Rohingya Refugee Background Students Negotiating Aotearoa New Zealand's Educational Practices and Institutions

Md Sorowar Hossain Chowdhury

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Primary Supervisor: Associate Professor Sharon Harvey

Secondary Supervisor: Dr. Megan Lourie

Abstract

Education is pivotal in successful refugee resettlement, with refugee students navigating diverse discourses within resettlement countries' educational systems. These discourses predominantly shape their subjectivities: identities governed by both internal (self)-analysis and external forces of power. While extensive research exists on refugees' educational opportunities globally, there is a gap regarding refugee background students' (RBS') navigation of New Zealand's education system. This study examines Rohingya RBS' educational aspirations and their negotiations with New Zealand's education system.

New Zealand, known for its diversity and inclusivity, presents various challenges for RBSs within its education system. Despite its welcoming stance, refugees often struggle with adapting to the educational complexities. This research employs Foucault's theories of power, knowledge, and discourse, using Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA) to explore the language and knowledge construction processes affecting Rohingya RBS. It examines how power dynamics within New Zealand's education system, shaped by global colonialism, capitalism, and neoliberalism, govern these students.

The study focuses on six purposively selected Rohingya RBS, three secondary students and three adults. It analyses a range of data: relevant government policy documents, interviews with educators and refugee coordinators, and classroom observations and interviews with Rohingya RBS. The analysis focusses on an interplay between statements, discourses, and discursive formations. It identifies and maps discourses and discursive formations, drawing on the Rohingya RBS' experiences.

The study identifies three major neoliberal discourses: English language acquisition, educational opportunities, and aspirations. Each comprises three peripheral discourses. Under English language acquisition, the discourses include language learning, language barriers, and learning alternatives. Educational opportunities encompass access to education, quality of education, and alternative opportunities. Aspiration discourses cover personal aspirations, collective refugee aspirations, and alternatives to aspirations. These discourses provide a framework for interpreting and presenting the findings.

The research finds that New Zealand's educational discourses of opportunity and ‘success’ are closely linked to English language acquisition, which, in turn significantly shape Rohingya RBS' aspirations. These discourses encompass broader societal narratives, such as integration, economic self-sufficiency, and cultural adaptation. The study explores how Rohingya RBS negotiate their educational pathways, highlighting the challenges related to English language proficiency and diverse educational practices that impact their academic progress and self-perception.

Central to this thesis is the notion that academic success for RBS in New Zealand hinges on English proficiency, which determines their academic potential and aspirations. This leads to theories of linguistic governmentality, positioning the English language as a key element in successful resettlement.

This thesis contributes to the development of more effective educational policies and practices for severely persecuted populations like the Rohingya in New Zealand and similar jurisdictions.

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Attestation of Authorship

I solemnly affirm that the work presented in this document is exclusively my own. I have ensured that any content derived from external sources has been clearly acknowledged and referenced. To the best of my knowledge and belief, this work is original and has not been previously published or submitted in part or in full for any academic or professional qualification at any other institution. This submission is a true representation of my individual effort and intellectual property.

Md Sorowar Hossain Chowdhury

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Ethics Approval

Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC) granted ethics approval for the study to commence (AUTEC ethics approval number: 19/115. Date approved: 9 May 2019.

List of Abbreviations

EAL	English as an Additional Language
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
FDA	Foucauldian Discourse Analysis
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
INEE	Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies
INZ	Immigration New Zealand
MBIE	Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment
MoE	Ministry of Education (New Zealand)
MRRC	Māngere Refugee Resettlement Centre
NCEA	National Certificate of Educational Achievement
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
RBS	Refugee-Background Students
TEC	Tertiary Education Commission
TES	Tertiary Education Strategy
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

Chapter 1 Introduction

The increasing number of refugees poses a crisis in today's world. According to the United Nations (UN) High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, n.d.), in mid-2021 there were 26 million refugees worldwide, and a total of 84 million forcibly displaced people. Of these, 48 million were internally displaced persons (IDPs) and 4.4 million were asylum seekers. In their report Refugee Crisis, the International Rescue Committee (n.d.) cautioned that the total figure of refugees had doubled in the last decade, meaning that 1% of the world's population was displaced, and very few were finally resettled by UNHCR. Further, UNHCR (2018) acknowledged that the refugee crisis had grown in "scope, scale and complexity" and is a "common concern of humankind" (p. 1).

Education is considered crucial for the successful resettlement and integration of refugees into host countries (Ager & Strang, 2008; Cerna, 2019; Cremonini, 2016; Lenette, 2016; Lenette et al., 2019; UNHCR, 2013). The UN has stated that refugees are entitled to and have the right to education irrespective of where they are (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, n.d.; UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 1989; UN General Assembly, 1948; UNHCR, 1996, 2019a; UN International Children's Emergency Fund [UNICEF, 2011).

Despite the UNHCR mandates, findings from previous research have suggested that most refugees face difficulties accessing education in their transitional countries, as illustrated in the case of Sudanese (Mamer, 2010) and Rohingya (Arar, 2021; Letchamanan, 2013) refugees. Other studies have shown formal learning obstacles for refugees, even in their country of final resettlement (Bačáková & Closs, 2013; Hailu & Ku, 2014; Hatoss et al., 2012; Morrice et al., 2020; Naylor et al., 2019; O'Rourke, 2011; Shakya et al., 2012; Sox, 2009). Consequently, UNHCR has remained concerned about the marginalisation and lack of educational opportunities in refugee communities because they continue to experience vulnerability, discrimination, and barriers to education and training at all levels (Taran, 2016; UN Development Programme [UNDP], 2016).

1.1 The Rohingya and Their Journey to New Zealand

The Rohingya are a Muslim minority population originating from the northern Rakhine State in Myanmar (formerly Burma) (Abdullah et al., 2018; Cheung, 2012). Following several decades of religious and cultural discrimination, they became officially stateless in 1982 upon the Burmese government's adoption of the Citizenship Law (The Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma, 1982). Subsequently, they have become recognised as one of the most persecuted minorities in the world, with many having no alternative but to flee their country and become refugees (Alam, 2011; Hossain, 2021; Mandalay, 2014; Safdar, 2015; Sharma, 2021; UNHCR, 1996).

For most refugees, the transition to a different country is a distressing experience (Dryden-Peterson, 2017). The context of the Rohingya people's displacement and statelessness has added trauma to their experiences. Their journeys from their homeland to a transitional country, and finally to a resettling country, are particularly difficult. The oppressive discourses of the historical and geographical displacement of the Rohingya are reproduced in the way institutions in resettling countries often respond to them (Bakali &Wasty, 2020). Rohingya refugees, in many cases, face additional challenges related to the nature of their displacement and their access to education in their home country of Myanmar, in refugee camps, in transitional countries, and in countries of resettlement. In response to these ongoing challenges, UNHCR (2011, 2019a) has emphasised a holistic approach to refugee education and has recognised that equitable access to quality education for refugees depends on the concerted efforts of a number of organisations.

As a country of resettlement, New Zealand is a signatory to the 1951 UN Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees. New Zealand launched a refugee quota programme in 1987, under which the country currently receives 1,500 UNHCR-mandated refugees each year (Immigration New Zealand [INZ], n.d.; New Zealand Parliament, 2020). New Zealand receives refugees from Asia, Africa, South America, Europe and the Middle East.

As a signatory to the Refugee Convention and other related Conventions and Protocols, New Zealand has responsibilities and obligations that have been mirrored in the five goals set for the New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Strategy (RfRS; INZ, 2012, 2017). Although education is one of the goals, the strategy focuses only on secondary education and adult refugee English language literacy; the higher level of formal (i.e.,

tertiary) education, applicable to many students aged 16 years and over, is not mentioned at all (Hartley, 2013; McBrien, 2014). The RfRS implementation priorities for 2020 have a similar focus on English language assistance, rather than a focus on education as a whole (INZ, 2018).

One notable feature of New Zealand's refugee quota programme is the relatively low proportion of refugees taken in per capita of population. New Zealand only resettles 0.3 refugees per 1,000 citizens (Marlowe, 2021) but was ranked 31st in the world based on GDP per capita in 2022 (World Population Review, n.d.). Being a comparatively rich country with a relatively low annual intake of refugees compared to countries of similar GDP (e.g., the United Kingdom) or similar population (e.g., Norway, which resettles 9.14 refugees per 1,000 people), RBS in New Zealand might be expected to enjoy optimised educational opportunities and outcomes. However, in practice, RBS in New Zealand experience a multitude of difficulties related to different learning cultures, academic English-language requirements, and discrimination. These difficulties have been compounded, as detailed in the following chapter, by the neoliberal policies the New Zealand government adopted and applied to its education institutions in the 1980s and beyond (Cerna, 2019; ChangeMakers Refugee Forum et al., 2011; O'Rourke, 2011).

1.2 Positioning the Rohingya Refugees in Relation to New Zealand's Education Policies

New Zealand's education policy and practices have been heavily shaped by neoliberalism over the last several decades, with an increasing emphasis on market-oriented skills and competencies. Neoliberal discourses cultivate a type of subjectivity where individuals are attuned to market demands, emphasising the development of skills that enable them to compete effectively in global and local markets. The broader goal of neoliberal governments is to foster a workforce adept at navigating neoliberal economic structures (Martín Rojo, 2018). Within this context, however, such a focus poses significant challenges for RBS. Due to their limited agency and diverse academic backgrounds, RBS often find it particularly difficult to adapt to and succeed within market-driven educational frameworks. Their experiences often contrast sharply with the expected outcomes of neoliberal education policy discourses and programmes, leading to a mismatch between their needs and the system's offerings (Koyama, 2021).

Given the pre-existing vulnerability of RBS owing to their refugeehood and the challenges they encounter, some researchers have suggested that they should be considered equivalent to disadvantaged domestic students (O'Rourke, 2011). There are several groups of students considered disadvantaged in New Zealand, such as Māori, Pasifika, and the physically and intellectually challenged, who are provided special attention by the New Zealand Ministry of Education (MoE; New Zealand Productivity Commission, 2017). RBS are afforded the same opportunities as their domestic peers, but they face obstacles in taking advantage of them (Cerna, 2019; O'Rourke, 2011; Sampson et al., 2016). In light of these challenges, this thesis therefore argues that, as a severely persecuted refugee group, Rohingya RBS warrant more attention in New Zealand's education policies.

1.3 Rationale for the Study

Many studies have been undertaken across numerous countries to investigate the educational conditions for refugees. These include studies conducted with Sudanese refugees in Australia (Major et al., 2013); other refugees in Australia (Naylor et al., 2019); refugees from the Horn of Africa (Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan) in the United States (Hailu & Ku, 2014); Afghan, Karen and Sudanese refugees in Canada (Shakya et al., 2012); African and Asian refugees in the United Kingdom (Morrice et al., 2020); and Myanmar refugees in the Czech Republic (Bačáková & Closs, 2013). In New Zealand, such studies have engaged with a range of issues, including policy barriers to education for tertiary-level RBS (Morrice et al., 2020; Naylor et al., 2019; O'Rourke, 2011; Sampson et al., 2016); the resettlement experiences of refugee youth (O'Connor, 2014); social capital and refugee resettlement (Elliott & Yusuf, 2014); and the global trends of refugee resettlement (Marlowe & Elliott, 2014). The rationale for the present study, however, lies in the paucity of research investigating the negotiations of the subjectivities of RBS in two contexts: among Rohingya RBS and New Zealand as a resettlement country.

This research is important on a personal level as well. As a core staff member of the Muslim Aid UK Bangladesh Field Office (https://www.muslimaid.org.bd) from 2012 to 2015, I had the opportunity to work in Bangladesh and Malaysia, promoting the resettlement of Rohingya refugees. In that role, I gained substantial knowledge of the Rohingya culture, and the precarious circumstances they faced during their displacement from Myanmar. While working with Rohingya refugees, I came to

understand and develop concerns about their inadequate access to education in transitional countries. Existing studies have confirmed Rohingya refugees' little access to formal education in transitional contexts such as Bangladesh, Malaysia and Thailand (Arar, 2021; Hossain, 2021; Letchamanan, 2013). The present research explores the long-term impacts of such inadequate access to education and the general vulnerability of Rohingya refugees, which is perpetuated by their prejudicial treatment as RBS in the education systems of resettling countries.

1.4 Research on Rohingya Refugee Education

There is significant research on Rohingya refugees but little on their educational experiences, especially in resettling countries. Some research on Rohingya refugees has focused on the political aspects of the Rohingya problem (Kipgen, 2013, 2014; Nemoto, 2005) and genocide (Zarni & Cowley, 2014). After the 2015 boat journeys and the 2017 military operation resulting in the forced displacement of about a million Rohingya to Bangladesh, several studies on the Rohingya people and Myanmar were undertaken. However, these studies concentrated mostly on topics like their citizenship status (Abdullah et al., 2018); persecution and forced displacement, human rights, and human rights education (Devonald et al., 2021); political and peace-building factors (Wilson, 2017); and trauma and educational opportunities in camp settings and transitional countries (Bakali & Wasty, 2020; Hossain, 2021; Palik, 2020). Moreover, no study examining the education of Rohingya refugees in New Zealand has thus far been undertaken.

This study aimed to fill that gap by analysing the educational experiences of Rohingya RBS in New Zealand, focusing on their aspirations and negotiations. It explored how these students balance their identities as former refugees and learners, shaping their engagement in education. By examining the subjectivities of Rohingya RBS, this study emphasises the need to give Rohingya refugees more voice and visibility regarding their educational experiences. The findings are intended to refine the educational goals of the RfRS (INZ, 2012, 2017) by providing insights into the aspirations of Rohingya RBS aged 16 and above and how they navigate the New Zealand education system. Although disparities in access to education for refugees are evident globally across all education levels (Taran, 2016; UN Development Programme, 2016), this study specifically examined secondary and tertiary education for Rohingya RBS in New Zealand.

1.5 Research Questions and Assumptions

This research aimed to explore how the subjectivities of Rohingya RBS are constructed within and through the New Zealand education system. It also aimed to understand how these students exercise their agency and construct their own subjectivities within this context. This dual focus allowed for a comprehensive examination of the dynamics between the educational discourses imposed on Rohingya RBS and their lived experiences of, and responses to, those discourses. My analysis, guided by Foucault's (1972/2002) theories of power, knowledge, and discourse, focuses on the complex interactions through which RBS negotiate their subjectivities, as well as how these are constituted in the development of their educational power relations. Therefore, Foucault's theories directly shape this study's objective, research questions, and methods.

For Foucault, the development of an individual's subjectivity is only partly self-determined. In other words, the process is significantly governed by a range of institutional practices and discourses. These external factors play a crucial role in shaping an individual's identity and perception of self within the societal and educational framework. Therefore, this research took into account the characteristics of subjectivity that identify and assign individuals into categories (Foucault, 1972, 1977, 2010). The literature review and findings chapters of this thesis investigate the processes of subjectification and what constitutes the subjects of neoliberal, educational, and refugee-background discourses. Using Foucauldian theory to examine Rohingya RBS' experiences, I explored this discursive formation of the subject and critically questioned its processes. At the same time, questioning beyond the constraints of subjectification led me to examine where there might remain room for policy change, and to document the self-determination and self-care of Rohingya RBS (Foucault, 2007).

This thesis focuses on how Rohingya RBS define their aspirations and negotiations within the New Zealand education system, exploring the factors involved in defining these students' experiences and identities. It recognises refugees as a "constructed category" and examines how they come to be defined. Accordingly, the main research question is:

How do Rohingya refugee-background students (RBS) negotiate, resist and shape neoliberal discourses in New Zealand in pursuing their educational aspirations?

This question was supported by two subquestions:

1. What are the educational aspirations of Rohingya RBS in the context of policy discourses in New Zealand?
2. How are Rohingya RBS' educational subjectivities co-constructed through the interplay of education policies, education actors, and these students' agency?

1.6 Research Design

Foucault's theories of power, knowledge and discourse were mobilised in this research to understand and explain the discursive processes that position Rohingya RBS in specific ways. The study explored how power is formed through expressions, relations, and strategies, which function as discourses to structure knowledge and regulate behaviour (Foucault, 2007). Subject positions and objects of discourse, such as policy documents, assessment criteria, scholarships, and grants, were identified as strategies and techniques of neoliberal education discourses. By analysing the organisation of people into distinctive subject positions, the study investigated how the positions of Rohingya RBS in New Zealand are normalised under regimes of truth that subjugate them (Foucault, 1977, 2002). Additionally, the study focused on discourses within educational systems and student-teacher relations, observing the power dynamics that inform subjectification. By attuning to the nuances of utterances and written texts, the study investigated how these elements serve as vehicles for the proliferation of power systems and their modes of control (Khan & MacEachen, 2021).

Three data sets were collected for this study: (1) government policy documents relevant to refugee education, (2) interviews with teaching staff and refugee coordinators, and (3) classroom observations and interviews with Rohingya RBS. Six Rohingya RBS in Auckland were recruited through purposive and snowball sampling. Ethnographic approaches were used to explore participants' lived educational experiences, supplemented by interviews with five educators, including two refugee coordinators and one deputy principal. Data were generated through semi-structured interviews, life history interviews, participant observations, and document analysis. New Zealand policy documents related to education and refugee resettlement were also analysed. International policy documents and reports were further examined to understand how discourses construct subject positions and eventuate the subjectification of RBS.

The study findings call for New Zealand and other similar jurisdictions to improve their educational provision for severely persecuted populations like the Rohingya people. This research provided Rohingya refugees with the opportunity to have their voices heard, and the findings foreground the lived experiences of Rohingya RBS as they navigate their way through educational institutions. These findings are being disseminated through appropriate information, education, and communication strategies and materials (e.g. conference, journal articles). International humanitarian and aid agencies, such as the International Rescue Committee and UNHCR, will thereby become better informed about Rohingya RBS' negotiations of the educational practices and institutions of their country of final resettlement, in this case New Zealand. Likewise, the research findings could also inform the strategies of the Inter-Governmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum and Refugees relating to the needs of RBS (Küchenhoff & Lourie, 2016).

This research also expands traditional applications of Foucauldian discourse analysis (FDA; Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2017) through the use of ethnographic tools to examine study participants' lived experiences. While notable academics have used post-structural theory to critique New Zealand's neoliberal education system (Harvey, 2006; Peters, 2012; Peters & Marshall, 2002; Roberts, 2009; Roberts & Peters, 2019), this research underlines how documented policies act upon and impact people, creating unsettling histories for certain populations, particularly refugees. This research promotes restorative approaches, such as "building and sustaining positive relationships" (Williams, 2019, p. 555), by examining how power operates through discourse. It explores possibilities for providing a different sense of subjectivity for these students, which manifests in forms of resistance and resilience within and against prevailing discourses of power.

1.7 Chapter Organisation

After this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 explains the historical and contemporaneous contexts of this research. It explains the roots of the Rohingya people's statelessness, tracing their presence in Arakan (now Rakhine State) since the seventh century. The chapter also explores a range of narratives about the origins of the Rohingya people. The chapter then covers the historical and contemporary educational provisions for refugees, with a focus on the impact of global neoliberalism, especially in the United

Kingdom, United States and New Zealand. The chapter highlights how mandatory English requirements in New Zealand can contribute to the marginalisation of RBS.

Chapter 3 conducts a review of literature that informs possible Foucauldian readings of the research context. It discusses UNHCR and country-level policies affecting refugee education and explores the educational aspirations and experiences of RBS. It examines how these students navigate educational policies and construct their subjectivities. Based on the reviewed literature on refugee resettlement and education, the chapter then develops a theoretical framework, detailing Foucault's key ideas and their relevance to education and refugee studies. The chapter concludes by justifying the use of FDA as the methodological framework.

Chapter 4 outlines the relevance of FDA to the study and describes the data collection methods, including policy document analysis, semi-structured interviews, life history interviews, and classroom observations. It presents guidelines for conducting discourse analysis, drawing on FDA (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2017), Foucault's (2007) theory of governmentality, and his method of "parrhesia", fearless speech or frank truth-telling (Foucault, 2001), to advocate for students' rights. The chapter also discusses the rigour, ethical considerations, and limitations of the study, particularly in relation to the vulnerability of Rohingya refugee-background students in New Zealand.

Chapters 5, 6, and 7 present and discuss the findings from the analysed data. The chapters identify three major neoliberal discourses: aspirations, educational opportunities, and English language acquisition. Chapters 5 and 6 explore how aspirations are discursively constructed and negotiated within institutional and policy contexts, and how policy discourses contribute to the production and regulation of subjectivities, alongside the institutional practices through which norms are enacted and subjects are governed. Finally, Chapter 7 centres on the English language as a key mechanism through which RBS are rendered legible, comparable, and allocable, tracing how they are called upon to govern themselves in accordance with these measures.

Together, Chapters 5 to 7 detail the practices through which the New Zealand education system materialises certain norms and constructs the subjectivities of Rohingya students. They also discuss instances of dissonance that Rohingya RBS must accommodate while creating a space for negotiation and reconstituting their knowledge and subjectivities. An important aspect of this dissonance is the lack of attention to the

full linguistic repertoire of RBS in New Zealand. The study recommends minimising this dissonance by incorporating alternative discourses and practices, such as translanguaging (Garcia & Wei, 2013), which respect and integrate the languages of refugee and minority students in resettling countries' classrooms to reduce power disparities.

Finally, Chapter 8 presents a summary of the findings, which is followed by the implications of this research for all stakeholders and how educational support for RBS is conceptualised and delivered within New Zealand's schooling system. The chapter also identifies directions for future research that would extend and refine understanding of how refugee education is organised and experienced within contemporary schooling systems.

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter has introduced this thesis, which explores Rohingya RBS' co-construction of discourses in New Zealand's education system. The rationale for the study outlined in this chapter is threefold: (1) the Rohingya people's severe circumstances of persecution; (2) their minimal access to formal education at home and in transitional countries; and (3) my personal motivation from experience working with and for the Rohingya people.

Rohingya RBS often arrive in resettlement countries like New Zealand with weak educational foundations and limited English proficiency. Despite their UN-guaranteed educational entitlement, Rohingya RBS must navigate their educational journey and the construction of their subjectivity within the education discourses of New Zealand. In response to neoliberal educational demands, RBS adopt self-care technologies to align with the governmental technologies that govern them. The intersection of these technologies shapes the subjectivity of RBS, which is a key focus of this study.

This introductory chapter has also outlined the philosophical framework of the study, which is based on Foucault's theory of power, knowledge, and discourse and applies FDA for data generation and analysis. It has demonstrated that New Zealand Government policies and educational practices produce certain norms (e.g., linguistic norms) that shape specific subjectivities, while also causing dissonance (e.g., non-recognition of linguistic repertoire beyond English). Refugee students, in many cases, create spaces to reconstitute their identities and develop new understandings of their

subjectivities. Through parrhesia (Foucault, 2001) and translanguaging (Garcia & Wei, 2013), they find opportunities to resist subjugation. Finally, the chapter has described how the primary aim of this thesis is to encourage and inform the development of more appropriate education policies and practices for severely persecuted populations like the Rohingya in New Zealand and similar jurisdictions.

The following chapter explores the contextual framing of this study by outlining the historical and current state of the Rohingya people, and describing the neoliberal turn in New Zealand's education system. In addition, the history of the Rohingya is surveyed, tracing their roots in Burma (now Myanmar) and Arakan (now Rakhine) to understand how historical, political and social dynamics have led to their statelessness and current plight as refugees. Chapter 2 also discusses the importance of discourse and the function of naming in constructing the rights and identities of the Rohingya. Like other refugees, the Rohingya experience distinct personal and social vulnerabilities, establishing an otherness that this research examines within New Zealand's neoliberal education system.

Chapter 2 The Research Context

2.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the context for this study by presenting the history of the Rohingya people and an account of the neoliberal shift in the Aotearoa New Zealand (hereafter New Zealand) education system as it relates to refugee-background students (RBS). The chapter traces the roots of the Rohingya in Burma (now Myanmar) and Arakan (now Rakhine), exploring how historical, political and social dynamics have shaped their identity and led to their current predicament. It also discusses the socio-personal vulnerabilities of refugees that contribute to their marginalisation, and how that marginalisation is discursively produced within New Zealand's education system.

To frame this analysis, the intersection of international refugee frameworks, Rohingya statelessness, coloniality, and neoliberalism provides a critical lens through which to examine the Rohingya crisis and its broader implications. By integrating Foucault's concept of "governmentality", the chapter explores how individuals are governed through social norms and hierarchies rather than direct authority (Foucault, 2007; Gudmand-Høyer & Lopdrup-Hjorth, 2009). Governmentality, as defined by Foucault, is a mechanism by which states regulate behaviours, norms and populations through policies. Building on this notion, subsequent scholars have provided insights into how neoliberal states manage populations, including migrants and refugees, through regulatory practices. Walters (2004), for example, discusses how migration is governed not just as a logistical challenge but as a means for states to exercise power, aligning with Foucault's concept. The biometric registration of the Rohingya in Bangladesh serves as one such example. Dean (2010), meanwhile, elaborates on how modern states use such regulatory practices to maintain control, often at the expense of marginalised groups, demonstrating what Foucault (1980) calls a "regime of truth". The American anthropologist Paul Rabinow neatly summarises how this concept functions in Foucault's works:

Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth; that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true. (Rabinow 1984, p. 73)

In the case of the Rohingya, their statelessness is not a bureaucratic oversight but a deliberate act of exclusion by the state through a *dispositif*, or apparatus, that normalises marginalisation (Foucault, 1978, pp. 92–93). By *dispositif*, Foucault means a complex network of relationships among institutional regulations, philosophical propositions, and moral standpoints that shapes an individual's behaviour, thoughts and actions in a given social context. It illustrates the dynamics of power and knowledge, and how they stimulate each other.

Established through conventions like the 1951 UN Refugee Convention (UNHCR, 1996), the international refugee framework offers legal recognition and protection for displaced individuals. However, its limitations, rooted in Eurocentric post-World War II contexts, fail to adequately address the colonial legacies that underpin Rohingya statelessness. In both Myanmar and their resettling countries, such as New Zealand, the Rohingya face the compounded effects of colonial exclusion, the historical marginalisation and denial of rights of minority groups, and neoliberal policies that prioritise economic productivity over social justice. This chapter explores how these intersecting frameworks of coloniality, statelessness, and neoliberal governance shape the experiences of Rohingya, both in their homeland and in resettling countries.

The chapter is structured to first provide an historical overview of the Rohingya, focusing on key events and policies that have in turn shaped their statelessness. Next, it analyses the broader international refugee framework, spanning its Eurocentric limitations and implications for Rohingya resettlement. Lastly, the chapter explains the implications of neoliberal education policies in New Zealand and their effect on shaping the experience of Rohingya RBS. The aim is to help readers understand how resettlement policies and educational practices reproduced systemic inequities, further embedding the marginalisation of the Rohingya, in alignment with Foucault's concept of governmentality.

2.2 The Rohingya: Historical Background

The Rohingya, an ethnic Muslim minority primarily from northern Rakhine State, Myanmar (formerly Burma), have long endured systemic oppression rooted in historical and political dynamics (Abdullah et al., 2018; Cheung, 2012). For decades, they have experienced severe religious and cultural discrimination, persecution and displacement (Cheung, 2012; Hossain, 2021; Palmer, 2011). Their oppression includes extrajudicial killings, forced labour, property expropriation, denial of employment opportunities, lack

of access to education, and restricted freedom of movement (Alam, 2011; Ibrahim, 2016; UNHCR, 2011).

The Rohingya can be traced back to Arab seafarers in the seventh century (Siddiqui, 2008; Ullah, 2017), with the presence of a "Rooinga" language recognised in the 18th century (Buchanan, 1799; Vater, 1815). Some argue, however, that the Rohingya identity only emerged post-1948, framing it as a modern construct (Chan, 2005; Leider, 2018; Tonkin, 2014a, 2014b, 2016). Others emphasise the integration of Muslims, who migrated from Bengal during the 19th and 20th centuries, with the already existing Muslim population in Rakhine (Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, 2017; Nemoto, 2005). These differing views constitute the contested and politically charged nature of Rohingya history and identity, complicating their claim to citizenship and entrenching their marginalisation through Myanmar's 1982 Citizenship Law.

2.2.1 Colonial Legacies and Statelessness

The systemic oppression and marginalisation of the Rohingya are deeply intertwined with colonial legacies and prevalent discourses in Myanmar. During colonial control, British favouritism to specific communities gave rise to Burman nationalism, resulting in extremist sentiments towards the safeguarding of Burman national identity (Settles, 2020). British colonial policies, including enlisting Rohingya Muslims against Japanese forces during World War II, fostered animosity between the Rohingya and Rakhine Buddhists. Contemporary political actors have manipulated this dynamic to justify anti-Muslim sentiments and state-sponsored violence, making the Rohingya victims of xenophobia (Leider, 2018; Nguyen, 2018). Historically, the Rohingya have been victims of riots and anti-Muslim violence, notably by the Rakhine Buddhists in 1930 and 1938. This was followed by Buddhist nationalist unrest at intervals between 1978 and 2016. Buddhist nationalism, which has roots in 1930s anticolonial movements upholding Buddhist values (Bogais, 2014), manifested more recently in the form of the 969 Movement and the subsequent Ma Ba Tha (Association for the Protection of Race and Religion) and eventually developed anti-Muslim sentiments.

Incorporating Foucault's (1978) notion of relational power, it can be argued that the alliance between state and not-state actors sustains systems of exclusion. For instance, the 2012 Rakhine State riots between Rakhine Buddhists and Rohingya Muslims resulted in large-scale violence against the Rohingya community causing much displacement, death, and destruction of property (BBC News, 2012). Here we see a

continuity of discursive power, where Rohingya statelessness is reproduced through both overt violence and bureaucratic "rationality" within regimes of truth that establish their position in society.

Bhattacharjee (2024) outlines four primary narratives contributing to the marginalisation of the Rohingya. The first portrays them as illegal immigrants from Bangladesh. The second sees them as collaborators with the British during the independence struggle. The third associates them with Islamic terrorism, and the fourth links them to foreign interests in Rakhine State. While these narratives provide particular accounts that exacerbate exclusion and disenfranchisement, branding the Rohingya as "illegal settlers" and undermining their citizenship claims (Ullah & Chattoraj, 2023), they are embedded in broader discourses of nationalism and colonial exclusion. These discourses have contributed to forms of state-sanctioned violence framed as ethnic cleansing (Bhattacharjee, 2024; Hurd, 2017).

The 1982 Citizenship Law entrenched Rohingya statelessness by defining citizenship based on residency before 1824 (The Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma, 1982). This legal framework reinforced their status as foreigners, exacerbating their marginalisation. Resentment against British colonial favouritism towards minorities like the Rohingya generated hostility among the Buddhist majority (Ibrahim, 2016). The Burmese Road to Socialism, which was the dominant governing rationality of the Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma (1974–1988), further solidified Buddhist identity as central to citizenship, denying rights to non-Buddhist minorities (Nemoto, 2005). Myanmar recognises 135 national races, regarding them as "citizens" and "indigenous people", while disenfranchising the Rohingya as "Bengalis" or "illegal migrants" (Gehlot, 2021). The law divides citizens based on ethnic differences as "citizens", "associate citizens" and "naturalised citizens", and excludes Rohingya from citizenship (Ibrahim, 2016). In 2017, ethnic cleansing by Myanmar security forces led to over 700,000 Rohingya fleeing to Bangladesh, joining existing refugee populations in the Cox's Bazar region (Rahman & Sakib, 2021).

