Representing Refugee Children: The Role of Non-Governmental Organizations and Their Volunteers as Liaisons of Refugee Interests in Local Schools

Dissertation

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Abstract

Since the establishment of the Refugee Act of 1980, nearly 3 million individuals have relocated to the United States under refugee status, with school-aged children comprising approximately 35-40% of the overall annual influx of new refugees. As newcomers to the United States, refugees are not able to vote and have limited avenues of political representation in policy-making venues. As schools and their governance structures are the vanguard of democracy in the United States, a critical question emerges with respect to refugee children’s educational interests: who advocates for the educational needs of refugee children when refugee parents are precluded from doing so through formal governance structures? This study explored answers to this question by engaging ethnographic methodology to illuminate the ways in which Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and their volunteers who partner with local schools may function as liaisons of refugee interests, representing refugee children’s educational needs to school leaders as they coordinate services for refugee children.
Dedication

Dedicated to Issa and Victor, two immigrants who relocated to the United States as middle school-aged children, and whose personal stories first captured my interest in English Language Learners, educational policy, and the responsibility of a democratic society to provide all children with equal educational opportunities. Also, I dedicate this project to יהוה, who makes a way, where before there was no way.
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Chapter 1:

Representation of Refugee Interests in U.S. Schools & Why it Matters

Under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, U.S. federal policy requires school districts that serve English Language Learner (ELL) and immigrant populations to be held accountable for establishing educational partnerships with the parents of ELL and immigrant children. Most refugee populations are both. Yet, a panorama of assimilation challenges and disjointed inter-institutional service coordination efforts often complicate districts’ efforts to form these partnerships with refugee parents (Ager & Strang, 2008; Bruno, 2011). Despite being required to do so by federal law, schools serving immigrant populations have found it difficult to build bridges between schools and refugee populations as school leaders struggle to involve refugee parents and primary caregivers as partners in the education of refugee children (Ryan, Dooley, & Benson, 2008; McBrien, 2005; Miller, 2009; Rah, Choi, & Nguyen, 2009). Yet, since the establishment of the Refugee Act of 1980, nearly 3 million individuals have re-located to the United States under refugee status, with school-aged children comprising approximately 35-

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2 8 U.S.C. 1521 § 411
3 See the Department of Health and Human Services Annual Office of Refugee Resettlement Report for Fiscal Year 2008 as reported to Congress in 2011. The 2008
40% of the overall annual influx of new refugees. Moreover, the problem that educational leaders face in identifying and meeting the needs of refugee children in U.S. schools is unlikely to subside. In fact, it is likely to grow significantly.

The United States is the world’s leading recipient of refugees (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2011). Annual influxes of refugees to the United States are likely to remain stable or increase for the foreseeable future as proliferating and escalating violent conflicts are producing greater numbers of refugees in need of sanctuary worldwide. In fact, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2011) recently reported that, “For the fifth consecutive year the number of forcibly displaced people worldwide exceeded 42 million, a result of persistent and new conflicts in different parts of the world. By the end of 2011, the figure stood at 42.5 million” (p. 2). It thus follows that as increasing numbers of forcibly displaced people pursue sanctuary, educational leaders in the United States can anticipate ongoing influxes of refugee children into their schools. If school leaders are already struggling to forge the required educational partnerships with current refugee parents, how will they do so as new waves of refugee immigration inundate their schools? My dissertation aspires to answer this question by shedding light on the individuals and organizations that may assist local schools as they seek to build partnerships with refugee parents. Specifically, I explore the ways in which volunteers and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) who partner

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4 See Bridging Refugee Youth and Children’s Services, http://www.brycs.org/aboutRefugees/refugee101.cfm

4 The most current official government report available. It can be found at: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/data/arc.htm
with local schools may function as liaisons of refugee interests, representing their needs to educational leaders and coordinating services for refugee children. In order to do so, it first becomes necessary to answer two important questions: (1) what is a refugee, and (2) why does the representation of refugee interests in education matter?

**Refugee Status and Its Implications for Democratic Society**

The United Nations (UN) defines refugees as individuals who are displaced or relocated because of a substantiated threat of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or social group membership, and the United States has historically aligned its asylum policies with this international definition (Farbenblum, 2011; Marouf, 2008; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2010). By providing international guidelines for determining refugee status, the UN sought to protect the world’s most vulnerable peoples from duress, tyranny, violence and threats to bodily integrity. The UN also sought to establish a basic ceiling of rights that should be extended to refugees in receiving countries. Such rights include access to the receiving country’s legal system, access to a primary education, employment, and proper documentation for initial residence (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2010). While the UN’s minimum threshold of refugee rights includes a strong recommendation for an expedited naturalization process, there is no immediate guarantee of citizenship in the receiving country (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2010). Such is the case in the United States, where the naturalization process typically takes 7-10 years (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2011). The political rights of refugees are thus limited, especially during the transitional years of naturalization that
occur between entry into the receiving country as a refugee and the culmination of the naturalization process that ends in full-fledged citizenship.

Because the United States is a representative democracy, the limited rights of refugees produce a political problem. In delineating threshold criteria for defining democracy, Dahl (1998) argues that inclusion in collective decision-making is an essential indicator of actual democracy. To illustrate this point, he asks:

If you are deprived of an equal voice in the government of a state, the chances are quite high that your interests will not be given the same attention as the interests of those who do have a voice. If you have no voice, who will speak up for you? Who will defend your interests if you cannot? And not just your interests as an individual. If you happen to be a member of an entire group excluded from participation, how will the fundamental interests of that group be protected? (p. 76-77)

In response to his own questions, Dahl concludes, “The answer is clear. The fundamental interests of adults who are denied opportunities to participate in governing will not be adequately protected and advanced by those who govern. The historical evidence on this point is overwhelming” (p. 77). Thus, for large-scale democracies, the issue of representation is perhaps the political predicament.

It is noteworthy that in order to increase equality vis-à-vis representation, Dahl (1998) proposes “inclusive citizenship” (p. 85) for large-scale democracies. He defines inclusive citizenship as equal rights, stating that:
No adult permanently residing in the country and subject to its laws can be denied the rights that are available to others...These include the rights to vote in the election of officials in free and fair elections; to run for elective office; to free expression; to form and participate in independent political organizations; to have access to independent sources of information; and rights to other liberties and opportunities that may be necessary to the effective operation of the political institutions of large-scale democracy. (p. 86)

Refugee status directly jeopardizes Dahl’s standard of inclusive citizenship. During the transition from refugee to citizen, the naturalizing refugee is situated within a political purgatory somewhere between undocumented resident alien and citizen. Like an undocumented resident alien, the refugee is denied full political rights despite having relocated and resettled in the United States. Unlike the undocumented resident alien, the refugee has official government authorization to relocate and resettle. Like the citizen, the refugee permanently resides within a represented U.S. municipality, works, pays taxes to the nation-state, and establishes roots in a community. Unlike the U.S. citizen, in most municipalities the refugee cannot directly participate in political processes through voting or by running for an elected office (Mandal, 2003). Thus, under Dahl’s framework for democracy, the political predicament presented by refugee status is this: permanent residence but denial of rights afforded to others.

In particular, the withholding of voting rights for refugees is of interest (Earnest, 2007; Harper-Ho, 2000; Hayduk, 2003; Hayduk, 2004; Song, 2009). Voting is the mechanism by which individuals in a representative democracy achieve a variety of
political aims. Individuals use votes to directly express their preferences, to elect representatives to represent their interests, to hold representatives accountable for presenting their interests and to expunge them if they don’t, to strategize for the elimination of undesirable candidates, and to block or support policy changes (Boix, 1999; Cox, 1997). Without the right to vote, refugees are denied access to formal representation and formal mechanisms by which they can have their individual and collective preferences matriculate into the mix of policy alternatives during political decision-making. This lack of representation makes refugees in the United States vulnerable to government without consent (Dahl, 1967), majority tyranny (Tocqueville, 2004) and coercive power (Dugan, 2003).

As government institutions, schools may illuminate these vulnerabilities in unique ways. Interactions with school leaders are among the first encounters that refugee families have with governmental agencies in U.S. society. According to federal regulations, enrolling school-aged children in the local public school is required within the first 30 days of relocation to the United States\textsuperscript{5}. Across the United States, refugee populations have been resettled in many major metropolitan areas, creating rapid and unexpected influxes of refugee children into urban schools. Such schools must adapt swiftly to the administrative and fiscal burdens associated with such influxes (Hanna, 2013; Singer & Wilson, 2007). Singer and Wilson also note that in the last five years,

\textsuperscript{5} Others include applying for a social security number, receiving a medical evaluation, and enrolling in English language classes. Within 60 days of relocation, refugees must secure gainful employment. See the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants: http://www.refugees.org/about-us/faqs.html
refugee relocation and resettlement efforts have begun utilizing suburban and rural communities as host sites, expanding the phenomenon of public schools’ that service refugee families. In this sense, schools in many geographic contexts become the face of U.S. democracy for refugee families that are likely to bring school-aged children with them.

Moreover, schools are a socializing branch of government. For current citizens and future citizens alike, one central function of schools in a democratic society is civic preparation and acculturation to the values of democratic society (Callan, 2004; Gutmann, 1987; Labaree, 1997; McBrien, 2005; Tyack, 2003). The juxtaposition of U.S. schools as the vanguard of democratic government and centers of civic preparation with the limited political rights of refugees is a fruitful one that yields a critical question: What may be the immediate and long-term unintended consequences of failing to include the representation of refugee interests in educational policy making?

**Possible Unintended Consequences of Failing to Represent Refugee Interests**

Failure to have refugee interests enter into the policy stream through sufficient representation produces social myopia with direct connections to the education system. Such nearsightedness fails to consider the long-term societal effects of refugee communities that fail to flourish and refugee children that do not matriculate from the school system with an education that prepares them to live productive, satisfying lives in the United States. Gutmann (1987) describes the role of education as it pertains to democratic society, stating that, “The broad distribution of educational authority among
citizens, parents, and professional educators supports the core value of democracy: conscious social reproduction in its most inclusive form” (p. 42). Gutmann’s assertion that democracy espouses conscious social reproduction requires democratic societies such as the United States to mindfully consider how failure to include the interests of disenfranchised populations may affect future iterations of U.S. society. In what follows, I identify at least three possible unintended ways in which failure to represent refugee interests poses threats to: (1) normative aspirations of deliberative democracy, (2) refugee populations’ long-term capacity to thrive within U.S. society, and (3) academic achievement of refugee children.

**Threats to deliberative democracy.** Over the last twenty years, scholars of democratic theory have interrogated previously held indicators of legitimacy to redefine what activities and outcomes provide evidence of democratic government, resulting in the theoretical advancement now known as deliberative, or participatory, democracy (Bohman, 1998; Dryzek, 2000; Elster, 1998; Freeman, 2000; Gutmann & Thompson, 2002). As the result of this advancement in democratic theory, legitimacy came to be seen in terms of the ability or opportunity to participate in effective deliberation on the part of those subject to collective decisions…deliberation as a social process is distinguished from other forms of communication in that deliberators are amenable to changing their judgments, preferences, and views during the course of their interactions, which involve persuasion rather than coercion, manipulation, or deception. The essence of democracy itself is now widely taken to be deliberation, as opposed to voting,
interest aggregation, constitutional rights, or even self-government. The
deliberative turn represents a renewed concern with the authenticity of
democracy: the degree to which democratic control is substantive, rather than
symbolic. (Dryzek, 2000, p. 1)

Consequently, achieving the authenticity of deliberative democracy requires democratic
governments to invite the perspectives, concerns, and interests of all individuals residing
in its jurisdiction, regardless of voting status, into policy-making processes in order to
sustain democratic health (Bohman, 1996; Chambers, 2003; Shapiro, Stokes, Wood, &
Kirshner, 2009). This creates a tension between the democratic ideals of legitimacy and
authenticity, which should result in the extension of rights of political participation to all
individuals residing within a democratic municipality, regardless of citizenship status,
and a reduction in public policies that restrict the rights of political participation of
certain individuals based on citizenship status (Benhabib, 2002; Bohman, 1996; Earnest,
2003; Fishkin, 1995; Hayduk, 2003; Song, 2009).

In an attempt to increase legitimacy and authenticity of democratic governance,
many deliberative democratic theorists make a case for the extension of rights of political
participation to non-citizens (Earnest, 2003; Earnest, 2007; Harper-Ho, 2000; Hayduk,
2003; Hayduk, 2004; Song, 2009; Tiao, 1993). This is emphatically true of non-citizens
such as refugees and documented immigrants, who have been legally welcomed into the
country for permanent naturalization (Bauböck, 2005; Harper-Ho, 2000), and many
would argue also true for undocumented immigrants who permanently reside in the
United States (Bauböck, 2005; Harper-Ho, 2000). Some would even argue that under the
auspices of deliberative democracy, rights of political participation should be extended to all individuals subject to laws and governance of a democratic system, regardless of permanence of residence or illegal residence (Benhabib, 2005; Heisler, 2005; Ong, 2005; Smith, 2005).

Gutmann (1987) clarifies the reason for such arguments in favor of extending rights of political participation to non-citizens: the intentional placement of decision-making power in the hands of the governed to encourage the pursuit of democratic ideals. Interestingly, she directly connects this tenet with educational governance and, like Dahl (1998), inclusion. The tenets of deliberative democracy encourage individuals living within that democracy to create iterations of society that increasingly come closer to achieving the primary aspirations of authenticity, legitimacy, and equality among all individuals affected by decision-making processes for which outcomes of those processes will be binding policies (Christiano, 2008). Arguably, the group decision-making processes of local communities affect refugee populations that reside in the United States. Refugees are bound by their communities’ policies, despite the reality that in most municipalities they are formally excluded from activities of political participation such as voting to select representatives to advocate for their interests in policy-making venues. Thus, the first reason citizens in democratic societies should care about including refugees in policy-making processes is that not doing so violates the normative aspirations of democratic equality and results in governance without consent.

Another reason for expanding avenues of formal and legitimized representation to refugees is that refugees may be future citizens. For most refugees, the culmination of the
naturalization process is citizenship, which endows the naturalized individual full constitutional protections and rights. In this sense, failure to induct, acculturate, and integrate refugee populations into the activities of democratic participation in schools and elsewhere during the transitional phase of naturalization may affect refugees’ participation in such activities once citizenship status is conferred. Ager and Strang (2008) gesture toward this need for induction, acculturation, and integration in their framework for refugee integration, which highlights understanding rights and citizenship in the receiving country among its top priorities. Moreover, refugee exclusion produces a conundrum for elected representatives at all levels of government, from school board leaders, mayors, and governors to Congressional representatives who may find themselves suddenly needing to answer for previous decisions that failed to consider the interests of the refugee constituency, or suddenly needing to include refugee concerns in their decision-making analysis once naturalizing refugees attain citizenship status.

Finally, the quality of democratic processes will be affected by excluding refugee populations. Quality deliberation depends on polyvocality (Dryzek, 2009; Urbinati, 2000), or the inclusion of multiple voices. Without reliable inclusion in educational policy-making deliberations, refugee interests and refugee voices are likely to be marginalized and under represented in schools, the vanguard of government at the local level. Likewise, effective solutions to complex community problems that involve refugee populations are unlikely to find optimal resolution without including the refugee populations themselves in efforts to identify, choose, and implement policy alternatives.
**Threats to long-term capacity to thrive.** Progress toward integrated, self-sustaining communities is a crucial component of refugee livelihood development projects upon relocation and resettlement in receiving countries (Buscher, 2011; Feinstein International Center, 2012; Jacobsen, 2006). As the socializing and educating branch of government, schools play a direct role in equipping refugee populations with the knowledge and skills necessary for developing self-sustaining communities. However, challenges of resettlement and relocation can complicate schools’ abilities to equip and serve refugee populations. While it is important to acknowledge the diversity of refugee populations in the United States, research on relocation and resettlement has identified common challenges that refugee populations encounter upon arrival to receiving countries. For many refugees these challenges include language barriers (Ager & Strang, 2008; Haines, 1988; Hou & Beiser, 2006; Tshabangu-Soko & Caron, 2011), cultural adjustment (Ager & Strang, 2008; Flaitz, 2006; McBrien, 2005; Strang & Ager, 2010), urbanization (Carter & Osborne, 2009; Jacobsen, 2006; Middleton, Richard, Howell, Peebles & Powell, 2011; Teixeira & Wei, 2009), the struggle for self-sufficiency (Brick, Cushing-Savvi, Elshafie, Krill, Scanlon & Stone, 2010; Connor, 2010; Kerwin, 2011), and encountering the emotional and psychological effects of trauma (Batista-Pinto Wiese, 2010; Boothby, 1992; Bracken, Giller & Summerfield, 1997; Cook-Cottone, 2004; Corvo & Peterson, 2005). As the branch of government most tied to local communities, schools are tasked with leveraging educational programming to meet the needs of refugee populations.

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6 In fiscal year 2009, individuals from 65 different countries were admitted the United States under refugee status (Kerwin, 2011, p. 6).
communities as they seek to overcome these challenges. Therefore, failure to include refugee voices in educational decision-making processes at the school level may prevent schools from receiving valuable information and feedback capable of making educational programming more responsive to refugee children’s needs.

**School & parent partnerships and academic achievement.** Lastly, a better understanding of parental partnerships with local schools provides insight into how failure to represent refugee interests may produce future iterations of democratic society that are inconsistent with the inclusive values of democratic society. The well-documented positive correlation between parental involvement in schools and gains in student achievement is a third reason that failure to represent the interests of refugee populations may detrimentally affect not only the naturalizing refugee community, but also future iterations of U.S. society. In their meta-analysis of empirical research on parental involvement in schools, Beard and Bradley (2001) wholeheartedly conclude that, “there is substantial evidence to show that parental involvement is a key contributory factor in raising achievement” (p. 27). This is especially the case in urban contexts, where refugee families are most likely to be relocated and parental involvement has been shown to have a significant positive relationship to gains in student achievement (Jeynes, 2005; Jeynes, 2007; López, Scribner, & Mahitivanichcha, 2001). Moreover, Xu, Bektoshi, and Tran (2010) found that collaboration between parents and schools is an essential element of relocated students’ successful adaptation to U.S. culture. They state:

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7 See Beard & Bradley, 2001; Brough, 1997; Cotton & Wikeland, 1989; Desimone, 1999; Eccles & Harold, 1993; Epstein, 1995; Epstein, Simon, & Salinas, 1997; McNeal, 1999; Thorkildsen & Stein, 1998
This study finds that family and school supports tend to enhance adolescents’ psychological well-being, and that the degree and quality of interaction between family and school supports are critical to adolescents’ psychological well-being. This study further indicates that without a supportive family, a positive school environment is likely to affect adolescents’ psychological well-being negatively (p. 105)

Thus, failure to represent the interests of refugee populations in educational contexts may negatively affect the degree to which their children are able to successfully adapt to the U.S. education system. In turn, refugee children’s educational achievement may be threatened.

Critical Questions Concerning the Representation and the Education of Refugee Children

These issues yield several critical questions with respect to political representation and the education of refugee children. Such questions include: (1) Without the ability to vote for formal representation in most local and all state and federal elections, what avenues of representation exist for refugee families to have their interests and preferences included in the decision-making processes and policies of the local school? (2) Who advocates for the educational needs of refugee children when refugee parents are precluded from doing so because of restrictions on direct political participation, language barriers, or other obstacles to inclusion? (3) How do advocates of refugee interests
identify and represent educational needs of refugee children to institutions and individuals with the power to influence educational policy-making?

My dissertation attempts to shed light on these questions. Chapter 2 traces the evolution of refugee status and refugee rights in international and domestic policy, constructs a theoretical framework of democratic representation to undergird my study, and then transposes this framework onto educational contexts in order to illuminate avenues of representation that may be available to refugee populations through U.S. schools. Doing so provides a better understanding of how and why refugee status is conferred as well as the rights promised to refugees upon relocation and resettlement to the United States. It also unearths several forms of representation that may be available to disenfranchised refugee populations through U.S. schools, illuminating the potential representational capacities of local school boards, non-governmental organizations, and educational leaders. Chapter 3 details the research methods of the study, which concentrates on one non-governmental organization (NGO) and its educational partnership with a local public school district that serves refugee populations in a major Midwestern city. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 apply the theories of democratic representation developed in Chapter 2 in order to analyze interviews, documents, field notes, and site observations to report key findings of the study. Chapter 7 completes my dissertation, discussing implications and recommendations for democratic theory, educational and public policy, and educational practice. It also identifies remaining gaps in theory, policy, and practice to fuel the work of future studies on refugee populations and representation in U.S. schools.
Chapter 2: Representation of Refugee Interests in Educational Contexts: Refugee Rights, Theoretical Framework, and Avenues of Representation in Local Schools

Several critical questions emerge from the juxtaposition of schools and the limited political rights of refugees—especially because schools are the vanguard of democracy and centers of civic preparation. Such questions include: (1) Why does representation of refugee interests in schools matter? What are the potential negative outcomes of failing to represent refugee interests in schools? (2) Without the ability to vote for formal representation in most local and all state and federal elections, what avenues of representation exist for refugee families to include their interests and preferences in the decision-making processes and policies of the local school? (3) Who advocates for the educational needs of refugee children when refugee parents are unable to do so through direct political participation? (4) How do advocates of refugee interests identify and represent the educational needs of refugee children?

In order to shed light on these questions, this chapter examines the intersection of refugee status and political representation in the United States within the context of education. As a foundation for this task, I trace policy perspectives on refugee status from their inception to the present. Then, using principal-agent theory as the foundation of democratic representation, I build the theoretical framework for my study by identifying
forms of representation that may be available to refugees in U.S. schools. Doing so allows me to apply various theories of democratic representation to educational contexts in order to explore the ways in which school boards, educational leaders, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) may function as representative agents for the refugee populations they serve.

**Policy Perspectives: Refugee Status & Refugee Rights**

Across industrialized nations, contemporary refugee policies have their origins in the United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, officially adopted in 1951 (Farbenblum, 2011; Kerwin, 2011). This convention established an international standard for determining refugee status, defining a refugee as a person who:

As a result of events occurring before 1 January 1951 and owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it. (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2010, p. 16)

This pioneer definition cited international interests as an impetus for delineating refugee rights and pathways to relocation and citizenship in receiving countries. These interests included a universal desideratum for policies that would: (1) facilitate a coordinated and efficient resettlement for vulnerable populations, (2) preserve and protect families, and
(3) guarantee social services to refugee families upon relocation to a receiving country. In addition to providing a uniform definition for determining refugee status, the 1951 Convention accomplished three subsequent policy aims. First, it formally established a threshold of specific rights that ratifying countries agreed to extend to refugees. Second, it formally established a threshold of protections that ratifying countries agreed to uphold for refugees. Third, it urged, though did not formally establish, additional policy recommendations for receiving countries. Rights conferred upon resettling refugees include: freedom of religious practice, the right to retain movable and immovable personal property (to the degree that retrieving such property was possible), the right to retain artistic and intellectual property, the right of association, the right of free access to the courts, the right to wage earning employment, the right to enter the liberal professions, the right to government dispensed rations in countries with rationing systems, the right to secure housing, the right to free access to public primary education, the right to enroll in the social security system of the receiving country, the freedom of movement within the receiving country, the right to identification papers and travel documents issued by the receiving country, the right to transfer assets to the country of resettlement, and the right to due process of the law (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2010, p. 19-32). Additionally, protections pledged to refugees include:

\[8\] Countries that participated in the 1951 ratification included Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Denmark, Egypt, France, Germany, Federal Republic of Greece, Holy See, Iraq, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland (also represented Liechtenstein), Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Venezuela, and Yugoslavia (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2010, p. 8)
protection against discrimination based on race, religion, or country of origin, coverage under fair labor laws, protection from excessive fiscal charges based on refugee status, protection from penalties associated with illegal entry into a receiving country provided that the individual had experienced an immediate threat to her or his life or freedom, and protection against expulsion from the receiving country except when necessary to safeguard national security, public order, or public safety should a refugee threaten those state responsibilities (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2010, p. 19-32). It is noteworthy that free access to the public education system of the receiving country is a civil right required by the Convention. In the United States, this illuminates the exact political conundrum at hand: like citizens, refugees are given the right to attend public schools for free, but unlike citizens they are excluded from formal rights of political participation that would enable them to pursue the representation of their interests in schools’ decision-making venues.

The 1951 Convention also issued several policy recommendations to its member countries. First, the Convention recommended that individual countries recognize their freedom to expand upon these threshold rights and protections for refugees in their own codifications of policies governing refugee resettlement. Article 5 of the 1951 Convention states, “Nothing in this Convention shall be deemed to impair any rights and benefits granted by a Contracting State to refugees apart from this Convention” (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2010, p. 19). Second, the Convention issued a recommendation for an accelerated naturalization process in the country of resettlement, stating, “The Contracting States shall as far as possible facilitate the assimilation and
naturalization of refugees. They shall in particular make every effort to expedite naturalization proceedings and to reduce as far as possible the charges and costs of such proceedings” (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2010, p. 32). It is noteworthy that while the convention establishes many rights and protections, the right to citizenship in the receiving country is not explicitly among them. Neither is the right to vote or run for an elected office. Yet, under the liberties of the Convention’s guidelines, both could be if the receiving country chose to do so. Once again, school governance illuminates a political paradox with respect to democratic practice: like citizens, refugees are given the right to attend public schools for free, but unlike citizens they cannot vote for school board members, mayors, or governors to represent their interests in school decision-making.

**Refugee Policy in the United States**

In 1968, the United States officially adopted the United Nations Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, thus pledging its agreement to abide by the configurations of refugee status and threshold rights delineated by the UN when it expanded refugee status to all peoples worldwide in 1967 (Kerwin, 2011). However, when the United States implemented the UN protocol, it added several nuances not included by the UN. Namely, it restricted refugee status to peoples who had been affected by communism or who were from specific areas of the Middle East (Kennedy, 1981). This restriction on refugee status remained in effect until Congress passed the Refugee Act of 1980\(^9\), which removed this

restriction and allowed refugee status to be conferred upon individuals from any country of origin. Since its initial codification, the Refugee Act of 1980 has been repeatedly reauthorized and remains in effect today.

In summary, this conspectus of international and domestic refugee policy has shed light on two key political problems as they pertain to refugee populations being served by U.S. schools: (1) the exclusion of refugee voice in school decision-making, and (2) the representation of refugee interests in school decision-making. Since refugee populations are not given the right to vote or run for office, it becomes necessary to explore how the second problem, representation, may be addressed by individuals and entities who function as advocates of refugee interests in schools. I now turn to the task of outlining a theoretical framework of political representation in order to explore avenues of representation that may be available to refugee populations through local schools- despite their disenfranchised status.

**Theoretical Framework: Principals, Agents, and Political Representation**

**Principal-Agent Theory**

Principal-agent theory supplies the foundation for derivative theories of political representation in democratic societies (Shapiro, Stokes, Wood, & Kirshner, 2009; Urbinati & Warren, 2008). The primary preoccupation of principal-agent theory is the existence of representative relationships and the ways in which they operate. As such, “principals” in principal-agent theory are represented groups or individuals who typically
select, elect, or hire “agents” whose obligation is to act in the interests of those that chose them (Boyd, 1994; Rees, 1985a; Rees, 1985b; Ross, 1973). Ross explains,

The relationship of agency is one of the oldest and commonest codified modes of social interaction. We will say that an agency relationship has arisen between two (or more) parties when one, designated as the agent, acts for, on behalf of, or as representative for the other, designated the principal, in a particular domain of decision problems. (p. 134)

In United States political contexts, the principal-agent relationship and its associated problems arise most visibly, though not exclusively, between geographically defined municipalities and their elected officials. But what about portions of the U.S. population, like refugee students and their families, that remain disenfranchised?

The principal-agent relationship provides the basis by which enfranchised voters invest decision-making authority in and retain accountability-exercising power over educational policy-making officials, such as school board members, mayors, and governors. By extension, it also provides the lever by which such voters influence policy outcomes. With respect to disenfranchised refugee populations, the principal-agent underpinnings of representation generate acute questions about consent, school governance, voice and deliberation. Such questions include: Do agents of political representation exist in schools for refugee populations that are unable to vote for elected officials to represent their interests? If so, who or what are these agents? How do they function? Where and how do refugee populations access these agents in order to have
their interests represented in schools? Do the representational activities of these agents align well with previous theory, or are theoretical advancements necessary in order to better understand how representation of refugee populations occurs in educational contexts?

As the first tier of government that refugee populations are likely to encounter directly and regularly, schools and the individuals, organizations, and institutions that influence their policy-making processes are a crucial juncture of representational capacity for refugee interests. Although refugee populations are unable to directly elect school board members, mayors, and governors to represent their interests in schools, I seek to show how principal-agent relationships are uniquely established between refugee populations and the educational agents that serve them in public schools. This is so not only because of the direct and ongoing contact that schools have with refugee populations, but also because principal-agent accountability is established between school leaders and refugee families in three important ways: the tax-based funding of public schools, accountability mandates and case law precedents in educational policy, and the governmental nature of educational professions.

Taxes, public goods, and the establishment of a principal-agent relationship.

Public education is a public good, and public schools are funded through local, state, and federal taxes (Labaree, 1997). Because they pay taxes on their income and on residential property they may purchase upon relocation, refugees are fiscal stakeholders in education, financially joining the pool of enfranchised citizens who help to fund public education even though they cannot directly vote for representation. Jacobsen (2009)
clarifies how a principal-agent relationship is established between taxpayers and public schools, stating, “Public education is itself a democratically run institution. Public schools are open to all, are paid for by public funds, and are accountable to the public” (p. 307). As previously discussed, the key question here revolves around community membership vis-à-vis who, exactly, is included in the public. On one hand, it would seem that refugees are included alongside citizens in the public because they pay taxes and contribute to the funding of public education. On the other hand, they are excluded from sharing in formal policy-making power in the public. In this sense, refugees may be in the same political situation that has historically produced revolt: taxation without representation.

Regardless, I assert that because refugees pay taxes and therefore contribute to funding public goods, a principal-agent relationship has been established, especially between refugee populations and public agencies, such as schools, that are funded through their tax contributions. While refugee populations may remain officially disenfranchised until they attain citizenship status, the taxes they pay to help fund public goods should guarantee that refugee preferences and perspectives matriculate into the educational policy stream through adequate representation— even if refugee populations do not share in the privilege of citizenship voting rights.

**Educational policy and the establishment of a principal-agent relationship.**

Educational policy in the form of case law and federal statute likewise establish a principal-agent relationship between disenfranchised refugee populations and educational agents in local schools. The Supreme Court determined in *Plyler v. Doe* (1982) that states
could not withhold or restrict access to k-12 public education based on citizenship status. Local districts are therefore obligated to serve to all school-aged children who reside within their territorial jurisdiction (Olivas, 2012). Thus, even if principal-agent accountability were not already established by the taxes that refugee families pay to the government to fund public goods such as education, the Plyler decision would still make schools responsible for identifying and responding to the needs and interests of the refugee populations they serve.

Similarly, in the era of educational accountability, refugee populations have a policy lever with which to garner representation from educational agents. Under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, educational agents are held accountable for the academic success of all minority sub-populations, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and immigrant populations. While the punitive nature of NCLB’s accountability mandates have been heavily criticized (Ravitch, 2011), it is necessary to acknowledge that by establishing a threshold of accountability for minority populations and tying achievement gains to federal funding, NCLB established a principal-agent relationship between educational agents in local schools and refugee populations. It did so by creating an unavoidable incentive for local educational agents to respond to the needs of all populations within their district, regardless of citizenship status. In raising this point, I do not seek to equate the power of voting rights and direct political representation with the threat of punishments under punitive federal educational policy. The power to exercise

agent accountability through voting is very different than the ability to leverage it through sanction. However, the incentives created by NCLB, while debatably flawed, do require educational agents to respond to the needs of the refugee populations under their jurisdiction.

Employment & service in schools and the establishment of a principal-agent relationship. Finally, the nature of employment and service in education establishes a principal-agent relationship between refugee populations and educational actors. In the era of educational accountability, administrators and teacher leaders are government employees whose job descriptions and evaluation protocols are increasingly codified in federal and state level policy (Biesta, 2004; Gonzalez & Firestone, 2013; Hess, 2005). Additionally, in most municipalities, school board members are elected or appointed to form local assemblies charged with implementing federal and state educational policies for the benefit of the local community (Allen & Plank, 2005; Berkman & Plutzer, 2005; Danzberger, 1994; Hess, 2005). In this way, such educational agents are vanguards of government with initial, immediate, and ongoing direct contact with and service to refugee populations. Therefore, local government agents, administrators, teachers, and school board members should represent the needs and interests of the refugee populations they serve.

Having thus argued that principal-agent relationships are established between educational agents and the refugee populations they serve, despite refugee populations’ disenfranchised status, I now proceed to explore forms of representation that may be available to disenfranchised refugee populations through educational agents in schools.
and educational environments. This exploration reveals seven forms of representation that may manifest to disenfranchised refugee populations through educational agents. These include delegation, guardianship, descriptive representation (Pitkin, 1967), symbolic representation (Pitkin, 1967), latent representation (Theiss-Morse, 2002), surrogate representation (Mansbridge, 2003), and nondemocratic representation (Rehfeld, 2006; Rehfeld, 2009).

