



**Title of Project:**

Refugee Women’s Social Identities and Community Integration

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**Project Summary:**

Today, 60 million individuals worldwide are classified as refugees—more than at any time since World War II (United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees, 2015). A primary concern for receiving communities, and of refugees themselves, is these newcomers’ integration into their new communities. In the U.S., federal policies and initiatives exist to support refugee integration, and these hinge mainly on refugees’ English learning. Indeed, for many newly arrived refugees and receiving communities, adult English language classrooms are a type of “front line” toward efforts at refugee integration. In particular, these classes are where many refugees interact most consistently and directly with U.S. citizens, that is, their teachers and administrators.

This ethnographic study zeroes in on one English class for refugee women, embedded within a family literacy program. Drawing on social positioning theories (Davies & Harré, 1990)—and through analyses of classroom ethnographic and discourse data (i.e., audio and video recordings, field notes, photographs, interviews, documents) gathered over the course of more than one year—I seek to understand how the social identities made available to refugees during their English class converge with or diverge from those they take up and craft for themselves. Further, I ask how these (mis)matches may shape the refugee women’s real-world opportunities for integration in communities beyond their classroom.