2.2.2 Evolution of Citizenship Status

The evolution of Rohingya citizenship warrants discussion because this is inextricably linked with their current statelessness and refugee status. Myanmar's 1982 Citizenship Law embodies Foucault's governmentality concept in that it controls the population by shifting citizenship status from jus soli ("right of soil", meaning "birthplace") to jus

sanguinis (“right of blood”, meaning “ethnic lineage”), thus systematically excluding Rohingya. The replacement of jus soli with jus sanguinis amplifies intergenerational experiences of marginalisation, as the children born into the Rohingya community face the same vulnerabilities as their parents (Bhattacharjee, 2024). The implications of jus sanguinis principles can be seen in the systemic exclusion of the Rohingya community. The 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol both underscore the need for robust international mechanisms to address the systemic nature of statelessness and the role of state power in sustaining it (Dean, 2010; Walters, 2004). These legal mechanisms facilitate the subjectivation among Rohingya refugees, establishing them as subjects within international humanitarian discourse.

Table 2.1 summarises how Rohingya citizenship status has evolved since Burma’s independence in 1948. Initially, the 1948 Constitution did not grant them full citizenship but provided them with National Registration Certificates and assurances of non-discrimination. In the 1950s, they were recognised similarly to other ethnic groups; the Rohingya participated in parliamentary elections and established a student association. By 1961, census and military reports identified a significant Rohingya population with no discriminatory treatment. However, in 1974, the Emergency Immigration Act imposed ethnicity-based identities, and the constitution instated restricted citizenship. As noted above, the 1982 Citizenship Law then revoked Rohingya citizenship, excluding them from the list of national races (The Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma, 1982). The updated 2008 Constitution reaffirmed their exclusion. Between 2014 and 2015, they were officially excluded from the list of 135 national races; the term “Rohingya” was banned; and they were forced to register as “Bengalis.”

Table 2.1

Rohingya Citizenship Status by Year

Year/Decade	Rohingya Citizenship-related Events
1948: Burma gains independence	• The 1948 constitution does not grant them full citizenship. • They are given National Registration Certificates with full voting rights. • They are assured of non-discrimination and non-harassment. • It is intended that citizenship would be awarded to a person who had lived in Burma for 8 of 10 previous years. • They are also told not to submit application for separate citizenship because they are already a recognised ethnic group.
1950s	• In 1954, the Prime Minister verbally declares the status of the Rohingya to be similar to that of Karen, Mon, Kachin, Rakhine and Shan. • The Rohingya enter the parliamentary elections and get elected as members of parliament. • At Rangoon University in 1959, an approved Rohingya student association is set up.
1960s	• The 1961 census records that 75% of the population of Mayu district (in northern Rakhine) are Rohingya. This same figure is shown in a 1964 school encyclopaedia. • The Muslim population of Mayu district as is described in a 1961 military report as being Rohingya. Mayu district was later formally incorporated by the Ministry of Home Affairs into Rakhine State. • Until the mid-60s the Rohingya do not receive any discriminatory treatment by the military regime, rather they are represented in the Burma parliament and thereby worked as allies to the Burmese Road to Socialism.
1970s	• The 1974 Emergency Immigration Act is enacted to impose ethnicity-based identities on the people. At this time the registration cards which the Rohingya obtained in 1947 are replaced by Foreign Registration Cards. • Burma's 1974 constitution mentions a person whose both parents are Burma citizens would be treated as a citizen. As Rohingya did not have official citizenship in 1948, they therefore could not claim citizenship.
1980s	• In 1982, Rohingya have their citizenship revoked. • However, the law does not mention there are 135 national races.
1990s	• The Rohingya are allowed to take part in the 1990 elections (at the administrative bodies' discretion. • In 1991, the unofficial claim of 135 national races surfaces.
2008	• A new Myanmar constitution is put in place. It re-establishes the 1948 and 1974 Constitutions. To become a Myanmar citizen, a person's ethnic group had to be resident in Myanmar in 1824, or both parents have to be citizens of Myanmar. The citizenship of the Rohingya people is thereby denied.

Year/Decade	Rohingya Citizenship-related Events
2014	• The official list of 135 national races is published, excluding the Rohingya.
2015	• The Myanmar government bans the word "Rohingya" on 29 March 2015 and starts forcing them to be registered as "Bengalis".

Note: Compiled from Bakali & Wasty (2020); Ibrahim (2016); Lintner (2017a, 2017b); Shahriar (2017); Siddiqui (2008); The Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma (1982); The Union of Burma (1947a, 1947b, 1974); The Union of Myanmar (2008); Yadav (2013).

2.2.3 Global Response

Global response and attention towards the Rohingya crisis have been insufficient, with nations prioritising geopolitical and economic interests over humanitarian concerns (Ismail & Dolan-Evans, 2017). The reluctance of prominent states such as India and China to address the crisis exhibits neocolonial values such as economic gains, power politics, and geopolitical interests (Hossain, 2022). China has taken the initiative to provide humanitarian aid for the Rohingya refugees, however, labelling them as "displaced people" implying its neocolonial ties with the Myanmar state and willingness to conciliate with it (Mahmud & Rai, 2023). China's strategic move here relates to their Belt and Road Initiative with the Myanmar state, which is designed to fortify their economic ties (Yuan & Lee, 2023). Many other countries have also taken a humanitarian approach to address the Rohingya crisis: the Canadian government, for example, acknowledges the Rohingya genocide; and Egypt has also condemned the violence happening to the Rohingya community. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) states, such as Malaysia and Indonesia, have also condemned the violence against the Rohingya; however, they lack consistent policies due to the volatility of their local politics. In addition, the principle of "non-interference in the internal affairs of ASEAN Member States" has limited their direct involvement in the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar (Korobi, 2024). These responses can be understood, in many cases, as reflecting a broader failure to adequately comprehend and act upon the Rohingya situation in Myanmar effectively. The crisis has impacted and been responded to by other South and Southeast Asian countries to advance their political and economic objectives, leading to resource constraints and conflicts between host nations and immigrant communities.

2.2.4 Bangladesh and the Rohingya Refugee Crisis

The systemic exclusions do not end at Myanmar's borders but continue to shape the lives of the Rohingya refugees. They experience crises in resettlement contexts too, including transitional host countries. Bangladesh hosts nearly one million Rohingya refugees in 33 densely populated camps (UNHCR, 2024). The first major displacement from Myanmar occurred in 1978, with approximately 200,000 individuals fleeing to Bangladesh (Bhattacharjee, 2024). The Myanmar government has largely avoided accountability for this displacement (Farzana, 2017), and anti-Muslim campaigns continue, including efforts to boycott and disrupt Muslim-led businesses and events (Zin, 2015). Many Rohingya have undertaken perilous sea journeys to Bangladesh under life-threatening conditions (BBC News, 2014).

The lack of coordination between international organisations such as UNHCR and local authorities affects access to education for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. The Bangladesh government's failure to collaborate with UNHCR to develop education policies is evidence of fragmented leadership. It can be argued that due to the absence of a strategic plan from the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief has been managed educational initiatives, which are typically not within its scope, resulting in systemic weaknesses (Global Partnership for Education, 2021). It is estimated that approximately half of Rohingya RBS have not engaged in formal learning processes since arriving in Bangladesh (Education Cannot Wait, 2022).

Moreover, Bangladesh grapples with resettlement challenges due to inadequate planning and poor local authority coordination. In 2015, Bangladesh faced major pressure as boats carrying Rohingya evacuees sought shelter in the country, attracting significant global media attention (Amnesty International, 2017; BBC News, 2012). Bangladesh also faced backlash for their negligence in providing additional refugee support aid. Fleeing persecution, these people were denied shelter in neighbouring countries such as Thailand, Malaysia and Australia. As a result, Rohingya refugees were derogatorily labelled "human ping-pong balls" (CNN, 2015), their plight gaining international visibility through extensive media coverage.

2.2.5 Education Challenges

Globally, education for refugees still faces "significant hurdles" (UNHCR, 2024, p. x), and the situation of Rohingya refugees is dire. From Myanmar's independence in 1948

the Rohingya community has endured education limitations, and the situation further deteriorated after the military coup in 1962, which caused the gradual omission of Rohingya students from formal schooling (Hossain, 2023). Similarly, in modern Myanmar, educational opportunities for Rohingya are severely limited (Arar, 2021). After the inter-communal clashes in 2012, government teachers stopped teaching in northern Rakhine State, leaving education dependent on unqualified volunteers. Muslims lack access to higher education due to discrimination and security concerns (Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, 2017).

In transitional countries like Bangladesh and Malaysia, Rohingya parents and students aspire to higher education. However, the lack of educational support predicts an uncertain future. The Myanmar Curriculum Pilot was started in the Cox's Bazar camps in early 2021 to support the education of refugee children. Its scope has since been limited, and it has only reached a small portion of the roughly 500,000 school-aged refugee children (Korobi, 2024). Ethnic cleansing by the Myanmar military led to a refugee camp in Kutupalang, Bangladesh, swelling by 700,000 people (Abrams, 2018). Rohingya education has thus become a focus due to concerns about a lost generation never going to school.

Refugees in Bangladesh are not provided access to public schooling, leaving over 500,000 children without education. UNICEF accommodates 145,000 children aged 4 to 14 (Reidy, 2020), offering daily two-hour lessons. Camps do not offer schooling for adolescents over 15 (Human Rights Watch, 2019). Recent studies highlight challenges in education for Rohingya refugee children (Hossain, 2023; Rahman & Husain, 2022; Shohel, 2022). Systemic gaps, such as the absence of pathways to access secondary and tertiary education, limit the opportunities and shape the future aspirations of RBS in Bangladesh (Education Cannot Wait, 2022). The current statistics show that approximately 100,000 school-age Rohingya children do not go to school. Also, 83% of the students aged between 15 and 18 years do not have adequate access to education (UNICEF, 2022). These statistics show the lack of an adequate support system for Rohingya refugees to provide them with education facilities. The gaps in education for refugees exacerbate the inequities and shape the future aspirations of Rohingya RBS, which are explored in relation to resettlement policies and neoliberal education systems in this research.

2.2.6 Journey from Statelessness to Refugee

Building on the examination of systemic barriers, this section analyses the Rohingya people's journey from "stateless" to "refugee", marked by several distinct phases that change their legal status as well as education entitlement. Table 2.2 summarises Rohingya legal status and education pathways in resettling countries. Their journey includes several stages. Upon becoming stateless, some reside in temporary shelters, like Leda camp in Bangladesh, while others face internal displacement or seek asylum via perilous sea journeys. Recognised by transitional host countries but lacking official UNHCR refugee status, Rohingya receive aid from local and international NGOs. Some may obtain "refugee identification" pending UNHCR registration, and a few achieve "registered refugee" status and qualify for third-country resettlement. In the absence of formal resettlement options, some Rohingya may resort to illegal measures, such as creating false passports, to secure citizenship in various Asian countries.

Table 2.2

International Legal Status of Rohingya: From "Stateless" to "Refugee"

Category/Status	Criteria/Social Identity	Example/Location
Born in a legally defined state	Number of different claims about their origin. However, the existing Rohingya have been living in Burma for at least several generations.	Ancestors of the study participants and the participants while in Burma
Stateless	Official non-recognition as Burmese.	IDPs in Burma, those people floating on the sea, trying to get shelter to the country of first asylum
Undocumented and unregistered refugee	Recognised by the country of first asylum as people who had to flee their country of origin. Primarily taken care of by local and international NGOs and humanitarian agencies. Not registered by UNHCR and therefore, officially not recognised as "refugee".	Leda camp, Bangladesh; Many in Thailand, Malaysia, and some other countries in Asia such as Pakistan, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia No entitlement to formal education
Documented refugee (not registered yet)	Have some form of ID as a refugee, still waiting to get UNHCR registration (under the process of refugee status determination by UNHCR), may or may not be resettled to a third country yet	Almost in all transitional countries (most of newly arrived Rohingya in Bangladesh)
Registered 'refugee'	Recognised by UNHCR as refugee and qualified for third country resettlement. Third country resettlement is not guaranteed at all (only 1% attain this).	Kutupalang Camp in Bangladesh. Some of the Rohingya people in Malaysia and Thailand
Miscellaneous	Make an illegal passport (e.g., Bangladeshi) and thereby become a citizen	All over Asia including Bangladesh, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia

2.2.7 "Refugee" as a Contested Label

The meaning of "refugee" varies in interpretation and application and is therefore contested. Article 1 of the 1951 UN Refugee Convention defines a refugee as someone who:

> as a result of events occurring before 1 January 1951 and owing to a 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 unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country. (UNHCR, 1996, p. 16)

This definition, complemented by the 1967 Protocol (UNHCR, 2011), provided a foundation for recognising refugees globally. However, it was developed in the context of Soviet refugees and does not universally apply, excluding social and economic grounds and other groups like internally displaced persons (IDPs) and environmental refugees. Other definitions exist, acknowledging that legal and constitutional boundaries vary by country (Hamilton & Moore, 2004). For instance, the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (n.d.), the European Migration Network (2025), the Latin American Cartagena Declaration (Reed-Hurtado, 2013), and the Organisation of African Unity (1974) all have their own definitions of "refugee". Different interpretations have direct implications for the Rohingya, who live as IDPs in Myanmar and as non-registered and undocumented refugees in Bangladesh, Thailand and Malaysia. Their stateless situation affects their social and economic rights, particularly in the education contexts explored in this research.

2.2.8 Rohingya Statelessness and Its Consequences in Resettlement

It can be argued that statelessness, separate from refugeehood, has direct consequences on resettlement. Statelessness and refugeehood are distinct conditions. This research acknowledges two UN conventions on statelessness: the 1954 Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness (UNHCR, 1954, 1961). The 1954 Convention defines statelessness in two forms: de jure stateless, which refers to a person not considered a national by any state under its law, and de facto stateless, comprising those who have legitimate claims to citizenship but cannot prove it or whose governments refuse to recognise them. The 1961 Convention suggests that de facto stateless persons should, as far as possible, be treated as de jure to enable them to acquire effective nationality. It also states that the 1951 Refugee Convention is relevant to the protection of de jure stateless persons on the move.

The Rohingya should be given citizenship but have not been recognised by any state since 1982. They consequently remain officially stateless, and discourses around their statelessness inform their refugee identity. Stateless individuals are highly vulnerable. Without protection from any country, they are "stateless and in limbo" (Foster &

Lambert, 2016, p. 219), susceptible to human rights violations like indefinite detention and destitution.

Myanmar's refusal to recognise the Rohingya as a legitimate ethnic minority profoundly impacts their experiences in host countries. For instance, on resettlement in New Zealand under the UNHCR quota, Rohingya refugees often face increased marginalisation and alienation. For example, they can experience a lack of basic living facilities, financial imbalance, fewer chances of employment, and compromised social identity (Sudheer & Banerjee, 2021). Despite being granted permanent residency, their enduring identification as Rohingya combined with their refugee identity exacerbates feelings of otherness and exclusion (Sudheer & Banerjee, 2021). At the same time, their former refugee status is a necessary form of differentiation that highlights their experiences and aspirations.

As noted in Chapter 1, New Zealand adheres to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, prohibiting the refoulement, that is, forced return, expulsion or extradition, of refugees (UNHCR, 2011). It also complies with the 1954 and 1961 Conventions on Statelessness (UNHCR, 1954, 1961). While New Zealand is recognised as a welcoming state for refugees, the practical implementation of these conventions poses challenges. These challenges, particularly those related to education, where issues of linguistic hegemony and governmentality persist, are discussed at length in Chapters 3, 6 and 7. New Zealand's efforts to fulfil its humanitarian responsibilities, and the effectiveness of its policies in genuinely integrating stateless communities, remain crucial areas for further examination.

2.2.9 Refugee Resettlement and Education

As discussed in Chapter 1, refugees generally struggle to move from a temporary country of asylum to a country of permanent residency (UNHCR, 2011, 2020). During that part of their journey, education plays a crucial role (Lenette et al., 2019; UNHCR, 2013). The European Commission (2007, p. 8) has called for the inequalities refugees face to be removed, including those in education, which is identified as "critical" for the "acquisition of competencies" that improve integration outcomes. Taking a similar stance, Phillimore and Goodson (2008) stressed that education and the English language are the most significant factors in the successful integration of refugees in countries with English as their first language. Education is used as a tool to improve the successful integration and inclusion of refugees. Hence, expenditure on refugee

education is considered an investment in the socio-economic development of several European countries (Cremonini, 2016). Globally, acknowledging and upholding the significance of education in refugee resettlement is integral to the UN Refugee Convention. The key developments in the provision of refugee education since 1951 are outlined in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3

Major Developments in Education for Refugees

Year	Developments in Refugee Education
1951	Article 22 of the UN Refugee Convention ensures refugees' right to primary education.
1966	Post-secondary scholarships are introduced for urban refugee students.
1967	UNESCO-UNHCR joint decision entrusts UNHCR with the responsibility of refugee education.
1985	Effectiveness of post-secondary scholarships is found to be not up to the mark.
1986	95.4% of refugee children attend UNHCR provided primary education.
1988	For the first time, UNHCR publishes guidelines for refugee education.
1989	The right to education for refugee children is supported by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
1990	Education for All (EFA) recognises conflict and displacement as the key barriers to education.
1992	• UNHCR publishes its second guidelines for refugee education. • Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative (DAFI) Tertiary Scholarship Programme for refugee students is introduced.
1994	• Interagency coordination on refugee education is emphasised. • Norwegian Refugee Council agrees to provide short-term education officers on secondment to UNHCR.
1995	UNHCR support for education emphasises scholarship over for primary and secondary level.
1996	• Critical role of education to protect refugee children is underscored. • EFA recognises education as a pillar of humanitarian response. • UNICEF agrees to extend expertise on refugee education to UNHCR.
1997	Review finds UNHCR guidelines inadequate.
1998	UNHCR abolishes its Senior Education Staff post; has no dedicated education staff.
2000	• UNHCR reintroduces its Senior Education Officer position. • World Education Forum asserts the role of refugees' education in development and peace. • Dakar Framework for Action re-emphasises conflict is the key barrier to reaching EFA goals. • EFA adopts Education in Emergencies as its flagship programme.

Year	Developments in Refugee Education
2001	• Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) forms. • INEE plays key role in inter-agency advocacy and information sharing in emergency education.
2002	UNHCR emphasises education as a tool for protection.
2004	INEE issued the Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies
2006	Global Education Cluster formed to coordinate humanitarian responses in education. The cluster is co-led by UNICEF and Save the Children, with UNHCR in an advisory role.
2007	UNHCR publishes its first triennial Education Strategy
2010	• INEE issues the revised version of its Minimum Standards for Education. • UNHCR publishes its second triennial Education Strategy.
2010–2011	UNHCR recognises education as one of its Global Strategic Priorities.
2012–2013	UNHCR retains education as one of its Global Strategic Priorities.
2012–2016	UNHCR recognises education as a core component of its protection and durable solutions mandate.
Vision 2030	Inclusion of equitable quality education in national systems.

Note. Adapted from Dryden-Peterson (2011, p. 15) and Aristorenas et al. (2018).

2.2.10 International Organisations and Refugee Education

It can be argued that the development of refugee education has seen significant milestones over the decades, with support from international organisations. In 1951, Article 22 of the UN Refugee Convention established the right to primary education for refugees (UNHCR, 1996). By 1966, post-secondary scholarships had been introduced for urban refugee students. In 1967, UNHCR, in collaboration with UNESCO, was officially tasked with refugee education responsibilities (UNESCO & UNHCR, 1984). The 1980s brought challenges, with the effectiveness of post-secondary scholarships for refugees being questioned by 1985. However, by 1986, 95.4% of refugee children attended primary education provided by UNHCR, indicating a transition of focus from higher education to providing access to basic education for refugee students (Dryden-Peterson, 2011).

The publication of UNHCR's (1988) Education Guidelines was a landmark development, as was the support for refugee children's education detailed in the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN, 1989). The 1990s saw increased focus on education in emergencies, with the Education for All initiative recognising conflict and displacement as major barriers (Inter-Agency Commission, 1990). By 1992, UNHCR

had published its second set of guidelines and introduced the Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative (DAFI) Tertiary Scholarship Programme (Martin & Stulgaitis, 2022; UNHCR, 2019b). Interagency coordination and enhanced support for education were emphasised in 1994 and 1995, with UNHCR focusing on scholarships for primary and secondary education.

The critical role of refugee education was the subject of international debate in 1998 when UNHCR abolished its Senior Education Officer post (Dryden-Peterson, 2011). However, the role was reintroduced in 2000, with the World Education Forum and Dakar Framework for Action underscoring the importance of education in development and peace. The Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) was established in 2001, leading to the issuance of Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies in 2004 (INEE, 2004). The Global Education Cluster was subsequently formed in 2006 to coordinate humanitarian responses. UNHCR's Education Strategy was updated in 2007, and education continued to be a "strategic priority" through the 2010s, culminating in the Vision 2030 goal of integrating equitable quality education into national systems (Aristorenas et al., 2018; Dryden-Peterson, 2011; UNHCR, 2019c).

The UNHCR's guidelines emphasise equitable access to education, yet disparities persist in host countries like New Zealand, where limited collaboration between international agencies and local schools hinders systemic improvements. In Australia, the Refugee Transition Programme offers tailored vocational training (Australian Government Department of Home Affairs, 2023), contrasting with New Zealand's emphasis on immediate academic integration. For instance, research shows that New Zealand's ranking for refugee acceptance rate is very high, but its ranking for support after refugee arrival is low. This lack of support adds to RBS' plight when trying to integrate into the education system of their host country (Hamilton et al., 2000).

The transition of Rohingya from "refugees" to "regular students" in resettling countries such as New Zealand, as outlined in Table 2.4, entails a structured process involving multiple stages. Upon arrival in New Zealand, Rohingya students are initially placed at the Māngere Refugee Resettlement Centre (MRRC) in Auckland, the country's largest city. There they undergo induction into the New Zealand education system and orientation on living in their new country (UNHCR, n.d.). The assessments performed at this stage prioritise English skills but often overlook students' prior educational

achievements or vocational training, as evidenced by refugee students with engineering backgrounds being redirected to manual labour roles (Plumridge et al., 2012). Standardised assessments function as discursive practices that materialise neoliberal rationality, disciplining both teachers and students to prioritise performative outcomes over holistic learning.

Refugees are subsequently allocated to communities, generally to neighbourhoods of modest socio-economic status, rather than affluent areas with access to more opportunities. School-aged students are generally enrolled in their local school based on the area's available educational institutions, frequently resulting in enrolment in schools with lower academic ratings ("low-decile") due to the socio-economic conditions of the neighbourhood. The decile system, used in New Zealand until its abolition in 2023, is referenced here as a historical and structural indicator of school-level socio-economic positioning. It was designed to provide additional resources to schools whose students came from low-socio-economic communities. Schools in lower-income areas often face challenges such as higher student-to-teacher ratios, reduced access to digital resources, and fewer extracurricular programmes, which disproportionately affect refugee students. For example, South Auckland schools may struggle to provide sufficient English as an Additional Language (EAL) support compared to schools in higher-income Wellington areas (Kennedy & Dewar, 1997).

Within educational settings, a "comprehensive diagnostic assessment" evaluates various aspects, including origin, health, emotional state, and educational background (de Castro et al., 2004, p. 79). Students are then placed in classes according to age. However, progression and inclusion in regular classes depend primarily upon the students' English-language competency, often with little acknowledgement of Rohingya students' pre-existing language skills in languages other than English. Rohingya RBS spend most of the time in EAL classes where they learn English until they are proficient enough to attend other classes where English is the language of instruction. Standardised English competency assessments determine progression, but challenges arise when students' existing skills in other languages or informal education are not recognised. These challenges include late learning, placement of refugee students in lower proficiency levels, and restricted access to subject-specific learning (McMaster, 2013). For example, students proficient in their native languages such as Rohingya, Arabic and Burmese may not receive adequate credit for their literacy skills due to the focus on English proficiency. Progression to general classes is contingent upon

individual advancement and specific requirements in the English language, eventually culminating in their recognition as part of the local student population.

Table 2.4

Legal Status of Rohingya: From "Refugee" to "Regular" Student in a Resettling Country

Category/Status	Criteria/Social Identity	Example/Location
Immigrated to refugee resettling country (New Zealand)	Newly arrived in New Zealand	Māngere Refugee Resettlement Centre (MRRC)
Induction and orientation, including education	Newly arrived in New Zealand	MRRC
Placement in community	Refugees are typically settled in communities with modest socio-economic conditions, often prompted by resource availability at the MRRC	This placement frequently leads to educational disparities, as schools in these areas may lack resources such as qualified teachers and updated curricula.
Placement into school	Location / quality of school; Little control over selection of school; because they are already placed in a modest neighbourhood, accordingly they usually gain admission into schools of low docile rating.	Schools in respective area / neighbourhood
Comprehensive diagnostic assessment at school, including family	Assessment comprises origin, social, health, emotional, educational status etc.	In school and upon production of MRRC reports
Placement into a class	Primary consideration is age. Progression and mainstreaming depend on English-language proficiency. No credit for other languages known	Having different requirements; no certainty of how much time needed to be qualified for regular class
Placement into a regular class	Enrolled	Qualified as a student

2.3 Neoliberalism and New Zealand Education

It can be argued that neoliberalism has significantly reshaped New Zealand's education system by prioritising market-driven approaches to constructing educational institutions as competitive marketplaces. Neoliberalism's presence in New Zealand and its education system dates back more than four decades. In the 1980s, the Fourth Labour Government eagerly embraced neoliberalism, beginning with a thorough reorganisation

of the public sector that continued into the 1990s as the Fourth National Government solidified the neoliberal reorganisation of the state and economy. New Zealand's "neoliberal experiment" (Kelsey, 2015) was one of the most ambitious attempts to establish the free market as a social structure.

Often understood as a political philosophy centred on free-market competition, neoliberalism is associated with principles of minimal state intervention, free-market capitalism, and economic growth as the primary driver of social advancement (Smits, 2014). Neoliberalism promotes limited government interference in economic and social affairs, emphasising the private sector as the most efficient distributor of resources. This principle emerged in the 1980s in Western countries, including New Zealand, as a response to the perceived failures of heavy state regulation, marking a shift towards policies prioritising economic liberalisation (Blyth, 2002; Swarts, 2013). In this research, the principles of neoliberalism are examined within the context of educational policies in New Zealand, particularly in relation to their impact on Rohingya RBS.

Neoliberalism prioritises market efficiency over other institutional models, including the family and the state (Birch, 2015). Neoliberals argue that the market is manufactured rather than natural, meaning that governments must actively defend markets and competition rather than allowing them to grow spontaneously. Neoliberalism is thus intrinsically devolutionary, seeking to place decision-making with or as close to the private individual and consumer as possible. Governments are expected to defend and promote competition, even while providing essential services like education. While some argue that governments should provide basic social insurance, neoliberal discourse often frames government intervention in education and social welfare as inefficient and burdensome (Vallier, 2021). This philosophy conflates political and economic ideals, redistributing power from the public to the private sector, and making education subject to profit-driven motives rather than recognising it as a fundamental right.

The privatisation and marketisation of education within neoliberal frameworks have been widely critiqued for increasing inequality, especially for marginalised communities such as refugees (Harvey, 2006). Under neoliberal policies, education is treated as a commodity rather than a public good, making access to quality education contingent on market forces and financial resources. While public schooling is free in New Zealand, elements such as school zoning, decile-based funding and competition

among schools foster inequalities in the quality and access of education (Olssen & Peters, 2005). This has serious implications for Rohingya RBS in New Zealand, where neoliberal policies exacerbate the financial and social challenges of integrating into the education system. Although education is recognised as a vital tool for refugee integration by the European Commission (2007), access to equitable education under neoliberal regimes remains limited. Additional expenses such as uniforms, digital gadgets, and extracurricular activities disproportionately affect low-income families and refugee students (McMaster, 2013).

Neoliberalism has been closely tied to and critiqued through Foucault's (1991) concept of governmentality, which describes how power is exercised not through overt control but by shaping individual behaviours and identities through governance mechanisms. In neoliberal contexts, governmentality reshapes individuals' identities and responsibilities, promoting self-sufficiency and economic productivity as primary social values (Bonnafous-Boucher, 2001; McCarthy, 1994). This framework is crucial for understanding how refugee students, including Rohingya RBS, are positioned within New Zealand's education system, where neoliberal policies govern their subjectification and access to resources.

Foucault's (1988a) later work on ethical formation, or "the care of the self", further highlights the role of governmentality within neoliberal societies. Ethical formation involves how individuals govern themselves according to societal norms and expectations. In neoliberal contexts, this manifests as internalising market-driven values and regulating oneself to meet the demands of the state. This process pushes students to view their success or failure in market terms, framing their educational experience as a personal responsibility.

For Rohingya RBS, this means aligning their identities with the expectations of the education system, such as learning English-language curricula that simultaneously conform to and resist institutional power, often at the cost of their own linguistic and cultural identity. Through the interplay of neoliberalism and Foucault's self-discipline, refugees navigate a system driven by neoliberal agency and controlled by systemic structure, impacting their educational experiences.

Foucault (1978, p. 94) argued that the "all-encompassing opposition between ruler and ruled at the root of power relationships [serves] as a general matrix" for experience and

history. In essence, Foucault underscored that power emanates from numerous sources and is deeply interwoven with knowledge structures, which is therefore evident in refugee education policies shaping RBS' experiences. Foucault (1982, pp. 77–78) suggested three modes of subjectification: (1) "the modes of inquiry which try to give themselves the status of sciences"; (2) "dividing practices" whereby the subject is either divided inside himself or divided from others; and (3) "the way a human being turns himself into a subject". These modes of subjectification may be mapped in the discourses through which Rohingya RBS are considered, assessed and included in New Zealand educational institutions. In essence, Foucault's perspective on subjectivity offers a layered interpretation of selfhood, driven by both internal introspection and external forces of power.