Representation

Pitkin’s (1967) seminal work on the concept of representation provides a foundational analysis of the origin and evolution of representation political thought. Pitkin discusses two historical configurations of representation as they occur through principal-agent relationships: (1) representation that occurs when principals confer decision-making authority to their agents, (2) representation that occurs when principals choose to hold their agents accountable for adhering to their interests. Pitkin responds to these configurations of representation by pinpointing their foundational flaw. She states,

Where one group defines a representative as someone who has been elected (authorized), the other defines him as someone who will be subject to election (held to account). Where the one sees representation as initiated in a certain way, the other sees representation as terminated in a certain way. Neither can tell us anything about what goes on during representation, how a representative ought to act or what he is expected to do, how to tell whether he has represented well or badly. (p. 58)
After identifying this deficiency, Pitkin (1967) offers a new approach to conceptualizing representation, one that aims to capture the representative activities of agents, indicating that

… we are now interested in the nature of the activity itself, what goes on during representing, the substance or content of acting for others, as distinct from its external or formal trappings. And only such a view can account for certain ordinary ways of speaking about representation where activity for others is involved, but activity without the formal arrangements of authorization or accountability. (p. 114-115)

Pitkin’s shift opens up three important channels in the development of theories of representation. First, it invites an exploration of the nature of agents’ activities with respect to their principals. Second, it invites an exploration of how actions and activities of political representation may occur outside of formal governance structures and legitimized principal-agent relationships. Third, it invites an exploration of how principal-agent relationships and activities of political representation occur when they are embedded within specific contexts. In other words, in order to better understand representation, we must find a way of “doing justice to the various more detailed applications of representation in various contexts…by identifying its angle of vision, or by identifying the context for which it is correct and exploring the assumptions and implications imposed by that context” (p. 10-11).
Since Pitkin (1967), scholars of representation have been exploring precisely that: how representation, principals, and agents may operate outside of formalized political structures and embedded in specific contexts. This has lead to several strands of theories of representation that seek to describe ways the principal-agent relationships may operate outside of the historical theoretical confines of authorization and accountability. These strands provide the theoretical framework for my study as I explore how representation of disenfranchised populations may occur outside of schools’ formal political structures, such as community partnerships with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and their volunteers. I now turn to the task of describing each of the strands that I will apply as lenses during data analysis and the reporting of findings in Chapters 4, 5, and 6.

**Delegates and delegation.** In principal-agent theory, delegates are representative agents who are chosen and sent by their constituent groups to governing bodies in order to advocate for the stated interests of the constituent group (Pitkin, 1967). Delegates are held accountable by their constituencies, and as a representative, a delegate is not free to make decisions based on her own judgements. She is sent to a decision-making entity in order to relay the interests of her constituency and influence policy changes that align with those interests. In educational settings, delegate relationships may emerge when naturalized members of the refugee population elect school board members to advocate for their interests.

Pitkin (1967) also recognizes that delegation, as a principal-agent scenario, may arise outside of electoral systems. The act of delegation may occur when any individual chooses another individual to function as a representative agent of her interests in a
decision-making venue. As such, delegation may emerge when school leaders, as government agents, are chosen by disenfranchised refugees as delegates to advocate for their interests in various policy-making processes.

**Guardians & Trustees.** In contrast to delegates, Dahl (1991) summarizes guardianship as:

A perennial alternative to democracy…in this view the notion that ordinary people can be counted on to understand and defend their own interests- much less the interest of the larger society- is preposterous. Ordinary people, these critics insist, are clearly not qualified to govern themselves. The assumption by democrats that ordinary people are qualified, they say, ought to be replaced by the opposing proposition that rulership should be entrusted to a minority of persons [called guardians] who are specially qualified to govern by reason of their superior knowledge and virtue. (p. 52)

Dahl notes how some classical and contemporary political thinkers propose guardianship’s desirability as a form of political decision-making. With respect to contemporary political regimes, he notes two ways in which guardianships may manifest. Guardianships may manifest in the form of a ruling class, or aristocracy. In democratic republics, such as the United States, they may also manifest when citizens elect representatives with the desire that they should function as expert guardians. In this scenario, citizens defer decision-making power to the elected official, believing that she is best qualified to make political decisions based on her expertise or special knowledge-
and she becomes a “trustee”- one in whom the constituency places trust and relieves of the obligation to advocate for their interests (Pitkin, 1967, p. 127). Instead, the trustee is free to make political decisions based on what she determines is best according to her expertise. In addition to discussing how guardianship may manifest in contemporary political contexts, Dahl also interrogates these manifestations as “rivals” (p.52) to democracy. Aristocracy, he argues, eliminates representation since all decision-making processes and power rests in the hands of the ruling class. In republics where elected officials function as guardians, he argues that representation is curtailed and there is a substantial threat to government without consent.

In educational settings in the United States, guardianship may manifest in several scenarios. Given the fact that aristocracies may arise outside of electoral processes, guardianship by ruling class may be a salient construct for considering how representation may occur for refugee populations who lack the ability to elect representatives. In this scenario, any group of people who sought to make educational decisions on behalf of refugee populations without directly involving those populations in the decision-making process could be considered a ruling class with the power to govern educational decisions that pertain to the refugee population being served. Theoretically, school leaders and teachers, school boards, and NGO volunteers could all function as aristocracies who govern education for refugee populations- especially if they fail to partner with refugee parents and share decision-making power in ways that shape legitimate outcomes. On a related note, guardianship could also occur in educational settings if naturalized refugee parents with the right to vote chose to elect school board
members with the desire that they would function as trustees because of their specialized knowledge or expertise.

Post-colonial complications of guardianship and trusteeship in studies of representation between Non-Western disenfranchised and disadvantaged populations and advantaged Western agents. Researchers have long pointed out how participants in colonial conquest invented and leveraged harmful political discourses in order to justify their military violence and tyranny against indigenous and Non-Western populations (Said, 1978; Taussiq, 1991; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). Such political discourses painted non-Western and/or indigenous populations as non-humans, sub-human savages, infants, or animals so that colonizers could position themselves as necessary guardians whose superior knowledge and resources could civilize and save those whom they sought to dominate and rule (Said, 1978; Taussiq, 1991; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). In this sense, history is rife with patterns of privileged colonizers who have established aristocratic governance structures over marginalized “others” (Said, 1978; Taussiq, 1991). Moreover, post-colonial studies recognize the ways in which such patterns and discourses persist in contemporary societies (Taussiq, 1991). As such, any study of the representation of Non-Western refugee interests by more privileged Western agents must be alert to the creation, use, or presence of discourses that depict refugees as altogether incapable, inferior, or under-qualified to understand and articulate their own interests. Such discourses may be used to justify guardianship governance structures- a justification that diminishes democratic objectives by eliminating refugee voices from directly expressing their interests as equals in a democratic society.
**Descriptive representation.** One form of representation that may be available to disenfranchised refugee populations in educational contexts is descriptive representation (Pitkin, 1967; Mansbridge, 1999; Meier & Gonzalez Junke, 2003). Descriptive representation occurs when agents “mirror” (Pitkin, p. 61) the composition of the community that they represent in terms of demographics and preferences. Pitkin notes that in this form of representation, “what seems important is less what the legislature does than how it is composed” (p. 61). At first glance, it may seem like faulty logic to propose that descriptive representation is available to refugee populations considering that in most municipalities they remain disenfranchised. Generally, descriptive representation does hinge upon principals’ ability to elect an agent based on shared demographics. In rare instances, refugee populations may be able to directly elect descriptive representatives. For example, there may be members of refugee populations that have effectively naturalized as citizens. These individuals could run and be elected to office, thus serving as descriptive representatives for the larger refugee population, even though disenfranchised refugee populations did not directly elect them. This could occur in school board elections as well as other local, state, and federal elections. Similarly, descriptive representation could occur in educational environments if the district hires teachers and administrators that demographically reflect the refugee population.

**Symbolic representation.** Pitken (1967) also explores the concept of symbolic representation. This form of representation occurs when any individual or community invests trust in an agent based on affective associations or emotional beliefs in that agent’s representation of their interests. By expansion, since symbolic representation does
not require that the representative agent be elected per se, it could apply not only to elected officials, but also to community leaders and educational leaders alike.

**Latent representation.** Theiss-Morse (2002) questions whether individuals genuinely desire greater representation in government and greater principal-agent accountability in actual policy outcomes. Building on a tradition of debate around representative agents as trustees, or those authorized by principals to act, and delegates, or those held accountable by principals for their actions (Pitkin, 1967), Theiss-Morse argues that most individuals are content to be represented under the auspices of “latent representation” (p. 85), or a preferred trust in elite decision-makers over direct political participation. Latent representation bears a strong resemblance to Dahl’s (1998) notion of expert guardians who analyze and attempt to solve complex policy problems. While Dahl (1998) recognizes certain dangers of entrusting expert guardians to provide solutions to policy problems, Theiss-Morse suggests that trusting expert guardians may in fact accurately reflect the real preferences of individuals. According to Theiss-Morse, latent representation sufficiently satisfies democratic aims provided that individuals are “assured that decision-makers are interested in them as people, are potentially open to popular input, and are not benefitting materially from their service and decisions” (p. 85-86). Given the limitations on political participation of refugee populations, the theory of latent representation may be particularly salient to the representation of refugee populations in schools. In educational contexts, latent representation may occur if refugee populations view themselves as under-informed, unknowledgeable, or otherwise ill-equipped to contribute to educational decision-making while viewing educational and
community leaders as experts who are informed, knowledgeable, or otherwise better equipped to make decisions for them.

Post-colonial complications of latent representation in studies between Non-Western disenfranchised and disadvantaged populations and advantaged Western agents. In addition to complicating guardianship and trusteeship, post-colonial criticism also complicates an exploration of latent representation and how it occurs between disadvantaged Non-Western populations and privileged Western agents. There are several dangers to this particular representative paradigm: (1) without directly seeking the input and understanding of the disadvantaged populations whom they serve, privileged agents may assume that the trust necessary for latent representation has been conferred upon them, when in fact it has not been conferred, (2) rationale choice, the human tendency toward self-optimization and self-preservation, encourages privileged agents to uphold pre-existing power structures- consequently, privileged agents may claim that latent trust exists in order to co-opt it as a license for their own power-reproducing agendas, and (3) Western agents may mistake Non-Western behaviors and attitudes as reflecting trust, when in fact they reflect something else.

Surrogate representation. Mansbridge (2003) defines surrogate representation as “representation that occurs when legislators represent constituents outside their own districts” (p. 515), later adding that, “in the United States, surrogate representation- a non-institutional, informal, and chance arrangement- is the preeminent form of non-territorial representation” (p. 523). While the agent is elected by a constituency, the agent chooses to represent the interests of those that either reside outside of the geographic
boundaries of the agent’s municipality, or those from within the municipality who do not have the right to vote and are therefore excluded from the agent’s accountability-exercising constituency.

Mansbridge (2003) highlights the differences between power-infused surrogate relationships, which involve the use of money or favors in exchange for representation outside of one’s district, and advocacy-based surrogate relationships, which occur when an out-of-territory representative takes up the cause of a particular group out of compassion, empathy, or altruism. She notes that in advocacy-based surrogate relationships, representatives “often feel not only a particular sensitivity to issues relating to [surrogate group] experiences but also a particular responsibility for representing the interests and perspectives of these groups” (p. 523). Surrogate representation in schools may occur if an elected school board member in a ward-based district advocates for the interests of families who live outside her ward. Similarly, it may occur if a school board member chooses to advocate for the interests of disenfranchised populations, such as refugee families, that reside either within or outside of the municipality that elected her.

**Nondemocratic representation.** Like Pitkin (1967), Rehfeld (2006; 2009) seeks to draw attention away from conceptualizations of representation that emphasize formalized arrangements of authority and accountability. Also like Pitkin, he seeks to place emphasis instead on the activities of representation itself. Thus, Rehfeld’s (2006) work expands theories of democratic representation to arrive at a general theory of “nondemocratic representation” (p. 1). Rehfeld’s argument suggests that at its core, the essence of political representation does not hinge on legitimacy through democratic
processes such as voting or fair and frequent elections. Rather, he suggests that it hinges on whether or not an individual or group recognizes someone else as a representative of its interests. He states, “The standard, democratic account thus turns out to be merely a special case of the more general phenomenon: political representation arises simply by reference to a relevant audience accepting a person as such. Thus, political representation, per se, is not a particularly democratic phenomenon at all” (Rehfeld, 2006, p. 2).

Rehfeld (2006) submits that this broad theory of representation is particularly useful for exploring instances of political representation in global and international contexts in which agents and entities that function as agents represent the interests of principals in transnational arenas. The activities of nondemocratic representatives would seem to be similar to those of surrogate representatives with one important nuance. While nondemocratic representatives may offer their agency to adopt, advocate, and include refugee interests in policy-making venues, they may or may not be elected officials. They are individuals or entities that simply offer or otherwise use their agency to represent others who have recognized them as representatives. Under the auspices of the theory of nondemocratic representation, the potential for the representation of refugee interests in schools proliferates. Any individual-a teacher, an administrator, a school nurse, a coach, a parent, a school board member, a volunteer, a community leader, a celebrity, a researcher, an elected official, etcetera could potentially function as a representative of refugee interests in schools as long as the refugee community recognized him or her as such.
Principal Agent Theory, Representation, and Educational Contexts

Having explored forms of political representation that may be available to disenfranchised refugee populations in the United States, I now explicitly examine connections between principal-agent theory, representation, and educational contexts. This examination illuminates the representational capacity of educational agents, entities, and partners as influencers of educational politics and policy. Specifically, I consider the representative capacity of school boards as local elected assemblies, of educational leaders as government employees charged with serving the refugee children residing in their districts, and of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) as special interest groups that partner with local schools and function as representatives agents for the refugee populations they serve. These explorations reveal how each educational agent may align with or diverge from the aforementioned forms of political representation based on the types of substantive activities each agent may undertake.

School boards: the representational capacity of local elected or appointed assemblies. As local assemblies of representative agents, school boards are political organizations with the power to implement, create, and enforce policies that pertain to schools and district governance. In most municipalities in the United States, local school boards remain the extension of government over which individuals can most directly participate and influence policy (Abernathy, 2005; Berkman & Plutzer, 2005; Conley, 2003; Iannaccone & Lutz, 1994; Tyack & Cuban, 1995). In fact, as local representative
agencies, “school boards are stewards of the community because they are charged with making decisions on behalf of the community that reflect the values of the community” (Rice, 2014, p. 3). This stewardship involves activities such as planning and prioritizing educational objectives, organizing and building local educational facilities, promoting systemic efficiency, agenda-setting and policy-making (Danzberger, 1992). Thus, the roles and responsibilities of school boards suggest that their policy outcomes should be highly representative of their unique student populations and local community contexts. They should, at least in theory, mirror the needs and values of the local community— including those in which there are schools that serve refugee children.

**Educational leaders: the representational capacity of street-level bureaucrats.** As employees of the state, administrators and teachers are governmental agents charged with the responsibility of leading schools and classrooms in ways that meet the threshold requirements of local, state, and federal policy. However, their agency, and consequently their representational capacity, is nuanced. Unlike school board members, educational leaders are governmental agents who are hired and charged with the mission of educating children. This creates a direct intersection between politics and education. Whether they are aware of it or not, educational leaders are political agents. In fact, they are distinct type of political agent. They are street-level bureaucrats (Lipsky, 1980).

Lipsky’s (1980) notion of street-level bureaucracy is useful in considering how educational leaders are agents with the ability to represent refugee interests within the larger public sphere. He states,
Most citizens encounter government (if they encounter it at all) not through letters to congressman or by attendance at school board meetings but through their teachers and their children’s teachers...Each encounter of this kind represents an instance of policy delivery...Public service workers who interact directly with citizens in the course of their jobs, and who have substantial discretion in the execution of their work are called *street-level bureaucrats*... (p. 3)

Lipsky goes on to describe how street level bureaucrats make and implement policy as the first direct node of interaction between government and individuals. In particular, he notes two features of street-level bureaucrats: (1) the “wide discretion” (p. 13) they have to interpret, apply, honor or overlook policy, and (2) the ways in which their individual actions aggregate into collective “agency behavior” (p. 13) of institutions and organizations.

In order to consider the representational capacity of street-level bureaucrats, it is necessary to consider their actions from a different direction than Lipsky (1980). Lipsky examines how street-level bureaucrats leverage their agency during episodes of policy implementation. In order to explore how street-level bureaucrats use their agency in activities of representation, I reverse the flow of activities to consider how street-level bureaucrats may also function as street-level representatives as they use their agency to ascertain the needs of the communities, families, and children they serve and then advocate for them. Doing so allows us to consider how street-level representatives may influence policy by reporting valuable, privileged information and matriculating community preferences as they represent them in policy-making venues.
Non-governmental organizations: the representational capacity of educational partners. A discussion of avenues of representation for refugee populations within the context of local schools requires an exploration of the representational capacity of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for several key reasons. First, The United Nations Charter directly connected NGOs with refugee relocation and resettlement when it identified them as essential consultants for coordinating international relief efforts (Ferris, 2005; Otto, 1996). Second, of the eleven volunteer organizations recognized by the United States government to assist with relocation and resettlement efforts, all fall under the general umbrella of NGO classification (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2014). Third, as facilitators of refugee relocation and resettlement in the United States, NGOs have a direct nexus to receiving communities and receiving schools. NGOs affect receiving communities and receiving schools by introducing refugee populations into local communities. Thus, schools and educational leaders must adapt, often quickly, to the sometimes rapid and unpredictable influx of refugee children (Flaitz, 2006; Stewart, 2011) as coordinated by NGOs.

Fourth, since the early 2000s, funding for community partnership projects between NGOs and government entities within local communities has increased largely as the result of the executive order to establish a Center for Faith-Based and Community Partnerships under the first George W. Bush administration (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2014). Since the initial executive order, multiple federal
departments, including the Department of Education, have likewise established their own Centers for Faith-Based and Community Partnerships, evolving into centers for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships (FBNP) as they have done so. According to the Federal Department of Education (2013), the mission of its center for FBNP is to “promote student achievement by connecting schools and community-based organizations, both secular and faith-based” by accomplishing three primary goals: (1) engaging community-based organizations, both secular and faith-based, in building a culture of high expectations and support for education, (2) developing and supporting initiatives within the federal government to help maximize the education contributions of community-based organizations, including faith and interfaith organizations, and (3) strengthening partnerships between community-based organizations and schools to help improve the nation's lowest-achieving schools. Thus, NGOs are entities on the periphery of the formal educational environment whose partnerships with local schools may allow them to function as representatives of refugee interests in educational settings.

11 Including: The White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the U.S. Department of Commerce, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the U.S. Department of Education, the Small Business Administration, the U.S. Department of Labor, the U.S. Department of Justice, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Corporation for National and Community Service. For more information, see http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ofbnp/offices/federal

12 See http://www2.ed.gov/about/initis/list/fbci/index.html
In order to better understand the representational capacity of NGOs, it is necessary to understand their various organizational manifestations.

**NGOs: What are they?** NGOs encompass a broad range of organizations that provide services to vulnerable populations at local, national, and international levels. They may emerge as community-based organizations (CBOs), non-profit organizations (NPOs), faith-based organizations (FBOs), grass-roots organizations (GROs), volunteer agencies (VOLAGs), and special interest groups (SIGs). The commonality between CBOs, NPOs, FBOs, GROs, VOLAGs, and SIGs is that they operate in cooperation with yet outside of formal government structures (Otto, 1996). Meanwhile, distinctions between them stem from variation in mission, structure, and scope of influence, although literature on NGOs quickly notes how distinguishing CBOs, NPOs, FBOs, GROs, VOLAGs, and SIGs from one another may be difficult because of significant overlaps between institutional design and mission (Chao & Musso, 2007; Ferris, 2005; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2011; Otto, 1996). Similarly, literature on NGOs reveals two important caveats: (1) the term NGO may reference entities formally recognized by the United Nations and state governments to act as consultants and coordinators of relief efforts, or it may be used more broadly to reference any NPO, FBO GRO, VOLAG or SIG involved in humanitarian work, and (2) the term NGO is a contested term, with some scholars objecting to the notion that NGOs are non-governmental actors, and others objecting to the ways in which the term amalgamates NPOs, FBOs, GROs, VOLAGS and SIGs under an overly broad umbrella (Clark, 1991; Ferris, 2005; Hancock, 1989; Korten, 1990). For the purposes of exploring the representational capacities of NGOs in educational
contexts, I choose to apply a broad definition of NGO in order to consider the substantive activities that NPOs, FBOs, GROs, VOLAGs, and SIGs may undergo as representative agents of refugee interests.

**NGOs: An Understudied Piece of the Representation Puzzle**

Previous work on the representation of minority interests in educational governance has concentrated primarily on two of the aforementioned avenues identified: school boards as local elected and/or appointed assemblies (Allen & Mintrom, 2010; Allen & Plank, 2005; Feuerstein, 2002; Iannaccone & Lutz, 1994; Kini, 2005; Land, 2002; Meier & Gonzalez, 2003; Mintrom, 2009; Rocha, 2007; Shipps, 2003; Townley, 1994) and educational leaders as considered through a lens of democratic school leadership (Begley & Lindy, 2004; Bredeson, 2004; Gerstl-Pepin & Aiken, 2009; Mullen, Gordon, Greenlee, & Anderson, 2002; Mullen & Johnson, 2006; Woods, 2005). Research on the effects of school board institutional designs such as voting laws (Harper-Ho, 2000; Kini, 2005), election timing (Allen & Plank, 2005), and ward systems versus first-past-the-post popular elections (Meier & Gonzalez, 2003) provide some evidence suggesting that each of these variables may not only increase multiple forms of representation for minority populations, such as direct, descriptive, and symbolic, but also may increase the inclusion of minority voices in policy-making venues, produce policy outcomes that address minority interests, shuffle the distribution of educational resources toward minority populations being served by the district, and ultimately leverage gains in minority student achievement. Similarly, research on administrators and teachers suggests that democratic school leadership, a leadership model in which a school leader
is, “committed to serving the common good, giving voice to multiple perspectives in
decision making, engaging in actions that foster democratic cultures, and demonstrating
courage to work against policies and practices that promote social inequities” (Gerstl-
Pepin & Aiken, 2009, p. 409) may increase the representation of minority interests
through its focus on community well-being, intentional invitation of minority voices into
policy-making venues, deliberate effort to model democracy in schools, and its mission to
advocate for educational equity for all children.

Both strands of previous research on the representation of minority interests in
educational governance help to shed light on how formal institutions and official
institutional actors may promote and curtail the likelihood that minority interests, such as
those of refugee populations, will be included in educational decision-making. However,
a dearth of research exists that illuminates how external actors and entities, such as NGOs
and their volunteers, may represent minority interests in ways that affect educational
decision-making processes in local schools. Yet, there are approximately 1.5 million
NGOs that currently operate in the United States\textsuperscript{13}, many of which reside on the
periphery of the formal education system and offer educational services through
partnerships with local schools. We know little about how these 1.5 million organizations
ascertain the needs of the populations they serve, represent those needs to the schools
with whom they partner, and then coordinate services to benefit society. Therefore,
NGOs that partner with local schools to assist them in attaining their educational goals

\textsuperscript{13} See Fact Sheet: Non-Governmental Organizations in the United States at
http://www.humanrights.gov/2012/01/12/fact-sheet-non-governmental-organizations-
ngos-in-the-united-states/
for refugee children need to be studied in order to gain a stronger understanding of their representational capacity.

**NGO Volunteers as Representative Agents: A New Angle on an Existing Strategy**

In an effort to reach out, facilitate channels of communication, and forge partnership pathways between immigrant populations and the schools that serve them, some districts have employed liaisons as a partnership strategy (Bridging Refugee Youth and Children's Services, 2012; Howland, Anderson, Smiley & Abbott, 2006; Rah, Choi, & Nguyen, 2009; Sanders, 2008; Zetlin, Weinberg & Shea, 2010). Liaisons are mediators who need to have an in-depth understanding of both the culture of the school and that of the refugee family and child. They act as brokers to develop good communication channels between the child, school, and parents. (Hamilton & Moore, 2004, p. 89)

Research on the role of school liaisons has primarily focused on formal, official, and institutionalized liaison arrangements in which districts intentionally designate and allocate funding to support an administrative staff position to fulfill the liaison role (Hamilton & Moore, 2004; Howland, Anderson, Smiley, & Abbott, 2006; Rah, Choi, Nguyen, 2009; Sanders, 2008; Zetlin, Weinberg, & Shea, 2010). Meanwhile, little research has focused on how NGOs and their unpaid volunteers, operating on the periphery of the educational environment and in partnership with local schools may represent the interests of refugee children. There are at least two reasons why research must be done to build upon our understanding of NGOs and their volunteers as potential
liaisons of refugee interests in educational environments. The first is human resources cutbacks and constraints in an era of increasing fiscal accountability for public schools. The second is the promotion of better service coordination and information sharing between local public schools and NGOs.

In light of funding cutbacks, heightened scrutiny of educational budgets, and increased demands for fiscally responsible school finance practices, districts that serve refugee populations may need to reconsider, justify, or eliminate funding for formal liaison positions. A better understanding of how NGOs and their volunteers may function as educational liaisons for refugee children will assist districts as they evaluate the best and most fiscally responsible strategies for building bridges to refugee populations. Therefore, one aim of this dissertation is to unearth how local NGOs and their volunteers identify the needs of refugee children they serve and to illuminate how they may function as liaisons of refugee interests in local school decision-making.

In addition, inefficient service coordination efforts warrant an examination of the ways in which NGOs and their volunteers may function as liaisons for the educational interests of refugee children. In a recent Congressional report on the status of refugee resettlement, Bruno (2011) notes that policies and programs targeting refugee populations in the United States are in need of serious reform. Specifically, Bruno identifies gaps in information sharing and disjointed service coordination between and across institutions as major deficiencies in the current system, stating there is a “lack of information collection and sharing by and among the many agencies and organizations involved in the U.S. refugee admissions and resettlement systems” (p. 17). Thus, a second aim of my
dissertation is to address this systemic deficiency by shedding light on how NGOs and their volunteers coordinate information sharing across and between institutions. Specifically, I explore the ways in which NGOs and their volunteers identify the needs of the refugee children they serve, form partnerships with refugee families and schools, and share information with educational leaders, refugee parents, and other pertinent actors and agencies involved in refugee relocation, resettlement, and assimilation. In order to accomplish this task, I employ a qualitative ethnography research design, which I now delineate and justify in Chapter 3.
Chapter 3: Methods

A study of the representation of refugee populations in educational contexts requires a method of inquiry capable of unearthing behaviors, attitudes, activities, networks, and relationships that often occur outside of formal structures. Therefore, I employ a qualitative ethnography research design to illuminate how representation of refugee educational interests occurs through educational partnerships of NGOs and schools. I now seek to describe my research design in detail. I begin with a discussion of ethnography and why my study aligns well with this methodology. Next, I describe the research site from which participants were recruited and data was collected. I also provide an account of how I obtained access and entrée to conduct my study. From there, I proceed to explain how sample selection and participant recruitment took place, and follow that section with a discussion of techniques used for data collection as well as factors that influenced data collection. Finally, I give an account of how data was analyzed, the strategies used to increase the validity, reliability, and trustworthiness of findings, and the researcher subjectivities that may have influenced the study. I conclude this chapter by identifying the limitations of the study before continuing to Chapters 4, 5, and 6 where I discuss findings.
Research Questions

This study aims to answer the following five research questions as they pertain to the representation of refugee interests in educational contexts such as schools: (1) Do NGOs and their volunteers function as liaisons, representing the educational interests of refugee children in schools? If so, how does this representation take place? (2) How do NGOs and their volunteers identify the educational interests of the refugee children they serve? Once identified, how do NGOs and their volunteers represent these needs to school leaders and educators in efforts to advocate for refugee children? (3) How do NGOs and their volunteers facilitate information sharing and coordinate intervention efforts across institutional boundaries? (4) How do school decision-makers, including school leaders and educators, facilitate information sharing and coordinate intervention efforts across institutional boundaries? (5) How do educational policies and practices enable and curtail information sharing and coordination efforts for schools and the NGOs and their volunteers that serve refugee children?

Qualitative Methodology: Ethnography

In order to answer these questions, this study employs a qualitative research design, engaging ethnography as a methodology (Carspecken, 2001; Creswell, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Thomas, 1993). As discussed by Denzin and Lincoln (2000), qualitative research methods are used when researchers set out to answer questions that explore how various constructs operate within cultural contexts, social relationships, and human experience. As this study seeks to understand how representation occurs when
embedded in educational contexts that involve complex layers of social relationships and human experience, it requires a qualitative methodology, in this case an ethnography.

Ethnography is a qualitative methodology “in which the researcher describes and interprets the shared and learned patterns of values, behaviors, beliefs, and language of a culture sharing group” (Creswell, 2007, p. 68). The researcher immerses herself in the research site for a specified period of time in order to observe the constructs of interest, and she incorporates multiple data collection techniques in order to accumulate a substantial data corpus and provide a “thick description” (Denzin, 1989, p. 83), or a detailed context rich account of the culture sharing group, the research site, and participants involved in the study. Therefore, this study aligns well with ethnographic methodology because it seeks to unearth how an NGO and its volunteers identify and advocate for the educational needs of the refugee children it serves, while simultaneously exploring participants’ shared values, representational behaviors, ideological beliefs, and ways of speaking about refugee children’s educational needs.

In order to conduct this ethnography, I immersed myself from June of 2013 to May of 2014 in an NGO that both served a local refugee population through its educational programs and officially partnered with the local public school district. I used multiple techniques for data collection including site observations, participant interviews, and document analysis in order to triangulate data and promote the validity and reliability of the study’s findings. In order to address issues of trustworthiness, I participated in regular acts of rapport and reciprocity with the research site and study participants (Harrison, MacGibbon, & Morton, 2001; Springwood & King, 2001). Examples of acts
of rapport and reciprocity included assisting in service projects sponsored by the NGO, participating in facility improvement days to paint rooms and organize the NGOs educational resources, and assisting volunteers as they served in the NGOs educational programs for refugee children and adults. This allowed me to study how representation of refugee children’s educational interests occurred when embedded within a particular shared cultural group, in this case, the institution and volunteers that comprised the NGO.

The Research Site

The research site for this study is a Non-Governmental Organization, specifically classified as a Non-Profit Organization (NPO), whose primary service recipients are East African refugees. The NPO is located in a major metropolitan area in the Midwestern United States. One of its stated missions is providing p-12 educational intervention and remediation services to refugee children, and it has developed and implemented an after school tutoring and mentoring program to achieve this aim. Additionally, the NPO participates in an official educational partnership with the local public school district that serves the same refugee population.

With respect to providing details about a research site, ethnographic work is sometimes troubled by the tension between two conflicting aims: providing a thick description (Glesne, 2006; Ponterotto, 2006; Schwandt, Lincoln, & Guba, 2007) and protecting the confidentiality of the research site and its participants (Erickson, 1986). In the case of my study, requests by the NGO that I mask specific details about its religious affiliations exacerbated this tension. For instance, in this study, the research site and its
volunteers are in ideological opposition with the refugee population they serve. The refugee population being served subscribes primarily to a Muslim religious ideology. While the NGO that serves as the research site has no official religious affiliation, it was founded by a Non-Muslim Faith-Based Organization (FBO) from where it still receives its funding and its volunteer base. Given these ideological stressors, it is unknown how details about the NGO’s Non-Muslim religious connections might affect the Muslim refugee population’s willingness to receive services there. Therefore, when negotiating access and entree to the research site with NGO leaders, the NGO requested that I refrain from identifying its specific religious affiliations, and made my access to the research site contingent upon my willingness to do so.

Consequently, for this study I had to weigh decisions about how information is reported. In order to protect the confidentiality of the research site and study participants to the degree requested by the research site, I extrapolated descriptive data in order to reach what I determined was a confidential level. For instance, rather than precisely identify the refugee population’s country of origin, I extrapolated descriptive data to the regional geography of East Africa. Similarly, rather than state the specific religion to which the NGO has connections, I extrapolated to Non-Muslim. As a confidentiality measure, I also incorporated the use of pseudonyms to protect the identities of study participants and the location of the study. Pseudonyms have been applied to the city, state, school district, school, research site, and all study participants.

In addition to ideological stressors, a large socioeconomic disparity exists between NGO volunteers, who enrolled in my study as participants, and the refugee
families they served and represented. Study participants who volunteered at the research site live in an affluent suburb of the major metropolitan area in which my study took place. Meanwhile, the NGO facility resides in the heart of the refugee community—a series of government subsidized housing projects located in one of the most financially distressed neighborhoods in the city. In order to volunteer in the mentoring program, study participants faced a 45-minute commute to reach the facility from the affluent suburb, and a 45-minute commute afterward to return to it.

Given the ideological and socioeconomic differences between study participants and those they served and represented, it becomes important to note the complications that arise from such differences in a study on representation. As discussed in Chapter 2, postcolonial critique must inform this study’s theoretical lens as it pertains to the research site and study participants. In this regard, study participants share the privilege of belonging to the historically dominant religion of their geographical area. They also share the privileges of middle and upper-middle class socioeconomic status. Comparatively, the refugee families they serve belong to a faith that has been heavily ridiculed and socially rejected by many groups and individuals in mainstream U.S. culture. In addition, the refugee families being served subsist primarily off of government assistance and minimum-wage employment. The nuances of such dynamics must be considered in a study on representation—especially a study that seeks to understand how a group with tremendous privilege represents a group with comparative disadvantage.

Similarly, the organizational nature of my study adds a second layer of nuance to it. The focus of my study is representation and how it occurs when embedded in an
educational partnership between an NGO and a local school. Therefore, this study examines representation from an organizational perspective—specifically from the purview of the NGO and its key leaders and volunteers. Because of its emphasis on understanding representation from an organizational leadership perspective, I did not seek to enroll members of the refugee population being served by the research site in this particular study. While I assert that such work is absolutely necessary, it is beyond the scope of this initial project, which seeks to understand representation from an organizational point of view.

