somalia challenges this homogeneous view. The study, conducted in Mogadishu, revealed that hate discourse differs between Somalis, where some people question others’ clan origins or discriminate based on perceived African or Arab-affiliated physical characteristics.⁴⁴

Somali Refugees’ Views of the United States

Although discrimination exists in Somalia, studies on Somali refugees in America indicate that Somalis’ racism education mostly happens post-arrival. For example, the UND dissertation explored racial identity development of Somali refugees and demonstrated that a growing

knowledge on American history and direct experiences with racism are most significant in shaping Somali refugees’ racial perceptions within the US. Few migrants learn about American racism pre-arrival.⁴⁵ Another study about the racial formations of Somali immigrants in North America, for instance, only noted one reflection about pre-arrival learning, where a respondent stated, “*I didn’t know anything about the nature of racism in North America, and I never heard the word racism at all. I heard that your color makes some difference in some parts of the world or that some singers sing about racial issues in America, but I never appreciated what it meant.*”⁴⁶

4.1.2 Asia and Southeast Asia

Colorist Norms within Asian societies

Skin color is often seen as a type of symbolic capital. Some research argues that colorism is on the rise throughout Asia, pointing to the demand for skin-lightening products as well as advertising that conflates light skin color with positive characteristics. The attribution of this trend is often to globalized markets, particularly exports from the US, which spread products and images tainted with colorism. Nevertheless, it is challenging to determine whether global imports influence or simply reflect Asian people’s attitudes toward skin color. In the last few years, assaults against Africans and people of color have steadily increased throughout South Asia. Racial discrimination along with deep-seated prejudices play a major role in mob violence, often entangled with stereotypical accusations of kidnapping, drug peddling, pimping and even cannibalism. Most physical attacks and racist insults arise from a widespread negative portrayal of Africa and Africans that predominate local popular and populist narratives.⁴⁷

40 Nyamnjoh, “Racism, Ethnicity and the Media in Africa.”

41 Jennifer J. Marson, “The Rwandan Diaspora in Canada and the United States: Reconciliation and Justice,” *Western Michigan University*, June 2016, <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2619&context=dissertations>.

42 Veronika Fajth et al., “How do refugees affect social life in host communities? The case of Congolese refugees in Rwanda,” *Comparative Migration Studies*, vol. 7, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-019-0139-1>.

43 Lindsay, “Racial Identity Development of Somali Refugees In The Midwest.”

44 Mohamed Eno & Abdi Kuscow, “Racial and Caste Prejudice in Somalia,” *Journal of Somali Studies* 1, no. 2 (2014): 91-118, <https://dr.lib.iastate.edu/handle/20.500.12876/89273>

45 Lindsay, “Racial Identity Development of Somali Refugees In The Midwest.”

46 Abdi M. Kuscow, “Migration and Racial Formations Among Somali Immigrants in North America,” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 32 no. 3, (2006): 533-551, DOI: 10.1080/13691830600555079

47 Mahmood Kooria, “Introduction: Narrating Africa in South Asia,” *South Asian history and culture* 11, no. 4, (2020): 351-362, DOI: 10.1080/19472498.2020.1827592

Media influence

Skin color stratification based on lightness or darkness of complexion is a significant issue. This stratification influences mate selection and media-related careers within South Asia, where lighter skin is correlated with beauty and success. Contemporary South Asian media reinforces skin color preference and transnational mass media promotes a global homogenized body image. Caucasian models in many Asian advertisements of beauty products support the desire of non-white women to be of lighter skin, at the same time sending the message that this is possible through the use of different products. Access to European and American programs, music and movies from all around the world promotes recognition for beauty ideals that are Caucasian but have a global currency.⁴⁸

Colonialism and racism

While European colonialism may partially account for colorism in Southeast and South Asia,⁴⁹ cultural norms favoring light skin tones appear to pre-date European contact. Colonial influences are often said to be strong in the Philippines and India, despite their relatively low levels of skin color bias. Thailand was never a colony but has the highest skin color bias for both females and males. Research indicates that, rather than colonialism, globalization and economic development play a critical role in the formation of skin color beauty ideals. Aside from Japan, countries with higher per capita GDPs tend to display stronger colorist bias. All four of the so-called “Asian tigers” (Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore) were near the top of the list.⁵⁰

4.1.3 Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria

While there are studies on how people in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria view the US and its foreign policies, research is severely limited on how racism is learned before migration to the US. Instead, some literature focuses on racism within these countries.