RBS must perform a complex balancing act between subjugation and self-formation. Subjugation describes the act of bringing a person or group under control through the exercise of power. In contrast, self-formation refers to the process through which individuals actively shape and construct their identities, subjectivities, and ways of being in broader societal power dynamics (Foucault, 1998). The multifaceted dimensions of the negotiations RBS are required to undertake include pre-migration experiences, education-related encounters, family and community advice, modes of schooling, racialisation, social and cultural capital, and the personal strategies of daily academic life. By exploring these aspects, these "regimes of truth" provide a nuanced understanding of how RBS negotiate their education and identity within the broader socio-political context. Refugee students negotiate between subjugation (state-led technology) and subjectification (ethical self-formation). These subjectivities reproduce neoliberal perceptions of education and contribute to their replication. Alternate forms of subjectivity in resistance might make possible the transformation of the social and political institutions with which they are imbricated (McLaren, 2002). Ball's (2015, p. 120) interpretation of Foucault on education follows a similar trajectory, whereby power is not just a "weight pressing down from above", but a productive force that "enfolds" resistance back into the neoliberal logic, turning the "struggle against" into a new form of self-governance. While dominant neoliberal discourses frame Rohingya RBS as deficient, their negotiation of hybrid identities, such as maintaining cultural practices while navigating English curricula, exemplifies Foucault's (1978) notion of "reverse discourse", challenging monolithic narratives of assimilation. This approach

provides nuanced scrutiny of the policies and institutional narratives of refugee education and illuminates how RBS both resist and integrate their subjectivities.

In essence, governmentality helps explain how, under neoliberalism, power is exerted indirectly by moulding individual identities to conform to societal norms. In New Zealand's education system, this is evident in the standardisation of language, where English proficiency is promoted as a marker of academic excellence. This standardisation mirrors neoliberal values that prioritise uniformity, efficiency and marketability, which marginalise RBS like those from the Rohingya community. Neoliberalism's focus on economic productivity leads to the reinforcement of linguistic standards, framing English proficiency as essential for social and economic mobility, and disregarding students' diverse cultural backgrounds.

This implies that Foucault's concept of ethical formation is essential for understanding how such educational practices govern students' behaviours and shape their self-perceptions. In New Zealand's education system, RBS may internalise the expectation that fluency in English is necessary for success, leading them to view their linguistic and cultural differences as personal failings. This internalisation reinforces the neoliberal agenda by encouraging students to conform to the market-oriented values of society, prioritising productivity and standardisation over inclusivity and diversity.

2.4 The Impact of Neoliberalism on the New Zealand Education System

Neoliberalism in New Zealand can be understood as a governmental rationality that restructures society by embedding market logic into all aspects of life, including education. Larner (2000) and Lewis's (2004) poststructuralist analyses provide a critical lens through which to examine how neoliberalism functions as both an economic policy and a mode of governance that shapes individual subjectivities and societal norms. According to Larner (2000), neoliberalism operates through discourses and practices that extend beyond the economy, leading to how individuals perceive themselves and their roles within society. This mode of governance fosters a form of citizenship where individuals are seen as autonomous, self-responsible actors who must navigate the risks and opportunities presented by the market. Lewis (2004, p.153) further argues that neoliberalism in New Zealand education has led to the construction of the "enterprising self", where students are encouraged to view their education as an investment in their

human capital, rather than as a means of intellectual or civic growth. This shift not only reinforces social and economic inequalities but also marginalises those, like Rohingya RBS, who do not fit neatly into the market-driven model of education. This phenomenon evinces a neoliberal rationality that prioritises economic productivity over inclusive educational practices. By framing education as a commodity to be purchased and consumed, neoliberal regimes of truth marginalise the broader purposes of education, such as fostering critical thinking, moral reasoning, and civic engagement, thereby entrenching systemic inequalities and limiting the potential for more inclusive and equitable educational practices (Larner, 2000; Lewis, 2004).

It can be argued that New Zealand's neoliberal reforms led to market liberalisation, resulting in the devaluation of its currency, deregulation of financial markets, and the abolition of most producer subsidies and import barriers. Many state-owned enterprises have since been commercialised and privatised. The government reformed the public sector with an emphasis on commercial management methods, competition, employee flexibility, and contractual agreements; to a lesser degree, it also pursued substantial social or welfare reforms. New Zealand's neoliberal reforms centred on monetary policy, following an economic and political philosophy that restructured the state regarding commercial and service enterprise. The redistribution of wealth promised by these neoliberal reforms produced the opposite effect, however, further exacerbating social injustices and reinforcing inequalities (Stiglitz, 2013). Cahill and Konings (2017) highlighted the disjunction between neoliberal theory and its application, criticising the expansion of interest- and institution-based power structures that construct hierarchical opposition and inequality. These governance dispositifs support economic approaches and emphasise their persistence, despite social inequalities.

The defining effect of neoliberalism in education is reformulating learning institutions into a marketplace, bringing them into comparison and direct competition. Such comparisons are grounded in New Zealand secondary students' performance via external assessments like the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) Levels 1, 2 and 3 and the New Zealand Scholarship (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, n.d.). Teachers are therefore forced to formulate strategies focusing on their students' performance in examinations rather than on any broader educational aims. The profit-driven system might also lead school authorities to hire low-paid, less qualified and less experienced teachers. This has been evident in the case of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) support-level paraprofessionals taking care of migrant

students, that is, the least qualified teachers serving the students with the highest needs (Harvey et al., 2014). Schools that service less socio-economically developed areas also tend to perform worse than others, trapped in a cycle of underfunding, poor provisions, and public perception (Crawshaw, 2015).

Tomorrow's Schools (Taskforce to Review Education Administration, 1988) was a New Zealand secondary-level school reform initiative that emerged from neoliberal reform in the mid-1980s. It set a new discourse for schools constituted by mission statements, priorities, objectives and messaging that underscored each school's accountability in increasing its efficiency and profit. Constructed according to models of consumerism, the new system would be policed by parents, who could move their children to another school if they were unsatisfied with the service provided by an institution. The establishment of the Review and Audit Agency also worked to monitor schools' performance. Tomorrow's Schools was founded on the notion that if schools were free of bureaucratic constraints and permitted to make their own decisions, they would successfully attend to the interests of the students' parents and meet their educational needs. Tomorrow's Schools was premised on its apparent empowerment of schools to make suitable and contextualised judgements in their specific settings, but, in practice, this absolved the government of responsibility in maintaining and resourcing the system throughout New Zealand. This notion seems paradoxical, as Tomorrow's Schools was founded on the belief that communities needed more control over their children's education. It can be argued that implementing market concepts in schools generated a strict consumer-driven conservatism rather than encouraging liberal freedoms.

The failure of Tomorrow's Schools is apparent in the impossible position many schools contend with, remaining incompatible with New Zealand's neoliberal structure and negating its intended effects. The problems schools can experience at the local level also harm the whole system. For example, the cumulative impact of many schools failing to handle teacher workload appropriately, worsened by underfunding and staffing issues produced by education system policies, is a factor in some teachers' disappointing job experiences (Locke et al., 2005; Stringer et al., 2018). Failure to repair the effects of Tomorrow's Schools ensures these problems continue, extending into additional education sectors. The education system remains discursively linked to individualist and privatised economic principles, resulting in subjectification operating within the neoliberal education system.

The trajectory of neoliberalisation processes can be contextualised further in the evolution of New Zealand's tertiary education system. During the 1980s, New Zealand's reforms also reorganised tertiary education (WeiQian, 2019), and the higher-level teaching profession has increasingly been subjected to policies that foster a culture of managerialism and competitive performance. One such policy is the Performance-Based Research Fund, which directly aligns with neoliberal principles by linking funding to measurable research outcomes, emphasising market-driven accountability and competition (Tertiary Education Commission [TEC], 2018, 2021). While these policies are presented as frameworks for enhancing teaching and learning quality, they inadvertently reinforce neoliberal values, emphasising individual performance and institutional competitiveness over equitable access to education.

The neoliberal reforms specific to New Zealand's tertiary education system were articulated in a series of papers issued in the late 1980s. The New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee commissioned the Watts Report in 1987, favouring government financing over self-funding. Formally titled New Zealand's Universities: Partners in National Development, the authors favoured public funding partly because it understood education as a right and because estimating the balance between the private and public benefits of tertiary education was difficult. They reluctantly accepted some user charges might be necessary due to fiscal constraints, though it was recommended these should not exceed 20% of average course costs. Although the report's stance on user fees was lukewarm, it foreshadowed a future framework in which the debate would be framed as "one of identifying the balance between public and private beneficiaries and thus of appropriate shares in financial contributions" (Universities Review Committee, 1987, p. 81).

This framework is further complicated in relation to overseas students, who must pay significantly higher tuition fees than their domestic counterparts. At the same time, their access to public funding and resources is also limited. The adoption of neoliberal policies in New Zealand, particularly evident in the tertiary education sector from 2012 to 2025, has led to significant changes in funding structures. Although implementing a user-pays system for domestic students raises concerns, charging full fees to international students may seem justifiable to ensure New Zealand taxpayers are not bearing the cost of the education of students from other countries. However, this approach warrants a nuanced understanding, especially in the context of RBS. International education is New Zealand's fifth-largest export industry, generating

approximately NZ$2.5 billion in 2014, a figure that was forecast to double by 2025 (MoE, 2020a; TEC, 2014). Unlike typical international students, refugees often flee adverse conditions without the financial means to afford higher education. Reducing fees or providing financial support for RBS would therefore align with humanitarian aid principles and support their integration into New Zealand society.

The neoliberal marketisation of education in New Zealand has contributed to increasing social and economic inequalities. Neoliberal reforms have shifted the emphasis of education towards instrumental goals, prioritising practical outcomes like job readiness and economic productivity over intellectual, moral or civic development. This approach, often referred to as "instrumental education", contrasts with a more holistic vision of education that promotes broader learning and personal growth (Moodie, 2016). "Constructive education" focuses on helping students continuously develop their understanding of the world. At the same time, the neoliberal model shifts the balance, emphasising academic instruction primarily for economic purposes, which ultimately reduces education to a tool for constructing a knowledge-based economy (Grace, 2014). In doing so, the holistic potential of education is diminished as competition between institutions obscures systemic inequalities and fails to address the collective needs of vulnerable student populations (Adelekan, 2020).

Although New Zealand's education system generates substantial revenue as a significant economic contributor, this focus on profit raises questions about its inclusivity, particularly for RBS who may not have the financial capacity to contribute to this economic model. Addressing the needs of these students, who often require more support and face unique challenges, contrasts against the revenue-driven approach and highlights the need for a more balanced, equitable educational model that accommodates diverse student backgrounds. In summary, New Zealand's education sector has been predominantly affected by the government's neoliberal approach since the mid-1980s. The New Zealand Experiment (Kelsey, 2015) is an excellent study of neoliberalism in practice that demonstrates how New Zealand shares common characteristics of neoliberal rationalities with other Western countries, including Britain.

While neoliberal reforms have emphasised market-based approaches to education, it is essential to note that New Zealand operates a hybrid model, with many features of a robust public school system still intact. Public funding, a centralised curriculum, and an

emphasis on equitable access are integral aspects of New Zealand's education framework. However, introducing competition among schools and performance-based measures has also aligned the system with neoliberal market-driven principles. The increased focus on "instrumental education" has significant implications for marginalised groups, such as Rohingya RBS. These students often arrive with diverse educational backgrounds and complex needs that may be at odds with an education system primarily geared towards practical outcomes like job readiness. The focus on constructing a knowledge-based economy and the competitive environment among institutions can inadvertently sideline the unique challenges faced by Rohingya RBS. In addition to academic instruction, these students require support to adapt to a new cultural and educational context, including opportunities to reconstruct their beliefs and understanding of the world in a foreign setting. The impact of neoliberal policies on Rohingya RBS signifies the need for more inclusive and supportive educational practices that consider the broader intellectual, moral and civic development of all students. It also underscores the necessity for a balanced approach that recognises the limitations of a purely market-oriented system and reaffirms the importance of public, equitable education for all learners.

2.5 Conclusion

By establishing the socio-political and historical foundations of Rohingya experiences, this chapter has set the stage for analysing the specific educational policies and practices in New Zealand that shape RBS' aspirations and opportunities. It has also demonstrated how governmentality shapes refugee policies, aspirations and educational integration, necessitating a more inclusive and equitable approach. In summary, this chapter has critically explored the socio-political and educational context in which Rohingya RBS navigate their educational experiences in New Zealand. Drawing on a Foucauldian framework, the chapter examined how neoliberal education policies shape not only the structure of the education system but also the identities and subjectivities of students within that system. These policies, with their focus on economic productivity, competition, and individual responsibility, create an environment where RBS are pressured to meet normative standards of language proficiency and academic achievement, standards that often fail to account for their unique backgrounds, histories and challenges.

This chapter has also highlighted how the Rohingya, as refugees, are discursively constructed within New Zealand's educational landscape. The emphasis on English-language acquisition as a primary marker of integration affirms a broader neoliberal agenda that positions these students as "others" who must be assimilated into dominant cultural and linguistic norms. The regime of truth surrounding English proficiency validates linguistic hierarchies, making assimilation a requirement for inclusion and undermining the epistemic value of Rohingya students' multilingual abilities. Although framed as a pathway to inclusion, this focus on language proficiency can serve as a mechanism of marginalisation, reinforcing societal expectations that overlook the linguistic and cultural diversity of RBS. The discourses surrounding refugeehood and education in New Zealand carry embedded power dynamics that shape how the system perceives these students and how they perceive themselves within it.

Through the lens of Foucauldian governmentality, this chapter has explored the processes of subjectification, showing how RBS are impacted by external discourses that regulate their experiences in education. However, this chapter has also alluded to how students exhibit agency by navigating and reinterpreting these discourses, challenging simplistic notions of victimhood or passive assimilation. The dual processes of subjection and subjectification are critical to understanding how these students interact with the educational policies and practices that govern their lives.

This chapter has set the foundation for the research inquiry by framing the investigation into how Rohingya RBS negotiate their identities and educational experiences within the overlapping contexts of refugeehood, neoliberalism, and education policy. The historical context of Rohingya statelessness, the focus on language as a tool of marginalisation, and the broader neoliberal turn in education are all key to understanding how these students are positioned within New Zealand's system. These contextual factors provide the foundation for the next chapter, which conducts a review of the existing literature in the refugee education and resettlement field. The chapter demonstrates how current research often simplifies the subjection and subjectification of refugees. This simplification frequently ignores the intricate interactions that exist within resettlement environments between the subjectivities of refugees, discourses of education, and discourses of the state. Additionally, the review evaluates studies on refugee educational aspirations and experiences that draw on a Foucauldian governmentality framework. Together, Chapters 2 and 3 lay the foundation for a

detailed examination of the methodological approaches used to explore these students' lived experiences.

Chapter 3 Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this literature review is twofold. First, it aims to demonstrate how existing research often simplifies the subjectification and subjectivities of refugees. This simplification frequently ignores the intricate interactions within resettlement environments between the subjectivities of refugees, discourses of education, and state discourses. Second, it undertakes a scoping study for this research by highlighting studies on refugee educational aspirations and experiences that draw on a Foucauldian framework of governmentality. The literature review concludes by identifying a research gap concerning the personal, social, and political vulnerabilities of Rohingya refugee-background students (RBS) that are exacerbated by the neoliberal Aotearoa New Zealand (hereafter New Zealand) education system. The argument is made that these vulnerabilities also impact students' educational aspirations.

3.2 Approach and Organisation

This literature review adopts Denyer and Tranfield's (2009) divergent/convergent approach to provide a holistic and detailed perspective of the phenomenon under study. This approach was chosen to survey the range and depth of refugee education research and to allow for a thorough assessment of multiple aspects of a research subject (i.e., divergent) followed by a focused analysis of specific areas (i.e., convergent), thereby providing a solid foundation for refugee education research (Baumeister, 2013). The divergent/convergent approach strengthens the discursive formation of refugee education, illustrating how power operates through policies and institutional practices to shape the experiences of severely persecuted populations like the Rohingya in New Zealand. By interrogating the mechanisms of governance and normalisation, such an approach enables the development of more effective educational policies that resist exclusionary frameworks and promote equitable inclusion. As Cerna (2019) demonstrates in a comparative OECD review, refugee education policies across member states are increasingly prioritising rapid transition to mainstream schooling and vocational pathways, operating within a broader neoliberal orientation towards employability and economic contribution. By situating this study within these wider policy trends, the approach also allows for a more critical interrogation of how governance and normalisation shape educational inclusion. First, I thoroughly reviewed

the literature on the difficulties surrounding refugee resettlement and education research, including the shifting perspectives on how refugee resettlement and education have been understood. Second, I conducted additional Google searches using the terms "refugee education" and "educational aspirations" with the modifiers "Foucault", "governmentality" and "subjectivity", which allowed me to examine how RBS' aspirations are understood through a Foucauldian lens of power, knowledge, governmentality, subjectivity, and discourse. Third, I identified literature on RBS' educational aspirations using EBSCOhost, Google Scholar, and JSTOR to conduct a protocol-driven search for "refugee educational aspirations" and related phrases like "asylum seeker", "resettlement" and "educational desires". The review covered academic publications from the past two decades via a systematic search of specific databases until a saturation threshold was reached, at which point similar articles were repeatedly retrieved regardless of keywords or databases.

The literature reviewed in this chapter is divided into three main categories. The first section reviews Foucauldian theories, followed by an examination of studies located at the intersection of Foucauldian theories and the educational goals of RBS. The second section focuses on RBS' educational aspirations. The third and final section investigates RBS negotiations within educational systems, which includes a broad overview of international and New Zealand-specific research. This organisation creates a clear narrative progression, starting from the general formation of RBS identities and culminating in an analysis of how these identities shape RBS' academic pursuits.

3.3 A Foucauldian Analysis of RBS' Lived Experiences

Foucault (1974) liked to think of his writings as "tool-box" for others to "rummage through", and selected concepts from his scholarship may serve well in analysing RBS' lived experiences. Foucault's conceptualisations of governmentality, biopower and subjectification, discourse, and subjectivity offer a sophisticated framework for understanding the intricate operations of power within societal structures, institutions, and individual identities. These concepts provide a critical lens for analysing how power operates to produce and sustain societal norms, institutional authority, and individual experience.

3.3.1 Governmentality

The concept of governmentality offers insight into how power dynamics operate in societal actions and form aspirations, especially those concerning RBS. This expression of power focuses on the general populace as its object of knowledge while also incorporating aspects of biopower, the way governments use technology to "regulate and control" populations (Foucault, 1998b; Harris et al., 2020). The interplay of disciplinary power and biopower impacts RBS' educational aspirations. An objective political economy is supposed through significant types of information, which co-opt a fundamental stake in safety and security, a concept intrinsically related to biopower. Safety and potential hazards are both associated with the RBS population, providing a foundation for deploying forceful tools and specialised disciplinary strategies (Foucault, 2007).

3.3.2 Biopower and Subjectification

Foucault's analysis of biopower and subjectification provides a nuanced perspective on how power and knowledge intersect and operate. For Foucault, power is imbricated with knowledge. Institutions (such as schools) may seem to act independently, but they are linked to and become expressions of more central (governmental) strata of power. Foucault (1978) described power as universal and omnipresent "not because it embraces everything but because it comes from everywhere" (p. 92). The universality and pervasiveness of power dynamics shape our societal experiences, impacting everything from individual relationships to institutional practices.

3.3.3 Discourse

Foucault used "discourse" to refer to a historically contingent social hierarchy that generates meaning and knowledge. Language circulates these social hierarchies as "regimes of truth" (i.e., discourses that establish certain things as true) and is considered the precursor to forming knowledge through discourse. For Foucault (1977a), we are made via discourse and its substantiation of knowledge. This perspective offers valuable insight into how discourse operates as a tool of power, shaping educational policies and defining what constitutes legitimate knowledge within resettlement contexts. By controlling the narratives around refugee education, institutions reinforce dominant ideologies, normalising specific practices while marginalising alternative ways of knowing and learning.

3.3.4 Subjectivity

For Foucault (1985, p. 6), subjectivity is the way a subject experiences themselves in a "game of truth", a set of rules by which truth is produced. "Subject" can be interpreted via two understandings in tension: being "subject to someone else by control and dependence" as well as "tied to [one's] own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge" (Foucault, 1982a, p. 781). Notably, "both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates ... and makes subject to" (Foucault, 1982a, p. 781). Thus, the subject is defined in its struggle against forms of domination, exploitation, and subjection, but any act of possible self-definition should also be understood as an expression of power's subjugating effects.

3.3.5 RBS and the Nature of Power

Contingent upon these theoretical foundations, this section presents research examining refugees' integration, particularly how power acts on RBS during their integration and experiences in their countries of resettlement, using a Foucauldian framework. The experiences of refugees are formed by the socio-cultural fabric and institutional norms of their host country, which act as the tools of Foucauldian governmentality, imposing norms and spreading disparity. Lippert (1999) explored the nation-state discourses and their impact on international refugee policies and identities, elaborating on how these discourses often result in restrictive policy frameworks that negatively affect refugees' lives. Similarly, Jaffe-Walter (2013) examined the liberal educational discourses promoting integration and underscored the "paradox of marginalisation" immigrants encounter in their pursuit of inclusion within educational settings. These analyses show how educational policies function as mechanisms of power, producing and sustaining restrictive discourses that govern refugee experiences. By constructing refugees as subjects in need of regulation, these policies often limit their agency and reinforce structural inequalities, ultimately hindering their equitable access to learning opportunities.

Further expanding on these dynamics, Whyte (2011) and Kohl (2020) highlighted the gaze of government monitoring systems and the questionable tools of power used to turn asylum seekers into "productive" citizens, with a particular focus on the coercive and surveillance aspects of state mechanisms. This argument aligns with Sidhu and Taylor's (2007) findings, which clarified the neglect of RBS in educational settings, underscoring the systemic issues hindering their academic progress. In contrast,

McPherson (2010) highlighted the marginalising effect of post-multicultural integration on resettled refugees, exploring the contrast between integration policies and refugees' lived experiences. These perspectives collectively emphasise how educational policies can function as instruments of surveillance and control, shaping RBS' experiences through disciplinary mechanisms. A critical assessment of these policies is necessary to challenge power structures that perpetuate marginalisation and instead create frameworks that foster genuine inclusion, agency, and equitable educational opportunities.

Based on the previous discussion of power dynamics and institutional practices, Hardy (2003) used Foucault's power framework to critique the current narrative of refugee-status-determination procedures, offering a more nuanced view of power in migrant organisations. She provided a more detailed exploration of how power dynamics shape the experiences and narratives surrounding refugees and asylum seekers. Hendriks (2020), meanwhile, showed how power systems in the Netherlands inflict systemic and psychological harm against asylum seekers and refugees, highlighting the deep-seated issues within the asylum processes that perpetuate suffering and exploitation. Christie and Sidhu (2006) suggested that educators use "parrhesia" or "fearless speech" as a form of systemic resistance. They elaborated on how this form of discourse can catalyse systemic change and provide a platform for challenging the existing narratives and power structures affecting refugees and asylum seekers. These critiques highlight how power operates through educational policies to regulate and marginalise refugees. By resisting these embedded power structures, education can shift from being a tool of control to one of empowerment, fostering inclusive and transformative learning environments that challenge existing hierarchies.

3.4 RBS' Educational Aspirations

In this study, educational aspirations refer to RBS' desire to achieve a particular level of academic achievement. I leverage Appadurai's (2004) concept of the "brittle horizon" to examine refugee, immigrant, and other underprivileged students' lives and futures. Their futures are tentative and unclear, and this theme emphasises the conflict between their desires and the challenges they face. Following Appadurai (2004, p. 76), the resettlement process can be understood as a struggle to repair a brittle horizon; refugees need to develop a "map" that allows them to voyage into a better future. Thus, even in difficult times, RBS' dreams motivate them to create their futures. The following

subsections explore the contributing factors regarding aspirations and outline a Foucauldian approach to the literature on aspirations.

3.4.1 High, Low, and Mixed Aspirations: Contributing Factors

When exploring how RBS navigate dual identities within educational settings, Foucault's concept of "heterotopia" provides a lens for understanding how RBS find themselves between different and often contradictory spaces: aspiring for social mobility while grappling with barriers stemming from structural and cultural constraints (Arar, 2021; Dryden-Peterson, 2016). RBS' aspirations are not entirely defined by either high expectations or low self-limitation but exist in a dynamic interplay between opportunities and individual hopes, shaped by global forces like migration policies and local educational frameworks (Erçetin & Kubilay, 2019). The educational aspirations of RBS occur on a continuum where the interplay of high, low, or mixed aspirations is a manifestation of sociocultural and economic intricacies as well as institutional norms.

The pursuit of education by RBS is primarily driven by their desire for empowerment, social integration, and economic stability rather than the intrinsic value of education. Researchers have interviewed immigrant and refugee communities from China, Mexico, Liberia and Sudan about their prior educational experiences, hopes and aspirations for education; the supports they received; and the challenges they faced in the United States (He et al., 2017). Fighting a long history of mainstream anti-immigrant sentiment, much work remains to be done on both the systemic and individual level to shift from (un)intentional racist practices to an appreciation of different communities' cultural wealth and equity-promoting actions (Archetti & Ranji, 2024).

A study of US immigration statistics showed key interconnections between immigration and education (Amthor & Roxas, 2016), underlining the relationship between education and inequality. Undocumented youths' lack of funds for higher education changes their life path, even though they want to study. This has long-term repercussions because their personal, cultural, and social capital may affect their children too. For example, in Turkey, 20 volunteer mothers from Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan were studied to establish refugee mothers' educational expectations for their children (Erçetin & Kubilay, 2019). In face-to-face encounters, participants were interviewed using open-ended questions. The findings showed refugee mothers wanted more school social activities, intensive mathematics and language courses, and good communication and interaction between schools, parents and children. These insights emphasise how systemic barriers and

inequalities are not merely incidental but are actively produced and maintained through regimes of power and knowledge. By critically examining these structures, educational policies can be reimagined to align with the aspirations of refugee families, challenging mechanisms of exclusion and fostering genuine access to quality education.

3.4.2 Inclusion

Dryden-Peterson and Reddick (2017) investigated the educational aspirations and experiences of refugees and (un)accompanied children seeking asylum, focusing on inclusion. Inclusive education encourages equitable access and involvement for all students, regardless of their circumstances or backgrounds (Dryden-Peterson & Reddick, 2017). Examining the experiences and academic goals of young, resettled refugees in their host countries has articuated how many persevered and remained driven to achieve academic success despite their difficulties (Morrice et al., 2020). Refugee families face immigration challenges in host countries, such as economic strain, restricted access to education, and legal matters. These studies collectively call for the establishment of refugee resettlement plans that endorse the importance of social inclusion and community support in helping refugees navigate the challenges of adapting to foreign cultures and accessing education.

3.4.3 Institutional Policies and Support

The role of institutional policies and support systems is significant in shaping aspirations, as evident in the work of He et al. (2017), Yilmaz (2022) and Dryden-Peterson and Reddick (2017). In this context, Foucault's notion of "discipline" becomes relevant, as the state not only promotes but also enforces conformity to particular norms of educational achievement. As highlighted by Yilmaz (2022; see also 2020), RBS must meet language and admission standards set by host nations, which serve as systemic barriers regulating their educational aspirations. By making language proficiency and standardised assessments prerequisites for educational advancement, these studies highlight how RBS are subjected to subtle yet pervasive forms of disciplinary power that shape their visions of the future.

3.4.4 Socio-economic Challenges

Low aspirations can be understood as responses to socio-economic challenges and systemic barriers. A recent mixed-methodology study from the Cox's Bazar Rohingya refugee camps in Bangladesh highlighted how poor living conditions significantly

hindered refugees' aspirations (Morrice et al., 2020). This study of Rohingya and host country adolescents aged 10 to 17 years (boys and girls) found that poverty, gender discrimination, a lack of school access, child labour, and early marriage cause low school enrolment and high dropout rates. The research emphasises how these constraints cause helplessness, hopelessness, and low self-esteem (Morrice et al., 2020). An ethnographic study of 30 refugee and immigrant teenagers of different class origins newly arrived in New York State found socio-economic differences in aspirations (Leo, 2021a). Families of lower socio-economic status sometimes had poorer educational attainment and lower expectations for their children since they had to prioritise fundamental needs (Leo, 2021b). These studies illustrate how structural barriers and socio-economic constraints are not just obstacles but are embedded within broader systems of governance and power. By critically interrogating these mechanisms, educational policies can be designed to disrupt exclusionary practices, enabling RBS to pursue their educational goals and improve their long-term opportunities.

3.5 Meritocracy

In Kakuma refugee camp, Kenya, Bellino (2021) found that schools enforcing meritocracy and offering upward social mobility were crucial to students' hope, despite being structurally out of reach for most. Refugees become aware of structural inequalities and formulate systemic critiques based on their experiences while strategically reimbursing trust in and aiming for inclusion within the same system (Bellino, 2021). Opportunities must increase within educational institutions and their promises of upward mobility must avoid "more of the same" (Bellino, 2021). Both external institutional challenges and internalised perceptions of refugees' experiences are crucial to understanding their low ambitions, particularly in the case of Rohingya RBS in New Zealand.

3.5.1 Systemic Inequalities and Obstructions

The findings of the above studies show that, for many RBS, systemic inequalities and obstructions, such as the lack of economic stability, systemic barriers, and limited opportunities, prevail. Together they contribute to what Foucault would describe as "subjugated knowledges", forms of understanding and subjectivities that remain marginalised or suppressed due to dominant power dynamics (Leo, 2021a; Morrice et al., 2020). The studies underscore that low aspirations among refugees are caused by systemic inequalities and obstructions leading to feelings of hopelessness among them.

Despite their efforts for social integration, these challenges often limit the opportunities for refugees, manifesting both resilience and the internalisation of social inequities.

Dryden-Peterson (2016) explores the host country constraints that intersect with socio-personal aspirations to create a unique category of students with mixed aspirations. The study specifically highlights refugee education in host countries within a historical and policy analysis framework, focusing on the 86% of worldwide refugees who remain and access education in neighbouring host countries. The findings suggest globalisation has increased refugees' education awareness and their educational and employment goals. However, border controls and schooling restrictions have marginalised refugee children by restricting their freedom of movement and educational rights (Dryden-Peterson, 2016). These findings emphasise how restrictive policies function as mechanisms of power that regulate and constrain refugee aspirations, reinforcing systems of control. By critically examining these tensions, more inclusive educational frameworks can be developed to challenge these constraints and expand access to meaningful learning opportunities.

3.5.2 Educational Solutions for Refugees

Following Dryden-Peterson's (2016) approach, a systematic review conducted by Arar (2021) explored educational solutions for refugees and other displaced people and how their interrupted pathways to higher education hinder their educational opportunities. The review aimed to fill a knowledge gap by examining policies and interventions for refugees' pathways into higher education and suggesting theoretical and empirical lenses to broaden and deepen this research (Arar, 2021). It concludes that refugees face legal and financial barriers, language proficiency hurdles, and non-acknowledgement of prior learning when applying to higher education.

Foucault's broader constructs of power, discipline, governmentality, and normalisation provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the aspirations of RBS across the spectrum of high, low, and mixed aspirations. High aspirations result from disciplinary power, pushing students towards normative educational achievements shaped by neoliberal values and societal expectations (Appadurai, 2004; Chen & Hesketh, 2021). On the other hand, low aspirations illustrate the effects of biopower and governmentality, where systemic barriers and oppressive living conditions have led to the internalisation of limitations, resignation, and even resistance to institutional expectations (Leo, 2021a; Morrice et al., 2020). Foucault's ideas on power, discipline,

governmentality, subjectification and subjectivity help explain how education has become less about genuine learning and more about producing self-disciplined, self-sufficient workers who are expected to navigate an unforgiving system on their own. Historical disenfranchisement sets the stage for understanding how systemic barriers persist in modern educational frameworks. The above studies collectively demonstrate the range of aspirations of RBS, which are shaped by socio-cultural limitations and global pressures, embodying an amalgam of constant struggle and hope for a better future. These perspectives explain how power operates through educational policies to regulate RBS' aspirations, often reinforcing systemic barriers. By acknowledging and disrupting these dynamics, policies can be reimagined to support rather than constrain RBS' academic and personal growth.