**Access and Entré to the Research Site**

Qualitative researchers must typically gain access and entrance into their chosen research site, and providing an account of how access and entré were obtained contributes to the overall transparency of the research process (Glesne, 2006; Patton, 2002). I obtained access and entré to the research site through my pre-existing connection to the NPO’s Executive Director. I became acquainted with him several years prior to his acceptance of the job. During multiple casual conversations in social settings, I became aware that he had done previous work serving a variety of refugee populations in local, national, and international contexts. Over the course of these conversations, I shared my previous research with him (Hanna, 2013), and we concluded that it would be ideal to maintain our connection and nurture our shared interest in providing educational services to refugee populations.
As a result of my previous research involving refugee populations and schools, I had been considering the under examined role that volunteers and Non-Governmental Organizations play in the representation of refugee interests in educational settings. Consequently, when it came time to choose a research site for this study, I approached the Executive Director about the possibility of conducting this study at his NPO. He expressed his favor for my interests as well as his support for using the NPO as the research site. I then proceeded with the research design and secured Institutional Review Board approval (Protocol Number 2013B0204) for conducting this study.

**Sample Selection**

Initially, participants were selected using purposeful sampling (Patton, 2002). Purposeful sampling is a technique in which the researcher intentionally recruits specific individuals as study participants because of their ability to provide “information-rich cases for in depth study” (Patton, 2002, p. 230). In this case, I used purposeful sampling in order to recruit NGO leaders, NGO volunteers, school leaders, and educators that I suspected would be most capable of providing rich information about: (1) the history and evolution of the NGO, (2) the history and evolution of the NGO’s tutoring program, (3) the history and evolution of the school’s strategies for serving the refugee population, (4) the ways in which NGO leaders and school leaders determined the needs of the refugee population being served, (5) the ways in which NGO leaders and school leaders represented any needs of the refugee population being served, (6) the ways in which information was shared across institutional boundaries between the NGO and the local school, and (7) any formal or informal policies affecting the ability of the NGO and the
local school to share information across institutional boundaries and coordinate educational services to the refugee population. See Table 1 for a description of study participants.

Table 1

*Study Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role of Participants</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NGO Executive Director</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO Program Directors</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO Advisory Council Members</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO Team Leaders</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO Key Volunteers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. n = 12.*
Sample Selection: Phase 1

During the first phase of data collection, from June 2013 to December 2013, I enrolled a total of 9 participants in my study. This included NGO directors (n=3) and key NGO program leaders and volunteers (n=6) such as the NGO Executive Director, the NGO Director of p-12 Educational Programming, the NGO Director of Adult and English as a Second Language Programming, members of the p-12 mentoring program’s advisory council, the curriculum team leader, the administrative team leader and key program volunteers who served as mentors.

While my initial estimate of the number of participants who would be enrolled during phase one of data collection was higher than the actual number recruited, the decision to recruit a smaller number of participants resulted from information obtained during initial interviews with participants. During initial interviews, I discovered that the types of actions, behaviors, beliefs, attitudes, networks and relationships conducive to the study of representation were actually occurring within a smaller sub-set of the NGO’s population. Namely, these were NGO Directors, NGO team leaders, NGO key leaders, an advisory council comprised of NGO key leaders and a textbook representative, and key NGO volunteers. As my study is about how the NGO represents refugee educational interests to the school with which it is partners, I therefore focused on where representation was happening once I learned that it was primarily occurring within this smaller sub-set of individuals.
Sample Selection: Phase 2

During the second phase of data collection, from January 2014 to May of 2014, new participants were added using chain-referral sampling (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981). During chain-referral sampling, previously enrolled participants were asked to identify two types of new participants: (1) individuals capable of providing additional information or novel insights as to how the NGO and its volunteers identify and represent the educational needs of the refugee children they serve and how these needs are represented to the school, and (2) individuals capable of providing information about how the school identifies the needs of the refugee children they serve as well as how the school coordinates information sharing and educational interventions through its partnership with the NGO. Regarding the first category of participants I sought to recruit during the second phase of data collection, other key informants from the NGO, several more were added (n=3) during this time. Regarding the second category of participants I sought to recruit during the second phase of data collection, those from the school, unanticipated obstacles arose that curtailed my ability to recruit school leaders into my study. Such unanticipated obstacles included the temporary removal and subsequent dismissal of the local school principal, a public scandal involving the school district that may have contributed to an overall hesitation to participate in educational research, and the interim principal’s decision to pause the partnership with the NGO until a permanent school leader could resume the work.

During a follow-up interview at the start of the second phase of data collection, I asked the NGO p-12 Program Director who had been working directly with school
leaders, to put me into contact with them for recruitment purposes. Previously, he had indicated to me that he would be able to do so when I was ready to move into the second phase of data collection. At that time, I learned that the key school leader, in this case the school principal, was indefinitely on leave from the school for an undisclosed reason. For the year prior, the NGO p-12 Director had been working with this school principal to establish and build the NGOs district sanctioned partnership with the school. I also learned that the school had appointed an interim principal, and that the NGO p-12 Director was having a difficult time establishing contact with the interim principal in order to continue developing partnership initiatives. Moreover, it was unclear whether or not the interim principal would become a permanent replacement, whether the school principal on leave would eventually return, or whether or not a new principal altogether would be hired. This situation continued through the remainder of the study, and at the time that data collection ended, the interim principal was still actively serving as the school’s temporary administrator. The NGO p-12 Director’s attempts to make contact with the interim principal during this time were met with hesitation and reluctance. Consequently, without administrative contact and support, my ability to recruit participants from the school declined significantly. I made several attempts to contact school leaders directly, but with similar results as the NGO p-12 Director: hesitation and reluctance to participate at the time given that the school was in a transitional phase of leadership oversight.
Data Collection

Data collection occurred over the course of 12 months and involved semi-structured interviews, site observations, field notes, and document analysis (Glesne, 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Linders, 2008). During months 1-6, the first round of data collection occurred during the NGO’s first educational mentoring program session. The first round of data collection included approximately 10 initial participant interviews with NGO directors, key leaders, and volunteers. It also included 15 site observations that occurred at the research site, and at public venues in the metropolitan area. During observations, I used the observation protocol (see Appendix A) to specifically document how study participants identified and represented the needs of the refugee population internally amongst themselves as well as externally to those outside of their organization. From my site observations, I produced field notes to contribute to the data corpus. I also collected 25 documents for analysis.

As mentioned in my discussion of my sample selection, during the first round of data collection, information about the structure and history of the NGO surfaced and suggested that the study narrow its scope to a smaller group of participants than originally planned. The NGO is a young institution, and the educational programming had been continually evolving in the year prior to the start of my study from a fledgling grass roots operation into a more sophisticated and organized program. As such, it made sense to focus on gathering data from NGO directors and NGO key leaders/volunteers involved with the decision-making processes and representative activities of the organization.
During months 6-12, the second round of data collection occurred, and involved 5 follow up interviews with initial participants, 2 interviews with additional participants added during chain-referral sampling, 10 additional site observations with resulting field notes, and the collection of 5 additional documents for analysis. The resulting data corpus (see Appendix C) consists of semi-structured interview transcripts, site observation reports, field notes, school and district documents pertinent to the refugee community, and NGO documents pertinent to the refugee community.

**Semi-Structured Interviews**

All initial semi-structured interviews were approximately 30-60 minutes in duration and followed the protocol established and approved by the Institutional Review Board at The Ohio State University (See Appendix A). Interviews primarily occurred in face-to-face meetings at public establishments close to the research site such as restaurants and coffee shops. Occasionally, interviews were conducted over the phone when face-to-face meetings were precluded by constraints upon participants’ schedules and/or inclement weather. For face-to-face interviews, consent was obtained in written form, and participants were instructed that participation was entirely voluntary and could be withdrawn at any time by merely expressing their desire to withdraw. For phone interviews, written consent forms were provided to participants via email prior to the phone interview. Then, phone interviews began by confirming that participants had read the consent form and verbal consent was obtained. Written consent of all participants whose interviews were conducted over the phone was then later obtained at the earliest possible opportunity that a face-to-face meeting could occur. Participants whose
interviews were conducted over the phone were also instructed that participation was entirely voluntary and could be withdrawn at any time. All participants were instructed that they were under no obligation to answer a question that they did not feel comfortable answering. If they preferred not to answer any question, they were instructed to communicate that they did not wish to answer that question, and it would be skipped.

Initial interview questions targeted data required to illuminate answers to the research questions of the study (See Appendix A). During both phases of data collection, 30-60 minute follow up interviews were conducted as necessary with initial participants. Follow-up interviews were necessary in instances where informants had introduced new data pertinent to research questions that required clarification or explanation. At the time that data collection concluded, no participants had withdrawn from the study.

Observations

Observations of study participants occurred at two locations: the NGO which served as my research site and various public venues throughout the metropolitan area in which the research site resides. Observations followed my Observation Protocol (see Appendix B). Observations that occurred at the NGO’s facility entailed observations of study participants as they interacted with one another to determine courses of action for identifying and advocating for the educational needs of the refugee children being served. During such observations, I recorded details describing the observation environment, including who was present, who was absent, where the event took place, and what happened during the observation. Additionally, I noted any practices or behaviors that
seemed representative in nature, took notes on potential connections to my theoretical framework, looked for disconfirming evidence, and identified questions that needed to be clarified during interviews with study participants. Site observations also occurred at various public venues such as restaurants and coffee shops where study participants met to conduct meetings pertinent to research questions. Examples of such observations included meetings in which participants designed volunteer training sessions, conducted planning meetings, and interacted with one another about identifying and advocating for the needs of the refugee population being served. During these observations, I recorded details describing the observation environment, including who was present, who was absent, where the event took place, and what happened during the observation. Additionally, I noted any portions of the meeting discussion that seemed representative in nature, took notes on potential connections to my theoretical framework, and identified questions that needed to be clarified during interviews with study participants.

Documents

There are two types of documents that were acquired during data collection: publicly available documents and internal documents not directly available to the public. Publicly available documents included: (1) flyers and posters for NGO events targeting service to the refugee population, (2) the NGO’s website, (3) the school’s website, and (4) the school district’s website. Publicly available documents were selected to explore how refugee populations’ needs were being represented through images and text. For documents designed and distributed by the NGO, I looked at how the NGO used images and text to represent refugee educational interests to current volunteers, potential
volunteers, the school, and the public. For documents designed by the school or school district, I looked for ways in which the school or district used images and text to represent refugee educational interests to the organizations with which it partners and to the public. Finally, for all publicly available documents, I looked to see if and how educational policies pertinent to the service of refugee populations in U.S. schools were discussed or represented to NGO volunteers, schools, or the public.

Internal, non-public documents collected for this study included: (1) reports and agendas from NGO meetings, and (2) NGO volunteer training materials and handbooks. For reports and agendas from NGO meetings, I looked to see how NGO leaders represented information and data about refugee populations’ educational needs to current and potential volunteers. I also looked at what types of educational needs appeared on reports and agendas in order to triangulate that information with transcript data and site observations. Similarly, for NGO volunteer training materials and handbooks, I looked to see how information and data about refugee populations’ educational needs were represented to current and potential volunteers. Finally, with both types of internal documents collected for the study, I looked to see if and how educational policies pertinent to the service of refugee populations in U.S. schools were discussed or represented to current or potential NGO volunteers.

Data collection concluded on May 31, 2014 after it was determined that data collection had reached saturation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998), and new data collection failed to reveal new information pertinent to the construct of representation and the research questions of the study. I detailed account of the dates,
times, and activities conducted for this study from start to finish are provided in my research log (See Appendix D).

**Data Analysis**

Semi-structured interviews were transcribed, analyzed, and coded to identify thematic categories (Creswell, 2007; Glesne, 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Data from documents, field notes, and site observations were also coded to identify thematic categories. I conducted two rounds of coding. During the first round of coding, I manually coded data, grouping data into initial thematic categories using color-codes and the following categories: advocacy, descriptive representation, symbolic representation, latent representation, surrogate representation, non-democratic representation, liaison roles and activities, identification of refugee children’s needs, inter-institutional information sharing, policy, and disconfirming evidence. After the first round of coding was complete, I conducted a second round of coding to connect data in each of the initial themes to specific research questions of the study. During the second round of coding, two new thematic categories were added: theoretical gaps and partnerships. Upon completion of the second round of coding, I conducted a thematic analysis across the data corpus to develop a grounded theory about how the representation of refugee educational interests occurred through the NGO and its volunteers. To develop this grounded theory, I followed Bernard’s (2000) approach for conducting a grounded theory thematic analysis by assimilating data from across the categories for comparison, exploring connections between categories, constructing theoretical models and weighing them against the data corpus.
In order to uphold confidentiality standards of research with human subjects, any potentially identifying information was removed during data analysis and reporting, and pseudonyms were used to replace the actual names of participants, educational agencies, and NGOs involved in the study (See Appendix E). At the conclusion of my study, all digital and electronic data was stored and will be kept locked for two years, after which it will be shredded and discarded.

**Validity, Reliability, & Trustworthiness**

I employed multiple techniques to promote the validity, reliability, and trustworthiness of this study’s findings. Such techniques included data triangulation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Glesne, 2006), peer review and debriefing sessions (Spall, 1998), establishing rapport and reciprocity (Harrison, MacGibbon, & Morton, 2001; Sherif, 2001), providing an account of researcher subjectivity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), and the identification and discussion of disconfirming evidence (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Erikson, 1986). I now describe these techniques in detail.

**Triangulation.** Data triangulation is “a validity procedure where researchers look for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories in a study” (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 126). I used two forms of data triangulation discussed by Denzin (1978) to promote validity, reliability, and trustworthiness of findings: (1) across-data source triangulation, in which I compared and contrasted data from multiple participants, and (2) methodological triangulation, in which multiple techniques of data collection are used, including semi-structured interviews, site
observations, field notes, and document analysis. Such triangulation supports efforts to increase the study’s validity, reliability, and trustworthiness (Denzin, 1978; Glesne, 2006).

**Peer review and debriefing.** Peer review and debriefing (Glesne, 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) is another strategy I used to promote validity, reliability, and trustworthiness of my study. Peer debriefing involves

a researcher and impartial peers [who] preplan and conduct extensive discussions about the findings and progress of an investigation…these discussions include issues related to preliminary data collection and initial analysis as well as the next methodological steps and the concluding analysis. The peer asks questions to help the researcher understand how his or her personal perspectives and values affect the findings. Such a questioning approach serves to minimize bias within the inquiry. (Spall, 1998, p. 280)

For this study, I recruited a doctoral candidate in educational leadership to function as a peer debriefer. Peer debriefing sessions were conducted when individual chapters were in final draft form.

**Rapport & reciprocity.** Rapport and reciprocity refer to the ways in which researchers establish relationships of trust with study participants, or rapport, and the ways in which researchers give back to study participants and research sites to promote mutual benefit, or reciprocity (Glesne, 2006; Harrison, MacGibbon, & Morton, 2001; Lincoln, 2009). Rapport and reciprocity are used not only to gain access to research sites
and recruit study participants, but also to try to do so in a way that reduces exploitation (Glesne, 2006; Harrison, MacGibbon, & Morton, 2001; Lincoln, 2009). Historically, acts of rapport and reciprocity have been standard features of ethnographic work, but in the last two decades their use has been interrogated for the ways in which they may falsely situate the researcher as politically neutral and complicate a researcher’s ability to unearth and document findings (Lincoln, 2009; Springwood & King, 2001). Currently, ethnographic researchers continue to work towards redefining and resituating acts of rapport and reciprocity within the field, but no coherent and satisfactory redefinition has been yet articulated (Lincoln, 2009).

In terms of my study, I did participate in acts of rapport and reciprocity, and doing so found me situated within the same predicaments already documented by other ethnographers: dealing with, and trying to navigate, reconcile, allow, and honor the political nature of my work while finding ways to reduce exploitation of study participants and the research site. While the field of ethnography continues to strive for better and newer articulations of research practices capable of moving beyond the limitations of rapport and reciprocity, I used them in this study as the best practices available to me to support my efforts to reduce exploitation and promote mutual benefit. I did so by responding to the needs of NGO through volunteer work. During the first weeks of my study, I learned that the NGO had a need for increasing its volunteer pool. The Director of the p-12 educational programming asked me to consider volunteering one night per week to tutor one refugee child. Because this was a need of the research site, and this was a concrete way in which I could develop rapport and reciprocity by
demonstrating that I was there not only to take, but also to give back, I accepted the invitation to volunteer alongside study participants.

I also participated in a handful of other more spontaneous and less frequent acts of rapport and reciprocity that occurred throughout the study. For instance, the NGO hosted several facility improvement workdays in which volunteers donated their Saturdays to re-painting facility classrooms or organizing the program’s library. I attended several of these workdays to volunteer my time for facility improvement.

**Researcher subjectivity.** Qualitative researchers recognize that all research is influenced by the subjectivities of the researcher (Foley, 2002; Glesne, 2006; Lincoln, 2009; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Peshkin, 1988; Springwood & King, 2001). Researcher subjectivities comprise the

> amalgam of persuasions that stem from the circumstances of one's class, statuses, and values interacting with the particulars of one's object of investigation…[and] whatever the substance of one's persuasions at a given point, one's subjectivity is like a garment that cannot be removed. It is insistently present in both the research and non-research aspects of our life. (Peshkin, 1988, p. 17)

Consequently, qualitative methods encourage researchers to attempt to identify, articulate, examine and engage with their subjectivities during all phases of the research process as an effort to increase transparency and trustworthiness (Glesne, 2006; Peshkin, 1988). I make an attempt to do so now by discussing aspects of my subjectivity as they may have interacted with the research process and influenced research findings. First,
however, I must discuss one way in which my researcher subjectivity exacerbates issues of trustworthiness: repugnancy (Springwood & King, 2001).

As previously discussed, the use of acts of rapport and reciprocity are contested in ethnographic work. Among other things, ethnographers share concern about how such acts may produce over sympathizing and over empathizing with study participants in such a way that important findings remain unexcavated. Springwood & King (2001) elaborate

…rapport is taken to imply a range of traditional concerns with ‘getting there’ and ‘being there’...these concerns have variously included empathy, immersion, participation, friendship, honesty, collaboration, trust, exploitation, negotiation, and loyalty. Without rejecting these possible features or outcomes of fieldwork relationships, we wonder more expressly about other constituent features of these relationships, such as confrontation, prevarication, obfuscation, disagreement, and even repugnance. (p. 405)

Thus, ethnographic work, such researchers suggests, must create space for addressing discord, tension, conflict, and perhaps unsettling or upsetting findings. Of the concerns raised by Springwood and King, the two I encountered as the result of colliding subjectivities during this study were disagreement and repugnance. Where pertinent, I detail how I experienced disagreement and repugnance through the subjectivities below.

_Educational researcher_. My identity as an educational researcher has potentially influenced the research process and findings. As an educational ethnographer, I have,
develop, and openly promote certain advocacy positions. My research paradigm rejects objectivity as a worthwhile pursuit and embraces the position that all research is politically non-neutral.

*Educator.* My identity as an educator has potentially influenced the research process and findings. Prior to beginning my doctoral studies, I was a middle and high school Spanish teacher. When I was a classroom teacher, I also volunteered with several organizations that offered educational remediation services and mentoring to at-risk children. Many of the children with whom I worked came from immigrant families, including undocumented individuals and refugees. As I built relationships with these families, I began to care about educational policies that intersected with their needs in ways that seemed detrimental to their academic success. I also found myself troubled by the ways in which immigrant and refugee families seemed to lack a way to directly represent their own interests using their own voice in educational decision-making processes.

At times, my subjectivity as a professional educator also produced disagreement and repugnance while in the field or interacting with study participants. This occurred as I observed or learned about pedagogical practices or cultural beliefs of study participants that seemed atrocious or damaging to me. Study participants were volunteers that came from a wide range of occupations. These included business owners, stay at home parents, retired engineers, accountants, nurses, full-time students, and a few who were professional educators in various schools in the metropolitan area. There were times when observations or interviews produced data that irked me because of my belief that it
defied sound pedagogy and/or my personal investment in promoting democratic equality in educational settings.

*Educational expert.* The fact that I am an educational researcher who conducted a study with volunteers who care passionately about the educational success of the children they serve presented an interesting subjectivity conundrum: while I tried to reduce my researcher footprint, study participants knew I was present as an educational researcher. Through our interactions during data collection, they also knew I was a professional educator. Consequently, many of them viewed me as an educational expert, regardless of my attempts to downplay my presence as a researcher and/or my professional background as an educator. Because of this belief, participants would occasionally invite my consultation in decision-making processes and/or pedagogical interventions. Mostly, this happened spontaneously during acts of rapport and reciprocity when I volunteered alongside them one night per week. On several occasions, it happened during formal meetings that I observed. During these participant initiated requests for my opinion or perspective, I tried to avoid answering questions while instead engaging participants in what they thought the answers to their own questions were. Despite my best intentions, it is possible that engaging participants in this way influenced the research process.

*Person of faith.* While I am a person of Non-Muslim faith, and my religious practice and beliefs are an important aspect of my identity, I subscribe to a very liberal understanding of my religion. As such, I often experience disagreement and repugnance toward many religions, religious practices, and people of faith that I perceive to be dogmatic or exclusive. This was sometimes the case during my study, whose participants
came from a volunteer base with origins in conservative religious institutions. On several occasions, my experience of disagreement and repugnance were quite strong. During data analysis, it became clear that such intense disagreement and repugnance coalesced around encounters with what I perceived to be faith-based initiatives masquerading as educational initiatives. It is important to note that this is my own interpretation of my own experience- in declaring it, I do not intend to insinuate that faith-based initiatives were in fact masquerading as educational ones- only that there were moments in which my personal subjectivity caused me to question that they could be.

**Disconfirming evidence.** Erikson (1986) defines disconfirming evidence as “data that might disconfirm a key assertion… leaving the researcher liable to charges of seeking only evidence that would support favorite interpretations” (p. 140). As such, while in the field I made intentional efforts to identify disconfirming evidence that could gesture toward ways in which acts of representation did not fit into the seven categories established by my theoretical framework. I did this by including space for documenting disconfirming evidence on my Observation Protocol (see Appendix B). Similarly during data analysis, I used disconfirming evidence as a thematic category. As a thematic category, whenever I encountered data about representation that did not fit into the categories of my theoretical framework I placed it into this category and used it to interrogate key findings.
Limitations

Theoretical Limitations

There is an inherent danger in transposing Western theoretical frames onto research with, about, or for non-Western populations. While principal-agent relationships undergird representation in large-scale Western democracies, applying this understanding of representation on refugee populations that relocate from non-Western, non-large-scale democracies prevents researchers and educational leaders from understanding how refugee populations themselves understand representation and what constitutes it in the decision-making endeavors of schools. In this sense, my research findings are limited by the application of Western conceptualizations of representation.

Methodological Limitations

First, researchers don’t always agree about the type of contributions made possible by qualitative studies such as ethnography (Firestone, 1987; Glesne, 2006; Smith, 1983). Such disagreements stem from differences in four fundamental elements regarding scientific inquiry: assumptions about the world, purpose of the research, approach, and the role of the researcher (Firestone, 1987; Guba, 1978; Kuhn, 1970). Based on differing scholarly investments in these four components of research, some researchers may oppose the assertion that ethnographies are capable of contributing to theory. On this note, I recognize that some scholars may object to my position that the findings of this study are, in fact, capable of refining and expanding our understanding of theories of democratic representation.
Second, because ethnography seeks to understand the practices, attitudes, actions, and beliefs of specific cultural groups, such work does not attempt to produce generalizable knowledge that can be applied to larger populations (Firestone, 1987; Glesne, 2006; Smith 1983). Therefore, I caution against overstating the findings of this study. While it is reasonable to argue that the findings from this study apply to the specific research site at hand, it would not be appropriate to directly apply these findings to any other setting.

Third, there are limitations that result from the types of sampling used to recruit study participants. According to Patton (1999), there are three primary limitations that occur from purposeful sampling- the technique I used during the first phase of data collection. These are: case limitations, temporal limitations, and findings limitations. Case limitations occur because the selective nature of purposeful sampling relies on the researcher to identify and recruit study participants based on her judgments vis-à-vis individuals who may be capable of providing in-depth information. Thus, she may unintentionally overlook or otherwise fail to identify and recruit some individuals into the study who could have provided valuable information. Temporal limitations occur because even when participants are enrolled in the study, the researcher’s observations of participants cannot be all encompassing. Rather, the researcher is present at specified times for participant observation, and observation data produced by purposeful sampling only captures events, interactions, and information that occurred while the researcher was present. Finally, the findings of this study are also limited by its use of purposeful sampling. It is possible that individuals who were not identified and/or recruited into the
study could have been capable of contributing valuable information capable of refining or disconfirming findings.

The chain-referral sampling technique I used during subsequent phases of data collection also has limitations. Biernacki and Waldorf (1981) identify five problems that arise from chain-referral sampling. These are: getting initial participants to refer potential participants to the researcher, verifying the eligibility of referred participants, the use of initial participants to increase the number of study participants, controlling the number of new participants added through chain-referral techniques, and monitoring referral chains for data quality. These problems produce limitations on qualitative studies. Because chain-referral sampling relies on initial participants to identify and refer potential participants to the researcher, an initial participant may overlook or otherwise fail to identify individuals who could have been capable of providing valuable information. In this way, data collected for the study and findings of the study are both limited by the selectivity of chain-referral sampling.

Fourth, as discussed in the data collection section of this chapter, unanticipated events caused an unexpected reduction in the recruitment pool for this study. As a result, the study’s angle of vision became limited regarding the representation of refugee children’s interests in schools. While a better understanding of how representation of refugee children’s interests in schools did emerge from this study, it came primarily from the point of view of the NGO and its volunteers with very limited data from the perspective of the school. Having now provided an account of the research methods of my study, I proceed to presenting the study’s key findings in Chapters 4, 5, and 6.
Chapter 4:

NGOs and Their Volunteers as Representatives of Refugee Interests

In order to better understand how NGOs and their volunteers may represent the educational interests of refugee children in local schools, my study investigated five research questions: (1) Do NGOs and their volunteers function as liaisons, representing the educational interests of refugee children in schools? If so, how does this representation take place? (2) How do NGOs and their volunteers identify the educational interests of the refugee children they serve? Once identified, how do NGOs and their volunteers represent these needs to school leaders and educators in efforts to advocate for refugee children? (3) How do NGOs and their volunteers facilitate information sharing and coordinate intervention efforts across institutional boundaries? (4) How do school decision-makers, including school leaders and educators, facilitate information sharing and coordinate intervention efforts across institutional boundaries? (5) How do educational policies and practices enable and curtail information sharing and coordination efforts for schools and the NGOs and their volunteers that serve refugee children? In this chapter, I present three key findings to the first research question. First, data provide evidence that the NGO and its volunteers did function as representatives of refugee educational interests, and that while multiple forms of representation occurred, guardianship was the prevalent decision-making structure in place during my study.
Moreover, guardianship resulted in what NGO volunteers understood as a general veneer of latent representation, enabling them to make educational decisions on behalf of the refugee population. In addition to guardianship, data also suggest that symbolic, nondemocratic, and surrogate representation also occurred; however, there were two important nuances of these forms of representation and how they occurred, and these nuances provide the foundation for the next two findings. These are: (1) NGO organizational structure affected the forms of representation made possible, and (2) the strength of the partnership between the NGO and the school affected the forms of representation made possible. I now report the three key findings to research question 1 in detail.

**Key Finding: Guardianship and Latent Representation**

As discussed in Chapter 2, guardianship, as a form of decision-making, occurs when common people are precluded from participation in decision-making processes because they are considered inept (Dahl, 1991). As a result, a group of more qualified individuals assumes the role of decision-making and forms an aristocracy that determines the needs of those being governed and makes decisions for them. Moreover, latent representation occurs when a group of people refuses direct participation in decision-making processes and defers decision-making influence and power to others. With respect to my study, data suggest that such guardianship was the ubiquitous decision-making system at New Beginnings Refugee Assistance Center, and that key volunteers believed a strong veneer of latent representation existed between them and the refugee population.
Data from an interview with Arun\textsuperscript{14}, the Director of the p-12 educational program for New Beginnings, illustrate how guardianship permeates the center’s general approach to educational decision-making. It does so by illustrating the belief that the refugee population requires NGO leadership to function as guardians because of its general inaptitude. When asked about what challenges New Beginnings has faced in working with refugee populations, Arun stated:

Challenges? Well, certainly the biggest challenge is getting them to see the whole picture. In their children’s schoolwork, we see that they don’t know the value of education. That to me was surprising. That they were not valuing education- the parents. But again, as I got to know the parents I see that, you know, they themselves are illiterate, living in refugee camps and all that. So how would they know the value of an education? And so that’s where I play a key role is to work with the parents to tell them the value of an education. And so that’s been I think one of the challenges is you know, to change their thought process- to appreciate the value of what we’re doing…the biggest challenge is for them to see the value of education. [First Interview 232-250]

And, when asked about what he thought refugee parents’ believed to be the purpose of education and if he thought refugee parents felt education was important for their children, he responded:

\textsuperscript{14} Arun is a pseudonym used to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of the research site and study participants. All actual names of study participants, locations, facilities, and any identifying information have been replaced by pseudonyms throughout Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7.
No. They don’t value that. And that’s been the challenge, you know. It’s very clear. They themselves are not educated, right? So how would they know the value? Today I am educated- I know my parents are educated, so we know the value of an education. You need a job here- and they don’t have a job so it’s easy- they live in this mentality of entitlement. Well, the government must give it to me. That’s what they’re used to. They don’t have to earn their keep. You know if I just sit here, the food is provided- I get my needs met. It’s an entitlement thing- so working for something is not something that they have seen. They don’t have any role models…they don’t have role models. So that is another challenge really the lack of role models. And that’s where, I think, we play a key part here- we are the role models. We are the ones that should be guiding them education-wise. [First Interview 250- 265]

Data in support of this key finding not only reveal how leadership of the NGO’s p-12 educational program believed it should function as a guardian of refugee educational interests, but also reveal the educational outcomes such guardians determined were within the best interest of the refugee population. In a follow-up interview with Arun, I asked him about New Beginning’s overall mission with respect to the refugee children it serves. He stated:

I think that for middle school and elementary we do have a clear vision- to fill in the gaps of the basics these kids missed. In the high school program, we are now trying to establish that vision. Our main goal is college or higher education, not
just finishing high school. So the goal is how do we get them there? How do we start preparing these kids for that? [Second Interview, Lines 43-65]

Similarly, data from my field notes illustrate instances in which NGO leadership, functioning as a guardian, determined the educational needs of the refugee population:

As I was on site today, I observed Arun interacting with several new refugee families who had brought their children to New Beginnings in order to introduce them to Arun and inquire about the possibility of enrolling their children in the tutoring program. Arun mentioned multiple times that New Beginning’s desire for the children is that they not only graduate from high school, but also go to college, stating, ‘It is our goal that each one of these kids goes to college.’ He then talked to the parents about how New Beginnings seeks to do that—by helping their children to master the basics and by preparing them for standardized tests such as the state graduation exam, SATs and ACTs. [Field Notes, 09/16/2013]

Another site observation also resulted in data that captured the ways in which NGO leadership recognized itself as a necessary guardian of refugee educational interests and consequently determined the overall needs of the refugee population. During a site visit for a training seminar to induct new volunteers seminar content was diffused with information about refugee children’s educational gaps, incompetence at mastering basic skills, and the NGOs hope to prepare refugee youth for post-secondary education. Statements that regularly positioned NGO leaders and volunteers as guardians of refugee children’s educational interests also diffused seminar content. My field notes illustrate:
During the training session tonight, the core leaders of the educational program who were responsible for designing and delivering the training regularly referred to the refugee children as ‘these kids’ who had some kind of educational deficiency- either in the form of learning gaps, lack of parental support or parental interest in education, lack of discipline, etc. Such statements were then followed by an invitation for volunteers to be a part of change by helping kids to learn the basics and serving as role models of success and discipline so that refugee kids can graduate from high school and go on to post-secondary opportunities. [Field Notes, 09/14, 2013]

As a result of this positioning of NGO leaders as guardians of refugee interests, NGO leaders and volunteers began to believe that refugee parents conferred latent trust upon them- giving them a license to make educational decisions for their children vis-à-vis curriculum interventions and advocacy with the school. Moreover, this belief allowed NGO leaders to construct narratives about themselves that positioned them as latent representatives of refugee interests- trusted by the refugee community to make educational decisions on their behalf. An interview with Jaime, a key volunteer and the leader of the curriculum team illustrates this:

The relationship between the kids and the mentors, I think, is huge. Because if the kids trust their mentors, then ultimately the kids trust them to do what’s best for them. Do you know what I mean? I think everything boils down to relationship. It’s just trust- I think we have the trust of the community now. [First Interview, Lines 185 -211]
Another key volunteer, Tina, reiterates how refugee parents’ trust in key NGO leaders has enabled New Beginnings to design educational programs for their children as guardians of their educational interests. She states:

I think the main thing with New Beginnings is that its, um, I think you have to show that everything you’re doing is for the betterment of the kids. You’re not just trying to go and take advantage of them, and so I think you first have to be able to build that trust- and I think that started two years ago, when we first began, when Arun started tutoring just one kid. The first few kids in the program, were all part of the same extended family, so Arun built trust with that family and then, he became a familiar face and then the other four tutors he recruited became familiar faces, so I think it built that trust. So, I think that was the first thing-going into the community, into the apartment complexes…they felt safe…at least initially I think it was a good way to build that trust. I think even still, the tutors always have some interactions because we provide transportation for the kids from their homes to New Beginnings. Tutors are always going to pick the kids up from their neighborhoods- saying hello to parents when they drop them off. So we’re using transportation to build that relationship. Arun also tries to go visit their homes once or twice during winter and summer break to just build those relationships. I think everything we’ve done comes from trust. [First Interview, Lines 361-443]
Similarly, Hye, the Executive Director of New Beginnings, noted the way that Arun’s involvement with the refugee community had established a latent trust in his ability to make decisions about their children’s educational needs, stating:

Arun has a genuine care for those he serves. He loves the children he tutors, and builds excellent relationship with their parents. He is honest, direct, passionate about their future, and pours out his life in service of their long-term well-being. In response, the refugee community we serve gives him a high degree of affection, respect and authority. [First Interview, Lines 15-19]

**Summary of Key Finding**

Such data illustrate the ways in which NGO leadership operated as guardians of refugee educational interests by allowing itself to determine the needs of the population and the interventions necessary to address those needs. It also illustrates that NGO leaders believed that the refugee community had conferred latent trust upon them to make educational decisions on their behalf. In this sense, from the perspective of the NGO and its leaders and volunteers, latent representation occurred between the refugee population and the NGO. However, because of the post-colonial complications associated with guardianship and latent representation, further work would need to be done in order to confirm that the refugee population agreed that: (1) it considered NGO leaders and volunteers to be expert guardians, and (2) it had conferred trust upon NGO leaders and volunteers to function as latent representatives of their interests. Given the post-colonial concerns that surround both guardianship and latent representation between privilege
agents and disadvantaged Non-Western populations, the NGO’s belief in its own expertise and earned trust with the refugee population may be presumptuous.