Discrimination in Iraq

In Iraq, Romas have been the target of discrimination and have been marginalized for decades. Romas were not granted Iraqi citizenship until 1979, possibly because of the “traditional Arab racial thinking relating to ‘bloodlines.’⁵¹ Anti-gypsy discourse is prominent and labels Romas as kidnappers, prostitutes, gamblers and alcoholics.⁵² Moreover, Iraq was once a slave-trading hub; much like the US, while Afro-Iraqis experience acute racism, some aspects of their culture (i.e. music and dance) are accepted into Iraqi society.⁵³ Black Iraqis are still called slaves and suffer from various societal issues such as poverty and lack of education.⁵⁴ Afro-Iraqis have limited access to high-profile jobs and usually work as laborers or domestic workers.⁵⁵ Iraqi discrimination towards Kurds is also prevalent, though such discrimination is ethnically, as opposed to racially, charged.⁵⁶

Ethnic Tensions in Afghanistan and Syria

Afghanistan is known for its ethnic diversity and is home to over 15 major ethnic groups.⁵⁷ The Hazaras, one of these distinct cultural groups, are Asiatic in appearance and have been the victims of discrimination for decades. “Target killing, kidnapping, hostage, orchestrated attacks and road blockage by the Taliban and other rad-

48 Nazia Hussein, “Colour of Life Achievements: Historical and Media Influence of Identity Formation Based on Skin Colour in South Asia,” *Journal of intercultural studies* 31, no. 4 (2010): 403–424.

49 Karim Bettache, “A Call to Action: The Need for a Cultural Psychological Approach to Discrimination on the Basis of Skin Color in Asia,” *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 15, no. 4, SAGE Publications, 2020.

50 Jacqueline M. Chen and Andrew Francis-Tan, “Setting the Tone: An Investigation of Skin Color Bias in Asia,” *Race and Social Problems* 14, no. 2, (Springer US, 2021): 150–69, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12552-021-09329-0>.

51 Ronen Zeidel, “Gypsies and Society in Iraq: Between Marginality, Folklore and Romanticism,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 50, no. 1 (2014): 74–85.

52 Ibid.

53 “LIVING IN THE SHADOWS THE ENDURING MARGINALIZATION OF BLACK IRAQIS”, International Republican Institute (2020), <https://www.iri.org/wp-content/uploads/legacy/iri.org/basra-series2-report-4-bleed.pdf>

54 Ibid.

55 “World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples - Iraq : Black Iraqis,” Minority Rights Group International (2017), <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5a53600d7.html>

56 “WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE IRAQI KURDS?” Human Rights Watch (1991), <https://www.hrw.org/reports/1991/iraq/>

57 CIA, “Afghanistan,” *The World Factbook*, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/afghanistan/>.

ical groups”⁵⁸ have prevented the Hazaras from engaging with much of Afghan society. Cultural, religious, and physical differences have led to anti-Hazara discrimination,⁵⁹ as Asiatic appearances are deemed less desirable within Afghan society.

Like Iraq, Kurdish Syrians are the target of discrimination despite comprising 15-17% of Syria’s population.⁶⁰ In 1962, the government stripped Kurds of their citizenship in 1962 and Kurds are not permitted to own land, businesses, etc.⁶¹ This discrimination in Syria stems from “Syria’s official adoption of Arab nationalism and backlash against non-Arab ethnic minorities, which included the Kurds.”⁶²

4.2 Migration

In addition to home country ethnic/racial perceptions, refugees’ interpretations of race and discrimination throughout the migration process may impact their overall understanding of racism. Refugees face multiple traumas and blocks as they move through countries of transit, as racial discrimination fluctuates throughout the journey. Refugees’ country-specific racial experiences contribute to how refugees access various services, protections, and resources. Following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, for example, many black and brown residents did not receive the same levels of protection as ethnic Ukrainians. Black students were not allowed to cross borders and were pushed off of trains during transit.⁶³ Such systemic racism must be addressed in order for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other refugee organizations to assist those in need.