3.5.3 A Foucauldian Approach to the Aspirations Literature

The literature on educational aspirations among RBS, such as those from the Rohingya community, can be explored through a Foucauldian lens focusing on power, knowledge and governmentality. Appadurai's (2004) concept of the brittle horizon captures the tenuous link between RBS' present circumstances and their future aspirations. From a Foucauldian perspective, this brittle horizon shows how discourses around power shape and limit the trajectories available to these students, reinforcing the boundaries of their perceived futures. As framed by Chen and Hesketh (2021), educational aspirations are abstract ideals shaped by dominant discourses, consistent with Foucault's (1978) notion of biopower, through which institutions regulate individuals' aspirations to control and govern populations.

These systemic exclusions, as shaped by neoliberal governance, directly affect how RBS perceive and negotiate their aspirations within restrictive educational systems. For example, the discourses around "high" and "healthy" aspirations indicate state-imposed standards that align with neoliberal ideals, positioning success within narrow definitions that marginalise students who do not fit neatly into these expectations. Neoliberal education also operates through "disciplinary power" (Foucault, 1975), where students, teachers and institutions are subjected to constant surveillance, assessment and ranking. Standardised testing, performance metrics, and league tables function as techniques of discipline that regulate and normalise behaviours, ensuring that individuals internalise market-oriented values like efficiency, productivity and competition. Those who fail to conform, such as students from refugee backgrounds who struggle to meet these rigid

expectations, are pathologised as “deficient” rather than seen as victims of structural inequalities. The work of Erçetin and Kubilay (2019) discussed above on refugee mothers’ expectations further illustrates how state educational systems impose normative roles, shaping family expectations in line with broader societal goals. In this context, “high” aspirations act as tools of exclusion as they endorse neoliberal values that do not align with refugees’ lived experiences and requirements.

Similarly, Dryden-Peterson and Reddick (2017) highlight how promoting inclusion in education can itself constitute a form of governmentality, using normative discourses to determine the “right” kind of educational engagement for RBS. These discourses also establish the notion of “healthy” aspirations, as success is often linked to institutional standards and practices, accentuating exclusionary norms for refugees. For example, the Refugee Resettlement Strategy developed by Immigration New Zealand (INZ, 2012, 2017) can be scrutinised through the lens of biopower, as the policies controlling linguistic and social integration shape refugees’ identities according to neoliberal values, making them conform to the institutional standards and goals. The Foucauldian critique lies in questioning who defines these standards of aspiration and success and how the regulatory frameworks of the host nation shape RBS’ access to education, reinforcing systemic inequalities masked under the rhetoric of inclusion and opportunity (Yilmaz, 2022). Thus, the neoliberal governance of the host state limits the educational landscape of refugees by imposing state-sponsored policies under the guise of endorsing social acceptance and involvement.

3.6 Governmentality and Refugee Policies

Governmentality, as explored through the lens of educational policy research, offers profound insights into the intricate processes by which governmental reasoning shapes and is shaped by broader societal contexts. This section describes the way education reforms both mirror and impact the exercise of power at multiple levels. In recent years, the role of policies in shaping access to higher education for asylum seekers and refugees has emerged as a pivotal research topic. The section also investigates the experiences of refugees and asylum seekers across different countries and explores the complex network of challenges, policies and responses that define these individuals’ educational journeys.

3.6.1 A Whole-of-person Approach

Scholars identify the "whole-of-person" approach as the best way RBS' aspirations can be addressed. Clark and Lenette (2020) conducted a qualitative study at an Australian university, which employed Bronfenbrenner's (1977) ecological systems theory. They examined the postgraduate goals of six students from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds and reported the insights of two academics with experience teaching such students. Participants recognised personal, institutional, community, and policy challenges in the study. From a Foucauldian perspective, resisting these trends means questioning how we think about education. Instead of treating it like an individual responsibility, we need policies that acknowledge systemic barriers and create real support systems. This could mean prioritising inclusion, valuing different ways of learning, and challenging the assumption that education should always serve economic goals first.

While most existing literature on enabling educational pathways recommends what universities could do differently, Clark and Lenette (2020) argue that a whole-of-person approach considering both institutional and personal issues would increase the postgraduate prospects of students from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds. Universities can help with institutional support, mentoring, and financial aid while mitigating immigration and personal constraints (Clark & Lenette, 2020). Monetary restrictions, social and cultural marginalisation, and inadequate educational support also prohibit immigrant adolescents from attending school (Sidhu & Taylor, 2007). The complexity and fragmentation of Australia's educational system causes many refugee youths to fall between the cracks (Clark & Lenette, 2020). These findings highlight how power structures within educational policies shape RBS' trajectories, often positioning them as subjects of regulation rather than empowerment. A holistic, whole-of-person approach disrupts these mechanisms by prioritising both institutional reforms and personal agency, fostering more equitable access to higher education.

3.6.2 Policy-related Constraints

Some studies also highlight policy-related constraints. As noted above, Leo (2021a) explored the US community college transition experiences of 32 first-generation immigrant and refugee students and analysed participant observation and interview data using Bourdieu's (1984) cultural capital theory. The findings show prospective community college students were unsure about the college admission process and

quality. Former and current community college students validated these concerns with their in- and out-of-school troubles. Challenges typically decrease lofty goals (Leo, 2021a). While students struggled with language barriers, financial support, and cultural adjustment, they also looked to community colleges as vital gateways for employment opportunities, social connection, and academic support. This study shows how power operates through structural barriers in higher education, regulating access, and limiting opportunities for refugee and immigrant students. Challenging these mechanisms requires policies that not only provide resources and support but also demolish the institutional constraints that govern their educational trajectories.

Hos (2016), meanwhile, found that RBS have high expectations but little knowledge of the US educational system. They face difficulties and need additional academic and psychological support. Many secondary-level refugee learners are students with interrupted or inconsistent formal education. Such students suffer from inadequate prior education, linguistic obstacles, cultural acclimatisation, and trauma (Hos, 2016). These observations emphasise how power operates through institutional structures that define who is deemed "educable" and who is marginalised. By critically assessing these mechanisms, educational policies can be reoriented to provide targeted academic and psychological support, ensuring that RBS, particularly those with interrupted formal schooling, are not merely integrated but actively empowered within their new learning environments.

Additional policy constraints are identified in other studies. Morrice (2021) conducted a three-year multisited, multilingual ethnography of Iraqi refugee families in Philadelphia in the United States. Using a discursive theoretical model, she examined citizenship and political rhetoric that portrayed Muslim refugees as the ultimate "other" and a threat to national security and identity. The findings show how tracking, linguistic competence criteria, and extracurricular activity exclude refugee children from public education and demonstrate how power operates through educational institutions to regulate and categorise RBS, often reinforcing their exclusion. By critically examining these mechanisms of control, policymakers can develop more inclusive frameworks that challenge systemic barriers and promote equitable access to public education.

Christie and Sidhu (2006) have explored how Australian education policy and practice frame children who are refugees or asylum seekers. For example, the mandatory detention of asylum seekers and restrictive laws that limit their access to schooling, as

well as discourses, such as those regarding security, border protection, and integration, structure the schooling of refugee and asylum-seeker children (Christie & Sidhu, 2006). Positive interactions between instructors, RBS and families, as well as cross-cultural awareness, often depend on administrators (Christie & Sidhu, 2002). Such systemic obstacles that prohibit marginalised groups, such as refugees and asylum seekers, from reaching their full potential thus stand in contrast to the current climate of global policies and viewpoints that seem to espouse social justice and shared responsibility (Spohrer, 2011). These studies expose how restrictive educational policies function as disciplinary mechanisms that contradict broader global commitments to social justice. By critically interrogating these contradictions, policymakers can work towards more inclusive approaches that resist entrenched power structures and genuinely support refugee and asylum seeker students in realising their full potential.

Portes and Zhou's (1993) "segmented assimilation" theory explaining refugee and immigrant reception was used by McBrien (2005) to explore US refugee schooling requirements, obstacles and solutions. Well-established limitations, family participation, community involvement, mentorship, culturally sensitive teaching, and inclusive and inviting schools were all reported as policymaking factors. Guo et al. (2019) subsequently examined how Syrian RBS aged 10 to 14 years were subjected to bullying and racism in Canadian schools, hurting their sense of belonging. To construct a just and equitable society and educational environment for Syrian refugee children, teachers, and school staff, dominant discourses that limit political, economic and cultural justice for destitute children must be challenged (Guo et al., 2019). These empirical findings illustrate how educational policies function as mechanisms of governance that can either reinforce exclusion or facilitate inclusion. By critically examining the power structures embedded within these policies, it becomes evident that fostering inclusive and supportive school environments is essential to resisting discriminatory practices and ensuring RBS have equitable access to academic and social opportunities.

Molla's (2019) research mapped higher education participation trends. The study identified policy silences and alternatives using policy review, national higher education statistics, population census data, critical sociology, and a capacity approach to social justice among African refugee youth in Australia. The findings show how grit, mentoring, and family support helped youngsters succeed. Molla recommends equality in policy and practice in order to avoid RBS from being excluded from their entitlements. Also in Australia, Naidoo et al.'s (2018) qualitative case study used

ethnographic methods to explain how some refugee-background African youth/teenagers in Melbourne have flourished in higher education despite racism, altered educational trajectories, and a lack of academic resources at home. Results showed that African refugee children in Australia experience several hurdles to high-quality education and completing their educational goals, requiring more specialist support and interventions. These studies trace how educational policies operate as instruments of power that shape the experiences of African refugee youth. By critically analysing the discourse surrounding access and success in higher education, it becomes evident that equitable policies and targeted support systems are necessary to counteract exclusionary practices and dismantle structural barriers that hinder RBS' academic progression.

As the aforementioned studies highlight, the path to higher education for refugees and asylum seekers is fraught with systemic, linguistic, cultural and psychological barriers. These barriers are not merely incidental but are produced and sustained through broader resettlement logics. Van Riemsdijk et al. (2024) argue that resettlement policies in Sweden and New Zealand frequently emphasise refugees' obligation to find employment over the state's responsibility for language provision and qualifications recognition, a critique extended by Mahony's (2017) analysis of how New Zealand housing policy responsibilises refugees through withdrawal of direct state provision. Addressing these challenges uplifts individual aspirations and strengthens social integration, equity, and the foundational principles of justice and inclusivity. Specifically, for Rohingya RBS in New Zealand, navigating the complexities of resettlement, cultural adaptation, and prior trauma further underscores the need for tailored educational policies that consider their unique histories and circumstances.

3.6.3 A Foucauldian Approach to Refugee Policy

A Foucauldian approach to refugee policy literature demonstrates how power operates in producing and implementing policies, shaping access to higher education for asylum seekers and refugees. Policies serve as mechanisms of governmentality, wherein the state provides access and regulates individuals, extending its impact through what Foucault conceptualises as biopower (Clark & Lenette, 2020; Sidhu & Taylor, 2007). Financial, cultural and institutional constraints become disciplinary forces that create systemic barriers for RBS, enforcing norms and perpetuating inequalities.

Policies on education for refugees, as explored by de Heredia (2022), Leo (2021a, 2021b), Morrice (2021), and Christie and Sidhu (2006), are not merely administrative tools but are imbued with discursive power. They categorise individuals, establish eligibility standards, and exclude those who do not conform to state-imposed norms. These exclusions, shaped by factors like language proficiency and financial stability, illustrate the leveraging of neoliberal beliefs that prioritise economic alignment over equitable access. More critically, this shift underscores a broader process of responsibilisation. Darling (2011) and Ilcan and Rygiel (2015) demonstrate how integration policies systematically obscure structural barriers by framing settlement outcomes as individual responsibility, a pattern wherein systemic failure is recoded as personal inadequacy. This not only individualises responsibility but also depoliticises inequality, making structural constraints less visible within policy discourse.

Foucault's (1980) concept of "panoptic gaze" is also relevant here, as policymaking functions as a form of surveillance that monitors, classifies and disciplines refugee populations. This mode of governance is further reinforced through neoliberal rationalities that prioritise efficiency and self-regulation. Olssen and Peters (2005) identify responsibilisation and efficiency metrics as hallmarks of neoliberal education governance. Gale and Parker (2017), meanwhile, examine how "realism" discourses in educational advising narrow legitimate aspirations. In this way, power, knowledge, and subjectivity intersect to shape educational trajectories (McLaren, 2002), with Spoonley (2015) showing how New Zealand's tertiary structures channel migrants towards shorter, employment-focused programmes. Even Even supportive policy measures often become "technologies of power", enforcing compliance and excluding those who fail to meet normative expectations (Foucault, 1977). By approaching refugee policy through this Foucauldian lens, we can understand how power relations shape the subjectivities of RBS, showing how broader societal norms and discourses govern their opportunities and experiences in the educational landscape. These studies thus pinpoint the overarching authority of state power on the opportunities and social identities of refugees, which limits their socio-cultural agency in the host country.

3.6.4 Educational Policies and Refugee Integration in New Zealand

In New Zealand, educational policies play a crucial role in integrating and successfully settling relocated refugees. Some policy declarations include skills training and continuous learning to help relocated refugees obtain jobs (INZ, 2018). English-

language acquisition is essential for refugees to participate in education and daily life (INZ, 2017). English proficiency is imperative to achievement across the curriculum, according to the 2007 New Zealand Curriculum (MoE, 2007). Students must receive, process and present information in English in all study areas except foreign languages.

The Statement of National Education and Learning Priorities (NELP) and the Tertiary Education Strategy (TES), both issued under the Education and Training Act 2020, offer barrier-free education, non-discrimination, and respect of students' identities, language and culture (MoE, 2020b). The connected publications use economically driven, business-oriented societal paradigms; investment, products, and government monitoring of delivery and services should thus be treated with caution. As established earlier in this thesis New Zealand's tertiary education system experienced significant neoliberal reforms during the 1980s (Streitwieser et al., 2019; WeiQian, 2019). These reforms turned schools into companies, generating competition in which "other goals of education, such as education for citizenship, have been all but abandoned or assigned to the margins" (Crawshaw, 2015, p. 8). These analyses demonstrate how market-driven education policies function as mechanisms of governance that prioritise economic productivity over social equity. By critically examining the discourse that legitimises such policies, it becomes clear that an overemphasis on economic imperatives risks marginalising RBS and undermining broader educational goals, such as inclusion, democratic participation, and social justice.

Although New Zealand's recent educational initiatives, like the NELP and TES, underscore the commitment to barrier-free education and the preservation of students' identities, the impact of neoliberal paradigms raises concerns. The historical transformation of education into a competitive marketplace could potentially overshadow the broader societal and integrative goals of education for RBS. The above studies explore the contradictory position of New Zealand in maintaining mobility in the global market while sustaining refugee programmes. The shift towards a competitive, market-driven structure may overlook the significance of inclusivity and broader social goals. This is evident in structural reforms, such as Tomorrow's Schools (Taskforce to Review Education Administration, 1988), which introduced competitive funding models that concentrated RBS in lower-decile schools with limited resources (Kennedy & Dewar, 1997). Harvey et al. (2014) document how such schools often rely on under-trained paraprofessionals despite their student's needs being more complex. Furthermore, May and Sleeter (2010) and Wylie and Bonne (2016) critique how policy

frameworks reinforce deficit views by linking success to conformity. McMaster (2013), meanwhile, observes that schools overlook refugee students' prior knowledge when progress is narrowly measured through English acquisition. Taken together, these findings illustrate how neoliberal restructuring operates as a technology of governance that redistributes disadvantage while appearing to be administratively neutral.

As demonstrated above, the reasoning of government (when concerned with the production of truth in which the exercise of power is judged reasonable) may be explored and presented by employing governmentality as a conceptual tool. Fimyar's (2008) study exemplifies a new area of governmentality studies that investigates how education reform narratives and practices at the government level get internalised and institutionalised at the self level. In general, governmentality establishes certain rules (norms) that manage their conduct and thereby normalise RBS' behaviour (Yilmaz, 2022). These perspectives illustrate how governmentality functions as a mechanism for regulating RBS, guiding how they internalise societal norms and adapt to institutional expectations. This power dynamic shapes not only their educational experiences but also their sense of self, as educational policies and practices embed certain behaviours, roles and identities, reinforcing or challenging their position within broader social and political structures.

The interplay between global discourses, nation-state responses, and the internalisation of educational reforms underlines the multifaceted nature of governmentality in shaping educational landscapes. As I navigated these dynamics, it became imperative to understand how power, policy, and practice intersect in the realm of education. Importantly, these tensions also extend to how belonging itself is conceptualised within policy discourse: Kymlicka (2015) and Eastmond (2011) caution that economic framings of belonging often overshadow alternative socio-cultural forms of connection. Guo et al. (2019) and Robleda (2020), meanwhile, argue that inclusion policies must be evaluated not only for what they enable but also for what they marginalise and exclude. This reframing positions inclusion as a regulatory practice that shapes which forms of identity and participation are recognised as legitimate.

3.7 Intersectional Challenges in Refugee Education

This section explores how intersectional challenges, comprising various factors ranging from regional diversity to the unique challenges faced by RBS, impact access to and the

quality of education. In the evolving discourse on education and its equitable distribution, a spotlight on diversity and social justice offers pivotal insights.

The plight of RBS in adapting to their host country's educational system is set within a kaleidoscope of social inequities and a lack of socio-cultural policies for the fair treatment of refugees. The inability to adapt to a foreign language, often deemed an academic failure, hinders their academic career and personal growth. With the increase in refugee traffic to European countries from 2014 to 2016, many European nations faced multiple challenges in the development and implementation of policies for refugees to provide them with equal facilities. These challenges include legal limitations, administrative barriers, and a lack of adequate socio-cultural environments for the refugees to adapt well to the host nation's culture while also retaining their own social identity (Koehler & Schneider, 2019; Lambrechts, 2020). For example, the absence of counselling sessions and language coaching for RBS in Germany highlights the lack of implementation of educational policies for RBS (Altınkalp et al., 2022). This problem heightened during 2015 as refugees struggled to navigate the socio-political contexts of the host nations. In Turkey, educational policies call for an equal and fair system for all students irrespective of their background (Crul et al., 2019). However, the implementation of these policies was uneven because approximately half the population of RBS are not registered at educational institutions. Enrolled RBS are often not given proper education as they attend temporary academic institutions that fail to cover the whole curriculum (Crul et al., 2019). Linguistic, cultural and economic diversity also affect RBS' education in the Asia-Pacific region, where they encounter difficulties in access, quality, relevance and equity (Bhowmik & Kennedy, 2016). Kao and Thompson (2003) found ethnic and immigrant schooling inequalities in the United States, too. However, the Swedish state incorporates inclusive policies for RBS, providing them equal access to higher education and additional training to achieve academic excellence (Koehler & Schneider, 2019). These studies highlight the gap between refugee education policies and their implementation, pointing to broader power dynamics. The researchers emphasise the need for effective, inclusive policies that not only exist on paper but are also properly executed to empower RBS.

Analysing the educational framework in New Zealand, Smith et al. (2016) undertook a comprehensive analysis of Rohingya refugees living in the country, emphasising the unique diversity and social justice issues they face. For Rohingya RBS in New Zealand, linguistic barriers, unfamiliar educational systems, and the need for trauma-informed

pedagogies are paramount concerns. As New Zealand continues its journey towards being a truly diverse and inclusive nation, the narratives and needs of resettled Rohingya must find a central place in educational discourse and policy development.

The aforementioned studies explore the plight of refugees in attaining education in different socio-cultural settings. The lack of policy implementation, foreign sociocultural systems, and unfamiliar educational spaces limit opportunities for refugees to achieve excellence in academic settings in host countries. These studies collectively highlight the need for scrutiny of social barriers so that refugees can have equal access to opportunities despite any regional barriers.

3.8 Related Recommendations for Overcoming Obstacles to Refugee Education

The educational journey of refugee children, frequently marked by obstacles, has been scrutinised in numerous studies with the intent to propose actionable solutions and recommendations. This subsection reviews crucial insights from the literature, focusing on leadership, policy and holistic approaches to refugee education.

Arar et al. (2022) conducted an international review on how school leaders and government policies specifically address the needs of refugee students in the primary and secondary sectors. The authors proposed inclusive and egalitarian refugee education leadership and policy to enable all students to flourish. Leadership in creating refugee student-friendly laws was also stressed (Arar et al., 2022).

Several African citizen movements focus on social justice, collective rights, and democratic participation. According to de Heredia (2022), elevating African citizens, movements, and community voices and perspectives can help us find ethical and practical solutions to Africa's complex ongoing problems. Mothers interviewed for the study suggested language and career lessons could help their children get jobs. Ramsay and Baker (2019) recommended mentoring, targeted monetary aid, and culturally sensitive instruction to help these youngsters flourish. As noted above, Leo (2021a) found that community colleges provide first-generation immigrants and refugees with monetary assistance, community links, and culturally sensitive support.

This subsection underscores the urgent need for inclusivity, cultural sensitivity, and collaboration in shaping the educational experiences of refugee children. Importantly,

these recommendations must also be understood within broader theoretical frameworks that account for how refugee subjectivities are shaped under conditions of uncertainty and governance. Giddens' (1991) concept of life politics illuminates how identity negotiation under conditions of risk becomes a central feature of late modernity. Ticktin (2011) subsequently extended this through analysis of how humanitarian regimes produce the "slow death" of ambition through temporal suspension. Adams et al. (2009), meanwhile, theorised anticipatory governance as the pre-emptive shaping of behaviour towards expected institutional evaluations. Achieving this requires a complex interplay of policy, leadership, and community involvement, striving towards an educational framework that caters to the unique needs of these students.

3.9 RBS' Negotiations within Education Systems

This section explores the strategies and experiences of RBS as they navigate the educational landscapes in their countries of resettlement. The pivotal negotiation dimensions of RBS that this thesis elaborates on include pre-migration and transitional country circumstances, education-associated constraints, transnational viewpoints, institutional backing, family and community input, varied schooling methodologies, experiences of othering and racialisation, the accumulation of social and cultural capital, language barriers and adaptations, and personal strategies in day-to-day academic activities. The subsections below investigate pertinent literature for each of these dimensions, grounding them within the lived experiences of Rohingya RBS in New Zealand.

3.9.1 Pre-migration or Transitional Country Circumstances

Pre-migration situations and experiences play a pivotal role in shaping the educational futures of refugees, and some scholars worry about the population's unaddressed educational demands in transitional countries. Letchamanan (2013) described the case of Malaysia, a "temporary" resettling location for Rohingya refugees, where some have resided for more than two decades but without access to mainstream formal education. She proposed that UNHCR could collaborate with civil society to design a strategy promoting education for Rohingya in Malaysia. Dryden-Peterson's (2016), meanwhile, work highlighted the importance of understanding the pre-resettlement educational experiences of refugees, emphasising such contexts can significantly direct their subsequent educational paths in countries of resettlement. Dryden-Peterson's study is important for understanding how Rohingya RBS negotiate their education in

New Zealand and other countries of resettlement. The situation of Rohingya refugees in Malaysia serves as a stark reminder of the educational hurdles many RBS face before resettlement. Addressing these challenges can pave the way for smoother educational transitions in the countries of eventual resettlement. The gaps in education when refugees settle in a new country need to be addressed to provide better learning opportunities.

3.9.2 Navigating Educational Systems

This subsection focuses on the multifaceted challenges the education system presents for RBS, ranging from linguistic barriers to monetary constraints. Grounding this exploration in Foucault's work acknowledges his critiques of institutions, including those in education, as sites of power and domination. While Foucault's scepticism towards institutions remains a critical lens through which these encounters are evaluated, it is equally important to consider instances where these institutions might offer RBS empowerment and support or even subvert the dominant power structures.

Reinforcing the intricate issues of resettlement, studies have demonstrated that refugees' most typical educational-related experiences are linguistic, financial, academic placement, and home-school collaboration issues. Bačáková and Closs (2013) found poor instruction and professional growth for two Myanmar RBS in the Czech Republic. The diverse educational challenges RBS face underscore the complex role support systems play in their navigation of subjugation and self-formation.

Family and community advice are pivotal in guiding individuals through educational and social landscapes, especially when cultural nuances come into play. Notably, cultural intricacies, such as gender role norms, familial obligations, and educational perceptions, shape the advice given to young people. Vertovec (2009) underscored the transnational networks and connections shaping migrant and refugee experiences, especially regarding social and educational navigation. Families, rooted in their cultural origins, are often impacted by these transnational ties, providing advice that bridges their homeland and the country of resettlement. The resilience and success of Mexican American women, as Espino (2016) highlighted, underscores the powerful role of family and community advice. Their ability to "resist with accommodation" showcases the delicate balance of holding onto cultural roots while adapting to new educational environments.

3.9.3 Modes of Schooling and Institutional Support

Researchers have analysed the modes of schooling (e.g., the types of education, methodologies and curricula) and the opportunities and support RBS enjoy in resettlement countries. Matthews (2008) suggested that schools work with parents, the community, and health and education agencies to help young African and Middle Eastern refugees in Australia with schooling and resettlement. Australian and North American polytechnic and university students benefit from dialogue and reflexive practices involving adult learners' life experiences. These practices enhance class discussions. RBS are usually marginalised in a precarious economy without adequate educational and social help. Studying Australian RBS, Baker and Irwin (2021) found multiple factors affecting their pathways into, through, and out of post-secondary education. They argue for subtle and adaptable learning and teaching strategies to help continue transitional activities and programmes that positively contribute and adapt to non-traditional students like refugees.

RBS must be respected culturally and given equal power as local students. McGinnis (2009) found that immigrant students are often excluded and discriminated against in schools, and their cultural values and beliefs are weakened. Teachers should leverage immigrant youths' social, religious, cultural and historical journeys to support them better in schools. McGinnis recommends that teachers encourage critical thinking so children can ask and answer questions about moving from adolescence to adulthood and become responsible and complete individuals. However, McGinnis (2009) provides a cautionary critique of how these teacher-student relationships can function in practice and describes some as "paternalistic and manipulative" (p. 78), in stark contrast with the positive familial and community guidance discussed earlier. These perspectives focus on the importance of educational approaches that empower RBS by recognising and valuing their cultural identities and lived experiences, while fostering critical thinking and autonomy, thereby challenging and reshaping the power dynamics within educational systems.

This cumulative research underscores the need for evolving educational methods and institutional commitments tailored to RBS' unique needs. Overall, the studies highlight the urgent need to foster more inclusive, culturally sensitive, and empowering educational environments to support RBS effectively. However, it is also essential to approach these recommendations critically. As we champion inclusivity and

empowerment, it is crucial to remain wary of unintentional power impositions and to continually question the pedagogical methodologies underlying such dynamics.

3.10 Foucauldian Analysis of the Negotiation of Subjectivity Literature within Educational Systems

A Foucauldian analysis of the literature on RBS' subjectivity negotiations within educational systems underscores the inherent power dynamics that shape their experiences. Foucault's (1982) concept of subjectivity is central to understanding how RBS navigate educational landscapes, balancing being "subject to" institutional authority and exerting agency for "self-formation". The negotiations described by Letchamanan (2013) and Dryden-Peterson (2016) highlight how pre-migration experiences, such as the lack of access to formal education in transitional countries like Malaysia, serve as significant constraints on RBS' ability to adapt and succeed in resettlement education systems. These experiences are shaped by discursive regimes of power that govern how RBS can actively participate in their education in host countries.

Modes of schooling and institutional support, examined by Matthews (2008) and Baker and Irwin (2021), further show how institutional practices may offer empowerment opportunities while simultaneously reinforcing mechanisms of control. As we saw above, McGinnis (2009) critically described the relationships between institutions and immigrant students as "paternalistic and manipulative" (p. 78), emphasising the double-edged nature of institutional interventions. Thus, RBS' negotiations within education are characterised by both subjugation to institutional norms and active efforts to shape their own subjectivities in ways that align with their cultural identities and aspirations.

3.10.1 Difficulties Faced by Muslim RBS

Given the Rohingya crisis and my research positionality, it is particularly pertinent to focus here on the specific experiences and difficulties of Muslim RBS. Negotiating one's subjectivity in resettlement countries, especially for Muslim RBS, can be challenging. This is because of the changes in global perspectives after the attack on the Twin Towers in New York on 11 September 2001, commonly known as 9/11. This event, in many Western countries, stamped Muslim youth with an "other" label, embodying negative and destructive images. The historical backdrop, coupled with the legacies of pivotal world events and media portrayals, deeply imprints the self-perception and external experiences of Muslim RBS (Bonet, 2017). Jaffe-Walter (2013)

made a similar observation regarding secondary-level Muslim students in Denmark. Acknowledging these multifaceted challenges is imperative to truly understand their lived experiences and is a necessary step towards creating genuinely inclusive and understanding environments.

A Foucauldian analysis of the negotiation and subjectification literature helps us to understand how Muslim RBS navigate resettlement, which involves complex interactions between external socio-political forces and personal identity formation. Following the events of 9/11, Muslim RBS have faced increased scrutiny and stereotyping, often being labelled as "other" due to pervasive global perceptions (Bonet, 2017). This process of othering exemplifies Foucault's (1982a) concept of subjectification, where individuals are both shaped by and resist the identities imposed upon them by external forces.

3.10.2 Racialisation of RBS

Racialisation refers to the process of attributing racial identities to a particular group of individuals. The intersection of race and refugee status forms a vital part of my research context, providing a deeper understanding of the multifaceted challenges faced by RBS of colour and drawing parallels or contrasting with the experiences of other refugee groups. For example, RBS of colour may be more vulnerable in relocation countries. Knight (2014) studied people of colour in the United States and male Latino student disclosures of coping techniques. Stebleton (2012) found that Black sub-Saharan African immigrant college students in the United States endured racism and prejudice due to their non-native status. These young adults transition to a workforce with significant connections to colonialism and slavery. Stebleton (2012) noted these immigrants try to balance their new American lifestyles with family ties back home. The experiences of racialised RBS in resettlement countries are thus intertwined with historical narratives of colonialism, demanding a nuanced understanding and approach to their integration and support.

3.10.3 Social and Cultural Capital

The literature has discussed Bourdeau's (1984) concepts of social and cultural capital. Drawing upon Foucault's insights on power relations and institutions, these forms of capital are interpreted as societal mechanisms of power and control. As refugees accrue social (e.g., networks) and cultural capital (e.g., education), they navigate the intricate

webs of institutional power structures shaping their lived experiences in resettlement contexts.