**Key Finding: Organizational Structure Affects Representation**

With respect to the first research question, which seeks to understand if and how NGOs and their volunteers function as representatives of the educational needs of refugee children in schools, data suggest that the NGO in which I embedded myself and its volunteers which I recruited as participants in my study did, in fact, function as representatives for refugee children in schools. However, data also suggest that NGO organizational structure affects the types of representation that may be made possible during various phases of organizational development and growth. The following data support this assertion by providing evidence that symbolic and nondemocratic representation occurred during phases 1, 2, and 3 of the NGOs organizational development while symbolic, nondemocratic, and surrogate representation occurred during phase 4.

New Beginnings Refugee Assistance Center, the NGO that served as the research site of my study, is located in Glendale Heights, a lower class neighborhood in a major metropolitan area in the Midwestern United States. According to the Refugee Services Program (RSP) for the state in which New Beginnings is located, as of 2012, the year for which most recent data has been compiled, approximately 43,000 refugees from nearly 60 different countries have been relocated and resettled in the state since it first began receiving refugees over a decade ago. The majority of refugees have been relocated into
communities within major metropolitan areas. Moreover, records from the RSP indicate that roughly one third of the overall existing refugee population of the state is comprised of school-aged children.

The major metropolitan area where New Beginnings is located has become the primary relocation setting for the second largest subgroup of refugees in the state: refugees from Eastern Africa. According to the RSP, as of November 2012, there were approximately 6,500 East African refugees residing in neighborhoods served by New Beginnings. Using the RSPs metrics for estimating the population, roughly one third, or 2,100, East African refugee children may be served by the local schools that surround New Beginnings. However, the actual number of East African refugee children being served by the metropolitan area’s schools may be much larger than the one third approximation suggested by the data the RSP has been able to capture. During personal communications between the RSP Director and me, the Director clarified why the actual number of refugee children being served by the metropolitan area’s schools is likely much higher than the statistical estimation: records from the RSP are currently incapable of capturing influxes of East African refugees who migrate from other states after initial relocation. In this sense, the Director indicated that the actual number of refugee children enrolled and being serviced by local schools could be prone to tremendous fluctuation.

As a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) that currently partners with the local school district in order to provide educational programs to the refugee population, New Beginnings is in its infancy. Presently, New Beginnings is legally incorporated as a Non-Profit Organization (NPO), and has been in operation for the past two academic
calendar years. During its inaugural year of operation, 2012-2013, it began its p-12 educational programming in the form of an after school tutoring program. However, this official tutoring program had a grass-roots predecessor started by two key volunteer leaders: one who had tremendous longevity with the East African refugee population, and another who worked extremely hard to build trust with refugee parents, forging pathways into the community at the local level.

The first key volunteer leader, Diane, had been working at the local level with the East African refugee population for several years. Her longevity with the population extends across state lines and institutional boundaries, and stretches back into more distant timelines. Diane has worked for multiple NGOs that serve refugee populations, and she found her way to New Beginnings by following groups of East African refugees that migrated to Glendale Heights from another state in order to reconnect with their families. After relocating to continue to serve the refugee population with whom she had been working in another state, Diane began to seek out and network with many local NGOs including Non-Profits, Faith-Based Organizations, Volunteer Agencies, and Grass Roots Organizations in order to explore strategies for securing social and educational assistance for the families she currently serves.

During her networking with a Faith-Based Organization in late 2011, Diane met and recruited the second key volunteer leader, Arun, to begin an after school tutoring program for one refugee child whose parents had expressed to Diane that he was in need of educational support. Over the course of several weeks during the summer of 2012, Diane connected Arun directly to the family. Arun began to meet with their son to tutor
him in math, but quickly discovered that the family was comprised of a handful of other children who could also benefit from tutoring, as he explains:

This basically started with just one kid, who required tutoring in his math. As I went in and started helping him out I found that there was big need there. His family- his brother, sisters, aunties, uncles all around the same age was also in his school, so I would pull the other kids along, too. And that’s kind of how we, kind of a grass root thing how we began. And then we went on for another couple of weeks and then we were getting more kids. We didn’t know how to control it. But we were happy to have more kids and then we went to the, you know, my church and we asked for a couple of volunteers and that’s when the program kind of started growing. [First Interview, lines 5-31]

As the initial ground level operation evolved, Arun recruited a small team of three volunteers to begin tutoring 12 -15 refugee children on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. after the start of school in August of 2012. From this inception to the present, what started as a grass roots tutoring program has undergone multiple phases of organizational development. As data will illustrate, the forms of representation available to refugee families through the NGO and its volunteers changed as the organization itself evolved, supporting the key finding that organizational structure affects the forms of representation available to refugee families through the NGO and its volunteers.
In order to explore the forms of representation available to refugee families at various phases of New Beginning’s development, I have used data to identify four phases of organizational development that trace New Beginning’s organizational structure from its inception to the time that data collection concluded. These are: (1) Phase 1: Birth and growth of a grass-roots movement, (2) Phase 2: Legal incorporation as a Non-Profit Organization/Volunteer Agency, (3) Phase 3: Clarifying mission, training volunteers, and developing institutional structure and culture, and (4) Official partnership with the school district & launch of the mentoring program. I now set forth to discuss each phase and their corresponding forms of representation.

**Phase 1: Birth and Growth of a Grass-Roots Movement**

Refugee parental interest in the modest grass roots tutoring project that served only a handful of refugee children quickly grew as those children began to tell their parents and peers about the benefits of attending the after school tutoring sessions. Arun, himself a naturalized Asian immigrant to the United States and a staunch believer in the power of education to increase children’s future opportunities, began to receive calls from new refugee parents inquiring about the possibility of sending their children to the tutoring program. He indicates:

Well, I certainly think it was totally word of mouth there’s no two words about it. We didn’t know how to control it. But we were happy to have more kids. I had no background in education. [At first] most of our volunteers had no background in education at all. We had 14 kids and what- three or four volunteers and we were
just crazy. And there was no structure at all and that’s where we started working.

[First Interview, Lines 33-39]

Similarly, Naomi, New Beginning’s current director of adult education programming, also discussed its birth and growth as a grass-roots movement:

This actually would begin I guess with our faith community. They recognized that there was a group of East African refugees living on the west side [of town] and so they began reaching out to them…this was an opportunity to volunteer our time and help in ways we knew were needed. So we went and did that. We have not put out flyers. We have not had to do anything. It has all been word of mouth. All of the students that are coming right now, come because someone spoke to them about us and invited them. [First Interview, Lines 124-148]

During the grass roots phase of development, the tutoring program took place in the public housing apartment complex at the heart of the refugee community and focused primarily on homework assistance. In order to operate the tutoring program, Arun and his small team of volunteers faced several obstacles to growth. The first was a 45-minute commute to and from the apartment complex, which was an initial deterrent for recruiting more volunteers. As indicated in his first interview, the primary volunteer pool for New Beginnings’ tutors came from a Faith-Based Organization on the opposite side of the city, and many of them were unable to commit to such a long commute during the workweek. The second obstacle was limited space for accepting more children into the tutoring program, which continued to run twice a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7:00
p.m. – 9:00 p.m. Consequently, for the first six months the program was in operation as a grass roots movement, Arun was unable to accept more children into the tutoring program due constraints on time, space, and volunteer team capacity. Despite these limitations, representation of refugee educational interests occurred during phase 1 in the following ways.

**Representation during phase 1.** During the grass roots phase of development, data indicate that the educational needs of refugee children were identified and represented, although the forms of representation available were affected by the grass-roots structure of New Beginnings at the time. By applying the lenses made available by my theoretical framework, it becomes clear that at least two forms of representation occurred during phase 1: symbolic representation and nondemocratic representation. It is noteworthy that at this time, the representation of refugee children’s educational needs occurred among and between NGO volunteers. During this phase of development, no data was captured that suggested that representation occurred between New Beginnings, its volunteers, and the school. While representation was not happening directly with school leaders at this time, the finding that representation occurred at this phase is relevant because it illustrates the ways in which the attitudes and beliefs about the East African refugee population began to take shape within New Beginnings as key leaders and volunteers began to represent the educational needs of the refugee population to one another. It also illustrates how representative relationships were being built between New Beginnings’ key leaders and the refugee population, who, data suggest, recognized them as agents capable of representing their needs to those with the resources to assist them.
**Symbolic representation.** Symbolic representation occurs when any individual or community invests trust in an agent based on affective associations or emotional beliefs in that agent’s representation of their interests (Pitkin, 1967). When New Beginnings began as a grass roots movement, symbolic representation occurred primarily through Arun, the Director of New Beginning’s p-12 mentoring program, and Hye, the Executive Director of New Beginnings, who had established rapport and trust with the refugee population. From the perspective of study participants and Arun and Hye themselves, refugee parents seemed to recognize Arun and Hye as individuals with whom they shared certain symbolic characteristics and who had available resources and agency to advocate for their needs. Consequently, they seemed to invest trust in Arun and Hye, whom they believed capable of representing their needs to others who could also help them. The first indicator that symbolic representation may have been present surfaced during an informal conversation I had with Hye while we were discussing my research progress. My field notes from this encounter illustrate:

While catching up with Hye about how data collection is going at the research site, our conversation branched out, and I asked him about how it was going building relationships with refugee leaders and families. He mentioned that he thought it was helpful that he and Arun were dark-skinned, spoke with accents, and were naturalized immigrants themselves. He said he thought it gave them a form of social and cultural currency to earn the trust of the refugee community as they pursue relationships in Glendale Heights. According to him, they shared these experiences and identities with the refugees in ways that middle-class,
white, native-English speaking, birthright-citizen volunteers don’t. [Field Notes, 08/03/2013]

Later, in an interview, when asked to clarify his perspective, Hye stated:

It seems to me that non-Anglo immigrants [like Arun and me] serve as a useful bridge between the incoming refugee community and the Anglo context within which these refugees find themselves. We are able to identify to a reasonable extent with both sides, so to speak, and mediate for, advocate for and explain each side to the other. There’s a degree of safety, which comes from a sense that Arun and I have walked their road before them, to a certain extent. Certainly we are greatly privileged compared to those we serve, but we’ve all faced the challenge of settling into a very different world than the one in which we grew up. [First Interview, Lines 20-44]

And, when asked about how such shared characteristics as immigration, multilingualism, race, and ethnicity might assist the refugee population in identifying Arun and him as individuals capable of understanding their challenges and advocating for their needs, Hye responded:

Yes, I think so. Arun and I serve as an informal bridge into a very different context… [Although,] I’m not so sure Arun and I are the end game. In the final analysis, we will be specially trusted to advocate for the needs of the refugee community until the bridge is built, and Anglos have genuine relationships with the community. The Anglos will always be seen as those who have final say and
power - and when they are also able to have trust and understanding, the need for
Arun and I to function as a bridge will diminish. [First Interview, Lines 45 -65]

Hye’s perspective, which highlights the ways in which symbolic shared characteristics
and experiences have enabled he and Arun to forge relationships with refugees being
served by New Beginnings, suggests that these shared characteristics have been a salient
factor in the refugee population’s willingness to trust Hye and Arun as individuals
capable of understanding their needs and representing them to others.

Arun also notes how sharing certain experiences and identities with the refugee
population has assisted him in understanding their needs and gaining their trust. When
asked to share his perspective about how he saw his personal story of immigrating to the
United States providing him with opportunities to build relationships with refugee
parents, he stated:

I’m originally from Asia. I was ten years old when my father passed away, so I
really didn’t have, when I was thirteen or fourteen I really didn’t have a father
figure to guide me and direct me. But, and to this day I don’t understand why-
God gave me a chance- really an opportunity to live through some difficult
circumstances- God gave me a chance to come to this great country. I shouldn’t
be alive today talking about it…So, I felt I was uniquely qualified because of my
own experiences to help these kids to see the value of education. You know-
because I had my education and have a comfortable job I can afford the things I
can. And I want to give the same thing to these kids that everything is possible in
this country and that all you need is the opportunity. If you have the education this
country will provide. Nothing is given free. But you can achieve what you want if
you work hard and you do it. And education is the key to it. [First Interview,
Lines 199-231]

Later, when asked if the trust he had established with the refugee population had resulted
in any refugee parents communicating the educational needs of their children to him,
Arun answered:

Yeah, mainly with education. They’ll come in- I have many families who start by
just bringing one of their kids in [to our program]- and now they have asked to
bring the younger siblings, too. [First Interview, Lines 442- 454]

Similarly, Kelly, a key volunteer at New Beginnings, also notices the ways in which
Arun functions as a symbolic representative when she describes how his shared
characteristics with the refugee population have been a catalyst for trust with the refugee
families whose children participate in the p-12 tutoring program. She states:

I think the fact that we’re lead by a minority person, an immigrant himself whose
skin color is different, speaks with an accent, who came to America. I think that is
our strength. He can go into the homes in this community of this particular
immigration population and he can have a connection with them while those of us
who have light skin, blonde hair, blue eyes, we would be automatically x’d out.
They wouldn’t even want to hear us. We don’t look like them. Having Arun being
who he is, is one of- I think- one of our greatest strengths. And I really wish that
we had more minorities, more immigrants working among us. I would love to see a more diversified population among the tutors. I think there would be a bigger element of trust. I just think it would benefit us more if we had more ‘Aruns’ on board. [First Interview, Lines 669-679]

Thus, such data illustrate the ways in which Hye and Arun’s shared symbolic characteristics and experiences have been a conduit into the refugee community, enabling them to establish trust with refugee families. This trust, based on symbolic factors, has been a salient factor in making refugee parents feel comfortable seeking out Arun and Hye as representative agents capable of understanding and advocating for the educational needs of their children.

**Nondemocratic representation.** According to Rehfeld’s (2006) conceptualization of nondemocratic representation, “political representation arises simply by reference to a relevant audience accepting a person as such. Thus, political representation, per se, is not a particularly democratic phenomenon at all” (p. 2). Data suggest that as such an audience, refugee parents and refugee community leaders in Glendale Heights accepted both Arun and Hye as nondemocratic representatives of their educational interests for reasons beyond symbolic affect. Both Hye and Arun invest a substantial amount of time both volunteering at New Beginnings and being present in Glendale Heights. Even though neither lives in Glendale Heights, each spend between 10-15 hours per week providing serves to refugees or frequenting community establishments and attending community events. They eat lunch at East African restaurants in Glendale Heights. They attend soccer games and spelling bees at Glendale Elementary School. They shop at the
East African bazaar and have become acquaintances with the Imams who guide worship at local mosques. They are occasionally invited into the apartment homes of refugee families, where refugee families open up and share their stories of relocation and resettlement, as well as the challenges they face as they seek to establish stability and self-sufficiency in the United States.

Data suggest that Hye and Arun’s presence in the refugee community has contributed to the refugee population’s acceptance of them as nondemocratic representatives of their interests. My field notes illustrate:

After the advisory council meeting this afternoon, several advisory council members were joking that Arun had become such a strong presence in the refugee community that they were starting to refer to him as the Mayor of Glendale Heights. Apparently, refugee parents show up at New Beginnings and ask to speak with Arun because they’ve heard he is a person who can help their children become more successful at school. This was noteworthy, given that other study participants have also referenced Arun as the ‘Mayor of Glendale Heights’ in interviews. This suggests that a narrative has begun about Arun as a recognizable representative of refugee educational interests. It also gestures toward the emergence of a shared NGO cultural belief that he is a key person who knows and understands the educational needs of the refugee community. [Field Notes, 08/03/2013]
Nineteen days later, at the volunteer training event, Hye jovially introduced Arun to a room full of new potential volunteers as “The Mayor of Glendale Heights” [Field Notes, 08/22/2013].

Later, when I asked Hye to describe Arun’s unofficial title in an interview, he stated:

I’m sure that the “Mayor” moniker is somewhat of an affectionate exaggeration, simply because at this point we don’t have an extensive network of relationships in the community. We are focused on a few families, and there are hundreds more in the refugee community in Glendale. However, having said that, Arun earns the Mayor moniker through his genuine care for those he serves. He loves the children he tutors, and builds excellent relationship with their parents. He is honest, direct, passionate about their future, and pours out his life in service of their long-term well-being. In response, the refugee community we serve gives him a high degree of affection, respect and authority. [First Interview, Lines 1-20]

Naomi, the Director of Adult Educational Programs for New Beginnings, also provided data that support the assertion that the refugee population recognized key leaders of New Beginnings as nondemocratic representatives of their children’s educational interests. She states:

[At first], we would actually go to their homes. And we were finding out by going to the homes that they really need this- they need help with English, they need help with math. We surveyed several of them- we asked them why do you want to
learn English or why do you want to learn math - how can we help you? And for many, their reasons were ‘we want to help our children with their homework and we cannot do that right now’.

As a follow up question, Naomi was asked if, as those relationships began to form and volunteers from New Beginnings spent time with members of the refugee population, those members of the refugee population expressed what they felt their educational needs were. She replied, “Absolutely.” [First Interview, Lines 101-123]

Thus, during phase 1 of New Beginnings’ organizational development, data captured two forms of representation that occurred: symbolic and nondemocratic. I now progress to the forms of representation that took place during its second phase of development when New Beginnings legally incorporated as a Non-Profit Organization (NPO).

**Phase 2: Legal Incorporation as a Non-Profit Organization (NPO)**

Fueled by his belief in the power of education to transform lives, from August through December, 2012, Arun began exploring how the grass-roots tutoring program could expand into something more organized and more official in order to serve more children. Identifying limitations on meeting space and quality volunteer leaders as obstacles to growth, Arun began to interact with leaders of his Faith-Based Organization (FBO) about the possibility of acquiring a facility in the refugee community that could be capable of housing an after-school tutoring program. During this time, he also began actively recruiting a larger pool of volunteers from within his FBO to serve as tutors.
Through some unexpected but serendipitous events, in January of 2013, the FBO with whom Arun was affiliated acquired several facilities in the heart of the refugee community. Just blocks away from the apartment complexes where the grass-roots program began, the newly acquired primary facility was within walking distance for refugee parents and children. The sudden acquisition of this meeting space allowed Arun and his initial team of volunteers to begin meeting in the facility immediately. Almost overnight, the tutoring program that had been serving a small core of refugee children nearly doubled. However, during the tutoring program’s transition into the newly acquired facility, volunteers and refugee children were added quickly. Induction preparation for both volunteer tutors and the children being served was informal and sparse. Other than an obligatory background check required by the FBO supplying volunteers to the program, there were no stated criteria for accepting individuals as volunteers. Any individual who expressed an interest in serving with the program and passed the background check was welcomed as a volunteer. Similarly, during this phase of rapid growth and transition into the new facility, there were no stated criteria for accepting refugee children into the program. Any child whose parents contacted Arun for permission to attend the program was accepted until space and current volunteer capacity were exhausted.

As the tutoring program continued to gain the attention of refugee parents, it also began to gain the attention of key leaders in the FBO that supplied its volunteers. As FBO leaders and volunteers continued to build relationships with refugee parents, it became clear that the needs of the refugee community went beyond p-12 education initiatives and
encompassed a broader range of social services such as adult education, citizenship education, English as a Second Language programming, medical services, and legal services. In response to these needs, in January 2013, leaders at the FBO decided to form a Board of Directors and pursue incorporation as a full-service Non-Profit Organization with various departments that would share the newly acquired facilities. They appointed Hye as the Executive Director and were granted legal incorporation. In the spring of 2013, New Beginnings Refugee Assistance Center officially came into existence as a Non-Governmental Organization classified under Non-Profit status.

During this second phase of organizational development, from January to May of 2013, New Beginnings provided p-12 educational tutoring services to approximately 20 refugee children on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 7:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m. Arun became the Director of New Beginnings’ p-12 educational programming under Hye’s direction and leadership. During this time period, the program’s expansion was rapid, multi-faceted, and dynamic. As a result, volunteer turnover, attrition, and burnout was high. In an interview, Arun clarified the challenges he faced during this phase of development, stating:

Our program is currently disorganized- and we’ve started noticing that this affects volunteers- we found a couple of tutors saying okay I’ve had enough, we don’t have any proper structure- no proper starting times. And so that began us thinking okay how can we keep our tutors motivated and excited and keep the program going. Without the volunteers, the whole thing falls apart. [First Interview, Lines 72-77]
This need to add structure led Arun to recruit several key leaders to lead various teams to design and execute various aspects of the tutoring program. Brian, a regional textbook representative for a major textbook publishing company, was one such leader. In May of 2013, Brian visited New Beginning’s facility and observed several tutoring nights. He then made recommendations to Arun for developing a mission, training volunteers, and developing institutional structure and culture. As the next section will show, Brian’s recommendations launched the tutoring program into its third phase of development.

**Representation during phase 2.** Data captured by this study suggest that during phase 2 of its organizational development, no new forms of representation began to occur, and symbolic and nondemocratic representation continued as the forms of representation made available to the refugee population at that time. However, while data did not reveal any new forms of representation at this time, it did reveal that symbolic and nondemocratic representations’ reach expanded to more members of the refugee population as more refugee families began to seek educational services for their children at New Beginnings. Arun clarifies:

We started with just a handful in the apartments, and we’ve started growing with more and more kids. One became two and he would invite his friend over and then before you knew it we were up to 15, and in the last week, we’ve added eight new kids. [Second Interview, Lines 49-52]

As he did during phase 1, Arun continued to meet with the parents of the refugee children being served by New Beginnings during phase 2. Thus, symbolic and nondemocratic
representation continued in phase 2- and they expanded to represent the interests of more
refugee families whose children began to receive services during phase 2.

**Phase 3: Clarifying Mission, Training Volunteers, and Developing Institutional Structure**

At the end of phase 2 of organizational development, Arun recruited Brian, a
former p-12 administrator and current textbook representative for a major textbook
publishing company, as a volunteer and consultant for the tutoring program. Brian visited
New Beginning’s facility and observed its educational programming on several
occasions. Following his visits, he then made suggestions to Arun for developing a six-
month growth plan. Brian recalls how he got involved:

Before I sent any resources to them, I went out to New Beginning’s facility. But it
was so long- it was from like 6:30 [pm] until 9:30 [pm]. And before I even went, I
was like- okay- I knew that it wasn’t going to work well for the kids but I had to
see it first, you know. So I was sitting with this girl, this kindergartener and it was
9:00 and she’s falling asleep. So, I just made notes. I understand that volunteers
have a 45-minute commute to get to the facility, but we’ve got to address this
issue of time. I’m looking at it as an educator and I’m saying the time is too long
and others are looking at it as volunteers and saying we have to make it worth our
volunteers’ time- we’ve got to get two hours of instruction in. And so we really
had a conversation about mentoring versus tutoring. And like what is the real
role? And so I really challenged Arun and his team to think through this notion of
being a mentor versus just being a tutor and just getting them through their homework that day or something. And, so that was one of the things that I recommended. [First Interview, Lines 431 - 462]

In addition to recommending the shift from tutoring to mentoring, Brian also recommended revising the schedule of the program, reducing its overall time commitment and providing structured activities for various time slots. He recalls:

And the other thing was just the structure of the time. There was very little organization. As a consultant, I recommended an hour-and-a-half time block. I suggested that they do some assessments before every session starts, and let’s focus on addressing reading and math. That’s really all you can address in that hour-and-a-half. It’s not a homework help session or other stuff. And so the big push then, too, was if you use the programs [developed by my textbook company] you’ll be able to go to the schools around there and you’ll be able to have conversations with them. [First Interview, Lines 462 - 480]

By conversations, Brian meant that the assessments and instructional programs his textbook company could provide quantifiable data about student progress to schools and school leaders in a language that they understood and recognized as legitimate. This was because his position as a regional textbook representative privileged him with insider knowledge about which schools used which curriculums. In the case of Glendale Elementary, Brian knew that it used curriculum from his textbook company. When asked if that was the case, he stated:
Glendale Elementary does. So Arun and I went and met with the principal there-we walked in and had the Diagnostic Literacy Assessments, and the principal said, ‘This is amazing! I don’t know of any tutoring programs in the state that are doing the Diagnostic Literacy Assessment program in order to see the growth in their students.’ She was excited because now they would able to look at the reading assessment that the students do in a non-school setting versus the school setting. What is that? How is that parsed out? How is that growing over time? How is what’s happening at New Beginnings correlated to growth in the classroom? So that’s really cool. So, I knew what the vision of New Beginnings was. I knew if we wanted to engage the schools, then the way the schools are going to take the tutoring program seriously is if they’re doing serious things. You know, so we’re doing these things that are recognized by educators as legitimate.

[First Interview, Lines 480 - 510]

In addition to shifting the focus from tutoring to mentoring, formalizing a program structure, and adopting his textbook company’s assessments and instructional materials, Brian suggested one other change to New Beginning’s p-12 program. He suggested that New Beginnings align its program to correspond to the school districts academic calendar by offering three 10-week sessions per year: a fall session, a spring session, and a summer session with several weeks off in between. He states his reason for doing so, noting that it would help with volunteer attrition:

One other thing comes to mind- I said okay set a ten week time period, have a break. Then, do another ten-week session- because as educators we’ll go every
week- we see the benefit of it. But as someone who’s not an educator, which is most of the volunteer base, I can commit to ten weeks. I can commit to ten-week chunks of time. [First Interview, Lines 510 - 526]

With the end of the public school academic calendar in late May, Arun began to incorporate Brian’s recommendations. In order to execute these changes to the program, Arun assembled an advisory council of key volunteer leaders who would take ownership of regrouping and redesigning the tutoring program over the summer. In order to accomplish this objective, Arun intentionally recruited key volunteer leaders that he knew had strong connections to the field of education. For instance, he recruited certified classroom teachers, intervention specialists, and coaches. He also continued to resource Brian as a consultant.

Arun clarifies the development of these leadership structures during phase 2 of development:

We’ve started working in teams and that’s something that I want to do more, yeah, because of chain of command you can’t have only one person in control- somewhat frustrating for me and to us all. But the way I like to manage and to do things is to have a group consensus. I’ve organized an advisory council, my executive board for us to work together. [First Interview, Lines 43-60]

In addition to the development of an advisory council, Arun discussed the development of various teams, such as the curriculum team, stating:
What I’m looking for [in the development of these teams] is I’m not an expert in this field so I’m looking to the experts to guide us. The curriculum team- these are teachers in middle school and elementary school who are qualified in their area and who are advising us and that’s where Jaime- she’s going to be responsible for curriculum…So right now that is the only subcommittee we have. Do I see other things happening? Yes. But, we need to be a lot more organized. We need to be a lot more structured and this is something that we’ve learned in these six months.

[First Interview, Lines 60-74]

Throughout the summer of 2013, the advisory council met twice once per month in efforts to clarify the program’s mission, determine what would constitute adequate volunteer training, and develop processes and procedures that would define the p-12 educational program’s institutional structure and culture. Several changes emerged from these advisory sessions. First, the advisory council decided to adopt Brian’s recommendation and redefine the program’s focus from tutoring to mentoring. This decision was based on volunteers’ observations that refugee children needed not only assistance with academic curriculum, but also assistance with assimilation into American culture. The advisory council believed that repositioning the p-12 program as mentoring would allow volunteers to serve as both academic tutors and personal life coaches to refugee children, creating space for instilling in refugee children the types of attitudes and behaviors that would prepare them for successful navigation of the U.S. education system and beyond.
Second, with respect to the academic focus of the mentoring program, the advisory council also decided to follow Brian’s recommendation and shift the program’s focus away from assisting refugee children with their school assigned homework and toward individualized educational interventions that would target gaps in their learning. Following that decision, Brian donated a full line of textbooks and educational resources to New Beginnings as well as his company’s assessment programs for reading and math.

Third, in order to address volunteer attrition and burn-out, the advisory council decided to follow Brian’s recommendations and adjust the days and times that the mentoring program would offer its services to the refugee children. From Phase 1 to Phase 3, the program had grown from a handful of volunteers servicing a handful of refugee youth to over 60 volunteers servicing upwards of 30 refugee youth. In efforts to retain these volunteers, the council decided that starting in August of 2013, services would still be offered twice per week, but on Mondays and Thursdays. Similarly, the council reduced the time frame for offering services from two hours to 90 minutes, and adopted a new structural schedule. Additionally, the advisory council decided to structure the mentoring program so that it would offer three sessions annually, a Fall Session, a Spring Session, and a Summer Session. Each session would last for 10 weeks with a one-month break between sessions. Volunteers were then required to commit to serving on one night per week for the entire ten-week session with the opportunity to opt in or out of the next session during the break between them.

Lastly, the advisory council decided that it should recruit and recognize specialized leadership teams in order to best develop and run the mentoring program.
Such teams included: (1) a curriculum team that would oversee the administration of math and reading assessments, develop individualized educational intervention plans for each refugee child based on these assessments, and modify these intervention plans at the end of every session to make adjustments based on children’s progress, and (2) an administrative team that would recruit and track volunteer participation, develop training seminars for volunteers, match volunteers with refugee children, coordinate mentor instructional materials with the curriculum team, design and monitor an incentive program for children’s attendance and good behavior, and be responsible for all program wide communications between the Arun, the advisory council, and volunteers.

During the summer of 2013, the advisory council and the leadership teams it recruited worked diligently to put these changes into effect. The curriculum team met with every refugee child enrolled in New Beginning’s program and administered individual assessments for math and reading using the donated assessment tools provided by Brian. The administrative team recruited over 60 volunteers and developed training seminars to prepare them for working with refugee children as mentors. These combined efforts paved the way for the fourth phase of organizational development: official partnership with the metropolitan school district and the local school responsible for the educational achievement of the refugee children receiving services at New Beginnings.

**Representation during phase 3.** Data captured by this study suggest that during phase 3 of its organizational development, no new forms of representation began to occur, and symbolic and nondemocratic representation continued as the forms of representation made available to the refugee population at that time. While data did not
reveal any new forms of representation that began during phase 3, it did reveal that symbolic and nondemocratic representations’ reach expanded to more members of the refugee population. However, this expansion occurred differently than it did during phase 2. During phase 2, representative expansion occurred as more refugee families began seeking educational services at New Beginnings. During phase 3, representative expansion occurred as more volunteers began developing trusting relationships with refugee parents. Data contributed by Arun support to this assertion:

We’ve been using tutoring as a mechanism to mentor these kids. So, that has to be reflected in the program also. So now when we refer to this it’s no longer the kids’ tutoring program, but it’s called the kids’ mentoring program. And I’ve seen a big shift, as I see the adults starting to connect with the kids…For instance, I see, uh connections being made- where on last Thursday two mentors went to the kids’ homes and wanted to meet the kids’ parents and mentors they’re starting to establish relationships with the families now. So a lot of good things have happened by having this structure, by shifting focus from calling it tutoring to mentoring. [Second Interview, Lines 1-45]

Thus, during the third phase of organizational development symbolic and nondemocratic representation continued. The structural advancements made during this time paved the way for the fourth phase of development, official partnership with the public school district and Glendale Elementary. During the fourth phase of development, data provided evidence that surrogate representation began to occur alongside symbolic and nondemocratic forms.
Phase 4: Official Partnership with the School & Launch of the Mentoring Program

In August of 2013, New Beginnings launched its redesigned p-12 educational program for refugee children. Simultaneously, it began an official partnership with Glendale Elementary School, the local school responsible for serving the majority of the refugee students receiving educational services at New Beginnings at the time. The previous spring, Arun had reached out to the principal of the local public elementary school in the hopes of building collaborative relationships with teachers and school leaders who serve the same refugee population. Eventually, he was able to earn the trust of the school’s leader and convince the building principal, Bonnie, that New Beginnings was not a fledgling charter school that wanted to pilfer refugee children from Glendale Elementary. Through his relationship with Bonnie, Arun was invited to give a formal presentation to the school board of the metropolitan school district in order to be considered for official partnership with the district. The presentation went well and New Beginnings received board approval to become an official partner of the metropolitan school district and subsequently, Glendale Elementary. Arun describes how this happened, and notes the difficulty he initially had in making contact with Bonnie because of her suspicion that New Beginnings was a charter school in disguise. He states:

When I first went and met with Bonnie, she thought we were a charter school. And she was very defensive- she felt very threatened. So I listened to her and when I started talking to her, [I told her] that what we want is to partner with the school, that we weren’t a charter school but we were just here to help the school, work with the schools… I just listened to her…I said you know what- why don’t
you come and visit us? But you know what? Don’t tell me when you are coming. So I think that is something that was very different. When I challenged her to come and take a look at our program, but unannounced. [First Interview, Lines 302-321]

Although she did not come to visit New Beginnings, Arun’s assurance that New Beginnings was not a charter school and that she could visit New Beginnings first hand if she wanted, opened Bonnie up to the idea of partnership with New Beginnings. In the weeks that followed, Arun earned Bonnie’s trust, and she petitioned the school board of her district to allow Arun to make a formal presentation to the district’s sub committee on school-community partnerships. The objective of the presentation was to seek board approval to make New Beginnings an authorized educational partner with the district and school. Arun elaborates:

We had about 8-10 members on the board sub-committee. I was given exactly 10 minutes to talk about New Beginnings and they were very clear about the 10 minutes. I did talk to them about the vision of their district and that we totally believed and were aligned with that vision. Their vision is that ‘Each student is highly educated, prepared for leadership and service, and empowered for success as a citizen in a global community’. I talked to them about the one on one mentoring and tutoring we do focusing mainly on Math and English and about college and not dropping out of school. I also told them that we wanted to partner with them, as they were the experts, but we had the ability to do the one on one with the students who needed the most help. We know that it is very hard for a
teacher to focus on a few kids who are behind in their work and that is where we come into play and can play a support role. [Third Interview, Lines 4-37]

During the presentation to the school board sub-committee for educational partnerships, school board members showed great interest in the partnership, asking him details about how the program functioned and how it recruited volunteers. In particular, they wanted to know if New Beginning’s volunteers went through background checks prior to working with children. After assuring them that all volunteers must complete a background check prior to volunteering with New Beginnings, the sub-committee thanked Arun for the presentation and excused Arun from the meeting, noting that they needed to discuss the potential benefits of partnership privately before making a final decision. A week later, the sub-committee contact Arun and notified him that they had approved New Beginnings as an authorized educational partner of the district and Glendale Elementary [Third Interview, Lines 37-67].