Transit states often fail to address certain vulnerabilities within migrant and refugee

populations. In Lebanon, the state and UNHCR failed to provide full protections to Sudanese refugees. Racial discrimination rendered many Sudanese “invisible” and led to divides among Lebanon’s Sudanese population.⁶⁴ As black and minority migrants continue their journeys, these migrants will carry racially-charged traumas to their locations of final resettlement such as the United States.

Though much literature examines experiences of racism by refugees during the migration journey, minimal research examines how refugees learn about American racism or race more generally during this process. A study examining gang violence amongst Karen refugee youth in Utica, New York briefly examined this question. Having fled isolated, mountainous villages in the conflict regions of Myanmar, Karen refugees who escaped to Thailand reported not knowing that persons with different skin colors existed until living in the Thai refugee camps. According to a participant in the study, movies and television shows served as many refugees’ first introductions to black persons. Due to the often violent media depictions of black Americans, many Karen grew fearful of their black neighbors upon arriving stateside.

4.3 Post-migration/Resettlement

Race is most evident to the racialized.³³ Race is a subjective, context-specific social construct. Thus, upon arrival to the US, refugees often find themselves thrust into racial categories that did not once exist for them. In the aforementioned study examining gang violence amongst resettled Karen refugees in Utica, New York, participants reported disorientation and confusion when, immediately upon arrival, Karen were thrust into the US racial category of Asian.

58 Mohammad Hussain Hasrat, “OVER A CENTURY OF PERSECUTION: MASSIVE HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATION AGAINST HAZARAS IN AFGHANISTAN,” (2019), <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Racism/SR/Call/mhhasrat.pdf>

59 Fadlillah Satya Handayani, “Racial Discrimination towards the Hazaras as reflected in Khaled Hosseini’s *The Kite Runner*,” *LANTERN (Journal on English Language, Culture and Literature)* 5, no. 4 (2016).

60 Loqman Radpey, “Kurdish regional self-rule administration in Syria: a new model of statehood and its status in international law compared to the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in Iraq,” *Japanese Journal of Political Science* 17, no. 3 (2016): 468-488.

61 “PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED REPORTS ON THE KURDISH MINORITY,” Human Rights Watch (1996), <https://www.hrw.org/legacy/summaries/s-syria9610.html>

62 Radwan Ziadeh, “The Kurds in Syria: Fueling separatist movements in the region?” *United States Institute of Peace* 31, 2009.

63 Rashawn Ray, “The Russian invasion of Ukraine shows racism has no boundaries,” *The Brookings Institution*, March 3, 2022, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/how-we-rise/2022/03/03/the-russian-invasion-of-ukraine-shows-racism-has-no-boundaries/>

64 Maja Janmyr, “Sudanese Refugees and the ‘Syrian Refugee Response’ in Lebanon: Racialized Hierarchies, Processes of Invisibilization, and Resistance,” *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 41, no. 1 (2021): 131-156, <https://doi.org/10.1093/rsq/hdab021>

Participants reported being discriminated against and categorized as Chinese or Vietnamese, two groups from which Karens had previously described as racially separate. Additionally, participants encountered opposing gang violence solely on the basis of being Asian. African refugees report similar sentiments regarding their resettlement. Fredrick Shema, a Rwandan refugee, notes that in Rwanda, migration to the United States is viewed as “an honor”;⁶⁵ the United States’ reputation as a safe haven distorts Rwandan refugees’ pre-departure perceptions of the country. However, upon arrival, many Rwandans realize that American racism is worse than they imagined. Older Rwandans, in particular, have a more difficult integration experience, which makes these refugees feel “less human” in the United States.⁶⁶