Enriquez (2011) explored how immigrant youth organise and use social capital to succeed in school. Her research found that relatives, classmates and teachers help these young adults emotionally and financially. By perceiving their social network as a "family", they created their own collective empowerment strategy. Thapar-Bjorkert and Sanghera (2010), meanwhile, found that Pakistani Muslims generate social capital within families despite prejudice and marginalisation; family is "a dialectical process of negotiation, compliance, and transformation" (p. 261). Arce (2009) identified "funds of knowledge" and "cultural founts" where "strengths and desires" enabling the family to pursue education are passed down. Arce (2009, p. 55) relates the story of her daughter coming to oppose "imperialist wars, racism, violence against the poor, and violence toward females" after learning about her Mexican/Chicano ancestors' social struggles.

Moran (2016) found a link between ethnicity and young Sudanese students' social and cultural capital in Brisbane, Australia. The students used hip-hop music to hybridise their identities, allowing them to adapt to a multicultural society while also resisting dominant cultural pressures. Similarly, Zell's (2014) study showed that immigrant students convert navigational and social capital into academic capital via educational attainment by sharing institutional resources with other students and building peer networks that include teachers. Zell recommended integrating life experiences, setting realistic goals, and maximising personal strengths. These studies illustrate how culture, identity, and social capital interplay in shaping immigrant and RBS' educational experiences. By leveraging cultural heritage, creative expression, and peer networks, students navigate academic and social challenges, transforming their experiences into valuable educational capital.

From a Foucauldian perspective, social and cultural capital can be understood as both tools for empowerment and mechanisms of power and control. These dynamics illustrate how the accumulation of social and cultural capital by RBS functions within a broader network of Foucauldian power relations, facilitating negotiation while subjecting them to normative standards of conduct. More specifically, these power relations are mediated through language as a key site of regulation. Martin Rojo (2018) conceptualises linguistic governmentality as the silent policing of language through market logics, wherein English proficiency operates as a disciplinary mechanism. Piller

(2006) and Leung and Creese (2010) further demonstrate how classrooms function as sites of linguistic regulation and gatekeeping, while Higgins and Norton (2010) show how learner identities are shaped by perceived value within classroom hierarchies. Taken together, these perspectives conceptualise how language operates not merely as a skill but as a technology of power that disciplines, stratifies, and produces particular kinds of learner subjectivities.

3.10.4 RBS Negotiating the Self in Their Daily Academic Lives

Drawing on Foucault's (1988) notion of "technologies of the self", that individuals shape their own subjectivities through engagement with power structures, navigating the academic environment becomes a space where underprivileged students engage in self-practices to negotiate and define their identities. The dynamics of this environment, embedded within institutional structures and societal norms, can greatly enrich their daily experiences and strategies to negotiate these challenges.

Smith et al. (2016) found that poor, working-class, and immigrant students in New Zealand higher education sometimes face campus stigma and discrimination from peers, faculties and staff. Their findings implied that their peers and professors excluded these youth from numerous daily academic and social events because they could not afford them. The researchers called these exclusionary practices "microaggressions" and found students' emotional response was to hide so others did not feel uncomfortable, pity them, or both. For Smith et al. (2016), this is evidence of RBS' internal fight between internal ambivalence and microaggression negotiations. This research underscores the importance of addressing microaggressions and exclusionary practices in educational settings, which contribute to the internalisation of marginalisation among RBS. This underscores the need for policies that not only address these systemic issues but also challenge the power dynamics at play, ensuring more inclusive and supportive educational environments in New Zealand.

According to Smith et al. (2016), "Environmental cues and indirect social communications were often the indicators of a social class hierarchy in which participants felt that they were located below others" (p. 145). This creates a tension between fitting in ("disguising") and being authentic ("coming out") (p. 145). For Muslim RBS, these strategies underscore the complex negotiations they undertake to balance acceptance within resettlement contexts with the preservation of their cultural

identity, thereby actively engaging in the processes of subjectification and self-formation.

3.10.5 Nature of Governmentality versus Agency and Resistance

This subsection focuses on the nexus between governmentality and agency, exploring how refugees manoeuvre through political structures while asserting resistance and maintaining their subjectivity. Hardy (2003) asserted that refugees contest refugee-status power dynamics through language, story and culture. Lippert (1999), meanwhile, argued that the refugee system is a form of governmentality with many restrictions. Governmentality provides a lens through which the practices and mechanisms of control and management of refugee populations can be examined. This analytic framework is particularly employed to scrutinise the post-World War II period, when the modern refugee regime, including the 1951 Refugee Convention (UNHCR, 1996), came into existence. Lippert (1999) showed how emergent refugee policies and practices were shaped by, and in turn shaped, broader political and societal dynamics.

McPherson (2010) used Foucault's framework to explore how integrationism governs immigrant subjectivities. The author argued that individuals resist the conventional integrationist narrative by emphasising their agency and autonomy in integration. Political dissent and contestation undercut integrationism's normalisation and empowers refugees (McPherson, 2010). Kohl (2020), meanwhile, used Foucault's (1972) and Goffman's (1961) theories to study power relations in a Danish asylum seeker project. She studied activation programmes that teach language, help asylum seekers find jobs, and integrate them into Danish society. The study also discussed how power is used in the project, underlining the complicated and contested power relationships between the asylum seekers and programme staff. These studies elaborate on the importance of understanding power dynamics in refugee integration, which can guide the development of educational practices and policies that empower refugees and challenge the normalisation of restrictive integrationist narratives within host country educational systems.

Young refugees can have high educational goals for several reasons. Mastery of certain skills and future hopes are among the elements predicting school success (Lynnebakke & Pastoor, 2020). High aspirations may boost young refugees' schooling and well-being. Lynnebakke and Pastoor (2020) used semistructured interviews in three Norwegian schools to study immigrant youths' high expectational expectations. Primary

(Levels 1 to 7) and lower secondary (Levels 8 to 10) refugee students participated in the study. The authors found that refugee aspirations are not static but are reinforced through a comparative process. By comparing their current educational hurdles against the lack of opportunity in their home countries and the success of settled peers, refugees students constructed a resilient academic identity that justified their high expectations.

Chao (2019) examined Bhutanese refugee children's resilience in the United States and found that the trauma of relocation serves as both a hurdle and a catalyst for resilience. Previously, Chase (2009) had discussed unaccompanied minors' asylum applications in the United Kingdom and how, despite vulnerability and marginalisation, they actively express their autonomy and speak up for themselves, emphasising the importance of their agency. These studies emphasise the resilience and agency of refugee children, highlighting the need for educational policies that recognise and nurture these strengths, ultimately fostering more inclusive and empowering learning environments for RBS in countries like New Zealand.

Through case studies of refugee women in Norway, Robleda (2020) examined the nuanced and varied ways in which they navigate and resolve issues of uprooting, social exclusion, and marginalisation in their daily lives. The author also highlighted the shortcomings of state policies and practices that frequently reinforce and perpetuate marginalisation and exclusion. As discussed earlier, Lee's (2021) ethnographic study explored the complex imprint family members made on the educational aspirations of a group of diverse immigrants and refugees in New York State. It showed how the experiences of economic precarity, high-stakes examinations, and downward mobility constrain youths' capacity to realise their goals (Lee, 2021). These findings focus on the importance of developing educational policies in New Zealand that address systemic marginalisation and economic barriers, ensuring that RBS have the support and opportunities needed to achieve their aspirations.

This review of the literature on the nature of governmentality versus agency and freedom underscores that refugees, although subjected to overarching structures of power and control, are not passive recipients of their circumstances. their circumstances. More precisely, this tension between regulation and agency can be understood through Palombo's (2014) concept of biopolitical interpellation, which theorises how moral imperatives, particularly familial obligation, structure refugee subject formation, and shape how educational and career pathways are imagined and

pursued. Their resilience, aspirations and agency, further shaped by familial and community networks, challenge the dominant narratives and demand a more nuanced understanding of their experiences in integration and educational settings.

3.11 New Zealand's Refugee Resettlement and Education Context

Though limited in earlier years, the research on refugee resettlement in New Zealand has recently expanded into diverse resettlement domains, especially focusing on education and its associated challenges. Marlowe et al. (2014) and Pahud et al. (2009) examined the educational landscape, noting the accessibility of basic and secondary schooling for refugees in New Zealand as an outcome of the nation's educational policies. On a different note, Strauss and Smedley (2009) highlighted that secondary schools regularly encounter funding shortages, pinpointing financial and human resource restrictions as significant hurdles. These challenges emphasise the need for more robust and inclusive educational resettlement policies in New Zealand to ensure that RBS, particularly those from severely persecuted populations like the Rohingya, receive equitable access to quality education and necessary support services.

Rafferty et al. (2020) recently explored how ideologies and policy shortcomings impact RBS. Their study found legislative gaps and a lack of inclusion exacerbate issues for immigrant children in New Zealand, creating extra barriers to education. A lack of language-learning help can lead to academic failure and limited post-secondary possibilities for students. In their study on female refugees' access to higher education in New Zealand and Bangladesh, Anderson et al. (2020) emphasised RBS' capacity and dedication to higher education. These studies point to the urgency of developing more inclusive and supportive educational policies in New Zealand to address these gaps, particularly for severely persecuted populations, ensuring they have equitable opportunities for academic success and future mobility.

New Zealand-focused studies confirm that the nation's approach to refugees is multifaceted, particularly in education and resettlement. Policy statements aim to make learning an enabling force for refugees, emphasising English-language acquisition as a pivotal tool for integration. However, neoliberal impacts and ensuing resource constraints undermine these intentions. Within the broad resettlement spectrum, the research underscores both the opportunities and persistent gaps in policies that affect refugees, highlighting the need for a more comprehensive and inclusive approach.

3.11.1 RBS' Subject Formation and Power Dynamics

RBS' subject formation is linked with the existing institutional and societal power dynamics. The multifaceted experiences of refugee populations, particularly within the realms of education, policy, and identity formation, are deeply intertwined with broader societal, institutional and theoretical frameworks. Concepts such as state theory, structural limits, discrimination in education, and the formation of subjectivity explain how systemic structures and individual agency shape the lives and aspirations of refugees. These interconnected dimensions highlight the need to critically examine the policies, practices and discourses impacting refugee experiences and advocate for more inclusive and equitable approaches across social, educational and policy landscapes.

More specifically, Fricker's (2007) theorisation of epistemic injustice provides a useful lens to understand how power operates at the level of knowledge production. Fricker distinguishes testimonial injustice (credibility deficit) from hermeneutical injustice (lack of conceptual resources to recognise knowledge). This framework illuminates how multilingual knowledge is systematically devalued in educational settings, producing what Morrice et al. (2020) and Leo (2021a) identify as subjugated knowledges, forms of capital unrecognised within dominant regimes. This underscores how educational systems do not merely transmit knowledge but actively regulate whose knowledge is seen as legitimate, thereby shaping refugee subjectivities.

3.12 State Theory and Interdisciplinary Refugee Concerns

The interplay between state theory and interdisciplinary refugee concerns provides a rich foundation for understanding asylum and refugee issues, highlighting the implicit connections of the state that govern such discourse. State theory primarily investigates the mechanisms and implications of a state's actions and policies regarding individuals and groups within its territory, focusing on how state frameworks affect refugees and asylum processes. According to Gill (2020, p. 61), "The study of asylum and borders is never far from a study of the state itself; the 'state of the art' of asylum research is, in many ways, a reflection of the 'art of the state' in managing its margins." For example, prior to Brexit, the United Kingdom's ambition was fuelled by the assumption that Europe steers policy (Spohrer, 2011). Although not a top-down implementation model, the European Union (EU) sets the agenda and provides national policymakers with language and concepts relating to asylum and refugees (Spohrer, 2011). The EU's policy framework significantly impacts the national policies of member states, creating

a ripple effect that reaches the lives of refugees and asylum seekers. The EU has added social collaboration to economic cooperation since the late 1980s. Whether EU policy should prioritise economic or social aims and how to balance them is uncertain. The European social model addresses this challenge through economic growth and social cohesion. In this context, again before Brexit, the discourse around asylum and refugee issues within the EU and the United Kingdom became intertwined with broader economic and social policy agendas, illustrating the multidimensional nature of state theory in addressing refugee concerns (Spohrer, 2011).

3.12.1 Structural Limits

The dynamic interaction between the globalising world and the structural limits RBS face explains the disparities and opportunities they experience in their educational pursuits. Christie and Sidhu (2002) explored the political, social and economic intricacies that define these boundaries in Queensland, Australia, especially in the context of a world increasingly driven by territorial concepts. The authors found that political, social, historical and economic factors impact how much these constraints recede or strengthen. Thus, businessmen crossing borders are more likely to overcome geographical constraints than those fleeing instability. Globalisation shows how territorial notions have impacted social connections and our ideas about humanity and human rights (Christie & Sidhu, 2002). The researchers suggested addressing asylum seekers and refugee flows within this framework. Refugee and asylum seeker children need equal access to new curricula, methods and technology to participate in new economies (Christie & Sidhu, 2002).

Children in detention centres suffer if their education does not convey these new values. Christie and Sidhu (2002) argue that the Queensland curriculum should address refugee children's citizenship and diversity issues. Global civic and ethical education ought to recognise issues of interdependence (Christie & Sidhu, 2002). This study suggested that service providers and educators are required to investigate popular understandings and media conceptions of refugees to help them settle and learn. It further recommended that educational institutions and schools prioritise inclusive education for at-risk students instead of segregating them. Inclusive education values variety to make schools enjoyable for all children (Taylor & Sidhu, 2012). The plight of RBS is exacerbated by social and global elements, underscoring the need to promote equality in education and citizenship and provide them with expertise that can improve their financial situation.

3.12.2 Discrimination in Education

Institutionalised behaviours within education systems play a significant role in determining the opportunities and challenges faced by students, especially those from refugee backgrounds, thereby discriminating against them. Lester and Ander's (2014) research focused on the events and encounters of two Burundian youngsters who were considered for special education programmes. Taking a critical perspective on disability, the research illustrated the way institutionalised behaviours function to close doors for some while opening doors for others.

Paying attention to refugees and asylum seekers' daily lives may help reduce suffering and victimisation. Refugees and asylum seekers are often represented as weak and defenceless (Robleda, 2020). Robleda's (2020) research explored how Norwegian female refugees overcome structural hurdles and express their autonomy to confront the asylum-seeking process and refugee experience. Educational goals affect an individual's educational decisions and their academic and job prospects. Rodriguez (2015) had previously critiqued refugee research that "dangerously shapes pedagogic action because much of it approaches refugee students through psychological lenses that position refugees like vulnerable problems to be fixed through education and other services" (p. 112. The author encouraged researchers to analyse social science research rhetoric and its effects on lived experiences, highlighting the need for refugee student perspectives in policy debate and social science education.

How, when and why refugees become a knowledge category was also examined Rodriguez (2015). Teachers must challenge themselves as educators and scholars to hear and see beyond psychological and sociological categories and ways of grouping students, such as their immigration or political status, race and gender (Rodriguez, 2015). Educational structures restrict growth and opportunities for refugees by treating them as weak. The above studies highlight the need to redefine systemic structures to promote freedom of perspective irrespective of one's regional identity.

3.12.3 Formation of Subjectivity

The formation of subjectivity, especially in the context of young refugees, is a complex process shaped by various factors, including legislative decisions, policy shifts, and personal experiences. Young asylum seekers have recently become the subject of increased legislative, policy and research attention in the United Kingdom (Chase,

2009). Institutional accounts of refugee experiences are often reduced to a narrow temporal window, focusing almost exclusively on the period immediately surrounding the asylum application (Chase, 2009). A substantial body of research has reported the profound trauma and instability to which many refugee children and young people have been exposed to before departing their home countries, during the flight, or even after arriving in host countries (Chase, 2009). Without a holistic policy framework that considers their entire lived experiences, including pre-migration trauma, transitional instability, and post-settlement barriers, New Zealand's resettlement policies risk replicating the same oversights. Addressing these gaps is critical to developing an educational system that not only acknowledges but actively mitigates the structural inequalities faced by severely persecuted populations like the Rohingya.

Exploring refugees' experiences in host countries, Chao (2019) wrote extensively on Bhutanese refugees and US immigrant and refugee youth resettlement. The author advocated the cultural model of assimilation and adaptability, which promotes preferential cultural assimilation of immigrant and refugee students while preserving their culture and traditions. The cultural paradigm of integration and adaptation targets first- and second-generation refugee adolescents. However, it does not explain how first-generation immigrant teenagers can adapt to mainstream culture. Chao (2019) emphasised that this model, although supportive of cultural preservation, lacks a comprehensive explanation of the adaptation processes for first-generation immigrants. The study recommended a more holistic approach to refugee adolescents' personal experiences and identification with their social, cultural and sociohistorical contexts.

The journey of identity formation for RBS illustrates the dynamic interplay of integration, cultural preservation, and individual agency. individual agency. These processes must be understood in relation to how aspiration itself is structured and constrained. Schneider (2018) and Appadurai (2004) challenge neoliberal framings of aspiration as individualised success, foregrounding collective and community-based orientations. Canagarajah (2013) critiques the "self-improving subject" discourse, arguing it obscures the uneven terrain of language acquisition, while Berlant (2011) theorises "cruel optimism" as the condition where aspirational objects become obstacles to flourishing. Taken together, these perspectives highlight how aspirations are shaped by structural inequalities, even as they appear to offer pathways of possibility. This review underscores the need to move beyond a simplistic deficit-driven approach to

emphasise the richness of refugee experiences and the multifaceted processes through which their identities evolve in new sociocultural environments.

3.13 Call for Inclusive and Ethical Education

From a Foucauldian perspective, educators and policymakers are tasked with fostering inclusive environments and ethical aspects of education while navigating challenges faced by RBS. This highlights the need for tailored approaches considering refugees' unique experiences and aspirations within broader societal and institutional contexts.

3.13.1 Inclusive Education

Existing research calls attention to the intertwined nature of the technologies of power used to manage refugees and asylum seekers and the moral responsibility exercised by professionals working in the larger field of settlement and ensuring their integration. A focus on students' difficulties, above all other issues, restricts teachers' imaginative agency to re-problematise educational disadvantage from the perspective of socio-structural constraints like poverty and institutional racism (Sidhu, 2016). Acquiring intellectual and ontological knowledge and understanding of colonial tools of power in regulating people outside the moral code is a critical step. Overall, school leaders and principals, particularly those in the Catholic education sector (Sidhu, 2016), are aware of the polarising political discourses that have sought to frame refugees' desire for protection as a danger to citizens' security. In Australia, they recognise that certain segments of society represented in their schools are not faring well (Sidhu, 2016). Despite this awareness, structural barriers like immigration policies and systemic racism persist, limiting RBS' opportunities. Effective resettlement policies in New Zealand must therefore go beyond inclusion to address these deeper institutional inequities, especially for severely persecuted groups.

Although the complexities of political discourse and societal perspectives pose challenges, educational leaders remain attuned to these dynamics. Their cognisance of the broader societal implications of RBS offers hope for more inclusive and holistic educational environments for refugees.

3.13.2 Ethical Education

Exploring the dimensions of ethical education, de Heredia's (2022) research presents narratives of ethical agency as portrayed by professionals pivotal to the settlement of

humanitarian entrants (refugees), all within a Foucauldian framework. De Heredia's study analysed the ethical agency of three professional groups responsible for resettling refugees. Asylum seekers and refugees entering Europe to flee conflict, persecution, and acute economic distress have drawn much journalistic, political, and intellectual criticism (de Heredia, 2022). Without employment rights, bridging-visa asylum seekers live in poverty and rely on community organisations for state aid (de Heredia, 2022). Deportation and family separation adds further stress on asylum seekers. Foucault's (1984) concept of "the care of the self" can empower educators and citizens to recognise and apply ethical-political options to a seemingly endless cycle of crises (de Heredia, 2022). Resettling is challenging for many refugees, especially children. Researchers and government agencies have documented refugee adults' special needs and features, but little is known about refugee children's daily interactions and experiences (Lester & Anders, 2014). De Heredia's (2022) findings highlight the urgent need for ethical, policy-driven approaches to refugee resettlement, particularly for children. In shaping New Zealand's educational policies for severely persecuted groups, integrating ethical-political frameworks can help create more just and sustainable resettlement practices.

This section has discussed how external forces and internal aspirations shape refugees' educational experiences. Central to this section is the interplay between educational structures and the ethical considerations that dictate the schooling of refugees. Through a Foucauldian lens, I have analysed the power dynamics that manifest in policy decisions and everyday classroom practices. The section aimed to highlight the need for a more tailored educational approach that understands and responds to the distinct challenges refugees face, anchoring this discussion within the broader context of the thesis.

3.14 Conclusion

In the existing literature, refugees are often portrayed as passively received subjects of host nations, where the socio-cultural and economic challenges reshape their narratives. Often represented as the recipients of cultural disparities and xenophobia, refugees are also perceived as burdens to the socio-economic stability of their host nations. These challenges overlook the plight of refugees and their desire for sociocultural integration and economic prosperity. This review has focused on the intricacies attached to the

experiences of refugees, and their potential to redefine themselves as active agents of empowerment.

This comprehensive review of literature pertaining to RBS in education underscores a series of notable gaps warranting academic inquiry. First, research into the educational resettlement of refugees is a field of interest among researchers across the globe, one that has provided in-depth analyses of specific aspects, such as integration, language acquisition, and the psychological ramifications of displacement. However, only a small proportion of this body of knowledge has so far been concerned with the processes of subjectivity formation within educational discourses, and how RBS negotiate and internalise these discourses in their identity formation.

Secondly, the existing research shows an overrepresentation of studies from North America, followed by Europe, and then the Asia-Pacific region, notably Australia. New Zealand, despite being a significant resettlement nation, remains vastly underrepresented in the academic landscape.

Thirdly, the theoretical frameworks employed in RBS research predominantly veer away from Foucauldian paradigms. Although several studies have examined the dynamics of displacement, assimilation and integration, there exists a paucity of research employing Foucauldian theories, particularly those centred around power and discourse.

Fourthly, while a variety of research on RBS from diverse countries of origin and ethnicity exists, studies focusing on Burmese Rohingya refugees remain scarce. This gap is alarming, given the unique historical and socio-political contexts from which Rohingya refugees emerge.

Finally, and most strikingly, there is a lack of research synthesising the variables of the Rohingya community resettling in New Zealand with a specific lens on Rohingya RBS' negotiations and subjectivity formation within the educational sphere.

Considering the aforementioned gaps and recognising the particular importance of education in the Rohingya community (see Chapter 2), I developed the following research question:

How do Rohingya refugee-background students (RBS) negotiate, resist and shape neoliberal discourses in New Zealand in pursuing their educational aspirations?

This question was supported by two subquestions:

3. What are the educational aspirations of Rohingya RBS in the context of policy discourses in New Zealand?
4. How are Rohingya RBS' educational subjectivities co-constructed through the interplay of education policies, education actors, and these students' agency?

Central to this exploration were the educational aspirations of Rohingya RBS in New Zealand. The review further probed the way neoliberal education discourses sculpt the subjectivities of these students and the challenges they encounter in their academic journeys. Through this approach, I aimed to enrich the academic conversation by bridging the identified gaps and highlighting a hitherto underexplored community within a specific geosocial context. By anchoring the research in both the Foucauldian paradigm and the specificities of the Rohingya experience, this research endeavours to contribute a fresh, multidimensional perspective on the existing body of knowledge.

Chapter 4 Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This research investigates how the subjectivities of Rohingya refugee-background students (RBS) are discursively constructed within and through the neoliberal Aotearoa New Zealand (hereafter New Zealand) education system. The goal of this study was to understand how these students assert their independence and construct their own subjectivities within the neoliberal education framework. This dual focus allowed for a comprehensive examination of the dynamics between the imposed educational discourses and the lived experiences and responses of the RBS. My analysis, guided by Foucault's theoretical constructs of power, knowledge, and discourse, focused on the complex interactions through which students negotiate their subjectivities. It also explores how these interactions are constituted in the development of RBS' subjectivities with the educational landscape.

This chapter begins by introducing Foucauldian discourse analysis (FDA), a methodological approach grounded in the philosophy of Michel Foucault (1972, 1980). This approach serves as an analytic tool to explore power-knowledge relationships and subjectivities within discourses (Arribus-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2017). In the following sections, I provide an account of the planning and execution of the empirical components of this research. The chapter describes the study's methods of data collection and analysis and how they are driven by critical and contemplative attempts to account for power and discourse. The analytic approach applied FDA of written sources, including key New Zealand policy documents, such as the Refugee Handbook for Schools (MoE, 2016), along with participant observation and interviews. The participants, selected through purposive and snowball sampling, consisted of Rohingya RBS as well as the refugee coordinators and teachers who supported them in academic institutions (Bryman, 2012). The ethnographic element of the data collection played a pivotal role in enriching our understanding of the experiences of RBS. This approach, involving classroom observation and in-depth interviews, allows for a comprehensive and nuanced exploration of their educational journeys within the context of New Zealand's educational system. The ethnographic methods used and their implication are further described in subsequent sections.

4.2 Reasons for Using Foucauldian Theories and FDA

This thesis's focus on Foucauldian theories of discourse, power, and knowledge had a threefold rationale. First, this focus helped to identify what is constituted as normalised, thinkable and sayable about RBS and how such notions may be construed. Foucault's theoretical lens provided a basis for examining dominant policy discourses, how such discourses construct RBS' experiences; and how Rohingya RBS negotiate and even resist these discourses. Secondly, I explored "subjugated knowledge", a term Foucault (1980, p. 81) used to describe forms of knowledge that are marginalised or excluded from mainstream discourses as formulated through neoliberal educational policy and practices. My analysis of the mechanisms and effects of such subjugation was performed without any assumptions as to the existence of an underlying truth.

To interpret both the mechanisms and effects of this subjugation, I have compared explicit statements and discursive patterns, and eventually discursive practices, within educational policies and student narratives. The comparative analysis of interview data and policy documents provided a basis for identifying patterns and inferring how educational policies, particularly those related to English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision, streaming, and pastoral support, are interpreted by educators in ways that subtly marginalise RBS. For example, policy documents often frame "integration" as a rapid and linear process, while interviews indicated that educators expected students to demonstrate quick linguistic and academic adjustment, regardless of their prior schooling disruptions. This alignment between policy language and educator expectations was analysed as a discursive reinforcement of neoliberal ideals of "self-sufficiency". One participant commented that, "I need to do well so that I'm not a problem here in this country" (Anas, Interview 1), was selected to denote how internalised discourses of productivity and individual responsibility operate as mechanisms of power.

FDA is a tool for understanding how our social interactions are entangled with social, political, and cultural contexts, impacting how we come to know and speak about ourselves. According to Hall (1997, p. 44), Foucault argued that "discourse never consists of one statement, one text, one action or one source; [rather,] the same discourse … will appear across a range of texts, and as forms of conduct, at a number of different institutional sites within society". Discourse, in turn, gives rise to certain "regimes of truth", which have been discussed in previous chapters. In the case of the

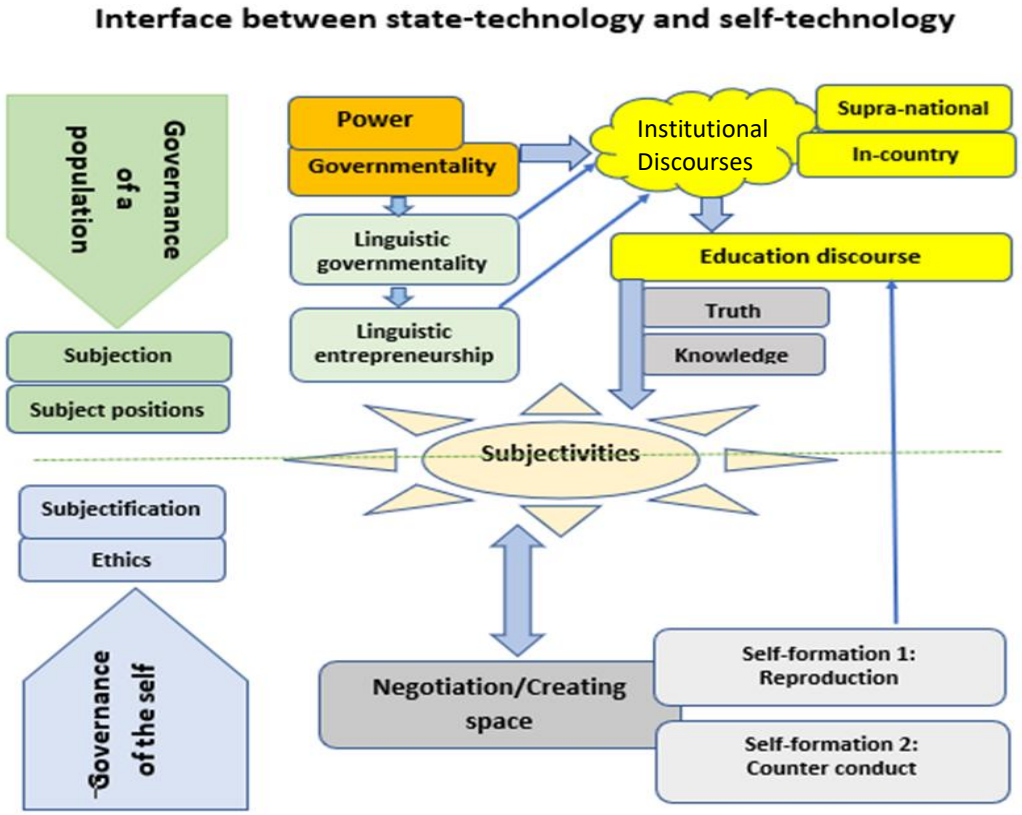
education of resettled RBS, discourse analysis identifies a variety of what Foucault calls "enunciative modalities", which identify objects of knowledge and establish specific meanings. These enunciative modalities refer to the ways statements are produced within a discourse, considering factors such as who speaks, under what conditions, and for what purpose. They examine how knowledge and meaning are authorised, legitimised and positioned within specific social contexts, exhibiting the power dynamics of discourse (Foucault, 1972).

Foucault sees discourse as encompassing more than just language; it refers to a set of relations that produce meaningful statements and allows certain things to be said, while excluding others. It operates within a social context with a corpus of knowledge and significance. Discourse has a material effect, establishing practices that meticulously construct the truths about which they speak, determining what counts in terms of what can be said and what remains unsaid.

Figure 4.1 represents a Foucauldian model of subjectivity. Governmentality deals with the "rationalities and technologies of governing in modern societies" (Dean, 2017, p. 1). I used this concept to explain the "agonistic" relation between two forms of governance: (1) "governance of the population" and (2) "governance of the self" (Ettlinger, 2011, p. 540), which enables an understanding of the multiple subjectivities of the research participants.

Figure 4.1

Foucauldian Model of Subjectivity



Note. Adapted from Ettlinger (2011) and Martin Rojo (2018).

4.3 Data Generation

This section describes how data were sourced and generated for this study. In line with the purpose of this research, data were generated from the following five sources to form a body of discourses through which to conduct FDA: (1) observations of participant Rohingya RBS (2) interviews with participant Rohingya RBS, (3) interviews with teaching staff (4) interviews with refugee coordinators, and (5) analysis of relevant government policy documents.