Once New Beginnings became an authorized partner of the school district, Arun was granted greater access to Glendale Heights administrators and teachers in order to better coordinate educational remediation services with the mentoring program. He was able to meet directly with faculty and staff at the school to discuss individual student needs. He was also able to attend extracurricular academic and athletic events hosted by the school. Data show that this official partnership, and the relationships that began because of it, expanded the ways in which representation of refugee interests occurred.
Representation during phase 4. Official partnership with the school district enabled a third form of representation to occur: surrogate representation. Surrogate representation continued to operate alongside symbolic and nondemocratic forms. Moreover, surrogate representation occurred in two ways—through the school board and through the NGO volunteers’ interactions with school leaders.

**Surrogate representation: the school board.** Surrogate representation is “representation that occurs when legislators represent constituents outside their own districts” (Mansbridge, 2003, p. 515). While the agent is chosen by a constituency, the agent chooses to represent the interests of those that either reside outside of the geographic boundaries of the agent’s municipality, or those from within the municipality who do not have the right to vote and are therefore excluded from the agent’s accountability-exercising constituency. In the case of the refugee population being served by Glendale Heights, the school board sub-committee demonstrated surrogate representation by choosing to attend to its needs—even though members of the refugee populations had no power to elect the school board members responsible for making decisions about school-community partnerships. Through this attention and advocacy, the sub-committee was persuaded, after a week of deliberation, to sanction New Beginnings as an authorized partner for the benefit of refugee children.

**Surrogate representation: school leaders and non-governmental organization volunteers.** As an official partner with the district, New Beginnings and its volunteers gained access to Glendale Elementary, school leaders, and teachers in ways that were previously unavailable to them. This access allowed new relationships and new channels
of communication to emerge in ways that school leaders and teachers, as governmental agents, were able to share information with NGO volunteers in order to advocate for their academic success. Similarly, NGO volunteers were able to share information with school leaders through ongoing symbolic and nondemocratic representation. Arun provides data that illustrate this. When asked about how the partnership was going, he responded:

Very well. I meet with Bonnie regularly. I just met with her- the school had an open house, so I got to meet a lot of the people there. A lot of school administrators, a lot of the teachers. I was able to talk to each of the teachers about the kids- about how we can establish ourselves, which takes time, about how we will work together. You know, it’s about sharing the responsibility of the teachers. We are here to partner with them and work with them. It’s a partnership to share we’re, we’re not here to take the kids away. [I asked them] how can we partner with them to help the kids? What are the areas the kids need to be strengthened in? And again that gave me better overview of each of the kids, on what their strengths and weaknesses were…what they were good at, what they were not good at, how we can help them. So I did get a lot of feedback from the teachers, a lot of feedback. [Second Interview, Lines 66-119]

Tina, a key volunteer at New Beginnings, also provided data that reveal how official partnership with the school enabled surrogate representation. About the partnership, she states:
I guess now we’ve kind of gotten a partnership with the metropolitan school
district, and so then now we have, we can have access to see the kids’ report cards
and stuff like that so we can interact with the teachers and, umm, kind of find out
from the teachers what the kids’ needs are. [First Interview, Lines 101-112]

And, when asked about how New Beginnings may be representing the needs of refugee
children to teachers and school leaders since the partnership had become officially
authorized, Tine responded:

I’m aware of one child, she’s the one that we suspected has, umm, some sort of a
learning disability and so we discovered it when I worked with her when she first
came to the program. At that point, she was in fifth grade and she couldn’t even
read basic words- stuff first graders would know. She kept mixing up her
numbers, she would flip them, if it was 28, she’d say 82. So then I was kind of
thinking maybe she might have dyslexia or something. Obviously I’m not trained
[as an educator] but I thought something was up, and the other tutor who works
with her had also written the same comment in the mentor journals. So we talked
to Arun and I was like you know, I don’t think I am qualified enough to work
with her and so that’s when we got Becky to start working with her because
Becky is a certified special education teacher…so Becky worked with her and
agreed that there might be some sort of learning disability…and then Arun did
talk to the schools about it because we were wondering how this child got moved
on to sixth grade when she could barely read at the kindergarten level. [First
Interview, Lines 167-200]
Similarly, Becky, a key volunteer at New Beginnings, and a certified Special Education teacher, discusses another situation in which official partnership with the school enabled surrogate representation. She recalls:

[We can] absolutely advocate. Arun goes to the schools and talks to the principal, to the teachers and becomes involved with these kids- advocating for them to their families. Like he is, the relationship he has with their families. For instance, there was a sixth grade boy and the school was trying to – he was in sixth grade and they were trying to put him back in the fifth grade. And Arun and his mentors had all gone to the kid’s house and kind of talked to the parents about what their rights were and kind of what might happen at school and try to communicate those things to them. And what they think should happen. I think that was like a huge moment. He ended up staying in sixth grade instead of going back to fifth grade. Talking from a teacher’s perspective when the family isn’t super involved, there’s kids that kind of just get thrown to the wayside. You know what I mean? I think advocating for them is so huge because I feel like that population has no advocate right now. And I definitely feel the weight of advocating for them because if we don’t do it who else is going to? You know. It’s hard. And it’s not easy and it’s time consuming, and it might take you out of your comfort zone but if we’re not going to do it, who else is? And I feel like it’s so evident in this population that we’re working with because I don’t think anyone else has reached out. You know, I feel like we are the first ones that are advocating. [First Interview, Lines 432-465]
Finally, Dale, a key volunteer and advisory council member for the mentoring program at New Beginnings discusses how official partnership with the district has enabled greater advocacy opportunities as Arun has been able to meet directly with school leaders and teachers. He states:

Arun’s efforts to connect with the parents and go into where they live and also to connect with the principal of the elementary school and to the next level, to partnership through the school board are the beginnings of advocating for these kids. And I think that’s part of what this particular program at New Beginnings is-starting with connecting with math and reading and really trying to invest in the kid’s lives and know them- and to have some continuity with each one of their tutors and continuity with the kids that come to the program so we can understand them and advocate for them. You know, what we advocate is for them to have the opportunities that other kids have. So I think that’s something that, you know, the program is able to do in talking with the parents and their teachers and the school board. [First Interview, Lines 168-185]

**Summary of Key Finding**

Data of this study coalesced in support of the assertion that as a Non-Governmental Organization, New Beginnings and its volunteers did function as representatives of refugee interests in local schools. However, data revealed the ways in which this representation was nuanced. As New Beginning’s organizational structure evolved, an increasing number of forms of representation were enabled. During phases 1,
2, and 3 of organizational development, symbolic and nondemocratic representation occurred. After the establishment of official partnership with the school during phase 4, surrogate representation began to occur. Table 2 summarizes New Beginning’s phases of organizational development and their corresponding forms of representation.

Table 2

*Forms of Representation Available During Phases of Organizational Development*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase of Development</th>
<th>Descriptive</th>
<th>Symbolic</th>
<th>Latent</th>
<th>Surrogate</th>
<th>Non-democratic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase 1: Grass-Roots Movement</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 2: Legal Incorporation</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 3: Mission, Training, and Institutional Structure</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 4: Official Partnership with Local School</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Latent representation began at the inception of the grass-roots movement, and has existed as a general veneer during all phases of organizational development.
I now proceed to the third key finding with respect to the first research question: do NGOs and their volunteers function as representatives of refugee interests in local schools? Data analysis provided evidence that not only does NGO organizational structure affect the forms of representation available to refugee populations, but also the strength or fragility of the school-community organization partnership does.

**Key Finding: The Strength or Fragility of Partnership Affects Representation**

The second phase of data collection, which began in January 2014, was designed to focus on gathering data from school leaders and teachers. However several unexpected events occurred between phase one of data collection, which focused on gathering data from the NGO and its volunteers, and phase two. These unexpected events occurred between October 2013 and January 2014, and they greatly affected not only Arun’s connection to Glendale Elementary, but also the future of the educational partnership and the types of representation that had been made possible while the partnership was intact. Data collected in response to these unexpected events directed data analysis toward the third key finding about how NGOs and their volunteers represent the needs of refugee children to local schools: namely, that the strength or fragility of a partnership affects representation. I now provide evidence for this assertion.

During the first phase of data collection, a scandal involving key educational leaders in the district erupted in the media. At around the same time, Bonnie, the principal of Glendale Elementary with whom Arun primarily arranged and conducted partnership activities between the school and New Beginnings, was placed on a
temporary leave of absence. To his surprise, when he attempted to contact the school in October 2013 in order to arrange for a visit to the school, he was told that Bonnie had been placed on a leave of absence for an undisclosed period of time and for an undisclosed reason. He learned that an interim principal was assigned to take her place until it was determined whether or not she would be re-instated as the principal of Glendale Elementary. It is unclear whether or not Bonnie had been involved in or implicated in the heavily publicized district scandal, but at the time many school leaders district-wide were either placed on temporary leave or dismissed. Media outlets such as the local newspaper and news stations began daily coverage of the scandal—coverage that went on for the remainder of the study.

When the interim principal began serving at Glendale Elementary, he expressed his reluctance and unwillingness to allow Arun to continue partnership activities with the school. Given the fact he was a temporary administrator, he had no prior knowledge of the partnership and how it functioned, and the school had pressing performance demands, the interim principal placed the partnership with New Beginnings on pause until a permanent principal was either hired or re-instated at Glendale Elementary. As a result, Arun’s connection to the school and New Beginning’s partnership with Glendale Elementary were both jeopardized. For the remainder of the study, attempts by Arun and myself to contact the school, school leaders, or teachers in order to pursue their involvement as study participants were thwarted. Arun and I were both unable to establish communication with the school. My field notes provide data:
In personal communications this week, Arun mentioned that since October, every time he has attempted to make contact with the school, he has been given a new date saying Bonnie will be back on that date. In December when he called the school, they told him Bonnie would be back on January 6th. When he called on January 6th, he was told she would be expected at the end of March. It is now April, and Bonnie has still not been reinstated. His connection to the school has suffered. Progress on the partnership has become stagnate. [Field Notes, 04/24/2012]

In response to the disruption of the partnership caused by Bonnie’s removal from the picture, Arun was markedly downcast about it when he provided an updated during a follow-up interview. In contrast to the excitement he exhibited toward the partnership during previous interviews, the tone of this interaction was noticeably deflated. He stated:

> Since October I have not met any of the teachers to even check on the progress of some of our kids…it is sad. Bonnie was very supportive. The interim principal is extremely nice, but since he is on an interim basis, he is not sure how long he will remain at Glendale Elementary. [Second Interview, Lines 311-317; Third Interview, Lines 4-67]

Such data suggest that while the district officially authorized the partnership between New Beginnings, the school district, and Glendale Elementary, oversight and maintenance of the partnership was too anemic to sustain the partnership when the
relationship with the school leader was severed. Data from my field notes reinforce this assertion:

Since January, I have made multiple attempts to contact the school directly in order to seek interviews with the interim principal or teachers at Glendale. Every time I've called the school, I get an automated voice mail - no actual human being picks up the phone - even when I call during school hours. I've not been able to get anyone to return my calls to the school. I've scoured the school and district websites for email addresses to a to an actual human being employed at the school - to no avail. The only public email address to the school is a generic ‘Contact Us’ email address on the school’s website, which uses the name of the school at the district’s domain name. [Field Notes, 05/01/2014]

Additionally, data compiled during document analysis reinforce the assertion that the partnership between the school district, Glendale Elementary, and New Beginnings was fragile. As a part of document analysis, I foraged the district’s website and the school’s website for any indication that a partnership between New Beginnings and the district existed - and if it did, any information about its logistics and progress. During my immersion in the research site, I conducted this search every three months. Throughout the entire twelve months this project occurred, there was never a mention of the partnership between New Beginnings and the school or district on any of the aforementioned websites. This is especially curious, considering that one of the menu items on the districts websites is, “Community”, which leads to a community page about
the district’s approach to school-community partnerships. It states that, from the perspective of the district,

a partnership is an ongoing, dynamic relationship that benefits schools, students, and partners. Partnerships encourage a collaborative relationship between a school and a business or organization and support the district’s mission to empower students for success in a global society. [District’s Website, Date of Last Access May 8, 2014]

The community page has a link to an online application for organizations to be evaluated for community partnership and includes the contact person to whom inquiries about partnership may be addressed. It is noteworthy that the district’s espoused approach to partnership is one that should be both collaborative and beneficial for partners themselves. Yet, a juxtaposition of these documents with data from Arun’s third interview suggests that after Bonnie was removed from the picture, the partnership between New Beginning and Glendale Elementary was neither collaborative nor beneficial to New Beginnings. Moreover, Arun’s third interview suggests that at least in the case of New Beginnings, there has been no district level involvement, supervision, or guidance for the partnership since it was initially sanctioned by the board’s sub committee for school-community partnerships. Such data further support the assertion that the partnership between New Beginning and Glendale Elementary is frail- and that as a result of this frailty, representation of refugee children’s interests have been curtailed.
With respect to this frailty, an interview with Kelly, head of the high school curriculum at New Beginnings, illuminates the ways in which the severed connection with Glendale Elementary and the absence of district level oversight has affected representation. She states:

I think the biggest challenge we have right now is communication with the school. We need to know what the teachers are assigning, where these kids are struggling, what do you want us to do, where can we be of the best help? What subjects—you know, where are you in scope and sequence in the school year. Where are you? What are you guys working on? So right now we have to rely on just our own knowledge—so identifying their needs becomes really hard. The parents often can’t even identify their needs because they’re new to this country- they don’t understand what’s happening in the schools because of the language barrier. Most of the parents are struggling with English, so they have no clue what’s happening in the school. We find out that kids sign their parents’ names to forms from the school, you just don’t know what’s happening because the kid is the major English speaker. That kid may only be eight years old, but is the major speaker of English in their home. So identifying needs is a real challenge just in general. It would really help if we could talk to the school. [First Interview, Lines 374-395]

In many ways, Bonnie’s leave of absence brought the fragility of the partnership between New Beginnings and Glendale Elementary to the surface. Without Bonnie’s involvement, the partnership deteriorated rapidly. Surrogate representation and the types of advocacy that it had enabled at the end of Phase 4 of New Beginnings development ceased to be
possible—perhaps indefinitely. At the end of data collection in May 2014, the interim principal was still functioning as the school leader, and there was no further clarity as to whether or not Bonnie would be reinstated.

Two points from this data suggest that the partnership between the district, the school, and New Beginnings was fragile. The first is that the partnership deteriorated just by the removal of one school leader. This suggests that the connection between Bonnie and Arun carried the full burden of responsibility for the partnership. Not only were they the two primary leaders responsible for founding the partnership, but also in many ways—they were the partnership. Second, while the school board clearly has an authorizing sub-committee and a process in place for evaluating whether or not the district should partner with various community organizations, data from this study suggest that it does not have a process in place for monitoring, nurturing, and institutionalizing such partnerships. Under these circumstances, at the time data collection ended, the partnership between Glendale Elementary and New Beginnings was tenuous and vulnerable to dissolution.

**Summary of Key Finding**

Data presented in this section provided evidence that the strength or fragility of school and district partnerships with community organizations, such as the NGO in this study, affect representation in ways that may enable and encourage or interrupt and jeopardize the representation of refugee educational interests in schools. In this study, the partnership between New Beginning and Glendale Elementary was too feeble to sustain operation when the key school leader responsible for coordinating partnership activities
was removed from the picture. Her absence not only reduced the types of representation made possible by the partnership, but also resulted in a suspension of partnership activities, threatening the long-term survival of the partnership. The authorizing entity- in this case, the school board- also neglected to establish a strong partnership with the NGO by failing to create progress report expectations, maintain regular communication with NGO key leaders, and stay abreast of circumstances affecting the effectiveness of the partnership. Meanwhile, the representation of refugee educational interests continued despite constraints placed upon it by NGO organizational structure and a fragile school partnership.

**Disconfirming Evidence**

While data from my study support the key findings of this chapter, one case presented itself in which something altogether different occurred vis-à-vis representation: the case of Kelly. Kelly is a key volunteer with New Beginnings p-12 mentoring program, and she is responsible for designing and implementing the curriculum for the high school students receiving services there. Data from Kelly’s case will show how she functioned as a nondemocratic delegate who represented- and was responsive to- a small constituency of young adult refugee students and advocated for their needs to leaders within the NGO. Her case disrupts a totalizing view toward the three key findings of this chapter because it reveals how representation of refugee youth’s educational needs occurred independently from both organizational structure and partnership with the school. I now describe her case in detail, beginning with her role at New Beginnings and her unique approach to designing high school curriculum for refugee youth.
Kelly became involved with New Beginnings in a large part because of her own educational advocacy for her own daughter with special needs. She recalls:

I was a home educator and I educated my own daughter who has learning disabilities. She is under an IEP from dyslexia and a processing disorder. And the way that you have to reach these kids is vastly different than 90% of what is happening in the educational community right now. And I know from working with my own kids and being a substitute teacher in many different school districts on the northern side of the city that there were going to be some unique educational needs that were going to appear down there at New Beginnings, and I knew that I had the abilities to reach refugee kids…That’s kind of what lead me to get involved at New Beginnings. [First Interview, Lines 110-130]

When Kelly joined New Beginnings as a volunteer in 2013, she began to work with a group of refugee children who attended a local high school. However, after implementing the curriculum provided by Brian’s textbook company, she determined that it was not working well for the high school kids. The refugee kids began to share their educational challenges with her with respect to high school curriculum, and the needs they had if they wanted to attain their aspirations of attending a post-secondary institution. In light of the needs that refugee kids were sharing with her, Kelly became their advocate and functioned as a delegate of their interests. She describes how this began:

So what happened is we have high schoolers- currently there’s six of them getting help and I work specifically with four of them. So, I asked them: ‘What are your
goals?’ When I asked them, they all stated that they want to go on to college. So that brings to my mind that you need to be able to get out of high school, and you need ACT/SAT prep so that you can score high enough to get into a college… [For instance], one of the high schoolers said to me in particular, I want to learn better vocabulary because when you know better vocabulary, ‘big words’ as she put it, you sound smarter. ‘You’re absolutely right,’ was my response. So, based on what she said to me, I decided to start a word of the day of SAT vocab words. [First Interview, Lines 130-200]

This portion of Kelly’s interview illustrates a noteworthy item with respect to her representation of refugee youth’s educational needs: it identifies her constituency. The above data provide evidence that the small group of four refugee high school students trusts her and recognizes her as someone who will listen to their needs and be responsive to them. Since these refugee youth do not vote, the development of this constituency is best defined as nondemocratic- it occurs because the group of refugee children recognizes Kelly as an individual who care about their interests, not because it has occurred through a formal selection process such as voting. I now proceed to the next section of data, which illustrate how Kelly becomes a delegate of the high school students’ interests, advocating for their needs to NGO leaders in ways that affect change. She recalls how she tried to implement the standard curriculum at New Beginnings, how that curriculum failed to meet the needs of her constituency, and how she advocated for changes that would benefit her students. She states:
I did try it [the curriculum]- it did not work for them, and deviating from the curriculum model was not easy. It is not necessarily what Arun had in mind, and I had to fight for it. He and I fought all summer long to get to where we are now. He finally came around. He wanted me to go back to basics, you know make sure the high school kids knew multiplication facts, make sure they could add fractions. We were talking fifth and sixth grade math skills and the like. And then he put some other stuff in front of us that was given to us and it was just below their level and the kids were looking at me like this is a waste of our time. They’re in high school, and they needed different supports and they did feel comfortable enough talking to me. I feel like I’m in some way kind of their advocate at school. You know, I don’t talk to the schools, but they come and they say this is what we need, this is where we’re falling behind. This is a real something that we desire. I just- we’ve struck a rapport with each other and I’m just as a part of them as they of me that they feel like they can talk to me. [First Interview, Lines 207-303]

Kelly continues, noting how her students’ educational needs drove her to advocacy for changes in the services they were receiving at New Beginnings:

[At first, Arun’s] whole thing for everybody at New Beginnings, his principle was: you can’t move forward in your education unless you have the building blocks, the foundations in place. While that is true, my contention was the other side of the same coin: These high school kids are trying to keep their head above water in difficult math classes, English classes, history classes, whatever. And if we’re not alongside them in helping them right where they are, then they’re going
to be sinking in school and frustrated because they have to keep up with that and then they’re coming to New Beginnings to do you know basic work that doesn’t really do that much for them. Well, I found they were very frustrated—my high schoolers—who were at the end of their rope. So, I kept at him and I kept at him, Arun we need to meet these kids where they are for whatever reason they have been promoted at school without these basic fundamentals in place. They are in Algebra- we must walk alongside the school and help them at the level of Algebra…that’s where they are. That’s the reality and without that in place, we’re not helping them achieve success at school right now…eventually he listened to me- and now he’ll say, ‘You stuck it with it Miss Kelly, and you convinced me. I wasn’t with you for a long time but I can see that these kids are now starting to bloom!’ So, I just needed to meet the kids right where they were and move with them. [First Interview, Lines 207-303]

Such data illustrate the way in which Kelly functioned as a delegate- an agent who goes to a decision-making entity and advocates for the interests of her constituency. In the case of Kelly, she functioned as a nondemocratic delegate- an agent chosen outside of formal election mechanisms, and entrusted with advocating for the educational needs of her small refugee youth constituency.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has shown that the NGO and its volunteers who were participants in my study did function as representatives of refugee educational interests. In broad terms,
from its inception to its current organizational structure, it has done so primarily through guardianship and a belief in latent representation. However, as the organizational structure evolved, increasing forms of representation became available as the NGO began interacting directly with the local school. Such forms included symbolic, nondemocratic, and surrogate representation. However, the fragility of the partnership between the NGO and the school affected representation, and when the partnership faltered, so did forms of representation.
Chapter 5:
How NGOs and Their Volunteers Identify and Represent Refugee Interests to Schools

The previous chapter presented findings for my first research question, which sought to understand if and how NGOs and their volunteers may function as representative agents for refugee educational interests. My study explored four additional questions, which seek to understand how NGOs and their volunteers identify and represent refugee educational needs to schools, how NGOs facilitate information sharing with schools, how schools facilitate information sharing with NGOs, and how policy may encourage or deter a school-community partnership’s efforts to coordinate educational services. This chapter is devoted to presenting the findings for the second research question, and provides evidence for four key assertions vis-à-vis how New Beginnings identified and represented refugee educational needs to schools. First, data reveal that the NGO in my study relied heavily upon individuals whom the director and key leaders viewed as educational experts in order to identify the needs of refugee children. Second, data indicate that the NGO in my study relied heavily upon educational assessments in order to identify the needs of refugee children. Third, data demonstrate that the NGO in my study relied heavily upon key volunteers to identify the needs of refugee children. Finally, data illustrate that once identified, the NGO represented the educational needs of refugee children through one key leader who functioned as a nondemocratic delegate and
the only direct conduit between the NGO and the school. I now present these findings in detail.

**Key Finding: Reliance Upon Educational Experts**

Data from my study demonstrate that New Beginnings, the NGO that partnered with Glendale Elementary and represented the educational interests to educational leaders there, relied heavily on those that Arun, the Director of the p-12 mentoring program, and other key team leaders viewed as educational experts in order to ascertain the needs of the refugee population. Data captured three types of individuals that NGO leadership viewed as educational experts: teachers, textbook representatives, and school leaders. In this study, these individuals functioned as consultants to the mentoring program. As such, they fortified its overarching guardianship structure and became a part of the altruistic aristocracy that determined the educational needs of the refugee population. The following data support this assertion.

**Teachers**

As the Director for New Beginning’s mentoring program, Arun championed the guidance, advice, and perspective of certified teachers who volunteered as mentors with New Beginnings and functioned as consultants with respect to the educational needs of the refugee youth receiving services. He states:

I’ve been privileged to have quality folks join us, advise us, and give us quality advice and you know, we’ve gotten Jaime, and we’re getting other folks coming in that are educators and experts in this field that are guiding us…these folks have
guided us, provided us valuable input, shown us the value of things. That’s been very helpful. [First Interview, Lines 268-275]

In a follow-up interview several months later, Arun again references the expertise of teachers who have identified the needs of refugee children and helped to shape the content and delivery of the mentoring program:

We’ve got, quality, quality people. It’s not just people who are you know saying, oh, “Let me come in and help,” we’ve got some quality teachers in our program who are able to guide us, and walk us through things. Again, you know my background. I have no, uh, you know, no educational degree, no teaching background. We’ve strengthened the program with a lot of good, quality people and they’re bringing us [curricular] material. So, uh, biggest need is to make sure we’ve got the right materials that will fit the needs of these kids- so that’s something that we’ve got to keep evaluating. These are things that we need to focus on and not lose our vision. We really want to get to these kids to college.

[Second Interview, Lines 121-144]

In further support of this finding, Becky, a key volunteer, and also a state-certified special education teacher employed by a suburban school district, discusses her role as an educational expert and a consultant to the mentoring program. She originally fashioned the individualized curriculum map later developed for each child by the curriculum team. Regarding her influence over this instructional development, she states:
Basically my role is to formulate an individualized curriculum for the kids. I started volunteering in February of last year, and I kept saying to Roger, ‘I feel like every kid needs an individualized curriculum and that’s going to be really hard to do’. But, when we first started the program there was no rhyme or reason. I think I honestly would print off worksheets before I came because I knew what grade level the kids were on in school, so as a teacher I could kind of match it up. And I was like, well, your average tutor isn’t going to know what to do with kids. I felt like the curriculum needed to pinpoint the needs of the kids and that way we could focus on those needs. And I think that for me was the like the biggest part of writing those curriculum maps is that we could maximize our time with the kids and teach them things that they need to know.

When asked about how the curriculum maps and curriculum design came about, Becky references the curriculum team, a group of teachers recruited by Arun to oversee the curriculum of the program. She recalls:

…Jaime and I talked and decided we needed something for the mentors to be able to follow so they - not being teachers- can walk into New Beginnings and have something there. Because I myself was printing off worksheets and almost formulating my own curriculum you could say. I think I started off rotating between four or five kids. I felt like to make a difference, I really needed to be prepared and, if I was thinking that about myself, I was thinking okay what about everyone else? I think a lot of people were playing games and things like that- very unstructured. So, Jaime and I came up with those curriculum maps last
summer. We met a lot of times and came up with all that. [First Interview, Lines 9-38]

Similarly, data from my field notes reinforce how Arun and key leaders of the mentoring program highlighted the role of educational experts in shaping the mentoring program. During multiple observations, I noted instances in which: (1) Arun interacted with refugee parents and mentioned the role that certified teachers played not only in mentoring refugee children, but also designing an individualized curriculum for them [Field Notes, 09/14/2014; Field Notes, 10/14/2014; Field Notes, 11/18/2014], and (2) Arun and key leaders presented training sessions to new volunteers and mentioned the role that quality educational professionals, such as certified teachers, played in developing not only the training materials, but also the structure of the curriculum and the structure of the program at New Beginnings [Field Notes, 08/22/2014; Field Notes, 09/14/2014].

**Textbook Representatives**

Data reveal a second type of educational expert that it recognized as having unique and valuable knowledge regarding the needs of the refugee population and how New Beginnings could better structure its program to meet those needs: a textbook representative. In the case of New Beginnings, Brian, a regional textbook representative for one of the top textbook publishing companies in the United States, was viewed as an educational expert whose curriculum expertise qualified him to match the refugee population being served with a curriculum package designed by his company to meet the
unique learning needs of children identified as English Language Learners (ELLs). In an interview with Brian, I asked him to describe how he got involved at New Beginnings and the role he plays in its educational services for refugee youth. He relayed the story of his involvement to me:

So, I’m at the welcome desk for our house of worship’s services on Saturday nights- so one Saturday night, Jaime walks by and she has a 2010 copyright of our middle school program. And I was like- okay there’s something going on here because nobody walks through a house of worship carrying a copy of our textbook- so I said hey you know there’s a new copyright to that book. You know- there’s a 2013 copyright, right? And she’s like, ‘what?’ And you know we just kind of had a conversation right there…I had no idea who she was. I guess that’s the salesman in me or whatever. She just walked by and I was like, hey- Do you teach? Because you’re using that book I’d like to get you a new one. So, we just started talking about school stuff and about my company and how the tutoring program was going. New Beginnings was really getting off the ground. And she’s like you know what, you’ve gotta talk to Arun. And I said I’ve got some stuff if you want it. [First Interview, Lines 273-305]

Following this interaction with Jaime at worship services, Brian invited Jaime to his house so that she could see his overstock of textbook inventory and select some resources to take to New Beginnings. During our interview, he recalled Jaime’s reaction when she first saw the resources that Brain was offering to her:
So Jaime came over to my house and I’ve got a three-car garage. So of the three cars, one of them is full of stuff, just all educational materials. So I said come over and you can have whatever you want- I’m going to throw it away or recycle it anyway. She’ll say this if you ask her- ‘Nah, I didn’t really believe him! I thought he’d have a couple pieces of paper, or whatever’. So I opened the door, and I literally have you know the size of a single-car garage- 30 by 30 feet of just boxes of stuff. And I was like- just take whatever you want. She said, ‘No way. I can’t just have it?’ I said take whatever you want this is all going to go away. It’s not used anymore, nobody buys it. She said, ‘Are you kidding me?’ I said, ‘No’. So we filled her car up and then Arun and I were able to connect after that…and he came over, the same type of thing. I filled his car up and didn’t even make a dent in what I have. So, then that’s when it started to really snowball- Arun, Jaime and I sat down. I said now you guys understand what I have, so what are you doing at New Beginnings? Because I can help you. [First Interview, Lines 305-354]

When asked to define how he viewed his role within the leadership structure of New Beginnings, I asked Brian if he considered himself a consultant. He responded:

That’s a good word for it…one Saturday I came out to New Beginnings, and that was really the first time we talked through a lot of which of these pieces would work. Because I donated about six different programs that were all sort of Response to Intervention based. [First Interview, Lines 363-375]
Furthermore, when asked about his consultation process and how he matches curriculum materials from his company to the needs of particular schools and organizations such as New Beginnings, he stated:

A lot of listening…I’ll listen for key words. Small group, large group…so in this particular instance, I knew that New Beginnings wasn’t- for the most part- dealing with educators that were delivering their program. So the materials they were going to use needed to be straightforward. So you couldn’t be using educational jargon. I know there’s engineers, and there’s moms, and there’s retired folks all volunteering. Everybody comes from different backgrounds. So it had to be something that volunteers could plug into easily. So, I listen, I don’t talk a lot. Because I want to hear what their goals are- where they want to go. And there could be a myriad of 10-12 different programs that I might offer up. But it may not fit where they’re at…in the case of New Beginnings, we just needed something with some structure. So we wanted to get people functioning and moving in some direction. So I’ll try to- if you know Greg Wiggins- sort of like backwards design…so that’s how I approach it. [First Interview, Lines 375-415]

As discussed in Chapter 4, Brian’s involvement with New Beginnings as a consultant led directly to several major changes to New Beginning’s educational remediation program for refugee youth- changes based directly on his recommendations. These changes affected instruction, curriculum, mission, and structure.
School Leaders

During the time that the partnership with Glendale Elementary was intact, Arun and other key volunteers at New Beginnings also relied upon school leaders as educational experts capable of using their specialized knowledge to help New Beginning ascertain the educational needs of refugee children. Data from several key leaders at New Beginnings illustrate this. Interview data from Arun indicate:

Certainly we work a lot with the school since we became partners. So that is one of the ways we are liaisons- we work with the principal of the school. We’ve established a connection with one of the elementary school principals, Bonnie. So that’s one way. [First Interview, Lines 80-87]

Similarly, interview data from June also contribute to highlighting New Beginning’s reliance upon school leaders to determine the educational needs of refugee children. When asked about how New Beginnings identifies such needs, she stated:

…since we’re an educational partner of the school district, Arun is able to speak to the principal from the school where the children go. He has spoken to the teachers of these particular kids and so that also gives us an idea of how to help them. [First Interview, Lines 364-380]

Moreover, data from my field notes also support the assertion that New Beginnings sought input from school leaders and teachers as it sought to identify the educational needs of refugee children. After a site observation, I recorded the following in my field notes:
While in the hallway of the New Beginnings facility tonight, I ran into Arun and spoke with him for a few minutes before he left to coordinate transportation for the kids. I asked him how things were going with the school partnership. He mentioned that last week he had been especially invited to an event at the school in order to meet administrators and teachers, build relationships with them, and consult with them about the individual needs of specific refugee kids being served by New Beginnings. He indicated that it was a very positive experience, and one that he’d like to have again and establish on a regular basis to seek input from school leaders and promote strong communication. [Field Notes, 10/21/2014]

**Disconfirming Evidence**

While data primarily indicate that New Beginnings leveraged specialized knowledge and input from teachers, textbook representatives, and school leaders in order to identify the educational needs of the refugee population, an anomalous strand of data hints toward the possibility that in a very limited capacity, some refugee parents may have had the opportunity to express their educational needs to New Beginnings through Arun. However, such data are curious, especially when held in juxtaposition to data provided directly from Arun during interviews. Over the course of our three interviews, when asked about how he and New Beginnings went about discerning the educational needs of the refugee children receiving services, Arun never mentioned directly asking refugee parents what they thought their children’s educational needs were.
On the contrary, when given opportunities to discuss New Beginning’s process for identifying the educational needs of refugee children, Arun consistently indicated that he consulted teachers, textbook representatives, and school leaders. While he talked of building trusting social relationships with refugee parents, he did not indicate that he asked them for direct input regarding their children’s educational needs. Thus, the weight of the evidence captured by my study suggests that it is unlikely that refugee voices were included consistently and intentionally in New Beginning’s processes for determining the educational needs of refugee children. Regardless, I include this anomalous bit of disconfirming evidence because it hints at the possibility that refugee parents, not only educational experts, could have contributed to New Beginning’s processes for identifying the educational needs of refugee children. Kelly, a key volunteer and member of the curriculum team illustrates the way that refugee parents may have been involved. When asked about how New Beginnings identifies the educational needs of refugee children, she stated:

Arun goes and he talks to the parents- asks them what are you looking for? What is it that you hope to get out of the tutoring program? What do you need? And having them express what they need, even if they say, ‘we don’t know what we need- we just know we need help in school for our kids’. [First Interview, Lines 351-358]

This data provided by Kelly is the only data in the entire corpus that suggests Arun may have asked refugee parents to articulate their children’s educational needs to him or New Beginnings. While data suggests that refugee parents approached Arun to let them know
their children needed general help in order to be successful at school [Arun, First Interview], and that the adult education program at New Beginnings had surveyed refugee adults about their own educational needs with respect to adult learning programs [Naomi, First Interview], outside of data provided by Kelly, there is no other data that suggest refugee parents were directly invited into the needs identification processes used by New Beginnings.