4.3.1 The Racial Impacts of Refugee Integration

The formal and informal ways in which refugees seek to integrate into their new communities impact how refugees understand and experience racism. The term “integration” is widely contested, as most definitions highlight the importance of mutuality, i.e. that both refugees and host communities try to accommodate and incorporate the practices and experience of each group.⁶⁷ Healthcare, employment, housing, education, and social connections are the most common domains of integration, or “spaces of encounter,” a term used by Helga Leitner in a study by the same name.⁶⁸ Additionally, language proficiency is an integral component of social and cultural connection, and refugees’ inability to speak English proficiently is often linked to discrimination and/or racism.⁶⁹

Housing acts as an important space for refugees to develop their racial understanding of the US, as apartments and neighborhoods are where refugees interact with people from within and outside of their communities. In a 2021 study conducted by Teresa Toguchi Swartz et al. on Hmong refugees, state-imposed residential segregation contributes to some negative and racist views. In this context, Hmong’s spatial proximity to African Americans in resettlement neighborhoods led to racially coded fears and anti-black sentiments. Such fears may have formed in refugee camps even before arrival in the US, further illustrating the complexity of racial identity formation and response.⁷⁰

For young refugees, schools are spaces of both integration and discrimination, often concurrently. Margaret Sinclair reported in 2001 that education was critical to the emotional healing and psychosocial fulfillment of refugees who had experienced traumatic displacement.⁷¹ Schools also enable language-learning; many studies indicate that refugee children become conversational more quickly than their parents, and then become crucial translators of social experiences, both literally and figuratively.⁷² Because refugee students generally assimilate more quickly than their parents and play a mediating role between their native and new cultures, refugee youth may blame their parents for the pressures and challenges associated with such a role.⁷³

Refugees’ experiences in the United States are not monolithic, as a refugee’s religion, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, etc. can compound to facilitate increased discrimination.⁷⁴ Individuals carry multiple identities that interact with systems of both oppression and privilege in

65 “A refugee leader shares his thoughts on the Black Lives Matter movement,” *The International Rescue Committee*, 18 February 2021, <https://www.rescue.org/article/refugee-leader-shares-his-thoughts-black-lives-matter-movement>.

66 Ibid.

67 Alastair Ager and Alison Strang, “Understanding Integration: A Conceptual Framework,” *Journal of Refugee Studies* 21, no. 2 (2008): 166–191. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fen016>.

68 Helga Leitner, “Spaces of Encounters: Immigration, Race, Class, and the Politics of Belonging in Small-Town America,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 102, no. 4 (2012): 828–846. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00045608.2011.601204>.

69 Jyotika Saksena and Shannon McMorro, “At the Intersection of Gender and Discrimination: Experiences of Congolese Refugee Women with Social and Cultural Integration in the United States,” *Women’s Studies International Forum* 88 (2021): 102517–. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2021.102517>

70 Swartz, Hartmann & Vue, “Race, Ethnicity, and the Incorporation Experiences of Hmong American Young Adults.”

71 Margaret Sinclair, “Education in emergencies,” in *Learning for a future: Refugee education in developing countries*, (Geneva, Switzerland: United Nations Publications, 2001), 1–84.

72 M. Zhou, “Straddling different worlds: The acculturation of Vietnamese refugee children,” in *Ethnicities: Children of immigrants in America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 187–227.

73 El-Radi, “The Resettlement Experiences of Southern Sudanese Women Refugees in Minnesota.”

74 Magan, Ifrah Mahamud. “On being black, Muslim, and a refugee: Stories of Somalis in Chicago.” *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies* 18, no. 2 (2020): 172–188.

complex ways, and may result in further marginalization and exclusion. In the past decade, this intersectionality framework has gained traction within the resettlement community. For example, at the intersection of gender and race, refugee men of color are portrayed in US media and politics as hypermasculine, and physically and sexually violent.⁷⁵ Islam has been racialized in the United States, where Muslims of color are portrayed as violent and oppressive “terrorists,” in opposition to Christianity and whiteness. Consequently, microaggressions and overt forms of discrimination have negatively impacted Muslim refugees in the United States. For example, Muslim children are four times more likely to report being bullied in school than other children and researchers “studying the racialization of religion have found negative associations between Islamophobia and mental and physical health.”⁷⁶ Visual representations of Islam, such as a hijab or headscarf, “may trigger hostility and discrimination from the dominant society.”⁷⁷ In this sense, the intersectionality of gender and religion may result in increased persecution towards Muslim women. The intersection of one’s social identities impacts racial understanding, which is important to note when examining how refugees learn about and come to understand race in the United States.