4.4 Participant Selection

Participants were selected purposively. At the time of data collection in 2019, around 50 Rohingya families lived in Auckland. These families included around 25 young adults between the ages of 16 and 25 (A. Hossain, personal communication, 20 April 2019). This age category was selected as representative of a transitionary period for youth between secondary school and either tertiary education or employment.

For convenience and manageability, one part of the major metropolitan area of Auckland, New Zealand, was selected as the focal geographical area. Twelve Rohingya

RBS students initially agreed to participate in my study, following communication with and consent provided by their parents. Participants were drawn from two neighbourhoods, whose names have been withheld to ensure confidentiality.

I applied two sampling methods in this study: purposive and snowball, both of which are types of non-probability sampling. In purposive sampling, the researcher chooses participants in line with the purpose of their study (Etikan et al., 2016). Snowball sampling (also known as "chain sampling" or "network sampling") is a method in which new participants are recruited based on information provided by other participants. The researcher initially identifies one or a few study participants and asks them to be referred to other potential participants, proceeding in this way until the number of participants is sufficient for the requirements of the researcher (Nikolopoulou, 2022).

As data collection progressed, however, participant numbers decreased. Some expressed concerns about their ethnic vulnerability in the host society. Others withdrew after submitting the consent form (Appendix C), requesting their information be deleted. After experiencing these difficulties with recruitment, my initial plan to solely interview young-adult Rohingya RBS changed, leading to an expansion of the focus to include the educational experiences of Rohingya adults who had been resettled. Eventually, six Rohingya refugees participated in the study: three female secondary students (16 to 19 years old) and three male adults (27 to 40 years old) who had either just graduated or had put their studies on hold owing to their circumstances. The incorporation of these participants allowed for a more thorough examination of RBS' educational objectives and negotiations by including adult retrospective accounts as well as those of younger RBS. Table 4.1 provides a summary of Rohingya participant demographics, and Table 4.2 shows their educational and employment trajectories.

Table 4.1

Participant Demographic Details

Pseudonym	Age	Sex	Education Level	Pre-arrival Education	Place of Birth	Languages Spoken	Time in New Zealand
Saleha	16	F	Year 9	Religious education in Malaysia Level: basic	Myanmar	At home: Burmese, Rohingya, and Rakhine. Education and other: English	1.5 years
Halima	18	F	Year 11	Religious education in Malaysia Level: equivalent to Year II	Myanmar	Same as above	1.5 years
Rokaiya	19	F	Year 13	Religious education in Malaysia Level: equivalent to Year III	Myanmar	Same as above	1.5 years
Amir	40	M	Tertiary	Undergraduate studies in business management, incomplete because of dismissal from university due to state policy	Myanmar	Same as above	7 years
Jamir	37	M	Tertiary	Undergraduate studies in law, incomplete because of dismissal from university due to state policy	Myanmar	Same as above	7 years
Anas	27	M	Tertiary	No formal education; attended camp-based basic education: familiarisation with alphabets and basic numeracy	Bangladesh	At home: Burmese, Rohingya, and Bengali. Education and other: English	13 years

Note. New Zealand secondary education runs from Year 9 to Year 13 (13 to 19 years).

Table 4.2

Educational and Employment Trajectories of Participants

Participant	Previous Education	Current Education	Key Barriers	Systemic Implication
Amir (40)	Incomplete business management degree (Myanmar)	None	Non-recognition of prior learning	Low-skilled employment
Jamir (37)	Incomplete law degree (Myanmar)	None	Policy-induced educational disruption	Employment mismatch
Anas (27)	Basic literacy (Bangladesh)	English Language Courses	Language barrier	Limited access to higher education
Saleha, Halima, Rokaiya (16 to 19)	Basic religious education (Malaysia)	Secondary Education	Financial and linguistic barriers	Uncertain transition to tertiary education

4.4.1 Extended Profile of Participants

The educational and migrational histories of the Rohingya RBS participants, in many cases, significantly shaped their educational and employment trajectories in New Zealand. Upon entering the country of resettlement, their prior qualifications and educational experiences played a crucial role in shaping their futures (UNHCR, 2021). While Rohingya refugees arrive in their resettlement country with varying degrees of English proficiency and some have qualifications that are recognised in host countries like New Zealand, many others face significant barriers. These include limited or interrupted formal education and low English literacy, which hinder their ability to meet local requirements for higher education or employment. These difficulties can be observed in the experiences of Amir (40) and Jamir (37) who were both pursuing degrees in Myanmar before expulsion due to state policies restricting refugee education. Their inability to complete formal degrees resulted in employment mismatches, a challenge where refugees with tertiary experience remain in low-skilled jobs due to credentialing barriers (Cerna, 2019). Similarly, Anas (27), with only basic literacy from Bangladesh, is attending English courses, accentuating language as a key determinant of access to education and employment (Hanna & Turner, 2022). While his engagement in structured language learning provides some pathways for integration, it does not directly translate into career opportunities, as formal employment often requires recognised qualifications alongside language proficiency (Sime et al., 2021).

4.4.2 Participant Access and Engagement

I accessed and engaged with the study participants following standard ethical protocols (see below). The secondary-level students were studying at two different institutions: Two students were enrolled at a college and another studied at a high school (in New Zealand, "college" and "high school" are used interchangeably to refer to secondary education institutions). These schools are pseudonymously referred to as Tiptonwhite College and Manorgreen High School, respectively. Upon obtaining ethics approval (Appendix A), I negotiated with the relevant stakeholders including the principals and parents of the students involved to make observations of the students in class (Creswell, 2013). In both cases, I was referred to the head of the English Department because they worked closely with the RBS. In both situations, they followed their internal institutional procedures. I was flexible when they modified the proposed observational schedules due to institutional reasons or the absence of participants from class. I wrote separate letters to the principals and classroom teachers outlining the goals and methods of my study and requesting access to their classrooms. I observed two class lessons for each student participant, each lasting 50 minutes. Table 4.3 summarises my interactions with the RBS participants.

4.5 Methods of Data Collection

Data collection comprised the following methods:

- Semi-structured in-depth interviews with secondary students to generate participant narratives about their education, especially in New Zealand.
- Participant observation for secondary students in their home, community, and classroom settings, to capture the real-world context of RBS' educational experiences.
- Life history interviews of those not in education at the time of data collection
- Informal interview/discussion with teachers and refugee coordinators, as expert members in the education of RBS.
- Policy-related documents.

Table 4.3

Summary of Researcher's Interactions with Research Participants

Pseudonym	Level of Education	Interaction	Time of Interaction
Saleha	Year 9	Interview 1	Jul 2019
		Observation 1	Oct 2019
		Interview 2	Oct 2019
		Observation 2	Nov 2019
		Interview 3	Feb 2020
Halima	Year 11	Interview 1	Jul 2019
		Observation 1	Oct 2019
		Interview 2	Oct 2019
		Observation 2	Nov 2019
		Interview 3	Feb 2020
Rokaiya	Year 13	Interview 1	Jun 2019
		Observation 1	Oct 2019
		Interview 2	Sep. 2019
		Observation 2	Nov 2019
		Interview 3	Mar 2020
Amir	Tertiary/Adult	Life history interview 1	Aug 2019
		Life history interview 2	Mar 2020
Jamir	Tertiary/Adult	Life history interview 1	Jul 2019
		Life history interview 2	Nov 2019
		Life history interview 3	May 2020
Anas	Tertiary/Recent graduate	Life history interview 1	Aug 2019
		Life history interview 2	
		Other interactions with participants: phone, social and religious gathering and events	May 2019 to 2020

As mentioned, there were two categories of RBS participants: secondary school students and adult students. For the adult students, I conducted life history interviews without any observation sessions because they had either recently graduated or were in between academic programmes . Life history interviews diverge from ordinary interviews as they focus on the interviewee's life experiences, personal narratives, and socio-cultural backgrounds highlighting their educational account retrospectively, which shape their subjectivities (Goodson & Sikes, 2001; Jessee, 2019). Conversely, for the secondary school students, I combined semi-structured in-depth interviews with

observation sessions conducted at their schools. I adopted this approach to attain a more comprehensive understanding of the students' lived experiences, informed by direct observation of their school classes and personal narratives shared during the interviews. I initially planned for two observations and two interviews per student-participant, totalling 12 data collection sessions (Table 4.3), totalling 12 sessions of data collection. I based this number on the need to strike a balance between depth of understanding and time constraints for both the participants and me. I intended to alternate between observation and interview sessions, starting with an observation. This sequencing allowed me to craft interview questions based on the previous observation, creating a dynamic and reflexive data collection process grounded in participants' real-life experiences.

The schedule of this work primarily depended on the convenience of the research participants. For the observations, I had to consider several factors, such as the school calendar and students' availability in the classroom as well as the time it took to obtain consent from principals and classroom teachers, plus students' parents or guardians. Additionally, I was dependant on the availability and assistance of particular people (e.g., refugee coordinators) who became my points of contact in each respective institution. These steps were intended to follow on from an initial introductory meeting.

However, I first had to conduct an interview session, followed by an observation, then proceed in this alternate sequence. I chose to conduct an additional, shorter third interview as a follow-up to the final observation session. I thus interacted with each participant six times over 12 months: one introductory meeting, three interviews, and two observations.

4.6 Semi-structured Interviews

One-on-one semi-structured interviews with participants were carried out in English, with a Bengali or Burmese interpreter present, depending on the participant. Interviews were conducted in this manner because (a) Burmese is the predominant language spoken in Burma and (b) some refugee children were born and brought up in Bangladesh until adolescence and primarily speak Bengali. Some participants who had lived in New Zealand for an extended period were fluent in English. Rohingya refugees are so dispersed and displaced that it is often difficult to find a common language among them. During the interviews with secondary students, a Burmese interpreter was present. I performed the task of Bengali interpreting myself (my native language). The

decision to use English as a common language, with interpreting provided when required, was suggested by Rohingya community leaders on the grounds that it would ensure mutual comprehension, save time, and minimise distractions. Participants also endorsed this decision. However, while this approach facilitated efficiency, it also underscored the linguistic barriers RBS face in their educational journey. The use of an interpreter and the need to work across multiple languages highlighted the challenges of linguistic adaption for RBS and how these language barriers affect their integration into the New Zealand education system.

Each secondary school student and adult participant partook in two interview sessions, the first lasting around 60 minutes and the second lasting approximately 30 minutes. The interviews were divided into three sections: (1) an introductory segment for building rapport, (2) a middle segment for questioning, and (3) a final segment for closing remarks (Galletta & Cross, 2013; Keats, 2000). For the adult participants, I conducted life history interviews focusing on their life experiences and personal narratives that formed over time. For the secondary school students, the interviews were intended to elicit their ongoing education experiences and the current problems they face.

4.7 Foucauldian-informed Participant Observations

Foucauldian theory, which significantly informs my research approach, has been increasingly integrated into ethnographic studies in recent scholarship (Macgilchrist & Hout, 2011; Marley, 2019). This theoretical framework underpins the data collection methods I have employed, including participant interaction through class observations and interviews and in-depth policy document analysis. Ethnographic tools enabled closer observation of the experiences and daily routines of Rohingya RBS, which in line with Arribus-Ayllon and Walkerdine's (2017) approach to FDA. This includes spatial, social and autobiographical practices. The observation sessions focused on Rohingya secondary school students in their classrooms. The goal was to examine their participation in classroom activities, specifically their interactions with their teachers and refugee coordinators, fellow learners, and academic materials.

During classroom observations, I took a seat in a position from where I could see the participant without being intrusive. Specifically, I observed the way participants initiated or responded to interactions with their fellow classmates and the teacher. I focused on how the participant under observation attended to the academic tasks. These

observations enabled me to relate the data collected from the classroom to the interview sessions that followed.

In line with Auckland University of Technology (AUT)'s ethics requirements and respecting the schools' own policies, for each observation session I made an appointment with the relevant subject teacher, obtained their written permission for my classroom observation, and arrived at the venue prior to the start of the lesson. In some cases, and wherever necessary, I was accompanied by the nominated liaison person, for example, the head of English at Tiptonwhite College. I was allowed to enter the classroom immediately before class started. During the 50-minute class, I could ask questions to the classroom teacher and sometimes had short discussions with them in a low voice while students were engaged in their work. I took detailed notes of what the participant was doing, their gestures, involvement in academic activities, interactions with their fellow learners, and participation in individual and group work. After the class, I thanked the teacher and left the classroom.

4.8 Life History Interviews with Adult Students

My choice to use life history interviews was informed by the concept of "propriospect", originally proposed by Goodenough (1971) and expanded on by Wolcott (1991), which refers to the distinct culture of individuals living in different places. Paraphrasing Goodenough, Wolcott (1991, p. 251) defined propriospect as "the totality of the private, subjective view of the world and its contents that each human develops out of personal experience". This notion proved particularly relevant to the life history interviews as they were intended to delineate participants' narratives that were determined by their unique migration experiences and educational journeys .

Following an informal and in-depth approach, I conducted life history interviews with each adult participant in one-on-one sessions. The first session was 50 to 60 minutes, and the second session was around 30 minutes. In some instances, I had to compromise on time as participants had other work or personal commitments. Indeed, the conflicting needs and priorities of resettled refugees, including the adult participants, who often live in precarious situations and face difficulties securing income, are testaments to the necessity for this research. In the case of one participant, I had to shorten the first interview because of unforeseen circumstances, though this time was compensated for in the second interview. The interview content was thus not compromised.

Due to their past experiences, many of the adult participants became emotional while talking to me. The interviews made me recall working with the Rohingya community in Bangladesh from 2012 to 2015, when I first resolved to conduct PhD research on Rohingya education. However, I did not personally know these participants from the camps in Bangladesh. As an interviewer, researcher and listener, I was conscious I might be instigating them to recount parts of their lives they would rather not disclose. This risk was addressed in the ethics application and Participant Information Sheet (Appendix B), where participants were given the right to pass on questions, leave anytime, and given support resources if needed. Some of their responses demonstrated just how traumatic the issues surrounding their resettlement and continuing education were for them. Understanding the psychological impact of these events on the participants and, indeed, the impact of their retelling was crucial to navigating my role as interviewer, researcher and listener.

4.9 Interview with Experienced Teachers and Coordinators of Refugee Students

Although not originally planned, I also collected data from several teachers and refugee coordinators from both of the participant schools in the form of informal discussions and interviews. I consider these people as experts in refugee education due to their extensive experience directly teaching students from a refugee background. Their insights into policy implementation and classroom dynamics provided critical perspectives on the systemic barriers RBS face, particularly in terms of language acquisition and cultural adaptation. Important to note, however, is that these teachers-qua-experts were not considered primary participants in the research. Only informal discussions were held with them, and hence they were not listed among the participant groups. These discussions were not formal interviews, but rather flexible conversations that took place within the guidelines of the AUT Ethics Committee (AUTEC, n.d.). The refugee coordinator / English teachers in both institutions were nominated by their principals as the key liaison persons for me concerning additional information I might need regarding the Rohingya RBS. I spoke with a refugee coordinator / turned-English teacher at Manorgreen High School attended by one secondary school participant. I also met and talked with the refugee coordinator / head of English at Tiptonwhite College attended by the other two secondary school participants. At Manorgreen High School, I held discussions with one of the deputy principals, and at Tiptonwhite College I talked

with a biology and physical science teacher and an English teacher. A summary of the experts' characteristics is given in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4

Experts in Refugee Education Interviewed

Pseudonym	Institution	Designation	Interactions
Lauren	Manorgreen High School	Refugee Coordinator (English teacher)	Two rounds of interviews, June-December 2019
Eliza Peta	Tiptonwhite College	Refugee Coordinator (Head of English)	Two rounds of interviews, June-December 2019
Melita	Tiptonwhite College	Subject teacher (Biology & Physical Science)	One discussion session, October 2019
Sunita	Tiptonwhite College	English teacher for Intensive English	Two discussion sessions, October 2019
Sally	Manorgreen High School	Deputy Principal for Year 13	Two discussion sessions, June-December 2019

The discussion sessions were informal and more flexible as compared to the interview sessions. After the initial discussion sessions, which provided room for open communication and interaction with the refugee coordinators / English teachers, I decided to more formally interview them to obtain information relating to the Rohingya RBS, including their personal experiences with the educational system, perceptions of policy impacts, and individual strategies for navigating these challenges. These details were crucial for the FDA because they provided the necessary context to understand and interpret the power dynamics and discursive practices within the educational system as experienced by RBS. I requested an interview from the refugee coordinator / English teacher of Manorgreen High School, and she agreed. I interviewed her twice in her office . She also gave me some materials, including the English Learning Progression document (MoE, 2008). I spoke also with the deputy principal of Manorgreen High School responsible for general academic issues for students in Year 13. I was advised to proceed through her as one RBS participant (Rokaiya) was in Year 13. The deputy principal acted as an intermediary between the principal and the refugee coordinator, and so I had several informal short discussions with her. These discussions were held in accordance with the ethical requirements of my research permitted by AUTEC, ensuring consent was obtained, support resources were available, and confidentiality.

In the case of the refugee coordinator / head of English at Tiptonwhite College, I followed the same approach. She invited me to her home for our interview because she could only find time for me during a holiday period. Being the department h ead of English, she was used to working especially closely with those students needing English-language teaching, including RBS. When observing her first English lesson in the classroom, I asked several questions regarding RBS' mandatory English requirements, and she explained that proficiency in the English language is a prerequisite as it impacts the students' capability to learn other subjects. I then arranged a follow-up discussion with her in her office. At Tiptonwhite College, I also consulted with a biology and physical science teacher. While sitting in on a lesson she conducted, I noticed the RBS was not adequately attended to by this teacher. The student appeared isolated and was doing something different from what was being taught in the class. This made me curious. Upon obtaining the teacher's consent, I had a discussion with her for about 45 minutes when the class finished. This observation informed my understanding of how RBS often face exclusion within mainstream classrooms due to linguistic and cultural barriers, leading to disengagement and educational challenges.

4.10 Policy Documents Analysed

Local and international education and refugee policy documents were analysed for this research to contextualise the political and social circumstances that impact the education of RBS in New Zealand.

1. *Tertiary Education Strategy* (MoE & Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment [MBIE], 2019)

Although this document broadly explains how the MoE formulates strategies for tertiary education, it also includes sections related to refugee education.

Relevance to Rohingya RBS: This policy addresses initiatives like Refugee Pathways and Career Planning, which accommodate career programmes and promote employment for refugees. Moreover, the document explains how schools ought to offer a welcoming environment for RBS, especially in terms of the enrolment process.

Gaps in Implementation: Despite the opportunities, RBS encounter significant problems in receiving education due to displacement, lack of cultural identity, and systemic barriers, which are further discussed in Chapter 2.

2. *New Zealand Curriculum* (MoE, 2007)

Developed by the MoE, the New Zealand Curriculum is the principal framework for the education of school students in the country.

Relevance to Rohingya RBS: The curriculum focuses on the integration of competencies such as communication, critical understanding, and social skills. This aids RBS in better adapting to the new environment and becoming active learners (MoE, 2015). The Curriculum promotes programmes for RBS facing displacement trauma (Education Gazette Editors, 2019).

Challenges: Although the Education Gazette (2019) discusses support programmes for RBS, this research extends our understanding by examining how the curriculum may inadvertently impose assimilationist expectations that overlook the distinct backgrounds of RBS.

3. *UNHCR Resettlement Handbook* (UNHCR, 2011)

This policy provides insight into the resettlement programmes and New Zealand's educational standards for RBS, categorising incongruities and any specific fields of advancement for refugee education.

Relevance to RBS: The Resettlement Handbook contextualises New Zealand's policies within a global framework, demonstrating how international refugee resettlement standards shape national education policies. The New Zealand Refugee Quota Programme promotes policies to accommodate RBS, such as language programmes and support plans to help them integrate with the environment of the host country. New Zealand accepted almost 1,500 refugees annually under this quota programme from 2022/23 to 2024/25 (Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment [MBIE], 2022).

Challenges: Host countries might lack the resources to accommodate RBS, including lack of adequate funding and lack of resettlement and education plans for refugees (Giving Compass, 2023).

4. *New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Strategy* (RfRS; INZ, 2012, 2017)

This policy focuses on the community life of refugees and includes initiatives that create pathways for employment, education, and public relations. This policy is vital in analysing state involvement regarding refugee resettlement in the host country.

Implementation and Challenges: Programs such ESOL help RBS to overcome language barriers and aim to facilitate integration (Mitchell & Kamenarac, 2021). However, due to their disrupted education, RBS can face challenges in overcoming language and cultural barriers. By examining this strategy, the research critically assesses how RBS' subjectivities are constructed within the education system.

5. *The Statement of National Education and Learning Priorities (NELP) & Tertiary Education Strategy* (TES) (MoE, 2020b)

These policies aim for initiatives that promote equality in education, focusing on inclusion and quality. Analysis of the implementation of these policies helps contextualise the educational experiences of RBS.

Implementation: These policies call for engagement with the families and refugee communities to promote education programmes for refugee students.

Challenges: However, they also correspond to neoliberal frameworks that position RBS as subjects who must conform to predefined educational norms.

6. *Refugee Handbook for Schools* (MoE, 2016)

The Refugee Handbook for Schools describes the educational standards for RBS in schools. It provides guidelines for school administration and mentors to accommodate RBS in schools. Schools are advised to acknowledge the cultural background of students to promote cultural inclusivity (Shohel et al., 2023).

Challenges: The application of this policy foregrounds inconsistencies in how schools navigate the tension between inclusion and assimilation.

The inclusion of these policy documents in this research is fundamental to establishing a comprehensive socio-political discursive framework that shapes the educational experiences of Rohingya RBS in New Zealand. These documents provide insights into how New Zealand's education system aligns with, and diverges from, global standards

for refugee education, while also explaining the institutional structures in which RBS navigate their educational journeys.

4.11 Data Analysis

Foucault did not provide an explicit strategy for analysing discourse (Arribus & Walkerdine, 2017). Based on his conception of his works as a "tool-box" (Andersen, 2003; López et al., 2021), scholars have proposed several methodological guidelines that extend Foucault's philosophy, while acknowledging that these ideas are not exclusive to his work (Arribus & Walkerdine, 2017; Ettlinger, 2011). I synthesised and implemented the FDA guidelines proposed by Andersen (2003) along with Arribus and Walkerdine (2017) to conduct my data analysis, which focuses on analysing discourse through three key elements: statements, discursive formations, and power relations, providing a cohesive analytic approach that aligns with my research objectives. In addition, I made use of methodological approaches, as well as critical responses to biopower and governmentality, which will be outlined in subsequent sections (Andersen, 2003; Dean, 2017; Ettlinger, 2011). I also utilised on "analytic memos", through which the discourse analysis is broken down into identifiable and manageable components. An analytic memo is a written observation used in qualitative research to interpret, analyse and record important insights or patterns that arise from the data, which helps in understanding the data more deeply and guiding further analysis (Charmaz, 2006; Saldaña, 2021).

The FDA analysis was conducted following Andersen's (2003) three-element strategy together with Arribas-Ayllon and Walkerdine's (2017) five flexible steps as they provide a structured yet adaptable approach to analyse discourse and power relations. Each of the steps was subsequently broken down into several substeps/activities, which is described in more detail below. This study incorporated FDA to methodically scrutinise the interplay of patterns such as "integration" and "self-sufficiency" within the participants' accounts and policy texts. The cross-examination of data collected in interviews, observations, and policy documents, generated several reoccurring patterns. These patterns were analysed in the light of broader notions of power dynamics and the placement of subjects.

To demonstrate the practical application of FDA and the critical depth achieved by the study, a worked example is included here. One of the male interviewees stated, "I want to complete my studies to prove I can succeed here" (Jamir, Interview 2), which can be

cross-examined in terms of the identified patterns of self-sufficiency and integration. This statement was selected to highlight the underlying power dynamics drawn out by FDA, illustrating how the patterns of self-sufficiency align with societal standards and pressures for academic excellence and social integration. Jamir's account demonstrates a struggle for social integration and academic success in relation to his host society's standards (Foucault, 1980). By applying a meticulous statement selection process, this study guarantees methodological transparency and the interplay of discourse, identity, and socio-cultural background, aligning with Foucauldian notions of power. Before describing Arribas-Ayllon and Walkerdine's (2017) five-step process in detail below, I now outline the key concepts that underpin their application of FDA.

4.11.1 Corpus of Statements and Historical Contextualisation

A corpus of statements refers to a collection of written or spoken texts gathered for analysis, often to explore specific discursive patterns or regularities related to topics or recurring language use (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2017). It is used in research to examine how language or content is used within a particular context (Gee, 2014). I started my analysis by collecting texts that addressed my research questions, consisting of the policy documents described above, which outline national and international approaches relevant to refugee education. Concurrently, I situated the texts within their historical context to understand the statements within the broader discourses related to refugee education and inclusion (Andersen, 2003). The historical context of the Rohingya was broadly described in Chapter 2, while this research's methodological approach is outlined in this chapter. In addition, I researched the historical and institutional context of specific policy documents included in the corpus.

4.11.2 Problematisations

Foucault (1984) uses the term "problematisation" to describe the process through which certain practices and behaviours are transformed into problems. According to Foucault (1984, p. 388), "Thought is freedom in relation to what one does, the motion by which one detaches oneself from it, establishes it as an object, and reflects on it as a problem." The Foucauldian approach involves questioning the fixed norms and scrutinising the circumstances, meanings and objectives. I apply Foucault's notion of problematisation to analyse how certain practices and behaviours of Rohingya refugees are framed as subjects of concern within the discourse.

I sought contradictions within the corpus of statements, focusing on how and why objects and practices became problematic. For instance, in New Zealand, the perceived threat of Rohingya refugees to state authorities and host communities, their agency, and acts of resistance became clear points of tension (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2017). This analysis was conducted through direct engagement with the data, analysing patterns in statements to understand the broader discourses and discursive formations (Andersen, 2003). For example, the patterns of "integration" and "self-sufficiency" were emphasised in the policy documents. However, patterns such as "resilience" and "adaption" emerged from the interviews. These patterns were compared with RBS' experiences, which showcased how the language barriers and financial challenges barred them from fulfilling these expectations.

4.11.3 Technologies and Power Relations

To identify technologies and power relations, I examined how power was circulated through texts, which included policy documents, learning syllabuses, media narratives, and institutional reports surrounding Rohingya refugees. This analysis also incorporated official statements from refugee resettlement bodies and other educational resources, which helped in identifying points of antagonism, conflict and competition, which are symptoms or expressions of problematisations in discourse. This included identifying the recurrent discursive regularities, contradictions, patterns and alterations in language that manifested power dynamics, specifically regarding how refugees were placed within the educational policies and systemic rules (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2017). I then analysed the role of power relations and social practices within the discourses (Andersen, 2003) by analysing how institutional practices, educational policies, and public opinions impacted the experiences of RBS.

4.12 Subject Positions and Biopower

I sought to understand the subject positions involved in texts, such as policy documents, educational syllabuses, and media narratives, by scrutinising who was given a voice and how language selections determined the representation of RBS. This involved interpreting the contextual limits of what could be said, written or practised by the producers of texts (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2017). I also integrated insights from other theorists, such as Koselleck (2004), Laclau (1993) and Luhmann (1995), to provide a more nuanced understanding of these discourses (Andersen, 2003). Koselleck's notion of historical time, which provides the layered nature of time and

history; Laclau's idea of hegemony describing how power is disseminated within society; and Luhmann's understanding of social structures and institutions helped me in analysing the impact of systemic power on refugee lives.

I then examined the roles and identities that RBS could assume within the educational discourse, exploring limitations such as restricted access to educational resources, the imposition of an alien language and cultural norms, and prevalent stereotypes about refugees that frame them as either susceptible dependents or threats to social unity.

4.12.1 Subjectification

I broadly analysed the practical ways participants, particularly RBS, constituted themselves as subjects of an internal moral code (i.e., subjectification), such as through ideals of success, language, happiness and progress. I did this by analysing their personal narratives, aspirations, struggle against societal standards, and identity crisis in relation to the dominant narratives. These were then compared to intangible policy concepts of refugee inclusion and adaptation (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2017).

I investigated specifically how RBS actively engaged in shaping their own subjectivities in relation to the norms and values embedded in the educational discourses. I did this by examining their narratives and identifying how they navigated or internalised the dominant standards, for instance by resisting or conforming to educational norms, or by adapting to linguistic and cultural expectations.

Throughout the analysis, I made use of analytic memos to document my ongoing findings, observations, insights, and emerging patterns. For instance, one analytic memo examined how patterns such as "integration" and "self-sufficiency" in the policy documents intersected with the language barriers and societal norms that created hurdles for RBS to fulfil such expectations. Another memo highlighted how the educators considered "language acquisition" as both a challenge and an opportunity for RBS. With each stage of the FDA, I continued to explore my findings and interpreted their significance within the broader historical and social context. I carefully organised my findings, ensuring a logical flow and clear presentation of the insights gained through the analysis and discussing their relevance and significance for understanding the educational experiences of Rohingya RBS. An analytic memo discussing "governmentality" is given as an example below:

Chapter 6; Participant: Jamir

Subject: Changing Academic Track from Law to Engineering

Memo #2

Jamir's decision to shift from law to electrical engineering suggests Foucault's idea of "governmentality", where state and institutional powers organise opportunities to benefit capitalist productivity rather than support individual freedom.

His choice to study electrical engineering, despite his interest in law, is impacted by New Zealand's job market and his limited language skills. As a refugee, Jamir is still in the early stages of language learning, which affects his academic options.

In law studies, strong language skills are essential, but because of his language challenges, Jamir is pushed towards electrical engineering, a field that demands less language proficiency. This demonstrates how education systems, under neoliberal ideals, prioritise economic outcomes over personal interests and intellectual development.

Overall, the system reinforces how state policies channel refugees into roles that meet market demands, rather than allowing them to pursue their individual goals.

Conducting FDA

As mentioned earlier, I followed the five-step FDA framework proposed by Arribus-Ayllon and Walkerdine (2017) for this research. These steps were incorporated with Anderson's (2003) framework by aligning the analysis of statements, discourses, and discursive formations with the method of FDA described below.

Throughout the five steps of my analysis, I employed a hands-on, iterative and reflexive method to identifying and understanding the discursive formation that shaped the experiences and representations of RBS. I began by manually annotating printed texts using a pencil to highlight meaningful patterns and emergent subject positions. These annotations formed the basis for extended memos and visual diagrams, enabling me to map interrelations across discursive practices and patterns. To bring order to this intricate web of information, I adapted Saldaña's (2021) "tabletop" categorising technique to create a designated physical space where I could spread out all the memos and diagrams.