**Summary of Finding**

Data from my study indicate that in order to identify the educational needs of the refugee population receiving services there, New Beginnings relied heavily upon three types of individuals who it considered educational experts: certified teachers, textbook representatives, and school leaders. These educational experts contributed their specialized knowledge to the guardianship structure of New Beginnings. Based upon their recommendations, New Beginnings made changes to its programming in order to meet educational needs of the refugee population as identified by these educational experts.

**Key Finding: Reliance Upon Assessments**

In addition to reliance upon guidance from those it viewed as educational experts, data provide evidence that New Beginnings also relied upon two forms of educational assessments in order to determine the educational needs of the refugee children it serves. Assessment programs provided by the major textbook company that also donated curriculum to New Beginnings were one type of educational assessment used by New
Beginnings to sort children into reading and math levels based on their test results.

Additionally, New Beginnings relied upon state standardized assessments administered by the local school to identify the content deficiencies of the refugee children involved in the mentoring program. Such assessments directly influenced the individualized curriculum maps developed for each child by the curriculum team at New Beginnings. I now provide evidence in support of this finding.

**Textbook Publishing Company Assessments**

The major textbook publishing company that donated the curriculum used by the mentoring program also donated two of its assessment programs, the Diagnostic Literacy Assessment (DLA) program, and the Foundations Math program to New Beginnings. Results from these assessment programs had tremendous influence over changes that New Beginnings made in its curriculum and structure. Over the summer of 2013, the curriculum team administered individual DLA and Foundations Math assessments to all 30 children receiving services at New Beginnings. Based on the results of these assessments, children were assigned to reading and math levels and their individualized curriculum maps gave specialized instructions to mentors about which library books from New Beginning’s freshly color-coded library would be most appropriate for their mentee, and where to begin in the Foundations Math books donated by the publishing company.

The use of the DLA and Foundations Math assessment programs is a particularly salient thematic strand. Eleven of the twelve participants in my study discussed these assessments when asked about how New Beginnings identified the educational needs of
refugee children. Of special interest is the way in which five study participants not only discussed the use of these assessment programs, but also identified them as a way to build credibility with local schools. Following, Arun and a selection of other NGO leaders discuss how New Beginnings acquired these assessment programs as well as their role in making partnership attractive to the local school by bringing credibility to their mentoring services. When asked about New Beginning’s use of these assessments, Arun indicated:

…we got connected with this gentleman working for this publishing company. And he started coming in and we started talking about what we were doing and what schools and age groups we were working with. And then he started providing me with math books and English books and as we continued, we kept talking and meeting. He said, ‘Hey, I have this thing,’ and he gave me this whole big DLA. Not being in the education field myself, I didn’t know what that meant. So, we got him to come and talk to us about all the resources he had provided. He trained a few of us to use the DLA, and that’s when we realized the special tool that we had. And this gives us a lot of credibility to our program because now I use all the assessments that we’ve done for kids and communicate the results to the schools. So this gives our program a lot of credibility because we’re now talking school language, which they understand. [First Interview, Lines 347-374]

Tina, a key volunteer, reiterates a similar perspective when asked about how New Beginnings identifies educational needs of refugee children, stating:
Well, I think the first thing, especially recently, we started doing is assessments, like standard tests that all the kids take. I think in the beginning, you would just, you would just conduct an informal assessment on them like okay, lets see if they can add and then if they can add, alright let’s see if they can subtract. So I think we went from that to a more formal standard testing to track them, okay like, this is where they should be and if they’re not at this level, then we need to put them at a lower level, umm, we started the DLA testing and so we can have specific numbers about where their reading level is. We have kind of similar assessments for the math. So I think through those tests. [First Interview, 35-60]

Tina went on and indicated, like Arun, that such formal assessments enhanced the attractiveness of New Beginnings as an educational partner by increasing the mentoring program’s credibility as an effective educational service. She states:

These assessments were also big in getting the partnership of the school district. I know when Bonnie met with Arun she said that’s something that most after-school programs don’t do is assess their students and so I think that built also a lot of credibility that we’re not just some shady business trying to rip off their school, we’re actually doing things that help the kids. So I think that, umm, having that specific testing that the schools recognize as legitimate has helped build our program’s credibility and build relationships with the school. [First Interview, 60-87]
Jaime, the curriculum team leader, is a certified teacher and volunteer at New Beginnings. She has taught Language Arts and Math for seven years in both public and online charter schools. When asked about her role at New Beginnings, she specified how she got involved at New Beginnings as well as how she came to play a large role in implementing the DLA and Foundations Math assessments. She recalls:

Last summer Arun got a hold of me and I got involved a month or two before the fall session started…along the way, Brian, Arun, and I started talking about a vision for New Beginnings and where we thought we wanted it to go. And then in the summer we developed a curriculum so I guess that brings me to my current role. I’m the Curriculum Director, and I’ve recruited a small curriculum team comprised of two other teachers who volunteer at New Beginnings as well. The three of us came up with the curriculum for our math program and our reading program. The reading is based on the results of the DLA assessment that we gave to the kids in the summer. [First Interview, Lines 4-28]

When asked to describe the assessments and how they are administered to refugee children at New Beginnings, Jaime continued:

…[DLA stands for] Diagnostic Literacy Assessment, I believe. We gave assessments to all of our kids to assess their reading levels, so that we knew whether they were on grade level, above or below, and we gave it to first through seventh graders…and then in terms of the math assessment we gave some math assessments in the summer as well…[from the] Foundations Math program-so
the Foundations Math, Brian recommended that straight off. After talking to us about what our needs were and what we thought the kids would need, Brian matched us with the Foundations Math program because it was a tier three response to intervention program. We confirmed or determined actual grade levels once we gave them the initial placement tests as provided by the Foundations Math program. So, our entire math curriculum is based, you know, on initial assessments. [First Interview, Lines 29-57]

Jaime went on to describe Brian’s role in New Beginning’s decision to adopt the assessments, noting like Arun and Tina that the decision to do so was based in part on the credibility that it would communicate to schools. She states:

[Brian] provided- I mean, he gave us all these materials, basically…he was instrumental…I mean Brian had all these resources and we were asking what is the most concise, least cumbersome, least expensive way to do this but do it effectively? And, he suggested the DLA, because he knew not only was it a good assessment but it’s a very widely accepted and understood assessment by the schools so, if we did want to go into the school and do anything, which Arun has always talked about, you know, partnering with the local schools, we knew that it would definitely be something that would give credibility to the program. So it was kind of a win-win all around. [First Interview, Lines 57-76]
Similarly, Becky, a key volunteer, and member of the curriculum team discusses the role that these assessments have played in re-structuring the mentoring program and identifying refugee children’s needs. She states:

Well, Brian donated entire sets of curriculum, which was awesome- that kind of really guided where we went with the curriculum maps. Because we were like this is so great, it’s scripted, anyone can do it. It pinpoints their needs because they have an assessment that you can take in the beginning, like a pre-assessment to identify the needs of the children and then we went through and graded them… And I literally picked out the sections that they got incorrect on the test as the sections that they would work through during mentoring…we wrote maps to address where those gaps were. [First Interview, Lines 39-59; First Interview, Lines 277-280]

Lastly, when Kelly, a key volunteer that supervises curriculum development for the high school children receiving services as New Beginnings, was asked about how New Beginnings identifies the educational needs of refugee children, she also referenced the assessments, stating:

…there is an assessment system in place now with these programs and their testing. Jaime’s been doing them so that she can identify some very specific targets with the kids….According to Arun, I’m just repeating what I’ve heard, you know, that we can have real baseline data that is accepted by any school anywhere- any Board of Education will say this is real empirical evidence that
these kids are here and this is what we did to accommodate their reading, whatever. So it brings us more credibility than just talking to the kids. Which happens to be a better way to actually get into the schools- you know, you have to use the tools that everybody agrees on. So they chose DLA testing. [First Interview, Lines 359-373]

In addition to the DLA and the Foundations Math assessments provided by the major textbook publishing company, data pinpoint another assessment used by New Beginnings to determine the educational needs of the refugee population receiving services: the standardized state test used to measure student achievement.

**State Standardized Student Achievement Exams**

The state standardized student achievement exams also contributed to New Beginning’s identification of refugee children’s educational needs in ways that shaped instructional activities, curriculum content, and program structure. Data suggest that it did so in two ways: (1) When the partnership with Glendale Elementary was intact, Arun was able to view and discuss student records with school leaders in order to determine which children were at risk of not matriculating to the next grade level and what specific academic deficiencies were preventing them from passing the state’s student achievement exams, and (2) With the approach of the annual state testing week during the Spring Session of 2014, New Beginnings suspended its entire curricular program based on DLA and Foundations Math in order to conduct test preparation activities with the children receiving services in the mentoring program. Data from an interview with Tina illustrate:
…Now that we’ve kind of gotten a partnership with district, now we have, Arun can have access to see the kids’ report cards and school records and stuff like that so we can interact with the teachers and kind of find out from the teachers also what they [refugee children] need. I’m not sure how much others have done so far, but I know Arun has access and I think that’s something playing a role. [First Interview, Lines 101-114]

Similarly, Dale, a key volunteer and advisory council member, discusses the role that state student achievement assessments play in determine the educational needs of refugee children. He conveys:

Well there are some assessments that we do for math and reading, so the reading assessments are taken and we also work through the state student achievement exam the- state achievement assessment. With the state achievement tests, we support them in helping do practice tests and drills for the tests so the kids get used to the tests when it comes up at school. We coordinate that with the timing of when the schools are administering these assessments. [First Interview, Lines 72-91]

My field notes also indicate ways in which the state standardized test for student achievement affected changes in New Beginning’s curriculum content and organizational structure. Such changes were based on the NGOs perception that one of the most important needs refugee children displayed was the need to pass state exams. My field notes recall:
This evening I learned that the leaders of the mentoring program had decided to suspend the curriculum map plan for the last three weeks of Spring Session in order to do practice tests and skills drills with the kids. When I inquired about why this decision was made, I was told that it was because at the end of Spring Session, Glendale Elementary, like all schools statewide, would be administering the state achievement test. As a partner to the school, New Beginnings wanted to help refugee children prepare for the tests to increase their likelihood of passing the exam. [Field Notes, 03/03/2014]

Summary of Finding

In order to identify the educational needs of refugee children, data captured by my study provide evidence that New Beginnings not only relied heavily upon the DLA and Foundations Math assessments provided by the textbook company, but also relied heavily upon state standardized testing in order to identify the educational needs of refugee children. The use of such assessments in identifying refugee children’s educational needs was a particularly salient theme, with over 90% of study participants directly recognizing it as the primary method used by New Beginnings to ascertain educational needs. Moreover, the use of such instruments was also connected to perceptions of program credibility on both sides of the educational partnership.

Key Finding: Reliance Upon Volunteers

The third key finding for the second research question of my study is that in order to identify the educational needs of refugee children, New Beginnings relied on feedback
from its volunteer pool. Data revealed three methods for volunteers to communicate
refugee educational needs to the leadership team: (1) private discussions with NGO
leaders such as Arun, Jaime, the advisory council, the administrative team, or the
curriculum team, and (2) the use of a mentor journal in which mentors recorded the
activities that occurred during tutoring sessions with refugee children as well as their
reflections over each session, and (3) feedback surveys administered by New Beginning’s
curriculum team leader, Jaime, to all 60 volunteers at the middle and end of the Fall 2014
Session when the program shifted its focus from tutoring to mentoring. While the intent
behind these three feedback solicitation methods was that adult mentors could
communicate needs with the NGO leadership team, data suggest that all three methods
faced challenges vis-à-vis implementation. Data from my field notes recall when these
procedures for communicating needs were put into place:

When I was on site tonight for the kickoff of the Fall Session, Jaime made sure to
mention during the mentor meeting prior to the kids’ arrival that if at any time
mentors have questions, comments, or feedback regarding any aspect of the
program or the kids’ needs, they should feel free to email any member of the
advisory team, including her or Arun. She also introduced the mentor journals and
indicated that each mentor should record the day’s activities as well as any
questions, concerns, comments, or notes. Since there are two mentors per child,
one for Monday night and another for Thursday night, she indicated that the first
thing mentors should do when they arrive is read the previous journal entry from
the other mentor to see if anything noteworthy occurred during the previous
session. She also indicated that the leadership team would try to periodically review the journals in order to look for any themes regarding the needs of the program or those of individual kids. [Field Notes, 09/09/2014]

Similarly, my field notes recall when the first mentor feedback survey went out six weeks into the Fall 2014 session. It was administered in hard copy, and mentors were asked to return it to Jaime by the end of the mentoring session that evening [Field Notes, 10/15/2013]. At the end of the Fall Session, another survey was administered—this time electronically. My field notes illustrate:

During the mentor meeting prior to student arrival, Jaime reminded volunteers to complete the feedback survey that had been sent out via email. She encouraged mentors to complete it prior to the end of the session next week so that the curriculum team and advisory council could review feedback and implement any necessary changes before the start of the next session in January. [Field Notes, 11/04/2013]

I now describe each of these methods for key volunteers to provide feedback, illustrating how New Beginnings relied upon them in order to identify the educational needs of the refugee children to whom it provided remediation services.

**Discussions with NGO Team Leaders & Mentor Journals**

During interviews throughout the course of Fall Session 2014, I asked study participants, who formed the core of leaders and volunteer teams of New Beginning’s p-12 educational program, what processes New Beginnings had in place for identifying the
educational needs of refugee children and how well these procedures were functioning. Eleven out of twelve study participants discussed the use of private conversations with NGO team leaders as a means of identifying educational needs of refugee children, while 50% of study participants also discussed mentor journals. Several participants indicated that there were challenges with both processes. First, there was only modest participation with respect to direct communication between mentors and NGO leadership. Second, time constraints had made it difficult for NGO leaders to read mentor journals in order to unearth needs that mentors had been identifying.

For instance, when Becky was asked to describe any processes that New Beginnings used to identify the educational needs of refugee children, she said:

Beyond assessments, the goal is that the mentor would say something to either June, Arun, Jaime, Dale, Tom, or me- like this is what they’re working on, but this isn’t working super well at this point. Relationally, we want our mentors to be close enough with their students that they would be able to tell you what they are struggling with. We did make a note in the training about how communication is really important, and to kind of let us know what things are working well or not working well. During the last session, we kept meaning to go through the mentor journals halfway through the session to kind of see how the mentor notes were working- but we ran out of time. We’ve gotta fill in the holes that are there in those processes. [First Interview, Lines 280-300]
Yet, despite these challenges, data from Tina’s interview reference a positive use of the journals to identify needs. When asked about processes used to identify refugee children’s educational needs, Tina noted:

I’m not entirely sure if there’s really a standard process more than just the mentors saying stuff. [Author clarifies: And does that discussion happen through the mentor journals?]…yeah, for example when we identified the child with the learning disability, I never knew her before I started mentoring her, and I was just reading up on the notes that the other tutor had written- and the tutor had written like, you know, this child switches letters, umm, and her math is low and her reading is low. So then after I worked with her two or three times, I got the idea that maybe she has a learning disability. So I think, yeah the journals helped us to identify that student’s needs. [First Interview, Lines 239-255]

Similarly, Jaime, the curriculum team leader, discusses the implementation of the journals as a needs identification tool as well as the challenges of managing their use. When asked about the decision to implement the journals, she states:

Well we kinda did it just because, I think, once we got some feedback from the mentors, and they just wanted enough room to write stuff and that’s why we went to the journals. Which I think is much better. It’s easier for everybody. I’m hoping again to take a look at the end of the session, look at the journals, go through the journals and see the kind of notes that the mentors are making or some of the things we don’t see or we don’t miss. People give Arun more feedback than they
give me so then he then passes it on to me if it has to do with like the curriculum. I try to get, like I said, feedback from everybody because I know that in leadership positions it’s really easy to lose touch with what’s actually going on and you have all these great ideas and none of them work because in reality they’re just not going to work. So I guess I’m really just thankful that people are sharing and they’re willing to take responsibility and talk to us and ask questions and things. I think I’m probably going to have more ideas once I am able to sit down and look at the journals as a whole after the session is over. [First Interview, Lines 140-151; First Interview, Lines 535-549]

Surveys

In addition to my field notes, which discuss the implementation of the mentor feedback surveys as a method of soliciting information from New Beginning’s volunteers, document analysis provides more explicit detail about the specific information New Beginnings sought. The survey administered in the fall asked, among other items, for mentors to make judgments about the appropriateness of the difficulty level of curricular materials for their particular student. A sample item from the Fall Session mentor survey illustrates:
1. Foundations Math

*We are currently working on week # ____ of the curriculum map

*Book Level: _____  Step #: ______

In my opinion, this work is:

☐ Too Easy   ☐ Too Hard   ☐ Just Right

Comments: (ex. Are you working very fast/slow? Do you feel like the Foundations Math is helping your student, etc.?):

In the Fall Session survey, duplicate items of an identical format were asked regarding the students’ Diagnostic Literacy Assessment levels for reading, any homework help being provided, and reading comprehension worksheets that were sometimes used by mentors during instructional activities.

A similar survey was administered toward the conclusion of the Fall 2013 Session. However, some survey items were altered slightly from the initial survey, and the end of session survey was twice as long, having 10 items instead of 5. New questions not previously asked in the earlier survey included items about the implementation of the new instructional schedule, how well the schedule worked- or didn’t- how well the mentor journals worked- or didn’t- and how well the pre-session mentor training conducted by NGO leadership had prepared mentors for the work involved with volunteering. In addition to these new survey items, the same five items about curriculum were asked, although the structure of the items was altered. In the administration of the survey at the end of the Fall Session, such questions were presented in the following format:

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7. Did you find the Foundations Math curriculum (please check all that apply):

☐ Beneficial
☐ Not beneficial
☐ User-friendly
☐ Difficult to use/follow
☐ Appropriate
☐ Not appropriate

Please offer any additional comments about Foundations Math, that you feel appropriate:

Through such surveys, New Beginnings solicited feedback from volunteers in order to determine the educational needs of refugee children as they pertained to the appropriateness of instructional materials and instructional activities. However, data also suggest there were challenges with survey implementation. With respect to the hard copy survey that was administered and collected during week 6 of the Fall 2013 Session, my field notes observed that mentors had a very limited amount of time to complete the survey. Mentors were told to take the survey with them to their cubicles and complete them at the end of the night after students had been dismissed. However, student dismissal was always rapid, and by 9:00 p.m., mentors often appeared eager to get started on their 45-minute commute across the city to return to the suburb where they lived. I observed that night that survey completion seemed rushed, and I wondered if that would affect the quantity and quality of the feedback [Field Notes, 10/15/2013]. Similarly, during the session break between Fall 2013 and January 2014, I asked Jaime and Arun how many mentors had completed the second survey that was administered
electronically. At the time of our conversation, they reported that while the feedback they had received from the electronic survey was very thorough, only about half of the 60 mentors had completed the survey [Field Notes, 12/17/2013].

**Summary of Finding**

Data from my study provide evidence to support my third key finding: that New Beginnings used feedback from its volunteers as a mechanism for identifying the educational needs of the refugee population receiving services. Data show that volunteers were encouraged to provide feedback through three communication channels: through personal communication with NGO leaders, through the use of mentor journals to record instructional activities, notes, and the needs of their mentees, and through feedback surveys administered by the NGO curriculum leader, Jaime. However, few mentors resourced the first communication channel, an open invitation for personal communication. Similarly, time constraints limited NGO leaders’ ability to review mentor journals, and restricted the effectiveness of the second communication channel. Finally, the use of surveys provided some helpful feedback to NGO leaders about refugee children’s educational needs, however there were challenges with administering the survey and securing a high response rate.

**Key Finding: One Key Volunteer as Nondemocratic Delegate to the School**

The final finding for the second research question of my study is: that when it came time to represent the educational needs of refugee children to school leaders, data captured by my study provide evidence that representation occurred exclusively through
one key NGO volunteer, Arun, who functioned as a nondemocratic delegate. As the only nondemocratic delegate to the school, Arun represented the educational needs identified by the philanthropic aristocracy comprised of educational experts and NGO volunteers, and by assessments. This finding is particularly salient. When asked to identify how refugee children’s needs are represented to the local school, 100% of study participants indicated that needs were communicated to Arun, who then represented them to school leaders. In this study, Arun functioned as a nondemocratic delegate-an individual chosen outside of formal selection processes such as voting, and sent to a decision-making entity in order to advocate for the interests of those who sent him. Multiple data sources provide evidence for this finding.

With respect to interview data, when asked to summarize how New Beginnings shared the needs of the refugee population with school leaders, Jaime, the curriculum team leader responded:

That’s a good question. Well, I mean obviously I would say Arun. The relationship that Arun is building with the school- just having the principal’s feedback and knowing what the kids are like in the school and then he can bring that here and share that with us and vice versa because he’s got the kids’ parents’ permission now where he can communicate directly with the school- that information can go back and forth and I think that’s huge. [First Interview, Lines 175-210]
Tom, a member of the advisory council, also shared this understanding of how representation occurs. When asked if there was a process in place for New Beginnings to share refugee children’s educational needs and advocate on their behalf with school leaders, he indicated that:

I mean there’s probably actually no official process. I see the process that happens is that a mentor or whoever tells Arun, and then Arun either makes a decision on his own about talking to the school, or he takes it to the advisory council. But as far as do we have an official process of any sort? No. So there is an informal process but no official process…I would say that the only advocacy [pauses] I would say for the most part we don’t yet. Arun has advocated, since he has some relationships with the school, with the principal, I think he has advocated- he has talked to teachers and coaches, so I think he is the one who has advocated. So, I guess I’d say it happened, but only through Arun. The organization as a whole is not advocating for the refugee kids in the school setting now. [First Interview, Lines 117-129; First Interview, Lines 165-174]

Likewise, when Becky was asked if a process exists for advocating for the educational needs of refugee children in the local school, she indicated that Arun was the direct, and only, advocacy agent from the NGO to the school. She stated:

I don’t think, like, a formal one by any means. Are you asking, like, outside of Arun? Because really, Arun is the program. He’s gone to the schools. He’s gone
to the principals. Other than that I don’t think there is a formal process. [First Interview, Lines 506-518]

Finally, to round out the selection of interview data to support this finding, Dale, another advisory council member, discusses how Arun is the only individual currently advocating for the educational needs of refugee children at the school. When asked about a process in place for communicating refugee children’s educational needs to the school, he stated:

You know, I don’t know if there is a formal process. But I think just with the connections that Arun has made, he has broken down barriers. I think it happens through Arun and through those connections. I don’t think there’s a formal process. I can’t say that there’s a formal, you know, questionnaire or paperwork or a procedure that New Beginnings would have to address those kinds of things. [First Interview, Lines 230-252]

Summary of Finding

In this study, data provide evidence that the representation of refugee children’s educational needs occurred exclusively through one NGO leader, Arun, who represented information generated by the NGO, such as DLA and Foundations Math assessment outcomes and mentor feedback, with school leaders. In this way, Arun functioned as a nondemocratic delegate who was sent from the service-providing NGO to the decision-making school to share refugee children’s educational needs with school leaders.
Chapter Summary

The second research question, which sought to understand how the NGO identified the educational needs of the refugee children receiving mentoring services as well as how those needs were represented to school leaders, has four key findings supported by study data. First, the NGO resourced three types of educational experts in order to ascertain the educational needs of the refugee population. These experts were certified teachers, textbook representatives, and school leaders who, through consultation, became a part of the altruistic aristocracy who viewed themselves as guardians of the educational needs of the refugee population. Second, the NGO relied upon three assessments in order to determine the educational needs of refugee children: the Diagnostic Literacy Assessment, the Foundations Math Assessment, and the state standardized test for student achievement. Third, the NGO relied upon feedback from volunteers in order to discover the educational needs of refugee children. There were three feedback channels for volunteers: (1) private conversations with Arun, Jaime, or any member of the curriculum team of advisory council, (2) mentor journals, and (3) mentor surveys. Finally, representation of the educational needs identified by the NGO occurred exclusively through one NGO leader, Arun. When the partnership with Glendale Elementary was intact, Arun functioned as a nondemocratic delegate from the NGO to the school, representing the educational needs of refugee children to administrators, teachers, and coaches there.
Chapter 6:
Information Sharing, Service Coordination, & Policy

Thus far, my study has examined two facets of Non-Governmental Organizations and their representation of refugee educational interests. I have illustrated how New Beginnings and its volunteers functioned as representatives of refugee interests in local schools, providing evidence that its overarching representative structure is guardianship by altruistic aristocracy. Subsequently, latent, symbolic, nondemocratic, and surrogate forms of representation became available during various phases of New Beginning’s organizational development. However, the fragility of the partnership between New Beginnings and the local school curtailed the NGOs capacity to represent refugee children’s educational interests. I have also illustrated that in order to identify the educational needs of the refugee population it serves, New Beginnings relied heavily upon educational experts, assessments, and feedback from key volunteers. In this chapter, I now present the findings to the three remaining research questions of my study: how do NGOs and their volunteers facilitate information sharing and coordinate intervention efforts across institutional boundaries, how do school decision-makers facilitate information sharing and coordinate intervention efforts across institutional boundaries, and how do educational policies and practices affect information sharing and service coordination efforts between schools and NGOs? In response to each of these questions, study data provide evidence for the following key findings with respect to New
Beginnings and Glendale Elementary: (1) one NGO leader was the exclusive conduit between the NGO and the school, and he alone facilitated information sharing and service coordination efforts, (2) there was no school leader facilitating information sharing and service coordination efforts with the NGO, and the partnership between New Beginnings and Glendale Elementary was highly asymmetrical with the NGO and the school demonstrating unequal investment in the partnership’s maintenance and growth, and (3) there was general, but not outright, policy nescience among NGO leaders with respect to how educational policies were affecting the representation of refugee interests in the local school. Disconfirming evidence about policies affecting representation of refugee interests gestures toward three strands of policy that may intersect with the representation of refugee interests in ways that warrant further research attention. I now present the key findings of this chapter in detail.

**Key Finding: Solitary NGO Leader as Conduit to the School**

Data captured by my study provide strong evidence that a solitary NGO leader, Arun, functioned as the exclusive conduit of information sharing and service coordination efforts with Glendale Heights. This is a very salient finding, with 100% of study participants identifying Arun as the only existing conduit for sharing information with the school and coordination educational services for the refugee children receiving remediation services at New Beginnings. As a representative selection of data in support of this finding, data provided by two key NGO leaders: Jaime, the curriculum team leader and advisory council member, and Tom, a key volunteer and advisory council member.
When asked to articulate the processes, strategies, or programs that existed to facilitate cooperation and information sharing between New Beginnings and Glendale Elementary, Jaime responded:

Arun. All roads point to Arun. Arun usually meets with Bonnie, the principal. She has taken him through the school. Like she walked him into the classrooms, so she walked him around and introduced him to all the teachers. She would say, ‘Who knows Mr. Arun?’, and all of the kids were like [raises her hand and waves it around]. So in terms of the direct relationship with the school, its Arun- he has taken some of our results I think to share with Bonnie. So I think she’s seen our DLA results, and she’s seen our curriculum map. [First Interview, Lines 470-495]

Tom shares similar sentiments when asked the same question:

I mean, there’s probably actually no official process. I again see the process that happens is a mentor or whoever tells Arun about something, and then he either makes a decision to share it or takes it to the advisory council. But as far as do we have an official process for sharing information? No. So there is an informal process but no official process…I think there’s definitely no official process for information sharing. Our only connection is Arun. He has talked to administrators at the local schools. He has talked to the school board. He does know some teachers and coaches, so like mainly we just have one guy right now. [First Interview, Lines 117-129; First Interview, Lines 263-274]
Data from my field notes also provide evidence that when it came to information sharing and educational service coordination efforts, Arun was the only conduit providing information to the school about the educational needs of the refugee children receiving services at New Beginnings. He was also the only conduit taking information back from the school to coordinate educational interventions between teachers and school leaders and key volunteers working with refugee children at New Beginnings. Multiple field note entries record instances in which Arun shared information from his visits to Glendale Elementary with NGO volunteers and advisory council members during mentor meetings\(^{15}\). During such visits to the school, he met with Bonnie, teachers, and coaches to discuss the educational progress of the refugee students in the mentoring program at New Beginnings. He shared information about specific children that he had gathered from feedback at New Beginnings, and he sought specific feedback from these school leaders regarding what mentors could do to assist teachers and coaches in the overall academic and social development of the refugee children. He then reported this information back to New Beginnings so that mentors could adjust their efforts to align with feedback from the school. In this fashion, Arun functioned as the only conduit of information sharing and service coordination efforts between New Beginnings and Glendale Elementary. Figure 1 illustrates this finding.

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\(^{15}\) Field notes from the following days reference instances in which Arun relayed information to mentors from his visits to Glendale Elementary: 09/16/2013, 09/30/2013, 10/21/2013, 11/11/2013, 01/13/2014, 02/17/2014, 03/03/2014
Figure 1. NGO leader as conduit. The individual in the middle of the figure represents the informational conduit. The green box represents the NGO, and green arrows represent information flowing from the NGO, through the conduit, and out to the local school. Similarly, the blue box represents the school, and blue arrows represent information flowing from the school, through the conduit, and out to the NGO.

Disconfirming Evidence

While this key finding is supported by data from all study participants and triangulation of interview data with observation data, a small strand of disconfirming evidence obtained during interviews notes that on one or two occasions Arun invited Brian, the regional textbook representative and consultant to the mentoring program, to join him on visits to Glendale Elementary [Brian, First Interview, Lines 464-474; Jaime, First Interview, Lines 475-480]. However, such data suggest that while Brian may have shared a certain type of information with the school, he did not function as a conduit of information sharing and service coordination efforts in the same capacity that Arun did. Primarily, data suggest that in one or two instances he discussed specific aspects of the mentoring program with school leaders, such as the use of DLA and Foundations Math assessments. As some may consider this information sharing of sorts, I mention it here to recognize the possibility that Brian may have been a second, although much less resourced, conduit of information sharing and service coordination efforts between the NGO and the school.
Summary of Key Finding

Data collected for my study strongly support the finding that one key NGO leader, Arun, functioned as the exclusive information-sharing conduit from the NGO to the school. As such, Arun also coordinated educational services at the NGO to align with information that he relayed back to the NGO from the school.