5.0 HOW REFUGEES NAVIGATE AND RESPOND TO RACISM

Just as refugees experience racism in varied ways, so too do they respond and cope differently to racism. Refugees’ experiences impact their conceptions of self and the collective solidarity and political action of their communities. Some individuals’ responses to racism occur

over a much longer term, even intergenerationally. Scholars, as summarized by the Racial Equity Tools team, point to the impact of internalized racial oppression, defined as an oppressed groups’ development of beliefs or actions that support racism and reinforce the supremacy of the dominant group.⁷⁸ Internalized racial oppression can be adopted in a few different ways, the first of which arises from a lack of racial literacy. As highlighted within one study, children of immigrants who lack racial literacy are unable to navigate the racism they experience, resulting in situations where children use avoidant coping mechanisms such as refusing to challenge discrimination.⁷⁹ A second method to internalized racial oppression, whitewashing, is a maladaptive response to racism which reinforces the idea that to be “American” is to be “white.” Moreover, this whitewashing phenomenon underscores how refugees learn about intra- and inter-group racism due to an initial “lack of ethnic knowledge” in the United States.⁸⁰

However, when refugees engage in collective solidarity, negative individual responses to racism may be abandoned. Nancy Fraser’s concept of “counterpublics” can be used to understand migrants’ political responses to discrimination and subordination.⁸¹ Counterpublics are defined as “parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counter discourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs.”⁸² Counterpublics suggest that increased migration has resulted in increased urban heterogeneity, resulting in two outcomes: increased hostility by dominant groups, and economies of scale that support subordinated groups’ specialized institutions. Together, both outcomes result in strengthened in-group solidarity, and encourage analysis of

75 Breanne Leigh Grace, and Katie Heins, “Redefining Refugee: White Christian Nationalism in State Politics and Beyond,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 44, no. 4 (2021): 555–575, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2020.1767799>.

76 Rebecca A. Karam, “Becoming American by becoming Muslim: strategic assimilation among second-generation Muslim American parents,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 43, no. 2 (2020): 390–409.

77 Ugurel Kamisli, Merih, “Acculturation experiences of Syrian Muslim refugee women in the United States: Intersectionality of nationality, religion, gender, and refugee status,” *Adult Learning* 32, no. 3 (2021): 103–114.

78 “Fundamentals, core concepts, internalized racism,” Racial Equity Tools, accessed December 20, 2021, <https://www.racialequitytools.org/resources/fundamentals/core-concepts/internalized-racism>

79 Tanya Golash-Boza, Maria D Duenas, and Chia Xiong, “White Supremacy, Patriarchy, and Global Capitalism in Migration Studies,” *The American Behavioral Scientist* (Beverly Hills) 63, no. 13 (2019): 1741–1759, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764219842624>.

80 Jennifer A. Huynh, “Understanding Internalized Racial Oppression and Second-Generation Vietnamese,” *Asian American Journal of Psychology* (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1037/aap0000211>.

81 Walter J. Nicholls and Justus Uitermark, “Migrant Cities: Place, Power, and Voice in the Era of Super Diversity,” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 42, no. 6 (2016): 877–892, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2015.1126088>.

82 Nancy Fraser, “Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy,” *Social Text* 25–26, no. 25/26 (1990): 68, doi: 10.2307/466240.

shared experiences in structural terms.⁸³ Refugee communities' development of a shared discourse about experienced racialization is thus a politically and socially valuable tool used to understand and respond to US racial hierarchy.