4.12.2 Step 1: Selecting a Corpus of Statements and Historical Contextualisation

Selection of Corpus: In conducting Step 1 of FDA, Arribus-Ayllon and Walkerdine (2017) advised a selection of texts could include spatial arrangements, social practices,

political discourses, expert discourses, social interactions, and autobiographical accounts. They elaborated:

> Texts could refer to personal observation and description of spatial/architectural surroundings, and the kinds of social practices they engendered. These ethnographic texts [emphasis added] were derived by the researcher's field notes of a given setting, e.g., parks, hospitals, urban architecture, and sites of cultural production. (Arribus-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2017, p. 115)

For this study, I selected five sites, as mentioned earlier, including a sampling of government policy materials, interviews with teaching staff as well as refugee coordinators, and data generated through observations and interviews with student participants. I gathered a collection of texts to form a corpus of statements related to education and RBS. I transcribed the audio-recorded interviews, which also allowed me to review the tone of the interview (Arksey & Knight, 1999; McMullin, 2021). I compiled all my conversational and observational notes and the interview transcriptions, as well as the policy documents, and undertook thorough and repeated readings of them, ensuring an in-depth comprehension of the content.

Regarding the selection of statements, some tension exists between the specific approach advocated by the FDA and the broad perspective promoted by Foucault's analytic framework. It is impossible to decide entirely which discursive formations regulate which dispersions of a statement. For Foucault (1998, p. 263), "One ought to read everything, study everything. In other words, one must have at one's disposal the general archive of a period at a given moment. And archaeology is, in a strict sense, the science of this archive." However, due to the practical limitations of this empirical study, I centred my analysis on specific contexts and areas of concern that were most pertinent to my research questions and ethical concerns. The data collected were relevant to these goals, ensuring participant contributions were not overlooked or wasted.

Historical Contextualisation and Initial Mapping of Discourses. I began historically situating the individual texts within the corpus, which included policy documents, interview transcripts, educational material, and observational notes, while documenting and analysing the discourses embedded within them. I developed a comprehensive understanding of the data and continued to use analytic memos throughout the discourse analysis process. These memos detailed my thinking, observations and contemplations

as I went through the data (Saldaña, 2021). They served as a contemplative space where I could think critically through the discourses and discursive formations, capture insights, and build a multilayered and comparative understanding of the experiences and representations of RBS.

Upon identification of each discourse, I assigned it a name, which was helpful in giving it a distinct identity and facilitating interpretation. This naming process proved vital in the subsequent stages of analysis. For example, I labelled one discourse as “Integration Imperative” and another as the “Aspiring Self”. These labels served not only as identifiers but also as a means to encapsulate the character and key aspects of each discourse. The result of this process was the creation of a discursive map, a graphical representation of the various discourses and their relationships, which can be viewed in Appendix G.

Eventually, each discourse served as a tool in the presentation of my findings, enabling me to articulate the narrative of each discourse within the broader context of my study, and relate it to Andersen’s (2003) concept of discursive formations. For instance, the Integration Imperative discourse describes the pressures on RBS to adapt and conform to New Zealand’s educational and societal norms. This discourse helps us understand the expectations placed on these students, and how these expectations are communicated and enforced in policy and practice. Meanwhile, the Aspiring Self discourse highlights the hopes, dreams and aspirations of RBS, explaining how they navigate their individual and collective identities within the schooling environment. This discourse contributes to broader discussions around identity formation, agency and resilience in the face of adversity in the context of refugee education in New Zealand.

In one memo, I noted a significant shift in the discourse surrounding education for RBS, moving from a paternalistic approach to one emphasising self-reliance and resilience. This had implications for how students perceived and navigated their educational journeys. My memos also documented my thought process behind the selection of texts, encapsulating initial observations about the historical context in which the texts were produced, and how this context might have shaped the discourses around RBS. Through these memos, I captured patterns and regularities in the language across different texts, thus kick-starting the process of identifying potential discursive formations. One such formation that emerged from this process were the recurring narratives about RBS’ resilience and adaptation. The texts constructed education as both a solution to, and a

space of management for. the “problem” of the refugee. Educational institutions were often framed as benevolent yet burdened, and RBS as lacking but redeemable through proper support. These constructions were not neutral; they positioned RBS within predefined narratives of trauma, resilience and gratitude.

This step laid the foundation for the next stage, where I interrogated not just what was said, but how particular issues were made visible and significant through discourse.

4.12.3 Step 2: Problematisations

This step involved the analysis of problematisations and the ways in which they were generated in discourse. Problematisation, as Foucault (1985) described, refers to how certain aspects of life come to be viewed as problems that require intervention. In this step, I asked: What is being problematised in the education of RBS, and how?

Identifying Contradictions. To identify specific problematisations in the provision of education for resettled refugees in New Zealand, I looked for contradictions within and between texts, and consistent discursive concerns sustained across different texts, such as the supposed vulnerability of refugees and the presumed strict necessity for English-language skills. For instance, the Refugee Handbook for Schools (hereafter “the Handbook”) advises teachers to consider “the possibility of direct or hidden bullying or other harassment at school” (MoE, 2016, p. 53), and states that schools should be inclusive and safe environments. Yet participant Anas recounted being mocked with slurs like “rice and curry”, highlighting a dissonance between institutional ideals and lived experience. This tension signals a problematisation of cultural difference and the limits of multicultural inclusion.

Examining Patterns in Statements. I then analysed patterns in policy statements. My analytic memos captured my thoughts on how certain issues, such as language barriers or cultural differences, were problematised within the discourse. For a concrete illustration, we may consider New Zealand’s policy on language proficiency requirements for refugee resettlement or the pervasive societal discourse emphasising English-language skills as a prerequisite for successful integration. These were evident throughout New Zealand’s refugee policy and in broader public discussions about refugee adjustment. The recurring emphasis on English-language acquisition across policy documents problematised non-English-speaking students as inherently deficient. Before entering mainstream education, RBS are required to undergo diagnostic

assessments focused on their English proficiency. I interpreted this as a discursive expression of neoliberal governmentality, a standardisation of "successful" integration against a singular metric: English-language proficiency predicated on individual linguistic capital.

Simultaneously, I analysed students' testimonies expressing their aspirations to acquire standard New Zealand English. Such testimonies, when critically examined, illustrates how the aspirations of RBS are framed within the discursive formation of neoliberal governmentality, specifically in relation to English-language requirements. Analytic memos helped me capture how these problematisations emerged through patterns in language. Phrases such as "limited English", "extra support needed" and "language development" repeatedly marked students as linguistically inadequate. These discourses constructed language not merely as a communication tool, but as a measure of belonging and educational worthiness.

This measure was not merely a singular marker of success and immediate integration, as portrayed in policy documents. Rather, it reinforces the impact of neoliberal tenets that prioritise specific forms of knowledge, skills and competencies as valuable or "legitimate". However, RBS' aspirations also formed part of a broader array of desires. Simultaneously, their aspirations can also be understood through a wider spectrum of discursive formations that extend beyond neoliberal governmentality. For instance, many students expressed a desire to pursue careers in the care and social work fields, which are often undervalued in neoliberal frameworks. Such aspirations suggest the role of other discursive formations that value empathy, community, and social responsibility. I analysed how these aspirations were situated within discursive formations that shaped the ways in which refugees were expected to integrate into society.

The problems I refer to in this context are the ways in which refugee resettlement and integration issues have materialised or been made "real" and significant in both policy and societal discourses. These specific materialisations of problems are discussed at length in Chapters 5–7. They manifest in various aspects of policy and cultural discourse, illustrating how discursive formations can tangibly shape societal perceptions and reactions.

4.12.4 Step 3: Technologies and Power Relations

Identifying Technologies of Power. In identifying the technologies of power, my analytic memos served as a space for me to scrutinise and evaluate how power was circulated through texts. I noted points of antagonism, conflict and competition. This involved dissecting the subtle ways in which power relations were inscribed in textual content. For instance, I specifically focused on the dynamics of power, contemplating how educational institutions might wield power over RBS through mechanisms other than language requirements, such as through the imposition of certain curricula or testing standards requirements.

I applied the lens of Foucault's (1988) "technologies of the self" to my analysis (Christie & Sidhu, 2006; Ettlinger, 2011). As discussed in the previous chapter, my analysis uses Foucault's concepts of governmentality, focusing on overall societal control using technologies, and biopower, dealing with the regulation of individual life processes. Foucault (1988, p. 17) proposed four major types of technology, "each a matrix of practical reason that human beings use to understand themselves": (a) technologies of production, (b) technologies of sign systems, (c) technologies of power, and (d) technologies of the self. Foucault insisted an individual's practices are not something that the individual invents by themselves. They are patterns found within culture, which are imposed on individuals by their culture, society, and social groups (Foucault, 1987). This intertwining of biopower and governmentality aids in understanding the bodily aspects of governance, where the individual body becomes a site of discursive formation and is shaped and controlled through various societal and political pressures.

Examining the Interplay of Power Relations and Social Practices. Moving on from the role of technology, I contemplated how power and subject positions were evident in the discourse, which involved the way power relations, inscribed in textual content, acted to shape discourses. For instance, I examined how students were positioned as both beneficiaries and burdens within these systems, often framed as "needing help" but simultaneously responsible for their own success. This link between discourses and power relations became a central part of the analysis.

I employed a process of comparison and cross- referencing (Patton, 2002), specifically focusing on how the discourses identified in this phase were aligned with or diverged from the insights and thoughts generated through my earlier analytic

endeavours. Cross-referencing these insights with participant interviews allowed me to trace how these technologies of power were received, contested or internalised. For example, one student spoke of wanting to "pass like Kiwi students", signalling an internalisation of the normative benchmark. Yet another expressed frustration with "always being seen as different", pointing to resistance to that very benchmark.

This step helped me to understand the overall patterns and discursive regularities emerging from the data sets . I first mapped the discursive patterns and regularities in the data and then used FDA to understand the power dynamics and discursive frameworks defining them. This process involved two steps. First, I undertook an exercise of "coherence evaluation" (Maxwell, 2013), which determined whether the material in question resonated with characteristics of the assigned discourse. Drawing on Foucault's (1972) concept of "statement", I treated data segments as individual units that derived their significance from the broader discursive formations in which they are embedded. The aim was to map how knowledge and power circulate within the discourse (Hook, 2001; Kendall & Wickham, 1999). This assessment was based on a comparative review of the patterns and regularities within the extract and the central tenets of the discourse as per my analytic memos. If there were discrepancies, I would reconsider the categorisation and make necessary adjustments so that each data statement represented the discourse it was meant to exemplify. In the second stage, I applied this same process of coherence evaluation to the entire data set, aiming to ensure a consistent interpretation of discourses across all data. By revisiting each statement in relation to the entire data set, I sought to minimise the risk of fragmentation and maximise the interconnectivity of the identified discourses. This iterative process allowed me to refine my understanding and interpretation of the discourses. To fortify the credibility of my analysis, I incorporated feedback from my supervisors.

4.12.5 Step 4: Subject Positions and Biopower

Identifying Subject Positions. I identified subject positions through the lens of biopower by examining how power was exercised over RBS through discourses and discursive formations. Biopower, as Foucault (1976) conceptualised it, operates at the level of life processes, shaping populations.

A subject position identifies "a location for persons within a structure of rights and duties for those who use that repertoire" (Davies & Harrè, 1999, p. 35). But "positioning" also involves the construction and performance of a particular vantage

point (Bamberg, 1994), offering a version of reality as well as a moral location within spoken interaction. This is similar to how the "moral adequacy" (Cuff, 1994) of people's accounts are linked to the "moral order" in which they seek to locate themselves (Sacks, 1992).

This study's primary focus was on the lived experiences of Rohingya RBS in the New Zealand education system, with a particular emphasis on the technologies of power expressed through the governance of a population and of the self. These technologies of power are not abstract concepts but are deeply intertwined with the daily experiences of RBS. They shape and are shaped by the specific socio-political and educational contexts in which these students navigate. Therefore, the technologies of power are how control and guidance over RBS are manifested, and how RBS respond, resist or adapt to these controlling mechanisms. In this sense, they represent the "mechanics" of power.

Exploring Roles, Identities and Limitations of RBS within Educational Discourse. I identified roles, identities, as well as limitations of RBS within educational discourses, particularly in policy documents. The identification and analysis of subject positions enabled a deeper understanding of how RBS are constituted in and through discourses and power relations, and how they actively engage in the construction of their identities. Throughout my analysis, a focus on identifying and analysing subject positions (associated with technologies of power) helped me to investigate what I term the "cultural repertoire of discourses". This phrase refers to the collective set of discursive resources available to individuals in a given cultural context, from which they draw to interpret their environment and articulate their identities and experiences.

These educational discourses inform the positions on which subjects ground their claims to truth and identity, allowing individuals to "manage, in quite complex and subtle ways, their moral location within social interaction" (Arribus-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2017, p. 118). In examining these dynamics, I aimed to understand not only the nature of the discourses themselves but also how they are employed as resources in the shaping and negotiation of power and subjectivity.

Educational discourses offered specific subject positions to RBS, often under a broader narrative of "overcoming adversity". I noted subject positions such as "the determined learner" and "the struggling student". The "determined learner" subject position is

informed by discourses that construct education as a key pathway to integration for refugees, stressing the importance of assimilating into the education system. Alternatively, "the struggling student" subject position emerges from discourses that underscore the challenges faced by refugees due to language barriers, trauma, or different cultural expectations concerning education. Lastly, the "resilient survivor" subject position is formed by narratives emphasising the strength and determination of refugees in overcoming adversities. Each position came with particular moral and emotional expectations: to struggle but not disrupt, to succeed but remain grateful.

I paid attention to how students were positioned in policy texts, such as the ESOL Guidelines, where they were framed as in need of "integration support" or "cultural adaptation" (MoE, 2003). These positions pathologised difference and rendered RBS as passive recipients of care rather than active contributors to their learning environments.

Drawing on Bamberg (1994) and Sacks (1992), I also analysed how students narrated themselves during interviews. For example, a participant described herself as "working hard to make her parents proud", thereby invoking the "determined learner" position. Another student, in recounting his journey to university, said he wanted to "show people that we can do it too", aligning with the "resilient survivor" subject position.

Yet, these self-narrations were not always affirmations. Some students resisted or redefined these positions. One noted that being seen as resilient "felt like pressure", indicating that the discourse of strength could also be a burden. These moments of slippage or discomfort were crucial in highlighting the limitations of available subject positions and the possibility of alternative subjectivities.

Biopower, in this context, operated by encouraging certain forms of self-discipline and identity work: being a grateful learner, a quiet achiever, a model migrant. These discursive subject positions were not freely chosen; they were offered, reinforced and regulated through both policy and everyday interactions.

4.12.6 Step 5: Subjectification

Exploring Self-constitution as Subjects. The final step of the FDA framework concerns the ethical and practical dimensions of subject formation. My analytic approach culminated in interpretations of the subjectification of RBS. According to Arribus-Ayllon and Walkerdine (2017),

> Subjectification refers to the ethics of self-formation. Foucault understands 'ethics' in a practical sense of human beings constituting themselves as subjects of a moral code. Ethics is the practical work of submitting oneself to a set of moral recommendations or obligations. Practices of self-constitution may adhere to standards or techniques imposed upon the self in order to attain wisdom, beauty, happiness, perfection, etc. (p. 118)

Within my selected corpus of statements, I observed how subjects are constituted both through "subjection", technologies of domination imposed upon them, and through "subjectification", their own efforts to shape themselves according to particular norms. As such, the analyses of discourses, statements, and the subjectification process are deeply interrelated.

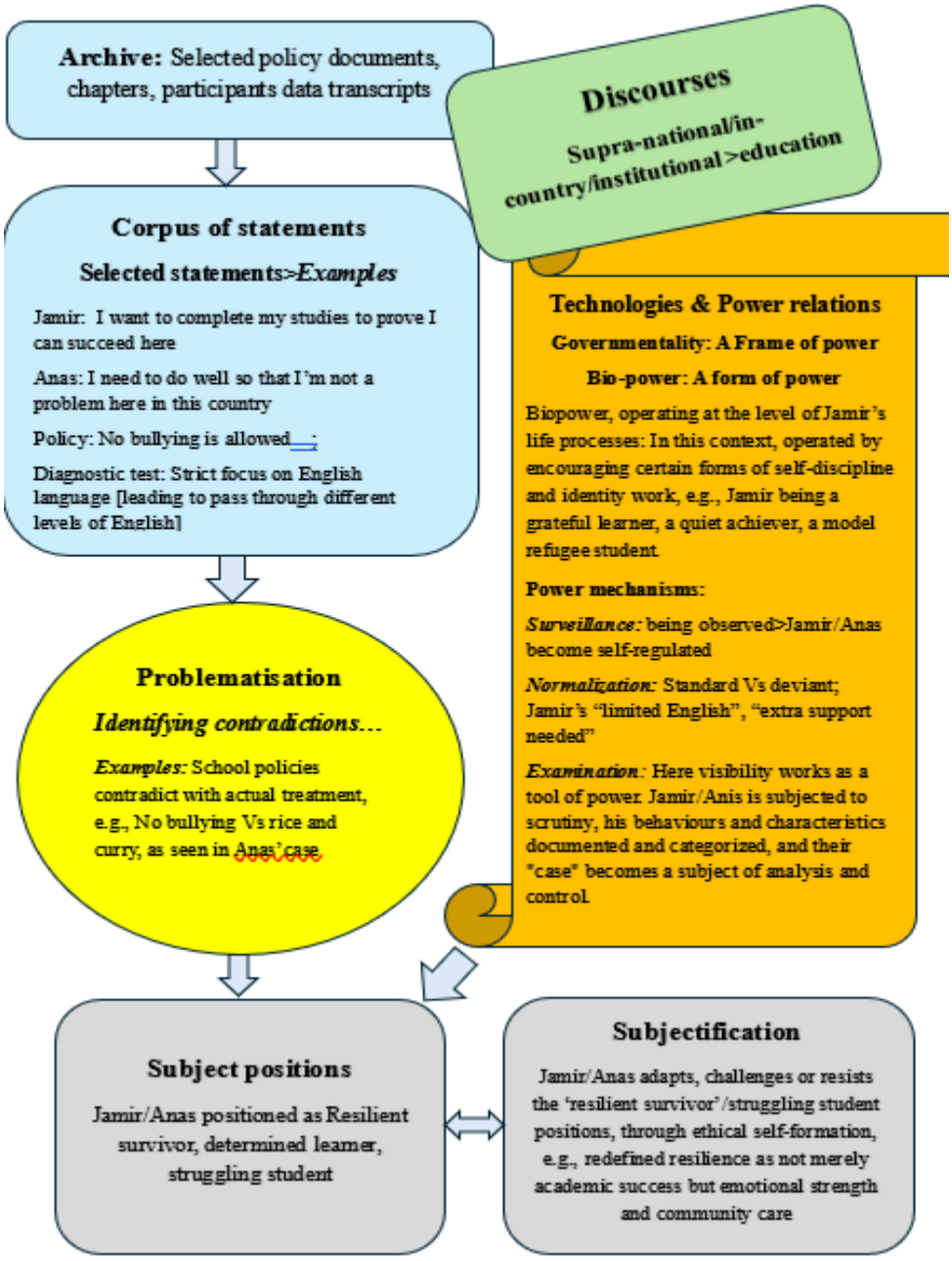
In this final stage, my analytic memos documented ruminations on how RBS actively constituted themselves within various discourses. I noted instances where students negotiated, adapted or resisted subject positions, and mediated the implications of these processes of subjectification. For example, I documented cases where students who embraced the "resilient survivor" subject position redefined what resilience meant to them (O'Connell et al., 2009), thereby rearticulating resilience beyond the conventional state narratives of vulnerability towards a more personal and empowering narrative of strength and perseverance. For example, a student who embraced the "resilient survivor" narrative redefined resilience as not merely academic success but emotional strength and community care. This reinterpretation represented a form of subjectification that challenged the narrow institutional definition of achievement.

Examining Self-constitution within Educational Discourses. I examined the self-shaping of RBS in relation to educational discourses. Although subject positions represented the predefined roles available within discursive formations, subjectification was evident in the active constitution of self by RBS within the broader educational landscape. Though distinct, these two concepts are intrinsically linked, with subject positions providing the structural framework from which individuals craft their identities through the process of subjectification. Through this analytic strategy, I visualised the nuanced and complex interplay between the "structural" constraints of subject positions and the agency exercised in subjectification within the context of discursive formations and educational discourses. Here, subject positions refer to the roles and identities offered and recognised in the educational discourse, and subjectification is the way RBS make sense of, adapt to, challenge or resist those

offered roles. This approach was instrumental in providing a more comprehensive understanding of how RBS are both shaped by and actively shape the educational discourses they are situated in, and how they navigate their identities and roles within these discourses. These were not merely responses to external expectations but expressions of agency within discursive constraints. As such, subjectification is where discourse meets lived experience most intimately. Figure 4.2 presents a summary of FDA carried to for this research.

Figure 4.2

Data Analysis (Following FDA) Summary



By applying FDA across five interconnected steps, I was able to identify the discursive formations shaping RBS' educational experiences in New Zealand. Discourses of vulnerability, support, integration and resilience operated not only in policy texts but also in the self-narrations of students. These discourses functioned as technologies of power, constructing subject positions and guiding practices of subjectification.

Yet, within these discursive constraints, there were also sites of agency, resistance and redefinition. RBS were not simply subjects of discourse but also participants in its rearticulation. Understanding these dynamics is essential to developing educational policies and practices that are more attuned to the complexities of RBS subjectivities.

This discussion of the data analysis used in this study provides a theoretical and practical foundation for the discussions in the following chapters, where I turn to broader implications for educational equity, inclusion, and refugee resettlement policy in New Zealand.

4.13 Triangulation of Data

Triangulation played a critical role in validating the credibility of the research by allowing the convergence of findings from different perspectives, such as interviews, observations, and policy document analysis. One example is how the insights derived from interviews with students were compared with classroom observations to identify any discrepancies and reinforce discursive practices. For instance, in the interview sessions, participants' concerns about inadequate language support were validated by policy gaps in ESOL provisions. In the classrooms, a lack of English-language support for RBS was observed, which further manifested the disparities for RBS. An FDA framework was integral to this triangulation process, as it enabled the identification of power relations embedded within educational policies and practices. This cross-referencing process between qualitative data sources, such as interviews and observations, and institutional documents helped create a more comprehensive picture of how policies are enacted in practice, the challenges faced by RBS, and the power dynamics at play in New Zealand's educational landscape.

4.14 Ethical Considerations

4.15 Ethics Shirking and Broader Ethical Issues

Ethics shirking, or the failure to adequately address ethical obligations in the management of refugee populations, is a significant issue involving both signatories and non-signatories of the UN Refugee Convention (UNHCR, 1996). Research shows that despite New Zealand adhering to the international human rights, the refugee settlement policies of the country lack a comprehensive structure and adequate funding, leading to gaps in implementation and potential discrimination (Mahony et al., 2017). Governments and institutions, including those that sponsor or conduct research, have fallen short of their ethical responsibilities to refugee populations, resulting in a widening gap between stated commitments and actual practices. Pittaway et al. (2010) highlighted how these failures often indicate a form of performative ethics, where policies and research initiatives are outwardly ethical but lack substantive actions to safeguard vulnerable populations effectively.

4.15.1 Compliance of Ethical Research Principles

This study adhered to the ethical principles mandated by AUTEC. To obtain ethics approval, I lodged a detailed application with AUTEC in April 2019, and it was approved in May 2019 [Ref: 19/115]. To thoroughly engage participants in my research, I gave them each the AUT-required Participant Information Sheet (Appendix B), which included the research objectives, benefits, hazards, researcher and primary supervisor names, and contact phone numbers. Furthermore, I assured participants that their involvement in this research would be entirely voluntary and that they would have the option to stop at any time. They were also assured the information they submitted would be kept private. Following that, informed consent was sought using an AUT-prescribed Participant Consent Form (Appendix C). I used participant pseudonyms in all relevant documents and reports. The study's findings were also shared with participants.

In accordance with ethical research principles, the lived experiences of a small number of participants, each being an individual representative of "governed" subjects (Besley, 2021; Puggioni, 2021), were constructed through their narratives as well as my ethnographic observations. This allowed me to look into their individual stories in considerable depth (Ball, 2016) while ensuring that ethical considerations were

followed in delineating their perspectives with respect and sensitivity. This study's findings may serve the betterment of refugee communities by conveying their voices to a larger audience. However, such findings should also be understood alongside an acknowledgement of several limitations.

4.16 Researcher Positionality

My positionality in this research can be understood across four aspects: (1) as a former development worker advocating for refugees' right to education in their home and transitional countries; (2) as a former teacher considering the needs of students, particularly those facing systemic barriers; (3) as a researcher presenting an authoritative account of RBS' aspirations and negotiations with New Zealand education, showing how such authority is framed by one's positionality (Threadgold, 1997); and (4), as an author constructing and presenting new knowledge that incorporates a broader understanding of RBS and their education (Hryniuk, 2018). My roles as an outsider to the Rohingya community, as a parent navigating the education system, and as a supporter of refugees all informed my approach, though not all facets of my identity were explicitly articulated.

As someone closely engaged with the Rohingya community and sharing certain socio-cultural affinities (e.g., same religion, geographical vicinity), my position inherently shaped the discursive interpretations and knowledge production presented in this research. From a Foucauldian perspective, rather than attempting to eliminate subjectivity, my role is understood as embedded within the broader dynamics of power and knowledge that guide the research process. My status allowed me to navigate and understand the power relations embedded within the community's experiences and discourses, enhancing the contextual validity of the research.

4.17 Conclusion

This chapter has delineated the methodological framework and analytic processes underpinning a study that seeks to illuminate how Rohingya RBS navigate and negotiate their subjectivities within New Zealand's educational landscape. Grounded in FDA, the research design integrates ethnographic tools: participant observation, in-depth interviews, and policy document analysis, to unravel the interplay of power, knowledge and resistance that shapes RBS' educational trajectories. By situating the study within Foucault's theoretical constructs of governmentality, biopower and

subjectification, this methodology provides a robust lens to interrogate how macro-level institutional discourses and micro-level lived experiences coalesce to both constrain and enable agency among RBS.

The ethnographic dimension of this study has been pivotal in grounding abstract theoretical concepts in the material realities of RBS. Immersive engagement with participants across educational, community and domestic settings facilitated a nuanced understanding of their daily struggles and aspirations. For instance, classroom observations imparted how linguistic barriers and cultural misalignments manifest in exclusionary practices, while life history interviews exposed the enduring psychological and structural impacts of statelessness and displacement. These methods not only enriched the data collected but also ensured that the voices of RBS remained central to the analysis, countering the risk of epistemic marginalisation often inherent in refugee research.

The triangulation of data sources: policy documents, educator perspectives, and student narratives, strengthened the validity of the findings by exposing discrepancies between policy rhetoric and on-the-ground implementation. For example, while New Zealand's RfRS (INZ, 2012, 2017) espouses inclusivity, participants' accounts highlighted systemic gaps in language support and credential recognition. FDA's emphasis on discursive formations and discourses allowed for a critical deconstruction of such contradictions, indicating how neoliberal educational policies often prioritise assimilation over equity. This approach underscores the value of combining macro-level discourse analysis with micro-level ethnography to interrogate the mechanisms through which power operates.

A significant strength of the methodology of this study lies in its attention to both structural oppression and individual agency. By examining how RBS internalise, resist or reinterpret dominant discourses such as the "Integration Imperative" or the neoliberal valorisation of self-sufficiency, this study illuminates the dialectic between constraint and creativity. Participants' narratives of resilience exemplify Foucault's notion of "technologies of the self", where individuals navigate and rework subject positions imposed by external structures. This dual focus on institutional power and personal negotiation offers a holistic understanding of refugee education, challenging deficit-oriented frameworks that reduce RBS to passive recipients of policy.

However, the methodological limitations of this research must also be acknowledged. The small number of geographically bound participants, restricted to Auckland's Rohingya community, limits the generalisability of the study's findings, while recruitment challenges underscored the vulnerabilities of refugee populations. These are common issues in qualitative research, and do not invalidate the study. Ethical considerations, particularly around re-traumatisation during life history interviews, necessitated continuous reflexivity on my part and adaptive consent processes. These hurdles, however, reinforced the importance of embedding ethical praxis beyond institutional protocols and of prioritising long-term community trust over short-term data extraction.

In synthesising Foucault's critical theories with participatory methods, this chapter has underscored the transformative potential of research that bridges structural critique with humanistic empathy. This research calls for a reimagining of education as a site of solidarity, a space where the subjugated knowledges of RBS can reshape the discourses that seek to define them.

Chapter 5 Disciplined Futures: The Formation of Aspirations under Neoliberal Governmentality

5.1 Introduction

Chapters 5 to 7 present and discuss the findings of this thesis. Each chapter explores a distinct yet interconnected thematic field shaped by discursive formations of neoliberal governance, that is, the "regimes of truth", the socially sanctioned rules that determine which statements are accepted as true and actionable within a given context (Foucault, 2002). These chapters critically examine how dominant narratives and institutional frameworks both shape and are reshaped through the everyday practices of Rohingya refugee-background students (RBS). Rather than a simple top-down imposition, these discourses operate through negotiation, compliance and resistance. Accordingly, this chapter examines both the framing of aspirations through national and international policies and the formation of RBS' aspirations across pre-settlement, resettlement, and schooling contexts, showing how these processes converge in their lived narratives. The chapter opens with an analysis of policy frameworks that biopolitically shape the aspirations ascribed to refugees. Biopolitics is understood here as the way power works to manage and enhance the well-being and productivity of a population through regulation and intervention (Foucault, 2003). The chapter then turns to RBS participants' accounts of educational and career aspirations and concludes by examining how these aspirations are negotiated within conditions of precarity and governance.

I begin by analysing the Aotearoa New Zealand (hereafter New Zealand) Refugee Resettlement Strategy (RfRS; INZ, 2012) as a central policy document that shapes refugee aspirations by structuring the institutions, programmes and expectations that refugees must navigate. I then examine the ways in which participants' narratives align with, adapt to, or resist these institutional logics. Throughout, I draw connections between the discursive imperatives of the policy framework and the lived actualities of Rohingya RBS. This chapter adopts a dual analytic frame: it first explores the policy itself and then juxtaposes it with participant data, allowing for a critical reading of aspiration as a site of both governance and ethical self-formation.

This chapter initiates the empirical analysis of Rohingya RBS' narratives by examining how aspirations are constructed, negotiated and constrained within the context of New Zealand's refugee resettlement apparatus. It draws on Foucauldian concepts of

governmentality, the subtle ways modern institutions shape how individuals govern themselves according to norms and metrics, and subjectification to explore the shaping of aspirations as a socio-political and discursive process rather than a merely individual or internal one. “Metrics” in this context refers to quantifiable indicators used to assess refugee outcomes in areas like employment, education or health, often detached from the lived complexities of resettlement (Foucault, 1991).

Rather than approaching the RfRS as a static policy text, this chapter engages with it as a discursive technology of governance: a set of ideas, rationalities and instruments that configure what kinds of futures become imaginable, intelligible and institutionally supported for refugees. Within this framework, aspiration is not simply a private vision or motivational quality, but a normative terrain on which power operates. The chapter then traces how Rohingya RBS take up, recalibrate, or resist dominant aspirational scripts, and how their dreams for education, work and social belonging are entangled in broader regimes of productivity, conditional inclusion, and biopolitical management. It examines how Rohingya RBS respond to these discourses in their everyday lives. While RBS do not directly engage with the RfRS as a written document, they encounter its governing rationalities through institutional expectations, classroom practices, service provision, and assessment regimes shaped by its metrics.