Key Finding: An Asymmetrical Partnership

Vis-à-vis the fourth research question of my study, which sought to understand how information sharing and service coordination efforts were facilitated on the part of the school, data captured by my study strongly suggest that there was no school leader or school district entity accountable for coordinating information sharing and educational interventions with the NGO. On the contrary, data suggest that the responsibility for forging, facilitating, and conducting partnership activities such as information sharing and the coordination of educational interventions fell upon the NGO. In this sense, New Beginnings and Glendale Elementary were unequal partners, with data providing evidence that the NGO was an invested and committed partner while the school and school district were neglectful and inattentive. There were two ways in which data suggest an asymmetrical partnership existed between New Beginnings and Glendale Elementary. First, there was an asymmetrical investment of time and resources in the school-community partnership. Second, there was an asymmetrical commitment to engaging practices conducive to the maintenance, sustainability and growth of the partnership. I now present data in support of these assertions.
No School-Based Counterpart

While Arun was the information sharing and service coordination conduit from New Beginnings to the school, data suggest that the school had no counterpart who functioned in the same capacity to promote information sharing and service coordination from the school to the NGO. In my first interview with Arun, prior to Bonnie’s leave of absence, he suggests that such a counterpart would be desirable, but recalls that it is not yet in place. He states that such a configuration of responsibility for the partnership is, “Premature. We don’t have it. Let’s talk about that in six months. Let’s see- we can go back to that. It will be interesting to see how that develops. Yeah- that’s something that we want to work on” [Arun, First Interview, Lines 474-479]. Kelly, an advisory council member, conveys a similar sentiment. When asked about what the school had in place to promote information sharing and educational service coordination from its end, she responded, “Well there is nothing in place, that’s the best I can come up with. At this point, there is no information sharing between the school leaders and us. I wish that there was” [First Interview, Lines 627-632].

In this regard, the responsibility for coordinating partnership activities between New Beginnings and Glendale Elementary was unequally distributed, and the burden of maintaining the partnership fell heavily upon NGO volunteers. This created an asymmetrical partnership in which the NGO invested time and resources to start, maintain, grow, and sustain the partnership while Glendale Elementary and the school district did not invest time and resources to do so. While Bonnie’s leave of absence may have played a role in the reasons as to why no school-based counterpart took ownership
of nurturing the partnership in her absence, data nevertheless illustrate that the lack of reciprocity on the part of the school and district affected the momentum and morale of the partnership.

**Asymmetrical Investment of Time & Resources**

From June 2013 – October 2013, when the school-community partnership with Glendale Elementary was intact, Arun visited the school at least once per month to meet and establish relationships with school leaders, teachers and coaches. As the academic year started in fall 2013, Arun’s visits allowed him to share information about refugee children’s educational needs with school personnel as well as solicit feedback from school personnel about specific children that he could then communicate to volunteers providing services at New Beginnings. In addition to these formal visits, while the partnership was intact, Arun also had access to refugee children’s sporting events, such as soccer games, and academic competitions, such as spelling bees. As frequently as he could- given the fact that he also carried the responsibilities of a full-time job and family- Arun would attend these extra-curricular events hosted at the school. He took time off of work to attend events that were hosted during the school day.

Yet, when invited to participate in the same types of partnership activities, no school leader, school board member, teacher, coach, or other representative from the school ever came to visit the New Beginnings, meet volunteers, observe the mentoring program in action, or interact with children in an extracurricular environment. Data
illustrate that when Bonnie was invited to visit New Beginnings, she did not. An interaction between Arun and me during our initial interview indicates:

Arun: I said [to Bonnie] you know what- why don’t you come and visit us? But you know what? Don’t tell me when you are coming- just show up on a Monday or Thursday night.

Author: Did she ever come?

Arun: No. [First Interview, Lines 285-295]

Similarly, when school board members were invited to visit New Beginnings and see firsthand how the mentoring program operated and what types of educational remediation services were being provided, no school board members did. When Arun met with the school board sub-committee for school-community partnerships, he made an open invitation for them to visit New Beginnings. An interaction between Arun and me during our third interview indicates:

Arun: I challenged them [school board members] to come any time when we were meeting and to visit us unannounced.

Author: Did any of them come?

Arun: No- not on a night that we mentor refugee kids. One school board member did come out on a Saturday afternoon. She was very impressed with my presentation of our program, and she got my contact details from the program coordinator and contacted me directly. She donated some science and math materials, and her daughter also volunteered in the summer to teach drama to our younger kids. But, no school board members came during our fall or spring sessions. [Third Interview, Lines 24-26; Third Interview, Lines 49-54]

Similarly, New Beginnings hosted two special events at its facility over the course of the year I was immersed there. These events were end-of-session celebration nights involving recognition of character and academic progress for the refugee children.
Celebration events included a formal convocation where each child received public praise and recognition from mentors, a certificate of program involvement, a gift bag, and a celebration dinner that included refugee parents, refugee children, mentors, and NGO leaders. My field notes from these events note that there was no school presence at either the fall celebration night or the spring celebration night [Field Notes, 11/18/2014; Field Notes, 03/24/2014].

Such data provide evidence that with respect to partnership activities, such as site visits to the partner, presentations to the governing body of the partner, and presence at extracurricular events hosted by the partner, through its primary conduit, Arun, New Beginnings invested time and resources to start, maintain, nurture, and grow the educational partnership. Meanwhile, there was no counterpart doing the same on behalf of the school or school district.

**Asymmetrical Commitment to Sustainability**

In further support of the assertion that the partnership between New Beginnings and Glendale Elementary was asymmetrical, data suggest that New Beginnings was committed to activities conducive to the sustainability of the partnership, while the school and school district were not. New Beginning’s commitment remained strong despite the challenges that manifested with Bonnie’s absence. Meanwhile, data suggest that both the school and the district had minimal commitment to sustainability of the partnership, as evidenced by their lack of reciprocity and lack of oversight of the partnership’s
maintenance and growth. This was the case at the school level with the interim principal who assumed leadership of the school as well as the district level with the school board.

**School-level lack of reciprocity.** As discussed in previous chapters, Arun first learned of Bonnie’s leave of absence in October 2013 when he attempted to contact her by phone to schedule his monthly site visit. He was initially told that she was on a temporary leave of absence, would return in November, and that he should attempt to contact her at that time. In November, he attempted to contact Bonnie again. He was told that she was on a leave of absence for an undisclosed period of time and for an undisclosed reason. He was also told at that time that it was unclear when Bonnie would be returning, but that he was welcome to try back in December. In December, when he tried again, he was given the same information and told to try back in January. In January, he was told that Bonnie was on a leave of absence until further notice and that Mr. Burchfield had been hired as the interim principal.

During the first few months of 2014, Arun attempted to contact Mr. Burchfield several times per month by phone and email in order to maintain access to the school and continue partnership activities such as school visits, teacher conferences, and attending extra-curricular activities. However, it was difficult to make contact with Mr. Burchfield, who was trying to manage a tumultuous school climate and keep Glendale Elementary running as smooth as possible given the circumstances surrounding the district scandal and Bonnie’s leave of absence. The challenges of keeping the school operating left him with little reserve for investing time and energy in a partnership about which he knew very little. When Arun and Mr. Burchfield were finally able to speak on the phone, it was
with regrets that he could not invest time and energy into the partnership. Arun explains, “The current principal was extremely nice, but since he is on an interim basis, he is not sure how long he will remain at Glendale Elementary and hence his reluctance to get involved” [Third Interview, Lines 60-65]. Following this phone conversation with Mr. Burchfield, all partnership activities with Glendale were placed on hold.

While it is Arun’s understanding that he could continue to follow-up with the school in the hopes that new leadership would invest time and energy in sustaining the partnership, this disruption has affected the momentum and morale of the partnership with Glendale Elementary. In our third interview, Arun’s countenance was noticeably deflated. When asked about the future of the partnership, his response was tentative and standoffish, noting that:

It takes a lot of time to work with these partnerships. With my fulltime job, it means that I have to take time off of work to meet with these school officials. Additionally, we are finding that the demographics of our kids are changing too. Many of our newer kids are attending other Elementary and Middle schools within the school district. This will require me now to meet with all these principals. At this point in time, I think we would be better served by concentrating on the individual curriculum plans that we have designed for each of our kids instead of trying to build relationships with the schools. [Third Interview, Lines 64-70]
**District-level lack of oversight.** The lack of district level oversight of the maintenance and growth of the partnership between New Beginnings and Glendale Elementary is an additional indicator that an asymmetrical partnership existed. Data show that there was no follow-up contact between the school board and New Beginnings from the time that initial board approval to sanction the partnership was granted in May of 2013 through the time that data collection ended in June of 2014. Not only did school board members decline invitations to visit New Beginnings and observe the mentoring program in action, but also the board neglected to monitor, nurture, and supervise the health of the partnership.

When Arun was asked if the school board was playing a role in helping the partnership grow toward maturity, he indicated that it wasn’t playing a role at all, and that since initial partnership had been granted, he had not had any contact with the school board regarding the progress of the partnership. When asked if he had been given any instructions for updating the school board on the progress of the partnership, he replied, “No they did not communicate any of that to me. I guess they were happy that someone was working with their kids and giving them one-on-one help in the important areas of Math and English. No, they have never asked me for updates” [Third Interview, Lines 47-56].

With a lack of reciprocity on the part of the local school, and a lack of oversight by the school district, responsibility for maintaining the partnership between New Beginnings and Glendale Elementary became lopsided. New Beginnings shouldered the burden of trying to maintain and build the partnership, but with a reluctant and inattentive
educational partner, that became increasingly difficult. At the time that data collection ended, the future of the partnership was unclear. New Beginnings’ leadership indicated that it intended to stop spending energy trying to re-establish its connection with the school and to prioritize its own mission to deliver individualized instruction for each refugee child instead.

**Summary of Key Finding**

Data captured by this study provide evidence for the assertion that an asymmetrical partnership existed between New Beginnings and Glendale Elementary. Neither the school nor the school district had an individual or entity in place to operate as a counterpart to the information sharing and service coordination efforts of Arun on behalf of the NGO. In addition to the absence of such a counterpart, school leaders and school board members also failed to participate in acts of reciprocity when invited by the NGO to do so. Such acts included responding to phone calls and emails, visiting New Beginnings to observe how educational services were being delivered, meeting volunteers, and attending special events to honor the refugee children and their families. Similarly, the school district neglected to check in on the partnership. For over a year, it never inquired about the progress of the partnership or required updates from NGO leaders or school leaders about its effectiveness. Meanwhile, while the partnership with Glendale Elementary remained intact, NGO leadership regularly visited the school, made contact with school leaders, and attended refugee children’s extra-curricular events hosted by the school. Such disparities in the execution of partnership activities provide evidence that the partnership between Glendale Elementary and New Beginnings was
asymmetrical- with the bulk of the responsibility to maintain the partnership resting on the NGO. In support of this finding, Table 3 quantifies the partnership activities of the NGO and the school for purposes of comparison.

Table 3

*Comparison of Partnership Activities*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partnership Activities</th>
<th>NGO</th>
<th>School/School District</th>
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<tr>
<td>Presence at Partner Events</td>
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</tbody>
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Note: Data represent the number of instances of each partnership activity during the full year of the study.

**Key Finding: General, But Not Outright, Policy Nescience**

The final finding of my study addresses the last research question pertaining to policy. Specifically, I sought to understand what policies, if any, might have affected the NGOs ability to represent the educational interests of the refugee children to school leaders. In order to explore this question, I asked study participants if they were aware of any public or educational policies that had particularly enabled or curtailed their ability to
identify the educational needs of refugee children or represent those needs to school leaders once they had been identified. In general, data strongly support the key finding that a broad policy nescience exists among NGO volunteers, with 7 out of 12 study participants indicating that they either had no knowledge of public and educational policy whatsoever, or that they were not aware of any such policies affecting their ability to identify and represent the educational needs of refugee children. However, a small corpus of disconfirming evidence gestures toward several ways in which district policy, educational policy, and religious law might have affected New Beginning’s ability to identify and represent the educational needs of refugee children. I now present data in support of these assertions.

**General Policy Nescience**

The most salient finding with respect to the last research question of my study is that participants were generally unfamiliar with any public and educational policy. Seven out of twelve study participants indicated that when it came to discussions about policy, they felt insufficiently educated about how policy works and what policies were currently in effect that could be affecting their ability to advocate for refugee children. These seven participants reported that they were unaware of any policies affecting their ability to identify and represent the educational needs of the refugee children receiving remediation services at New Beginnings. Tom, a public school teacher in a suburban district and an advisory council member and mentor at New Beginnings, provides a representative response similar to others who expressed policy nescience. When asked about what
policies might be affecting his organization’s ability to identify and represent the educational needs of refugee children, Tom stated:

I don’t know. I don’t think so. I really don’t know. I’d be very impressed with the person who’s up to date on their educational policies. It’s a bit of a moving target. It’s always changing. Even so, it’s not like there’s laws or policies, it’s more cultural or social stuff [that affects our ability to identify and represent their needs]. I wouldn’t say its laws or policies. So, I guess my answer is, ‘No’, but I don’t know. [First Interview, Lines 319-341]

Like Tom, six other study participants expressed an overall unfamiliarity vis-à-vis policy, with two study participants, Naomi and Roger, choosing to skip over all policy questions during the initial interview.

**Disconfirming Evidence**

Despite an overarching policy nescience among NGO volunteers, a small corpus of disconfirming evidence suggests that three strands of policy might have been affecting New Beginning’s ability to identify and represent the educational needs of refugee children. First, two study participants, Tina and Kelly, indicated that the school district’s policy on partnership had affected information sharing and service coordination efforts. Second, three study participants, Becky, June, and Dale indicated that school-choice policies had affected information sharing and service coordination efforts. Third, one study participant, June indicated that local religious laws of the refugee community had
affected information sharing and service coordination efforts. I now present data that demonstrate each strand of disconfirming evidence.

**District Policy on Partnership**

One strand of disconfirming evidence suggests that the school district’s policy on establishing a school-community partnership affected New Beginning’s ability to represent the educational interests of refugee children to Glendale Elementary. The effect was mostly procedural, meaning that although New Beginnings may have been ready to represent the educational needs of refugee children sooner than it was able to, it was precluded from doing so until it had gone through the district’s bureaucratic process for board approval of the partnership. Tina conveys this perspective, stating:

I know at first- it’s kind of fixed now, but before we had the partnership with the school district we couldn’t just go in and talk to the principal about the needs of the kids. We had to make a presentation to the school board and then they had to agree to a partnership. So I think that was a policy we had to work through to be able to have partnership. At first it was kind of a hindrance since we had to come up with the partnership before we could share information with the school and get information from them. [First Interview, Lines 668-738]
Another volunteer, Kelly shares this sentiment:

Because I don’t know what the policies are, or should be. That is- I don’t really have much to say about that. Other than you know, well, I can’t say that it’s really a policy or a law, it’s just the inability to go in and talk to the very teachers that we’re working alongside with. We’re flying blind. And whatever needs to change, you know, I’d love to see that. And I don’t know what that means. Does it mean we get credential cards that say I have the right to come in? So if there was a way to get into the schools and have a conversation, I think, because of what I’m doing and the way I see things and what I’m trying to get done with these particular kids. Breaking down the red tape. [First Interview, Lines 752-773]

To the participant’s point, document analysis of the district’s partnership policy does suggest there is some red tape. The district’s policy for establishing educational partnerships with community organizations shows that the procedure for establishing an educational partnership is a bureaucratic one involving multiple steps. These steps, in order, include: (1) contacting the district’s school-community partnership coordinator via phone or email for an initial interview in which organizations seeking partnership must explain who they are, what services they provide, and how their mission aligns with the district’s mission, (2) await notice from the partnership coordinator as to whether or not a formal presentation to the school board sub-committee for school-community partnerships has been granted, and if so on what day the organization seeking partnership should plan to give a presentation to the sub-committee, (3) deliver a concise 10-minute presentation to the sub-committee explaining the benefits to the district as they align to
the district’s mission statement, (4) await notice from the sub-committee regarding approval or disapproval of the partnership, and (5) if approval is granted, begin coordinating partnership activities with the school or district. In the case of New Beginnings and Glendale Elementary, where Arun and Bonnie were already in contact, and Bonnie had become convinced that a partnership was beneficial for her school, data supplied by this strand of disconfirming evidence does suggest that the bureaucratic process required by district policy may have prevented New Beginnings from representing the educational needs of refugee children sooner than it did.

**School Choice Policy**

A second strand of disconfirming evidence suggests that educational policy, in the form of charter school law, may have been affecting New Beginning’s ability to identify and represent the educational needs of refugee children. A small corpus of data suggests that at least one start-up charter school was using financial incentives to lure refugee families away from the local school, Glendale Elementary, where their needs could be represented through the partnership with New Beginnings. Similarly, data suggest that charter school policies, which encourage charter school development, had resulted in suspicion and hostility toward outside organizations that the school perceived to be charter schools in disguise. In this way, school choice policies delayed New Beginning’s representation of refugee educational interests as Arun had to spend several months convincing Bonnie that New Beginnings was not a charter school in order to gain her trust.
When asked about what policies might be affecting New Beginnings ability to represent educational needs of refugee children, Becky, June, and Dale all commented on the ways that charter laws were being misused by start-up charters to target refugee parents. For instance, when asked about what policies might be affecting New Beginning’s ability to advocate for refugee children, Becky stated:

Well, I know there’s a lot of involvement with the charter schools and things, which I’m not a big fan of. I’m sure there’s good ones out there, but all of the refugee kids that I’ve taught that have come to us from charters are just a mess because - they’re re-entering the public school after the charter. We had one little girl, a second grader, who came to us—on a total side note—she rocked back and forth and sucked her thumb...she came from a charter school and they didn’t start any processes for an IEP. They’re like these kids that have like big needs and I don’t think the charter schools are equipped to meet them. So I worry about these kids at charter schools because I don’t think the parents understand. [First Interview, Lines 535-560]

Becky continued, indicating that she believes refugee parents’ language barriers may complicate their ability to understand information about charter schools and how school choice works in the United States. Becky was especially concerned about charters’ use of financial incentives to attract refugee families. She articulates:

…they [charter schools] offer money to families if their kids go to them. June was telling me about one- I don’t know what the name of the charter was, June does.
But, they were offering $50 per child per month to the family to have their child go to their charter school. So if you’re a refugee family and you don’t understand what’s going on, of course you’re going to go to the school that’s going to give you money. Whether that’s a good education for your child or not. They’re really starting to pick up, like that charter school is starting to get a lot of refugee families, and…why wouldn’t you do it? I don’t blame them at all. If I didn’t know and I was in a new country and someone was offering me money to go to school I’d probably send my kids there too. You just don’t know any better. And I think the weight of education is different coming from refugee camp, your main instinct is to survive, not to go and get an education. [First Interview, Lines 561-621]

Data from this interview with Becky provide a context for data provided by Dale, which suggest that charter school policy had created suspicion and hostility between Glendale Elementary and outside organizations that may seek to form educational partnerships with the district. When asked about policies affecting New Beginning’s ability to advocate for refugee children, Dale stated:

The only policy that comes to mind is that the first time Arun said that he approached the elementary school principal, she thought we were a charter school and moving into their territory, and as soon as she found out we were a study program, she supported us. She knew at that point we were working alongside them, but initially there was a barrier that could have been there if they thought somebody that was coming in to their district to try to replace what they’re trying to do. [First Interview, Lines 306-327]
Data from this strand of disconfirming evidence suggest that school choice policy may have been affecting New Beginning’s ability to identify and represent the needs of refugee children. It may have done so by luring away refugee children from the local school, where an educational partnership capable of representing their needs existed between New Beginnings and Glendale Elementary. It may also have done so by producing a climate of territorialism and suspicion between the local school and outside organizations seeking to form educational partnerships.

**Religious Policies**

A final strand of disconfirming evidence with respect to policy suggests that locally formed religious policies of the refugee community may have affected New Beginning’s ability to identify and represent the educational needs of refugee children. The East African refugee population served by New Beginnings is predominantly a Muslim community. As with many religious communities, members of a community may subscribe to varying degrees of orthodoxy. With respect to the refugee population at New Beginnings, data suggest that some members of the refugee community who subscribed to more orthodox religious policies refused to let their children attend the mentoring program at New Beginnings because its facility was formerly a house of worship for a Non-Muslim faith. When asked about policies affecting the advocacy of refugee children, June explained how local religious law played a role in New Beginning’s ability to serve, and consequently advocate, for some children:
Culturally speaking, I think the fact that maybe because of religious differences, uh, them being from a Muslim culture- some of them will not allow their children to come to New Beginnings because the facility is an old house of worship [of a Non-Muslim faith] that's been converted to a community center, even though Arun has assured the parents that we do not teach religion at New Beginnings. Even for those children whose parents have allowed them to come, we have to be careful. There is an old sanctuary in the middle of the facility, obviously, it was a house of worship before- and that's a lot of space, but we cannot even take the children in there to use the space, because you know, that would offend them if we took them into the sanctuary area. So- as it is now, we cannot use that space because the children will go home and say that we made them go into a Non-Muslim sanctuary. [First Interview, Lines 502-557]

In this way, for those refugee families who subscribe to a more orthodox set of religious rules and regulations, such religious policies affect New Beginnings ability to identify and represent the educational needs of their children. It does so because orthodox religious policies prevent refugee families from allowing their children to enter the houses of worship of Non-Muslim faiths. Even though New Beginnings is a Non-Profit Organization, and not a house of worship, the fact that its facility is a former house of worship is preclusive to some orthodox Muslim believers.
Summary of Key Finding

In general, NGO volunteers expressed policy nescience with respect to knowledge of any public or educational policies that could be affecting their ability to identify and represent the educational needs of refugee children to school leaders. However, a small corpus of disconfirming evidence unearthed three policies that had potentially curtailed needs identification and representation. Two study participants identified the district’s policy on forming educational partnerships as overly bureaucratic and cumbersome. Two study participants identified charter school laws as having impacted the NGOs ability to identify and represent educational needs because refugee children it serviced were being lured away from Glendale Elementary where it could leverage its partnership to advocate for their needs. One study participant identified local religious laws as affecting orthodox Muslim believers’ willingness to allow their children to receive services at New Beginnings, which in turn prevented potential needs from being identified and represented.

Summary of Chapter

This chapter presented findings to the final three research questions of my study. With respect to how the NGO facilitated information sharing and the coordination of educational services with the local school, data coalesced around the key finding that it occurred through Arun, who became the exclusive information-sharing conduit from the NGO to the school. With respect to how the school facilitated information sharing and the coordination of educational services with the NGO, data demonstrate that there was
no informational counterpart on the part of the school, and consequently, no conduit existed. Additionally, data show that the partnership between New Beginnings and Glendale Elementary was asymmetrical with the burden for conducting partnership activities conducive to information sharing and coordinating educational services falling almost entirely on New Beginnings. Finally, with respect to policies that may affect the ability of NGOs to identify and represent the educational needs of refugee children they serve, my study found that in general, NGO leaders were unfamiliar with how policy functions, which policies were in effect, and consequently how they might have been impacting representational capacity. Meanwhile, a small corpus of disconfirming evidence gestures toward three policies that might have limited New Beginning’s representational capacity: district policy, charter school policy, and local religious law. Having now presented all key findings of my study, I proceed to Chapter 7 where I discuss the study’s implications for educational theory, policy, practice, and research.
Chapter 7: Representation of Refugee Interests in Schools: Implications and Recommendations for Policy, Practice, and Research

This study, which examined how NGOs and their volunteers function as representatives of refugee interests in schools, has provided evidence suggesting that NGOs and their volunteers are important, but perhaps overlooked, pieces of the school governance puzzle. While NGOs exist on the periphery of formal educational structures such as schools, school boards, and district offices, they provide educational services to the same children who attend local schools. When they partner with schools to coordinate educational remediation services, they become a part of the formal educational structure. In the case of New Beginnings and its partnership with Glendale Elementary, such a partnership made multiple forms of representation possible for the refugee families whose children attended New Beginning’s mentorship program. While the partnership was intact, New Beginnings and its volunteers were able to identify the educational needs of the refugee children it served and advocate for those needs with school leaders and school board members. However, this study has also shown that representation and advocacy are delicate and intricate processes. Without proper care and oversight, educational partnerships conducive to the inclusion of refugee interests in schools’ decision-making processes become easily threatened. Therefore, safeguarding the representation of refugee educational interests against policies and practices that curtail
their inclusion must be a priority for schools in democratic societies. This is especially the case for refugees- and other non-citizens- whose immigration status provides no formal avenues of political representation.

Having reported the key findings of my study, I now discuss their implications for theories of democratic representation as well as educational policy, practice, and research. As an ethnography, findings from this study should not be generalized- they are pertinent to the specific context in which they occurred. However, their context-rich nature remains useful for considering how theories of democratic representation may need to expand, and how local schools and districts that serve refugee populations might improve educational policies and practices in order to promote the representation of refugee interests in their decision-making processes. In a broad sense, they also remain useful for considering how state and federal educational policies might be revised to safeguard and increase the representation of refugee interests in schools.

**Theory**

My study raises several important questions with respect to theories of democratic representation and how such theories intersect with refugee status. As newcomers to the United States who typically relocate from non-democratic political regimes and violent conflict, refugees are often neophytes when it comes to democratic political structures and processes. In addition to inexperience with democracy, many refugees face acute relocation challenges such as extensive language barriers, securing sufficient livelihood, engaging with cultural differences, separation from family and community support
structures, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Such inexperience and the intensity of relocation challenges bring crucial questions about democratic participation and representation to the forefront in conversations about how to include refugee voice in democratic processes. Such questions include:

1. Is guardianship ever appropriate as a governance structure? If so, when and to what degree?

2. At what point does an individual, especially a newcomer, become qualified to directly participate in democratic processes?

3. If newcomers are precluded from all forms of direct participation in democratic processes during naturalization, how does that affect their readiness to participate in democratic processes once citizenship status is attained?

In response to these questions, previous theories of democratic representation applicable to the U.S. context may be insufficient in two ways: (1) they fail to establish a cogent model for enabling the representation of refugee interests during the 7-10 year naturalization process, and (2) they fail to prepare refugee newcomers for direct political participation once citizenship status is attained. In order to address these theoretical shortcomings, I re-examine previous theory in light of the findings of my study, and suggest an alternative that may be helpful in educational contexts.
Guardians, Trustees, & Refugees: An Alternative to a Dahl vs. Theiss-Morse Dichotomy

One key finding, that a general veneer of guardianship provided the primary representational paradigm of the NGO and its volunteers, permeated my study on the representation of refugee interests in schools. Yet, guardianship is a highly contested representational paradigm. Pitkin (1967) identified the primary tensions of both guardianship and delegation, noting that guardianship frees expert agents from all accountability to those being represented, while delegation chains representative agents to their constituency’s desires in ways that may prevent delegates from making decisions they think are best for their constituency. In derivative discussions of this primary tension, scholars concerned with representation have illuminated its nuances. Dahl (1991) calls guardianship a “rival” (p. 52) to democracy because it implies that everyday people are incapable of knowing what is best for them. Said (1978) warns of the ways in which imperialist people groups co-opt guardianship to dehumanize those who are unfamiliar to them- a political process he called “Othering” (p. 332). Meanwhile, Arendt (1973) discusses how convincing governed peoples of the need to rely on expertise in decision-making can leverage power toward a totalitarian regime. Such abuses of power certainly defy democracy in its truest sense- government by the people for the people.

Yet, since the inception of democracy, political thinkers have made arguments in favor of guardianship. From ancient political thinkers, such as Plato, to contemporary ones, such as Theiss-Morse (2002), scholars have argued that guardianship is both a desired and desirable form of democratic representation. Theiss-Morse (2002) claims that
most people prefer guardianship, provided that they trust the guardian and may play a role in choosing him or her. Meanwhile, political thinkers who follow Plato’s line of reasoning agree with his assertion that common people are under-qualified to understand the complexities that arise when making decisions for an entire polity; thus, such decision-making should be reserved for those with sufficient capacity to do so. With respect to refugee populations that have relocated to democratic societies, there are dangers to both positions, and alternatives must be sought.

The danger of conferring immediate and direct rights of political participation upon refugee populations, the position that aligns best with a rigid adherence to participatory democracy, is that newcomers may, in fact, be under prepared for making decisions about policy. For most refugees, democracy is a complete regime reversal from the political systems they knew prior to arrival. And, given the language barriers that most refugees face, it is reasonable to question the degree to which voting-aged refugee newcomers could adequately understand political issues in order to vote in ways consistent with their actual preferences. In this sense, Dahl (1991), and political thinkers like him, perhaps under-considered how newcomer status- and various challenges associated with it- may complicate immediate rights to direct political participation. Newcomers may not have the capacities in place to understand complex social, political, and cultural processes- and conferring them with the immediate power to influence policy may be premature.

On the other hand, there are multiple dangers to guardianships and aristocracies, even philanthropic or altruistic ones. Dahl (1991; 1998) cautions that in such decision-
making arrangements, the likelihood of exploitation and abuses of power are high— and one might argue that for refugee populations who have multiple limits on various forms of capital—social, linguistic, and economic—the risk of exploitation is even higher.

Moreover, while one can see Theiss-Morse’s (2002) point that some members of democratic society prefer guardianship over direct political participation, such a view could easily be co-opted by guardians and aristocrats who wish to enjoy the luxury of decision-making without the burden of seeking input from those being governed. In this sense, latent representation, as a form of representation in democratic society, may backfire when guardians fail, or have disincentives, to invest time and resources in developing a deep understanding of newcomers over whom they are exercising decision-making authority.

This is especially the case when aristocratic ruling parties govern non-Western populations that have relocated to the United States under refugee status. Western guardians may lack a deep understanding of the cultures, perspectives, and interests of the non-Western populations for whom they make binding policy decisions. They may lack an understanding of such fundamental questions as:

1. How does a particular refugee population conceptualize representation?
2. When a member of the refugee population seeks advocacy within his or her indigenous culture, how does that process work?
3. If latent representation seems to be the preference of a particular refugee community, how can guardians be sure that relocation challenges aren’t masking an actual preference for direct participation?
4. And, even if latent representation is the actual preference of a refugee population, to what degree are guardians able to ascertain the needs of refugees without directly involving refugee families in conversations about their needs?

In this sense, the intersection of refugee status and representation illuminates both the dangers of guardianship and the dangers of conferring immediate rights of political participation. It seems that neither option accomplishes two of the normative aspirations of democratic society: equal ability to participate for all who are bound by policy outcomes, and policy outcomes that accurately reflect the will of the people. Guardianship precludes an equal ability to participate, while prematurely conferring rights to political participation upon individuals facing acute relocation challenges, including language barriers and entrance into a new political regime, may compromise the processes of deliberative democracy and yield illegitimate policy outcomes. Refugee status, therefore, requires us to generate a different approach to representation-one that overcomes the hazards of guardianship while providing an induction into democratic life-one that builds a cogent bridge from newcomer to citizen. Moreover, because schools in the United States are the vanguard of democratic government in the local community, school governance structures may be an ideal place to begin building such bridges.

**Building Bridges Through School Governance: Representation by Invitation & Induction Into Democratic Life**

Urbinati and Warren (2008) note a phenomenon of interest with respect to political representation and how it functions in contemporary democratic societies.
Namely, they note that representation, as a construct, has outgrown traditional expressions of the principal-agent relationship. Phenomenon such as globalization, immigration, forced displacement, and the digital era have all complicated attempts to wed representation to traditional political structures such as elections, voting, assemblies, and territories. Thus, for the last two decades, scholars of representation have been attempting to re-articulate the construct in ways capable of capturing how it occurs in modern decision-making venues. Such work has yielded theoretical advancements such as surrogate representation (Mansbridge, 2003) and nondemocratic representation (Rehfeld, 2006; 2009), both of which informed the theoretical framework of my study. However, such advancements only describe how representation is occurring in certain contexts. They do not provide practical solutions capable of addressing the two shortcomings of surrogate and nondemocratic representation vis-à-vis refugee populations. Neither establishes a cogent model for enabling the representation of refugee interests during the 7-10 year naturalization process, nor do they prepare refugee newcomers for direct political participation once citizenship status is attained. Both require refugee newcomers to secure the attention of a surrogate or nondemocratic agent who then commits to being responsive to their needs. If they are unable to secure such an agent, then their interests are likely to remain unrepresented.

In order to forge avenues of political representation during the 7-10 year naturalization period and induct refugee newcomers into political life, it makes sense to begin with school governance as the vanguard of democracy. Within the decision-making processes of local schools, avenues of representation could be developed that would not
require refugee newcomers to secure the attention and responsiveness of an external agent. Rather, schools could develop avenues of representation that invite refugee families directly into their decision-making processes. In this sense, representation by invitation could become an intentional inclusion of newcomers’ interests by inviting their direct participation in deliberations about school policy. Representation by invitation could bypass traditional political structures that wed representation to citizenship status and the right to vote. Of course, representation by invitation raises questions with respect to accountability and responsiveness. Citizens have the power to hold agents, such as school board members and school leaders, accountable for behaving in ways that accurately reflect their interests. Meanwhile, representation by invitation would not give refugees the same power to expunge unresponsive agents. However, given the accountability mandates of contemporary educational policy, school board members and school leaders have a strong incentive to respond to the educational needs of all families residing within their districts. Thus, it is reasonable to conclude that if school governance structures invited refugee populations to represent their interests, those same governance structures would make efforts to be as responsive as possible. In this sense, representation by invitation would address the two shortcomings of previous theories of representation: it would establish a cogent model for enabling refugees to represent their own interests during the 7-10 year naturalization process, and it would provide a local induction process to prepare newcomers for full political participation once citizenship status is attained.
By suggesting that schools develop avenues of representation by invitation, I am not suggesting that such avenues should supplant other forms of representation available to non-citizens in U.S. schools. Where legitimate descriptive, symbolic, latent, surrogate, and nondemocratic forms of representation are occurring, improvements to policy and practice should expand their effectiveness at including refugee interests in educational decision-making. Moreover, where forms of representation do not yet exist for refugee populations being served by U.S. schools, improvements to policy and practice should forge them. With this in mind, I now proceed to my study’s implications for educational policy, practice, and research. I approach all three under the auspices of increasing the representation of refugee interests in educational decision-making. I do this irrespective of particular representational forms, but with an emphasis on policies and practices that may encourage a more direct inclusion of refugee interests in schools.