Dominant groups can use their influence to delegitimize counterpublics' discourse in the public sphere, further reinforcing dominant discriminatory rhetoric. American exonyms for immigrants are, as illustrated by Andrew Nelson and Kathryn Stam's 2021 study, "political acts that create order and facilitate control... and become permanent through authoritative processes of policy-making."⁸⁴ The Bhutanese and Nepali communities have replicated such phenomena. For these communities, who have complicated histories of displacement, identity formation is highly contextual. For instance, in one Bhutanese-Nepali folk group, the decision to change names from 'Buthanese-Nepali' to just 'Nepali' was enough to cause contention. Whereas 'Bhutanese' represented the refugee marker denoted by the state for grant and legal purposes, 'Nepali' instead came to represent a number of Nepali Christians. Strategic identification with a state-formulated exonym became divisive within the community, thereby challenging the counterpublics' ability to create a shared discourse and access the public sphere.

Jeffrey Guhin found other occurrences of division, such as Muslim immigrant communities reproducing racism in a 2018 study. In the desire for an American ummah, a community of Islamic people, some Muslim immigrants may have inadvertently perpetuated colorblind racism by trying to establish a strong collective religious rather than ethnic or racial identity.⁸⁵ This act allowed for selective Muslim immigrants to act on "racial hinges," a process through which "racial liminality opens the door to whiteness as necessary."⁸⁶ Although the concept of the American *ummah* aims to create an inclusive space for all Muslims, the colorblindness described allows those with an ambiguous relationship to whiteness to learn how to manipulate their privileges.

6.0 CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This literature review has outlined the racism in the US and the ways in which refugees learn about race before, during, and after their migratory journeys. Refugees tend to be marginalized and discriminated against in the US as "others", and colorblindness, a new type of racism, further exacerbates the situation that the refugees in the US face. The racial contexts in their countries of origin and their experiences in the course of migration and in host communities also affect their understanding of races. However, while research on refugee-based discrimination is abundant, few studies examine the ways in which refugees learn about and develop understandings of racism in the US.

In this regard, two areas of research that deserve more attention are the suggestion that refugees may learn and perpetuate racist attitudes or fears about minority groups *before* being resettled, and the concept of a "racial fate outlook" after having arrived. The dominance of American culture globally, and the coded racial stereotypes that this culture often possesses, are likely to influence refugees before and during their migration journey. Understanding how refugees in the US have learned about American racism can inform interventions, such as pre-arrival programs or antiracist curricula, that may both lessen refugees' racist attitudes and improve understanding of the ways in which the US racial hierarchy is relevant to them.

Finally, this review has noted that the intersectional ways in which refugees experience racism is understudied. Particularly for refugees with compounding identities, like LGBTQI refugees of color and refugee women of color, little is understood about the impacts of the compounding discrimination they experience. Questions remain about the extent to which these communities are victimized, internalize such oppression, and respond to it through counterpublics or other forms of activism inherent within their identity groups. Further population-specific research may help improve resources that

83 Amina Zarrugh, "Racialized Political Shock: Arab American Racial Formation and the Impact of Political Events."

84 Andrew Nelson and Kathryn Stam, "Bhutanese or Nepali? The Politics of Ethnonym Ambiguity," *South Asia* 44, no. 4 (2021): 772–789.

85 Jeffrey Guhin, "Colorblind Islam: The Racial Hinges of Immigrant Muslims in the United States," *Social Inclusion* 6, no. 2 (2018): 87–97

86 Neda Maghbooleh, *The Limits of Whiteness: Iranian Americans and the Everyday Politics of Race*, (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2017).

address the impacts of discrimination on the domains of integration, like access to health-care, housing, and employment.

Therefore, the study following this review will aim to explore the current research deficit and seek to understand how racialized experiences contribute to refugees' racial learning in the US. It can eventually be used for more thoughtful programming, more meaningful stakeholder engagement, and advocacy to address some key challenges pertaining to racism in the resettlement of refugees.

To read the report on RIT's subsequent research, please visit <https://sites.tufts.edu/ihs/rit-us-refugees-race-report/>.

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