Policy

My study has multiple implications for educational policy. First, my study illuminates ways in which educational policies that target school-community partnerships might be revised in order to promote greater responsibility over such partnerships’ maintenance, growth, and sustainability. By increasing the effectiveness of such educational partnerships, my study suggests that partner organizations such as NGOs will have increased opportunities to advocate for the disenfranchised families they serve, representing refugee children’s educational needs to school leaders. Second, my study has implications for educational policies that target increased refugee parental
involvement in schools and school governance. I now set forth to discuss specific policy changes that should be considered at the federal, state, and local level.

**Federal Policy**

Federal policy requires schools to forge relationships with parents that make them equal partners in educational process\(^\text{16}\). While federal policy targets educational partnership as a goal for all parents, it especially obligates schools to forge partnerships with parent populations whose children face greater socio-economic, social, cultural, and linguistic obstacles to academic success. Interestingly, federal policy encourages schools to leverage the educational partnerships with community-based organizations such as NGOs in pursuit of their parent partnership initiatives. However, while federal policy requires schools to form such partnerships, it does not currently hold schools accountable for monitoring, nurturing, and growing educational partnerships. This shortcoming may provide a perverse incentive for schools and districts to form partnerships because they are required to do so- not because they intend to engage in responsible and reciprocal educational partnerships. To this end, federal policy may inadvertently produce irresponsible governance. Allen and Mintrom (2010) discuss responsible school governance, arguing that officials who govern schools and educational decision-making have a duty to behave responsibly toward the public and toward children. My study builds upon their framework of responsible school governance by suggesting that those who govern schools should also be responsible toward those with whom they form partnerships.

\(^{16}\) The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 20 U.S.C.A. § 6318

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educational partnerships. In order to increase responsible governance of educational partnerships, policy makers at the federal level should consider the following:

- Federal policy should be revised not only to require educational partnerships, but also to require accountability processes to ensure that those with whom states and districts form educational partnerships are treated responsibly. Such accountability processes should require schools and districts that form educational partnerships to report on the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of the partnership’s effectiveness as well as the school or district’s plan for the growth, development, and sustainability of the partnership.

**State Policy**

One strand of data in my study gestures toward the ways in which refugee newcomers may be under-prepared and vulnerable when it comes to making informed decisions about school-choice. Therefore, state-level policy makers may consider the following policy recommendations:

- States should revise their educational codes to require local districts and charters to provide an annual informational forum for parents. The purpose of such a forum would be to update parents on school-choice policy and supply accurate information about what school-choice is, how marketing, admissions, enrollment, and disenrollment work, important questions to consider during school-choice processes, and what rights parents have when making a decision about school-choice for their children.
• States should revise their educational codes to require local districts and charters to provide an induction program into the U.S. education system for refugees and other newcomers. Such an induction program should include what accountability is, how traditional public schools and charter schools measure and report accountability, what school choice is, how marketing, admissions, enrollment, and disenrollment work, important questions to consider during school-choice processes, and what rights parents have when working with schools and making decisions about school-choice for their children.

School, School District, and Local Policy

As local municipalities and local schools are the vanguard of democracy in communities where refugee newcomers reside, the policies they design and implement have the most direct and immediate opportunity to increase the inclusion of refugee interests in educational decision-making. Local policy makers and school leaders may increase the representation of refugee interests by: (1) providing induction services to refugee families with respect to the U.S. education system and democratic processes, (2) targeting policy changes to increase refugees’ access to institutional forms of representation at the local level, and (3) intentionally inviting refugees into schools’ and districts’ decision-making processes. In an effort to do both, local policy makers and school leaders may consider the following:

• In the absence of state policies requiring schools to provide an annual informational forum for parents, the local district could require schools to do so.
The purpose of such a forum would be to update parents on school-choice policy and supply accurate information about what school-choice is, how marketing, admissions, enrollment, and disenrollment work, important questions to consider during school-choice processes, and what rights parents have when making a decision about school-choice for their children.

• In the absence of state policies requiring schools to provide an induction program into the U.S. education system for refugees and other newcomers, the local district could require schools to do so. Such an induction program should include what educational accountability is, how traditional public schools and charter schools measure and report accountability, what school choice is, how marketing, admissions, enrollment, and disenrollment work, important questions to consider during school-choice processes, and what rights parents have when working with schools and making decisions about school-choice for their children.

• Policy makers in local municipalities with a refugee presence should consider changing local voting laws to allow refugee populations to vote in local school board elections. This would not be a novel approach. During historic periods of immigration, voting rights were extended to non-citizens. Harper-Ho (2000) elaborates, “…the United States has a long history of non-citizen voting; non-citizens voted in the United States and even held public office from the Colonial Era through the 1920s” (p. 272). Similarly, despite restrictions on non-citizen voting rights at the state and federal level, there are currently municipalities in which local voting rights have been extended to non-citizens. This phenomenon
has occurred primarily in educational settings through local school board elections (Earnest, 2003; Harper-Ho, 2000; Hayduk, 2003; Hayduk, 2004; Kini, 2005). State and federal policies do not currently restrict local municipalities from extending voting rights to non-citizens, such as refugees. The ability to participate in local democratic processes would provide refugee populations with an important induction opportunity to integrate and acculturate to the rights and privileges they will fully acquire as future citizens. Extending school board election voting rights to refugees would also provide a legitimized avenue of representation, reducing refugee populations’ need to seek it through surrogacy and nondemocratic forms.

- For similar reasons, local municipalities might also consider allowing members of the refugee population to run for office in local school board elections. Although, refugees may face obstacles that decrease their ability to run for office since school board campaigns typically require funding (Adams, 2008). Refugee populations may lack the disposable income necessary to fund such campaigns themselves as well as the social capital to procure campaign funding from external sources. Moreover, for refugees that relocate to districts in which mayoral control or appointed school boards govern local educational policy-making, their ability to vote or run for school board office would be irrelevant. Regardless, the ability to run for office should be among the policy changes considered by municipalities comprised of refugee populations.
• School districts that serve refugee populations should consider inviting key leaders of refugee communities to serve as appointed chairs on their school boards. While most school board members are comprised of publicly elected officials, some are appointed by governors or mayors, and some are comprised of both elected and appointed members (Berkman & Plutzer, 2005). Districts that serve refugee populations may carefully consider this option, especially as increased minority representation on school boards has been linked to gains in minority representation writ large and minority student achievement (Allen & Plank, 2005; Meier & Gonzalez-Junke, 2003). While it would perhaps require the assistance of special services, such as language translators, the social and academic benefits may greatly outweigh the inconvenience of providing such services.

• For contexts in which building level school leaders such as principals and teachers have established trust with a community-based organization such as an NGO, school districts should consider ways to reduce the bureaucratic processes required to formalize educational partnerships. As the direct connection between the NGO and the school, school leaders may be in the best position to determine the benefit of such partnerships, and should have the ability to sanction them if they have determined that children are likely to benefit from the partnership. In this way, NGOs that have the capacity to function as surrogate and nondemocratic representatives of refugee educational interests will not face lengthy delays caused by overly bureaucratic obstacles to partnership.
• Schools and districts that form educational partnerships with community-based organizations such as NGOs should develop personnel and processes for overseeing the successful growth and development of such partnerships. Failure to do so constitutes irresponsible partnership, and may result in asymmetrical dynamics that threaten not only the immediate effectiveness of the partnership but also its longevity. Those involved in creating the partnership should play an active role in monitoring, maintaining and nurturing it.

**Practice**

My study also has multiple implications for schools and school leaders who administer and deliver educational services to refugee children. In general, my study illuminates ways in which schools and school leaders might facilitate changes in organizational leadership, organizational structure, and school climate in order to promote the formation, growth, and sustainability of strong school-community partnerships. By increasing the effectiveness of school-community partnerships, my study suggests that partner organizations such as NGOs will have increased opportunities to advocate for the families they serve, representing refugee children’s educational needs to school leaders. My study also suggests that schools and school leaders might facilitate changes in organizational leadership, organizational structure, and school climate in order to increase refugee parental involvement in schools and refugee parental understanding of the U.S. school system. By fostering educational leadership practices conducive to strong school-community partnerships and increased refugee parental involvement in schools,
refugee parents will have increased opportunities to build relationships with school leaders and advocate for their own educational interests.

**Organizational Leadership**

In an effort to build stronger, more responsible, more democratic, and more effective school-community partnerships and increase refugee parental involvement in schools, school leaders should consider the following leadership practices in schools and districts that serve refugee populations:

- As a leadership practice, school leaders should participate in acts of reciprocity with educational partners. They should: (1) visit the facilities and programs of educational partners and get to know the leadership team and workers or volunteers; (2) attend special events hosted by the educational partner; (3) initiate phone calls and email correspondence with the educational partner, and (4) be responsive to the needs of the educational partner as it seeks to work alongside the school in serving refugee children.

- As a leadership practice, school leaders should promote the educational partner and its services to refugee parents in order to increase parental involvement. In particular, school leaders might: (1) Include educational partners in annual events such as back to school night and parent teacher conferences by inviting them to attend such events to speak to parents about the services they offer—providing translation services when necessary; (2) Promote educational partners through their public websites, providing information about the services offered by partners
as well as contact information for inquiring about services. Such information should be available in languages best understood by the refugee population, and may need to be available as an audio file for populations whose language has no written form; (3) Encourage classroom educators to promote educational partners by regularly updating educators about organizations with whom the school is partnered and what services those organizations offer. When appropriate, educators should actively refer families and children to partners whose services they believe could benefit the child.

- As a leadership practice, school leaders should make strong efforts to become aware and be cognizant of the social norms, faith traditions, and religious laws of the refugee populations that they serve and how these may intersect with the mission, norms, and perspectives of organizations with whom they form educational partnerships. Where there is potential for some children’s access to partners’ educational services to be compromised based on cultural or religious conflicts, school leaders should, where possible, provide alternatives that would make the partners’ services accessible to all refugee children. For instance, when doing so would increase the accessibility of partners’ services, schools may provide a neutral meeting space for after school tutoring and mentoring programs.

**Organizational Structure**

Adjustments to schools’ organizational structure may help educational leaders build stronger, more responsible, more democratic, and more effective school-community partnerships. Leveraging changes to schools’ organizational structures in ways that invite
refugee parents into schools’ decision-making processes may also increase refugee parental involvement in their children’s education. Therefore, school leaders should consider the following structural changes in schools and districts that serve refugee populations:

- As policy requires school leaders to forge partnerships with refugee parents and community-based organizations, it is the school, not the educational partner that should shoulder the burden of forging, nurturing, and sustaining educational partnerships. In order to prevent irresponsible or asymmetrical partnership, school leaders should re-structure the leadership team, designating a scope of work and the proper funding to an individual who performs the following tasks: (1) monitors the landscape of potential educational partners and develops an awareness of which Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) such as Non-Profit Organizations (NPOs), Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs), Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), Grass-Roots Organizations (GROs), and Volunteer Agencies (VOLAGs) are offering educational remediation and other social services to the children attending their schools; (2) initiates contact with partners whose mission and approach to providing services aligns with the mission statement of the school and district; (3) initiates partnership with NGOs that are a good fit for the district or school; (4) oversees the growth and sustainability of the partnership by coordinating reciprocal partnership activities and being responsive to partners’ needs; (5) reports to school and district leaders on the effectiveness of partnerships.
• Adjusting organizational structures with respect to school governance, so that school board members, administrators, and classroom educators may invite educational partners into the decision-making processes of the school for the purposes of increasing the representation of refugee educational interests. For instance, school leaders might: (1) regularly invite educational partners to share their perspectives about the needs of the children they serve during school board meetings and other decision-making events; (2) require, as a responsibility of partnership, that the educational partner selects a liaison to aggregate partner feedback about the needs of refugee children and share that feedback at regular intervals at school board meetings and other decision-making events.

• Reduce organizational bureaucracy and other structural barriers that prevent educational partners and their workers or volunteers from connecting and communicating directly with school leaders and classroom teachers about the needs of specific children they serve. For instance schools might: (1) facilitate the exchange of contact information between school leaders and classroom teachers and educational partners’ workers or volunteers; (2) provide certified identification cards for authorized volunteers to visit the school for the purposes of interacting with refugee children’s teachers and coaches and attending school-sponsored events such as athletic competitions and academic convocations.

• Evaluate the effectiveness of current efforts to increase the representation of refugee interests in schools’ decision-making processes, and consider how leveraging educational partners and their volunteers as uncompensated liaisons...
could conserve funds that have been previously allocated to support a compensated position. For instances in which doing so would create more effective representation and more responsible fiscal sense, school leaders should adjust organizational structure to allow educational partners and their volunteers to serve as uncompensated liaisons of refugee interests and eliminate redundant expenditures associated with formal liaison positions.

- Adjusting organizational structures with respect to school governance, so that school board members, administrators, and classroom educators may invite refugee parents directly into the decision-making processes of the school. For instance, they might: (1) create a leadership position for a representative of the refugee community to serve as a member of the school’s leadership team, and allow the members of the refugee community to choose the individual who will fulfill this role; (2) allow the refugee community to create a panel of parents or community leaders that will be invited to attend the school or district’s decision-making processes in order to represent the needs of the refugee community; (3) create a chair on the school board for a member of the refugee population, and allow the refugee population to choose the individual who will fulfill that role.

**School Climate**

In an effort to build stronger, more responsible, more democratic, and more effective school-community partnerships and increase refugee parental involvement in schools, school leaders should consider the following to build a school climate conducive to the inclusion of refugee interests in their decision-making processes:
• School leaders should develop a school climate that encourages democratic processes such as representation and deliberation by conducting professional development programs for faculty, staff, and educational partners and their volunteers that target increases in these individuals’ awareness of their own agency as representatives of refugee interests in schools.

• School leaders should develop a school climate that encourages democratic processes such as representation and deliberation by identifying and addressing barriers to refugee parents’ participation in schools’ public decision-making processes, especially school board meetings and parent-led advocacy meetings such as those of local Parent Teacher Associations.

Research

The representation of refugee interests in educational contexts is fertile ground for educational researchers to collaborate with schools, NGOs, and refugee communities on projects aimed at increasing the inclusion of refugee interests in policy-making venues. As school districts navigate the swiftly changing instructional demands produced by influxes of refugee populations, educational researchers may be capable of collaborating with local districts to unearth the needs and perspectives of refugee populations. In an effort to foster such collaboration, the following are recommendations for future research on the representation of refugee interests in local schools.
Non-Western Theoretical Frames

Educational researchers should conduct projects to explore how particular refugee populations understand and define representation as well as how such populations participate in collective decision-making processes. Without first understanding the nuances of representation and collective decision-making for particular refugee populations, it is premature for school leaders and educational researchers to assume that: (1) decision-making trust has been established or conferred upon them, and (2) the needs they have identified through aristocratic means accurately reflect the actual preferences of refugee families. In this way, there is an imperialist danger in imposing Western theoretical frames, concepts, and practices upon refugee communities (Said, 1978; Smith, 1999). Therefore, educational researchers should devote attention to answering such questions as:

- Do particular refugee populations have a conceptual framework of representation that they have brought with them into the community in which they have resettled and relocated? If so, what is it and how is it the same or different than conceptualizations of representation in the local U.S. community in which they have relocated and resettled?

- How do particular refugee populations produce and enforce binding community rules within their community? How do these collective decision-making processes align with or differ from the collective decision-making processes of the local U.S community in which they have relocated and resettled?
Answering such questions is likely to require numerous context-rich, immersive qualitative studies capable of describing the practices and perspectives of individual refugee communities.

**Representative Agents**

Educational researchers should continue to explore how activities of representation occur when they are embedded in educational contexts, identifying individuals and entities that function as representative agents for refugee families. Such projects should explore questions such as:

- Who represents refugee interests in local educational policy-making venues? How does this representation occur?
- To what degree do educational leaders understand themselves as political agents capable of advocating for refugee interests? To what degree do educational leaders understand their activities as representational activities?
- To what degree do educational partners such as NGOs and their workers or volunteers understand themselves as political agents capable of advocating for refugee interests? To what degree do educational partners understand their activities as representational activities?
- How does representation in educational contexts align with or diverge from anterior constructs of representation in democratic theory?
- How are actual policy outcomes affected by agents’ advocacy of refugee educational interests at the local level?
• What hinders or promotes the inclusion of refugee interests in local educational policy making and implementation?

Such projects may examine both the institutionalized and informal ways that representative agents represent refugee interests in schools and other educational settings. For instance, projects that explore the use of institutionalized liaisons, such as community liaisons employed by school districts, could explore the ways in which those liaisons determine the needs of the populations they serve and then advocate for those needs. Similarly, projects that explore the use of informal liaisons, such as unpaid volunteers, could explore the ways in which those individuals determine the needs of the populations they serve and then advocate for those needs. Such projects should be intentional about exploring the power structures of schools and districts in order to determine if and how liaisons’ advocacy produces identifiable change in terms of policy outcomes and resource allocation on behalf of the refugee populations being served.

**Double Agents: Representing Education to Refugee Newcomers**

While beyond the scope of this study’s research questions, several strands of data suggested ways in which NGOs and their volunteers not only function as agents who represent refugee educational interests to schools, but also function as agents who represent education and learning to refugee newcomers. They do so by representing to refugee populations what U.S. education is, what education’s outcomes should be, what constitutes educational success, and what education’s promises and purposes are. Moreover, volunteers not only represented education to refugee populations, but also
learning and what learning is— including indicators that provide evidence that learning has occurred. Future research should explore this phenomenon in detail in order to understand the following:

• How are school leaders and educational partners representing the promises and purposes of U.S. education to refugee families?
• How are school leaders and educational partners defining education and educational success for refugee populations?
• How do such depictions of education align with or deviate from refugee populations’ own understandings of what education is and what constitutes educational success?
• How are school leaders and educational partners defining learning for refugee families? How do such definitions align with or deviate from refugee families’ own understandings of what constitutes learning?

School and Community Partnerships

Educational researchers should continue to study school-community partnerships and their capacity for the representation of minority interests in educational decision-making. In particular, researchers should conduct projects that aim to:

• Develop organizational leadership models for responsible educational partnerships.
• Identify indicators of effective school-community partnerships.
• Understand the relationship(s) between responsible and effective school-community partnerships and increases or decreases in minority representation.
• Understand the relationship(s) between fragile and insufficiently institutionalized school-community partnerships and increases or decreases in minority representation.

**Charter School Recruitment Strategies**

Research should be done to develop a stronger understanding of context specific strategies that charter schools use to advertise themselves to refugee parents and enroll refugee children. Such projects should examine:

• Which charter schools actively advertise themselves to refugee populations in efforts to recruit refugee children? Who authorizes them? Who manages them? Who provides instructional leadership and delivers classroom curriculum? Where do such schools obtain funding for marketing campaigns?
• According to advertisements and recruitment materials, what innovations does the charter claim to offer that could be of direct benefit to refugee children?
• How does the charter school compare to the local public school vis-à-vis refugee student achievement?
• How do the educational services, programs, and resources offered by the charter school compare to the educational services, programs, and resources offered by the local public school?
• Specific marketing methods used by charter schools to reach refugee audiences—
including radio commercials, television commercials, online advertisements, mail
and email advertisements, sponsored recruitment events, house calls, and word of
mouth. Such studies might be qualitative or experimental. Qualitative studies,
such as document analysis might investigate marketing materials for themes,
strategies, and narrative responses about marketing materials from study
participants. Experimental studies might compare reactions and school choice
decisions of parents exposed to different types of advertisements.

• Any specific incentives used by charter schools to increase their attractiveness to
refugee parents.

The Increasing Role of Technology in Representing the Educational Needs of
Refugee Families

While beyond the scope of this study’s research questions, one strand of residual
data suggested that demographic tracking technologies, such as geo-coding with
Geographic Information Systems, may play a significant role in representing the
educational needs of refugee children. Such technologies allow districts that serve
refugee populations to categorize and track children by any number of variables of their
choosing including items such as home residence, socio-economic status, race and
ethnicity, parental demographic information, and home language—building a profile of
each child while monitoring and tracking changes in such information. Such technologies
allow administrators to re-district, re-allocate resources, and adjust instructional services
to the changing educational needs of all children, including refugee children, that their
districts serve. However, it is unclear if refugee parents, or other parents, are aware that districts are collecting information about their families and using it to build student profiles and track various activities. Therefore, research should be conducted in order to better understand the following:

- What is the full extent of information collected by districts that use geo-coding? Where is this information stored, and how is consent obtained for acquiring it?
- Other than making decisions regarding re-districting, resource allocation, and changes in instructional programming, how do districts use the information collected through geo-coding to inform or advocate for various policy changes?
- How do districts use information collected through geo-coding to inform decisions that they make about instructional resources and educational partnerships?
- What awareness does the public have about geo-coding and its use by the district?
- What awareness do non-native English speaking families, which would include many refugees and immigrants, have about geo-coding and its use by the district?
- What are the costs associated with the use of geo-coding?

**Conclusion**

As newcomers to the United States, refugees have limited avenues of political representation. As the vanguard of democratic government in the local community,
schools and their governance structures are among the first encounters that refugee populations have with political life in the United States. However, because they can neither run for the school board nor elect school board members to advocate for their educational interests, my study explored how refugee populations may have their interests represented through NGOs and their volunteers who partner with local schools to provide educational services to refugee children.

The NGO and volunteers that comprised my study generally operated as an altruistic aristocracy of educational guardians—relying on educational experts, assessments, and volunteer feedback in order to ascertain the educational needs of the refugee community. However, guardianship was not the only representational form occurring at my study site. Symbolic, nondemocratic, and surrogate forms of representation also occurred. All forms of representation were affected by both organizational development and the fragility of the educational partnership between the local school and the NGO.

While the partnership with the local school remained intact, one key NGO volunteer functioned as the only informational conduit between the NGO and the school. Meanwhile, there was no individual functioning as an informational conduit from the school to the NGO. This resulted in an asymmetrical educational partnership that curtailed representation of refugee children’s educational interests and threatened the sustainability of the partnership. In general, NGO leaders and volunteers had little knowledge of ways in which policy may have been affecting their ability to represent the interests of refugee children in local schools. Nevertheless, study participants did suggest
that an overly bureaucratic district partnership authorization policy, school-choice policy, and local religious laws might have affected their ability to function as representatives of refugee interests in the local school.

Finally, this study has implications for theory, policy, practice, and research as they pertain to the representation of refugee interests in educational decision-making. Theories of democratic representation need to continue to expand in order to account for the ways in which representation occurs outside of formal structures. Federal, state, and local policies need to be revised in order to facilitate responsible governance of educational partnerships, increase the representation of refugee interests in educational decision-making, increase refugee parental involvement in schools and their decision-making processes, and protect refugee parents from being exploited by educational marketing and recruitment strategies. Educational leaders such as school board members, administrators, and teachers should intentionally invite refugee leaders and parents into their decision-making processes while reducing barriers to their involvement. Lastly, educational researchers execute further studies that explore non-Western conceptualizations of political representation, the political agency of those who work with refugee populations, the ways that agents represent education and learning to refugee populations, charter schools and how they market themselves to refugee families, and the increasing role of technology in representing the educational needs of refugee families in districts’ decision-making processes.
References


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Rice, P. (2014). *Vanishing school boards: Where school boards have gone, why we need them, and how we can bring them back.* Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Education.


Appendix A: Initial Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself as an NGO leader, NGO volunteer, and/or educational leader- what roles and responsibilities do you play in the educational experience of the refugee students served by your school or organization?

2. How does your organization/school identify the educational needs, preferences, and interests of the refugee population that is serves?

3. What challenges have you faced in identifying the educational needs of the refugee population you serve?

4. Once identified, what is your organization/school’s process for communicating/representing the educational needs of the refugee population to: (a) others within the organization/school, (b) any parties outside of the organization/school, and (c) the public?

5. How does your organization/school view its role in the education of refugee students? Is it supplementary? Complimentary? What actions reflect this role?

6. Once identified, does your organization/school advocate for the unique educational needs of refugee children? If so, how? If not, why not?

7. Once identified, what instructional program(s) and intervention(s) does the organization/school implement for addressing the educational needs of the refugee population?
8. What processes, strategies, or programs exist that facilitate cooperation and information sharing between the refugee community and NGO/school leaders?

9. How would you improve these processes, strategies, or programs?

10. What processes, strategies, or programs exist that facilitate cooperation and information sharing between NGO leaders and volunteers and school leaders?

11. How would you improve these processes strategies, or programs?

12. What do you consider the greatest strengths of the organization/school’s educational programming and interventions for refugee children?

13. Have you encountered any laws or policies (educational or otherwise) that have hindered or helped your organization/school’s efforts to identify the educational needs of the refugee population you serve?

14. Have you encountered any laws or policies (educational or otherwise) that have hindered or helped your organization/school’s efforts to represent and/or advocate for the educational needs of the refugee population you serve?

15. Have you encountered any laws or policies (educational or otherwise) that have hindered or helped your organization/school’s efforts to coordinate information sharing and interventions with other organizations/school’s serving the refugee population?

Is there anything else that you think it would be important for us to know about your organization/school, the refugee population you serve, or the educational programming delivered by your organization/school?
Appendix B: Observation Protocol

Date:  
Time:  
Description of Environment:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observed Practice</th>
<th>Theoretical Connections/Disconfirming Evidence</th>
<th>Questions for Clarification/Research</th>
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Field Notes:
Appendix C: Data Corpus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Observations</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Observations of participants at research site</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Observations of participants at training meetings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Field Notes</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Notes and Reflections from Research Site</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Notes and Reflections from Training Meetings</td>
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<tr>
<td>III. Interview Transcripts</td>
<td>288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Initial Semi-Structured Interviews</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Follow Up Interviews</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Documents</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• School Website</td>
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<td>• District Website</td>
<td></td>
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<td>• School Board Website</td>
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<tr>
<td>• NGO Website</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• NGO Volunteer Training Documents</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• NGO Volunteer Journal</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>V. Researcher Reflexive Journal</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Account of Researcher Subjectivities</td>
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</table>

Total Data Corpus: 393
Appendix D: Research Work Log

06/21/2013  Initial IRB Approval to Begin Project
07/01/2013  Participant Recruitment: Emails to NGO Educational Leadership Team (1 hr)
08/03/2013  Site Visit: Educational Leadership Advisory Board Meeting (2 hr)
08/03/2013  Interview: NGO Director of p-12 Educational Initiatives (1.5 hr)
08/14/2013  Site Visit: Educational Advisory Board Mtg. for Volunteer Training Preparation (2 hr)
09/09/2013  Site Visit: Fall Session Educational Program Kick-Off & Welcome Back (2.5 hr)
09/14/2013  Site Visit: Volunteer Recruitment Presentation & Luncheon (2 hr)
09/16/2013  Site Visit & Reciprocity (Assist with p-12 Tutoring) (2 hr)
09/23/2013  Site Visit & Reciprocity (Help Organize NGO Library) (2 hr)
09/30/2013  Site Visit & Reciprocity (Assist with p-12 Tutoring) (2 hr)
10/07/2013  Site Visit & Reciprocity (Assist with p-12 Tutoring) (2 hr)
10/12/2013  Interview: NGO Director of p-12 Educational Initiatives (2 hr)
10/14/2013  Site Visit & Reciprocity (Sort and Label Books for NGO Library) (2 hr)
10/21/2013  Interview: Curriculum Development Team Leader (1.5 hr)
10/21/2013  Site Visit & Reciprocity (Assist with p-12 Math/English Tutoring) (2 hr)
10/28/2013  Site Visit & Reciprocity (Assist with p-12 Math/English Tutoring) (2 hr)
11/04/2013  Site Visit & Reciprocity (Assist with p-12 Math/English Tutoring) (2 hr)
11/11/2013  Site Visit & Reciprocity (Assist with p-12 Math/English Tutoring) (2 hr)
11/18/2013  Site Visit: End of Fall Session Celebration & Awards Ceremony (2 hr)
11/25/2013  Interview: Advisory Board Member/Textbook Representative (1 hr)
12/02/2013  Interview: NGO Director of p-12 Educational Initiatives (1 hr)
12/26/2013  Site Visit: Advisory Board Planning Meeting for Spring Session 2014 (2 hr)
01/13/2014  Site Visit & Reciprocity (Assist with p-12 Math/English Tutoring) (2 hr)
01/14/2014  Interview: NGO p-12 Administrative Assistant (1 hr)
01/17/2014  Interview: NGO p-12 Curriculum Team Leader (1 hr)
01/18/2014  Peer Debriefing Session: Ch 1, Ch 2, Ch 3 (2 hr)
01/20/2014  Site Visit & Reciprocity (Assist with p-12 Math/English Tutoring) (2 hr)
01/23/2014  Interview: NGO p-12 Curriculum Team Member (1 hr)
01/27/2014  Site Visit & Reciprocity (Assist with p-12 Math/English Tutoring) (2 hr)
01/30/2014  Interview: NGO p-12 Curriculum Team Member (1.5 hr)
02/03/2014  Site Visit & Reciprocity (Assist with p-12 Math/English Tutoring) (2 hr)
02/10/2014  Site Visit & Reciprocity (Assist with p-12 Math/English Tutoring) (2 hr)
02/17/2014  Site Visit & Reciprocity (Assist with p-12 Math/English Tutoring) (2 hr)
02/24/2014  Site Visit & Reciprocity (Assist with p-12 Math/English Tutoring) (2 hr)
03/01/2013  Interview: NGO Advisory Board Member (1 hr)
03/03/2014  Site Visit & Reciprocity (Assist with p-12 Math/English Tutoring) (2 hr)
03/04/2014  Interview: NGO Advisory Board Member (1.5 hr)
03/04/2014  Interview: NGO Director of Adult Educational Services (1.5 hr)
03/10/2014  Site Visit & Reciprocity (Assist with p-12 Math/English Tutoring) (2 hr)
03/24/2014  Site Visit: End of Spring Session Celebration & Awards Ceremony (2 hr)
03/25/2014  Data Analysis: Coding Transcripts (4 hr)
03/27/2014  Data Analysis: Coding Transcripts (4 hr)
03/29/2014  Data Analysis: Coding Transcripts (4 hr)
04/01/2014  Data Analysis: Coding Transcripts (3 hr)
04/03/2014  Data Analysis: Coding Transcripts (3 hr)
04/05/2014  Data Analysis: Coding Transcripts (2 hr)
04/07/2014  Data Analysis: Coding Transcripts (4 hr)
04/08/2014  Data Analysis: Coding Transcripts (4 hr)
04/10/2014  Data Analysis: Coding Transcripts (4 hr)
04/14/2014  Data Analysis: Coding Transcripts (2 hr)
04/16/2014  Data Analysis: Coding Documents (3 hr)
04/17/2014  Data Analysis: Coding Documents (3 hr)
04/20/2014  Data Analysis: Coding Documents (3 hr)
04/21/2014  Data Analysis: Coding Field Notes & Observation Protocols (4 hr)
04/24/2014  Data Analysis: Coding Field Notes & Observation Protocols (4 hr)
05/01/2014  Interview: NGO Director p-12 Educational Programming (1 hr)
05/04/2014  Interview: Executive Director (1 hr)
05/05/2014  Data Analysis: Coding Interviews (3 hr)
05/10/2014  Peer Debriefing Session: Ch 4 (1 hr)
05/17/2014  Peer Debriefing Session: Ch 5 (1 hr)
05/24/2014  Peer Debriefing Session: Ch 6 (1 hr)
05/31/2014  Peer Debriefing Session: Ch 7 (1 hr)
## Appendix E: Pseudonym Guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Role(s) in Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) or Local School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arun</td>
<td>Director of the New Beginnings’ p-12 educational programs for refugee children, “Mayor” of Glendale Heights, official NGO liaison to Glendale Elementary, Naturalized Immigrant to the United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hye</td>
<td>Executive Director of New Beginnings, Naturalized Immigrant to the United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diane</td>
<td>Key Volunteer at New Beginnings, 10 years of experience working with the refugee population currently being served by New Beginnings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naomi</td>
<td>Director of New Beginnings’ educational programming for refugee adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brian</td>
<td>Advisory Council Member of New Beginnings’ p-12 Mentoring Program; Regional textbook representative for a major textbook publishing company; Former information technology administrator for a local school that serves the refugee population.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonnie</td>
<td>Principal of Glendale Elementary School from start of study to October 2013.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tina</td>
<td>Key Volunteer; Volunteering since New Beginnings’ inception as a Grass-Roots Movement; member of the administrative team.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Becky</td>
<td>Key Volunteer; Advisory Council Member of New Beginnings’ p-12 Mentoring Program; Certified Special Education Teacher*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Key Volunteer; Administrative Assistant to Arun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaime</td>
<td>Key Volunteer; Curriculum Team Leader for p-12 educational programming; Certified Middle School English Language Arts and Math Teacher*</td>
</tr>
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</table>
### Key Volunteer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roger</td>
<td>Key Volunteer; Advisory Council Member of New Beginnings’ p-12 Mentoring Program; High School Biology Teacher and Coach*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom</td>
<td>Key Volunteer; Advisory Council Member of New Beginnings’ p-12 Mentoring Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dale</td>
<td>Key Volunteer; Advisory Council Member of New Beginnings’ p-12 Mentoring Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly</td>
<td>Key Volunteer; Substitute Teacher*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Burchfield</td>
<td>Interim Principal at Glendale Elementary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*All teachers who were participants in this study were employed at suburban districts. They became involved with New Beginnings by volunteering through the Faith-Based Organization that supplies New Beginnings’ volunteer base. They do not work for the metropolitan school district affiliated with Glendale Elementary.*