Drawing on interview data and ethnographic engagement, I analyse the ways in which Rohingya RBS interpreted and inhabited the aspirational roles made available to them. Some embraced entrepreneurial, career-oriented identities aligned with the neoliberal belief of the self-sufficient, employable subject. Others articulated aspirations rooted in religious ethics, family obligation, or political solidarity. These are alternative forms of becoming, that is, trajectories of selfhood shaped by values and affiliations beyond those recognised by state-defined success, that exceed the state’s narrow benchmarks for success. Still others recalibrated their goals in response to earlier structural constraints experienced in transit countries, such as extended waiting periods, disrupted education, or restricted access to employment. Although these barriers were largely encountered prior to arrival in New Zealand, their effects persisted, shaping how students imagined and adjusted their aspirations in resettlement. This chapter positions the everyday narratives of Rohingya RBS as situated counter-narratives to the normative future imagined by the RfRS, illuminating how aspirations take shape through lived experiences that exceed and disrupt institutional logics. Saleha, for example, framed her aspiration to become a police officer not only as a career ambition

but as a response to marginalisation and a means of reclaiming authority. Halima located her desire to become a doctor in practices of care and spiritual responsibility forged in transit spaces. Anas expressed aspirations shaped by a sense of responsibility that extended beyond national belonging, aiming to use his education to advocate for Rohingya human rights. These narratives show how even when RBS' goals seem to align with state-endorsed models of success, they are often shaped by alternative values and logics that are not legible within dominant policy frameworks.

In theorising aspiration as a discursively governed field, the chapter contributes to broader critical debates around the politics of refugee integration. It challenges taken-for-granted assumptions about aspiration as a neutral or universal good and demonstrates its entanglement in systems of governance that reward certain futures while foreclosing others. Ultimately, this chapter argues that aspiration functions as a powerful technique of neoliberal governmentality, mobilised not only to measure success but to shape subjectivities. Yet, the narratives of Rohingya RBS make clear that this power is neither total nor uncontested. Aspiration is not simply a site of governance but also one of negotiation and improvisation, where RBS align, adapt or contest dominant scripts through everyday acts of dreaming and doing.

5.2 RBS' Aspirations and the New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Strategy

The RfRS serves as a central apparatus through which the New Zealand state structures refugee futures, including educational and career aspirations. In New Zealand, RBS' aspirations are forged within a dense web of policies, institutional expectations, and state discourses, operating as forms of biopolitics that not only regulate how RBS are taught, but also shape how they come to know themselves, what futures they can imagine, and what forms of aspiration are intelligible and rewarded. Among a range of policy documents, the RfRS stands out because it regulates not only education but also health, housing, employment, and language acquisition, thereby functioning as an overarching mechanism for biopolitical regulation. While other texts are threaded through Chapters 6 and 7, this chapter foregrounds the RfRS because it is the most explicit articulation of how New Zealand seeks to manage refugee subjectivities across life domains and thus offers a rich site for examining how aspirations are discursively produced through governmental rationalities and technologies of population management.

5.3 Biopolitics, Policy Aspirations for Refugees, and RBS' Subjectification

Biopolitics and policy aspirations have profound impact on RBS' subjectification. Indeed, the aspirations of RBS cannot be fully understood without considering the broader discursive and institutional environments that frame their lives. Refugees and their families, like most people, bring with them pre-existing hopes for education and careers, often formed in their home country and reconfigured through displacement contexts such as refugee camps or interim countries (e.g., Malaysia for the Rohingya population). Their aspirations do not originate in host-country policies, nor are they entirely independent of them; rather, they are negotiated in relation to global and national structures that render certain futures imaginable, legitimate or foreclosed. I approach them in this thesis as biopolitical aspirations: the future-oriented goals inscribed in policy frameworks that seek to regulate refugee life by shaping what refugees are expected to want for themselves.

5.3.1 Global Frameworks and Legitimisation of Aspiration

Global frameworks largely claim to legitimise RBS' aspirations. RBS arrive in resettlement settings already holding aspirations, which are then shaped, and sometimes constrained, by institutional environments. Instruments such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN, 1989) affirm education as a fundamental right, legitimising ambitions even under displacement. Similarly, the UNHCR Resettlement Handbook (UNHCR, 2011) operationalises these rights by specifying pathways for educational and vocational access.

Global frameworks, including the Global Compact on Refugees (2018), UNHCR education strategies, and the Sustainable Development Goals (notably SDG 4 on inclusive education; UN, 2015), embed refugee education within discourses of opportunity and empowerment. Halima's reference to attending a UNHCR-supported school in Malaysia (similarly echoed by Rokaiya and Saleha) shows how such initiatives shape trajectories (Interview 1). Likewise, Amir's positioning that "this [New Zealand] passport gives me access to the whole world now" (Interview 2) and his earlier account of UNHCR facilitating both employment and resettlement highlight how international frameworks materialise in lived aspirations for mobility and recognition.

5.3.2 Negotiating Institutional Settings in Host Countries

Upon arrival in their host country, RBS often enter education systems brimming with hope, yet must negotiate the actualities of language barriers, financial pressures, and familial obligations. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2018) highlights equitable access, language support, and progression into higher education as central to inclusion policies. These policies create both opportunities and expectations, positioning refugees as future contributors to national economies. Rokaiya's statement that "people will value me when I have my own business" (Interview 3) underscores how economic self-sufficiency is internalised as both opportunity and recognition.

In the New Zealand context, the RfRS identifies education as a cornerstone outcome of successful integration. Supported by ESOL funding, culturally responsive teaching resources, and tertiary pathways, the institutional environment encourages RBS to envision themselves as legitimate participants in national life. Halima's statement, "When I become a doctor, people will listen to me, they will not think about my [refugee] background", speaks to this dynamic (Interview 2). Jamir's pragmatic remark, "I am doing whatever I can", demonstrates how aspirations can be continually recalibrated due to lived constraints. Jamir was referring here to the way he continually alternated between study and different forms of work, taking on part-time jobs, pursuing electrician training rather than his earlier ambition to become a lawyer or engineer, and supporting his young family. His statement serves as an example of the pragmatic recalibrations that many RBS undertook: rather than abandoning aspirations altogether, they adjusted them in response to language barriers, financial pressures, and familial obligations. In Jamir's case, his trajectory from law to engineering to electrical work illustrates how structural constraints made certain futures less attainable, pushing him to reimagine his goals in ways that were still forward-looking but more immediately feasible. These three examples are illustrative, but the broader participant group also underscored similar patterns of aspiration recalibration, highlighting the shared negotiations many RBS experienced in institutional settings.

5.3.3 Discursive Framing and the Brittle Horizon

From a Foucauldian discursive standpoint, these instruments and policies function as technologies of governmentality, enabling certain aspirations while disciplining them into frameworks of productivity, integration and self-reliance. Appadurai's (2004)

concept of the capacity to aspire highlights that such hopes remain fragile, a “brittle horizon” for those confronting systemic disadvantage. He argues that aspirations function as a navigational capacity, a “map of a journey into the future” (p. 76), yet this capacity is unevenly distributed and easily fractured by structural constraints.

Thus, while rights-based and national frameworks provide enabling conditions, the futures of RBS remain tentative and vulnerable. Their aspirations proclaim both hope and precarity; they are shaped by rights discourses yet grounded in negotiations with institutional, economic and social limitations. Their aspirations are best understood not as direct outcomes of policy but as dynamic processes of navigation, adaptation and, at times, resistance.

5.4 Overview of Selected National and OECD Policy Documents

A good number of New Zealand and OECD policy documents contributed to RBS’ aspiration formation. The Refugee Handbook for Schools (hereafter “the Handbook”; MoE, 2016), for instance, offers practical guidance to schools receiving RBS, from initial enrolment to graduation. While framed as supportive, its provisions reinforce a logic of risk management and early intervention, where RBS are categorised in terms of need, vulnerability, and deviance from a norm. Customised lesson plans and identification of “at-risk” students, though well-intentioned, are grounded in a discourse that views integration as a technical problem to be solved. Teachers are positioned not just as educators, but as agents of behavioural normalisation, tasked with “fitting” students into the school community. In this way, the Handbook contributes to aspiration formation by embedding expectations of gradual conformity and self-discipline within everyday schooling practices.

The New Zealand Curriculum (MoE, 2007), meanwhile, extends these logics by offering a normative vision of the ideal learner: one who is “confident”, “connected” and engaged in “lifelong learning”. These aspirations appear open-ended and inclusive but operate within a tightly bounded framework of self-governance and normalisation, producing a governable subject who internalises state rationalities and disciplines themselves under dominant norms of aspiration, productivity and citizenship. The Curriculum emphasises personal responsibility, cultural responsiveness, and civic contribution, positioning the learner as an autonomous subject capable of navigating diverse environments. For RBS, this vision is double-edged: on the one hand, it offers a place in the national imaginary; on the other, it conditions belonging on the

internalisation of specific subjectivities, those aligned with economic and civic legibility. Refugee youth are expected not only to learn but to embody aspirational dispositions that affirm the values of the dominant culture.

At the tertiary level, the TES 2014–2019 (MoE & Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment [MBIE], 2014) and the Statement of National Education and Learning Priorities (NELP; MoE, 2020b) reinforce this alignment between aspiration and economic utility. The TES, in particular, frames higher education as a platform for building industry-relevant skills, with explicit goals to improve adult English literacy and basic numeracy, increase success for Māori and Pasifika (people who have migrated from the Pacific Islands to New Zealand; see Chu, 2016), and prepare all students for work. In Foucauldian terms, this document exemplifies neoliberal governmentality, wherein individuals are encouraged to treat their education as an investment in their human capital. RBS are positioned not only as learners, but as future workers in a competitive global economy, and their aspirations are expected to demonstrate this entrepreneurial self-responsibility. The NELP echoes these imperatives by foregrounding "safe and inclusive learning environments" and "valuing diversity", while also embedding performance expectations and institutional metrics of success. What appears as recognition often functions as instrumentalisation, where diversity is celebrated insofar as it contributes to measurable institutional outcomes.

A comparative perspective is offered by international frameworks such as Refugee Education: Integration Models and Practices in OECD Countries (Cerna, 2019), which surveys best practices across national contexts. Although not a governing document in the New Zealand context, Cerna's review offers a lens for domestic aspirations: her emphasis on early transitions into mainstream schooling and pathways into vocational education indicates a wider policy trend that views refugee education primarily through the lens of integration via assimilation. In this sense, the aspirations imagined for RBS across OECD contexts often rely on similar neoliberal scripts: urgency, employability, and the moral imperative of "contributing" to the host society.

5.5 Biopolitically Inscribed Aspirations and RBS' Subjectification

RBS' subjectification occurs through aspirations that are not innate desires but negotiated within biopolitical frameworks that inscribe employability and self-sufficiency as desirable ends. While each of the documents analysed above plays a role in shaping the broader discursive environment of refugee education, I focus here

specifically on the RfRS because it offers a particularly rich site for exploring these dynamics by articulating a comprehensive vision of what a "successful" refugee subject should become. The RfRS's five outcome areas are framed as neutral indicators of integration but operate, in Foucauldian terms, as disciplinary markers. They encode expectations of economic productivity, civic conformity, and linguistic assimilation, while downplaying or erasing alternative imaginaries grounded in ethical obligation, cultural continuity, or collective flourishing. In this sense, the Strategy does not describe refugee aspirations at all; rather, it constructs an institutionalised vision of what refugees should aspire to. It embeds this vision within a logic of cost-efficiency, self-management and responsibilisation, framing success as alignment with state-defined outcomes rather than with refugees' own lived desires or moral frameworks.

Unlike curricular or pedagogical guidelines, the RfRS functions as a central biopolitical apparatus. It works like a policy technology that manages the life, health and productivity of former refugee populations rather than merely regulating their legal status (Foucault, 1978), orchestrating the entire resettlement process: housing, health, employment, and education, under the rubric of self-sufficiency. The government frames this work as central: "The New Zealand Government sees refugee resettlement as a priority" (INZ, 2012, p. 5), though the priorities outlined align more with economic integration than cultural or relational inclusion. Its five strategic goals (discussed below) provide not only indicators of state success but also templates for the ideal resettled subject.

The Strategy acknowledges that "resettlement is a complex process that needs many different organisations to act together" and that outcomes like education, employment and housing are interdependent (p. 10). Yet, in practice, these domains are often operationalised through isolated performance indicators.

Through mechanisms like the six-week Māngere Orientation Programme and ongoing interagency monitoring, the RfRS operates as a disciplinary project, producing refugee subjectivities aligned with economic independence, social cohesion, and behavioural compliance. The Māngere Orientation Programme functions as an institutional gateway where refugee subjectivities are shaped through workshops, employment briefings, and diagnostic assessments (INZ, 2024; see also UNHCR, 2023). This emphasis is further exhibited in the Strategy's directive to "place a strong focus on employment as part of the central reception programme" (p. 9), foreshadowing the labour-oriented

construction of aspirational futures. Here, the Strategy's aspirational discourse becomes affectively and materially real: students are told to "think practically", are assessed for "work-readiness", and are reminded that "self-sufficiency" is expected within a matter of months. This is institutionally encoded, as the Strategy aims to "place a strong focus on employment as part of the central reception programme" (p. 9). This early intervention exemplifies how power works not by repressing desire but by shaping what it is possible to desire. This Strategy does not merely suggest that refugees should aspire; it prescribes how and to what end they should aspire, embedding aspiration within a logic of conditional inclusion.

In New Zealand, refugee resettlement is administered through a centralised policy environment, where education is tightly bound to resettlement outcomes and performance indicators. Unlike general education systems that are broadly structured by curriculum policy, RBS encounter an additional layer of directives that tie schooling directly to settlement goals such as employability, English acquisition, and "self-sufficiency". Within this stratified landscape, the aspirations and ambitions of students, especially those from marginalised backgrounds like Rohingya refugees, are intricately shaped by neoliberal principles.

This section dissects how these principles impact and often dictate RBS' educational trajectories and aspirations. It examines the interplay between individual aspirations and the broader socio-economic structures that enable and constrain them. Informed by Foucauldian concepts of power and subject formation, this analysis highlights how aspirations are not simply individual or community choices but are shaped by state rationalities and technologies of governance.

5.5.1 Discursive Emphasis on the Economics of Belonging

An emphasis on the economics of belonging, that is, individual progress towards economic self-reliance, is articulated in the policy objectives of the RfRS. The Strategy underscores the integration of refugees into the educational system and their broader social and economic assimilation. This holistic approach is encapsulated in the Strategy's vision, which states:

> The overarching vision for the RfRS is:
>
> Refugees are participating fully and are integrated socially and economically as soon as possible so that they are living

> independently, undertaking the same responsibilities and exercising the same rights as other New Zealanders, and have a strong sense of belonging to their community and New Zealand. (p. 3)

In analysing this vision, a biopolitical inscription of integration is presented as indistinguishability, an attempt to erase difference through a regime of veridiction that defines full participation in economic and social life as the normative endpoint of the refugee subject's trajectory. On the surface, this approach promotes integration and rapid adaptation to the "Kiwi" way of life. However, rather than supporting diverse personal aspirations, the Strategy puts forward a prescriptive model of success centred on economic self-sufficiency and civic conformity. While the Strategy includes references to social belonging, these are framed through the lens of participation in mainstream institutions and responsibilities, rather than affirming alternative or culturally specific aspirations.

Moreover, the Strategy's promise of equal rights comes with an implied expectation of assimilation into predefined roles. While the Strategy affirms that refugees are entitled to the same rights as all New Zealanders, this vision of inclusion is tightly coupled with expectations of economic contribution and behavioural alignment with national goals. This framing of support as both humanitarian and economically instrumental risks narrowing the societal space for refugees to pursue aspirations beyond state-sanctioned success.

The Strategy frames support not only as humanitarian, but also as productive investment: "[T]his support for refugees settling in New Zealand will benefit the whole country" (p. 4), thus reinforcing the conditional nature of inclusion. The Strategy's emphasis on fostering a "strong sense of belonging" warrants scrutiny. This phrase, while seemingly benign, suggests an expectation for refugees to mould their aspirations in line with societal norms, potentially at the expense of their cultural or personal identity. Van Riemsdijk et al. (2024, p. 514) underscore that "[t]he 2012 Strategy reflected a neoliberal emphasis on refugees' obligation to find paid employment, rather than the state's responsibility to ensure refugees' access to language tuition, education, and/or qualifications recognition". The policy subtly champions a form of belonging that conforms with established standards of civic participation, English fluency, and economic independence, nudging refugees towards "acceptable" aspirations that align with mainstream expectations of integration.

Furthermore, the resettlement vision hints at shaping "ideal" citizens, individuals whose goals, desires and behaviours fit neatly within accepted societal frameworks. Foucault (1977) argues that surveillance and assessment shape individuals according to social norms. Mechanisms echoed in New Zealand's resettlement process through systems like language-proficiency testing, school-based academic placement, health screening, and ongoing performance monitoring by contracted service providers. These practices construct normative expectations around who counts as a "successfully integrated" refugee. Although the Strategy advocates for rapid integration and the formation of a cohesive societal identity, it is crucial to question whether this approach fully honours the diversity of personal aspirations among refugees.

5.5.2 The Five Goals of the Strategy: Producing the Neoliberal Subject

The five goals of the RfRS operate as technologies of governmentality and have profound impact on neoliberal subjectivity formation of RBS. Indeed, the goals produce the figure of the "ideal" refugee through benchmarks in labour, health, education, and housing. In interviews, participants often measured their own success by paid work. Each goal of the Strategy embeds aspirational norms through seemingly neutral administrative language, such as requiring that "all working-age refugees are in paid work or are supported by a family member in paid work" (p. 5). Collectively, these goals construct an idealised refugee subject: employed, integrated, healthy, English-speaking, and privately housed. By tying these outcomes to measurable indicators, the Strategy converts aspirations for life into categories that can be monitored and audited.

In setting out these goals, the Strategy presents integration not as structural change or cultural reciprocity, but as refugee adaptation to existing institutions and norms. Its overarching aim is expressed as "Refugees are participating fully in New Zealand life" (p. 5). While framed in the language of inclusion, these goals channel refugees into neoliberal scripts of self-sufficiency and compliance, where belonging is equated with economic contribution and institutional conformity.

The focus on self-sufficiency through employment highlights a strong belief in economic self-reliance, casting financial independence as the cornerstone of successful resettlement. By defining success almost entirely through labour market participation, the Strategy sidelines other dimensions of well-being, such as autonomy, dignity, and cultural belonging. Its parallel emphasis on participation and belonging operates as a quiet political project, shaping refugees into "ideal" citizens through market activity

while downplaying cultural diversity and the structural barriers that limit genuine inclusion. Additionally, the stated goal of ensuring housing standards is deeply contradictory. While the Strategy frames housing as a dimension of well-being, in practice the state largely withdraws from direct provision, instead relegating former refugees to the private housing market, a sector marked by high costs and poor quality. This withdrawal exemplifies not regulatory care but neoliberal responsibilisation, shifting the burden of securing adequate housing onto refugees themselves (Mahony et al., 2017). It illustrates the state's intent to monitor, guide, and perhaps control refugees' physical and social environments. These goals function as technologies of disciplinary power that shape not only how refugees live but how they are ethically compelled to conduct themselves. Although the Strategy promises "improved planning and coordination … for all groups to work together on achieving the five goals" (p. 10), in practice, the burden of integration is often placed on refugees alone. Through indicators of health, education and housing, the Strategy inscribes normative subjectivities, drawing the boundaries of what it means to live a "good" life in the eyes of the state.

Appadurai's (2004) concept of the "brittle horizon" signals the tenuous link between refugees' present circumstances and future aspirations. From a Foucauldian perspective, the brittle horizon illustrates how discourses around power shape and limit the trajectories available to these refugees, reinforcing the boundaries of their perceived futures. The insistence on refugees achieving a state of living where they no longer require government housing assistance illuminates another Foucauldian aspect: the state's strategy to reduce its biopolitical responsibilities. It transfers the onus of ensuring safe, secure and healthy living conditions onto individuals, in this case, refugees. Individualising responsibility in this way allows the state to exercise disciplinary power more freely. Subjects must regulate their behaviour, including how they define their aspirations and goals, according to the need to provide for themselves materially, which Foucault refers to as "self-correction" and "productivity enhancement" (Foucault, 1977). Lastly, the Strategy's goal delineating the necessity for English-language proficiency further strengthens this notion, positing language not just as a communication tool but as capital, a means to enhance one's economic viability.

5.5.3 Discourses of "Ideal" Citizen and the Burden of Self-reliance

This subsection argues that the figure of the "ideal" refugee citizen is defined by self-reliance, positioning economic productivity and moral autonomy as conditions for

inclusion while obscuring inequalities. Following the achievement of the goals articulated in the RfRS, the New Zealand government envisions an ideal-citizen outcome exemplified by self-reliance: “Refugees and their families are living independently with a strong sense of belonging to New Zealand” (p. 7). This valorisation of independence resonates profoundly with neoliberal doctrines. This independence, however, is not merely financial; it extends to broader existential states wherein refugees, by adapting to market norms and reducing their dependency on the state, validate their social status and rights to belong. As the Strategy frames it, integration is not just about rights but about refugees “undertaking the same responsibilities and exercising the same rights as other New Zealanders” (p. 3), a formulation that encodes conditional belonging through productivity.

This narrative enacts a process of responsibilisation, wherein structural inequities are obscured by the framing of refugees as autonomous neoliberal subjects. Any failure to integrate is recoded as a moral failure of the self, rather than a limitation of the system. It also points towards a major contradiction highlighted in the literature where individuals are blamed for structural issues, while economic independence is framed as a measure of personal success (Darling, 2011; Ilcan & Rygiel, 2015).

Based on the goals and expected outcomes of the Strategy, it becomes evident that while it is designed to promote integration and independence, it also shapes the kind of individuals refugees are “encouraged” to become. It fosters a particular model of a “productive” citizen based on neoliberal market principles, simultaneously employing subtle mechanisms of control to standardise the refugee experience and self-realisation. Participants described being steered by settlement providers and employment agencies into short-term training courses or entry-level jobs designed to meet immediate employability metrics, rather than being encouraged or resourced to pursue longer-term educational or professional trajectories. Such accounts illustrate how policy, when enacted through service delivery, channels refugees into narrow economic moulds, shaping their sense of belonging and constraining their field of aspirations.

Moreover, the desire for refugees to cultivate a coveted belongingness within these terms poses successful social integration as something attainable only through market participation. Economic pathways to belonging often overshadow other significant forms of connection and inclusion within socio-cultural narratives (Eastmond, 2011; Kymlicka, 2015). The premise is that societal participation, primarily through economic

engagement, is the path to a fulfilling life in the refugee's new home. This leaves little room for RBS to articulate and pursue aspirations shaped by their cultural contexts, histories, and personal experiences distinct from what the market dictates. These findings both reinforce and expand earlier studies stating that the inclusion policies should be evaluated both for what they include and what they exclude or marginalise (Guo et al., 2019; Robleda, 2020).

The state's role in resettlement transcends mere administration, venturing into refugees' identity formation realms. When Amir described shouldering familial burdens silently, "I don't normally share my difficult situation" (Interview 1), Foucault's (1977, p. 30) "soul [as] prison of the body" materialises, a self-regulated refugee subjectivity. The state's authority permeates the personal aspirations of refugees, scripting a specific life trajectory and set of desires informed by New Zealand's socio-economic standards and cultural expectations. In this regard, refugees are encouraged to emulate norms of self-sufficiency, and this "independence" becomes a marker of their transition from "outsider" to "insider"; the latter having conformed to the subtle disciplinary expectations of their new social context.

The development of a strong "sense of belonging" then becomes less an organic emotional connection and more a state-sanctioned identity marker, guiding refugees towards specific integration forms that conform to pre-existing national narratives. Indeed, belonging is formalised as an outcome: "Refugees and their families are living independently with a strong sense of belonging to New Zealand" (p. 7), rendering it both aspirational and administratively auditable, although "a strong sense of belonging" appears to describe an emotional or affective state, the Strategy operationalises it through measurable indicators. In practice, belonging is audited via proxies such as employment status, housing stability, English-language acquisition, and participation in community or educational programmes. These are logged in monitoring reports and outcome evaluations, turning the subjective register of "belonging" into an administratively auditable category that can be quantified and assessed against performance benchmarks. Such framings also sit uneasily within the New Zealand context. While Māori philosophies of belonging, whakapapa (genealogical connection), whanaungatanga (relationality), and collective responsibility are not consistently enacted in state practice, they nonetheless provide a contrasting ethical horizon. Against these Indigenous values, the Strategy reduces belonging to an individualised, market-oriented achievement. These policy framings exemplify how aspirations are regulated

biopolitically, producing not only categories of desirable futures but also shaping the very horizon of what refugee youth can imagine for themselves.

5.6 RBS' Aspirational Discourses in Transit Spaces

In transit spaces, RBS' aspirations were shaped by discourses of care and vulnerability, which often framed gendered responsibilities as central to how their futures were imagined. Halima's aspiration exemplifies this: "Even before I came to New Zealand, I knew I wanted to become a doctor. In the camp, I used to help my mother who was always helping other women, and I liked that feeling" (Interview 2). For some RBS, such aspirations were cultivated not mainly in classrooms but within refugee camps and transit countries, where everyday struggle and gendered responsibilities shaped their moral imaginaries and future visions (Dryden-Peterson, 2016). These aspirations often took root long before resettlement in New Zealand, signalling both inherited cultural roles and creative responses to survival and self-worth in displacement. Female RBS tended to articulate aspirations around empowerment and reclaiming strength, emerging during their experiences of displacement. This trend is illustrated in Saleha's account: "When I was in Malaysia, I wanted to do something strong. I thought about police or physical education. Something that gives you respect and strength." Her imagined future was grounded not just in economic mobility, but in forms of embodied authority and public respect. Saleha's aspirations were shaped by her experience of dislocation and a desire for safety, dignity, and gendered empowerment. The professions she identified, policing and physical education, signify a logic of self-protection and control in response to both personal and structural vulnerability. Saleha's account of wanting a career associated with "respect and strength" speaks to a deeper aspirational logic rooted in restoring agency, dignity and authority, particularly as a Rohingya woman raised in a context of systemic disempowerment. While the Strategy promotes employment as a measure of integration, it is silent on how dignity, gendered self-worth, and symbolic recognition factor into refugee aspirations. Saleha's narrative demonstrates these values, showing how aspirations are not only economic calculations, but also ethical projects of becoming.

Halima's framing of medicine as a form of spiritual and ethical service, meanwhile, departs from the utilitarian logic that often dominates institutional discourses of success. Rather than viewing education as a tool for individual economic mobility, she envisioned a future shaped by moral obligation and care. This aligns with Foucault's

(1988) concept of the "technologies of the self", where individuals work on themselves in relation to ethical and communal ideals. In Halima's case, these self-practices of care stand in contrast to state-sanctioned expectations of productivity.

Halima's aspiration to become a doctor is rooted not in the Strategy's notion of employment readiness, but in a moral economy of care and community service developed through her refugee experience. This highlights a disjuncture between the state's emphasis on economic productivity and individualised career outcomes, and the gendered, relational imaginaries through which some RBS articulated their futures. Halima's narrative illustrates how aspirations emerge at the intersection of what Appadurai (1996) calls "ethnoscapes", the shifting life-worlds of refugees, and "ideoscapes", the circulation of dominant values, where practices of care resist the state's framing of ambition as individualised work readiness. Her aspiration exhibits an ethics of care that exceeds the market logic embedded in policy discourse, suggesting that policy measures of integration risk overlooking the affective and social drivers of ambition.

Halima's vocational imaginary formed in the interstices of camp life, where informal healthcare and mutual support networks became meaningful sites of learning and aspiration. Indeed, her narrative gives a convincing entry point into how ethical aspirations are formed through gendered practices of care in displacement. Her vocational desire emerges not through state curricula or developmental discourse but through relational care work and moral habitus within the camp. This is an example of the technologies of the self, where subjectivity is constituted through repeated, ethical practices shaped by gendered expectations and social roles. Halima's aspiration is a visceral expression of her surroundings, an ethical positioning formed by seeing it from her mother and enacting it herself, rather than by neoliberal market-driven orientation of productivity. As Ball (2015) and Schneider (2018) argue, aspirations are increasingly shaped by state-sanctioned imaginaries of success, which are typically individualised, credential-based, and economically productive. Such ethical formations show that aspirations can centre on caregiving and communal obligation, resisting neoliberal reductions of ambition to employability.

5.7 Discourses of Collective and Familial Aspirations Pre-resettlement

Refugee aspirations are often rooted in collectivist frameworks of familial duty and community care, articulating ambitions through responsibilities to kin and collective uplift rather than the neoliberal imperative of individual self-advancement. Such orientations can be read as counter-discourses that unsettle the state's production of self-maximising, governable subjects. These collectivist visions, formed in refugee camps, transit contexts, or through intergenerational obligation, complicate the neoliberal imaginary of the self-maximising individual. In this study, Rokaiya framed her earliest vocational dreams through the lens of familial duty: "I always thought about how I could earn and help my family … even in the camp, I imagined one day I would run a shop or something" (Interview 1).

While policy discourses in New Zealand emphasise self-responsibility and mobility as markers of successful integration, Rohingya RBS framed their aspirations through collective and intergenerational responsibility. Participants explicitly cited parents, siblings, or community well-being as primary motivators. Anas wanted to "give back to the Rohingya people by becoming a visible face" (Interview 2); Jamir hoped to "earn enough to send money home, even if it's not much" (Interview 3); and Halima viewed her future career as "a way to honour my mother's sacrifice" (Interview 2). These perspectives reframed aspiration as relational, not individualistic, and pointed to a moral economy of success shaped by histories of displacement.

Anas, too, articulated a vision that centred not on personal advancement but national and communal uplift. His educational ambitions emerged not from an internalised desire to "achieve" but through his identification with the political and humanitarian needs of the Rohingya community: "I didn't have a vision to study bachelor['s], master's … but when I was accepted for resettlement, I thought maybe this is my chance to help my people" (Interview 1). He also stated, "Promoting a higher-level education … bring[s] a nation from darkness to light" (Interview 1). For Anas, educational aspiration was always intertwined with collective responsibility:

> Sending money to our community members … it is something like our obligation to them. We are living a better life in New Zealand, I mean, although in hardship but much better than our [community] members who are living in the camps in Bangladesh or trapped in Burma. (Anas, Interview 1)

Remittance is more than material support; it signifies an ethic of solidarity rooted in shared struggle. In contrast to the emphasis on individual self-sufficiency in the RfRS, Anas's priorities illustrate a collectivist mode of subject formation, where aspiration is tethered to the well-being of a broader community. His case exemplifies how transnational obligation can disrupt the state's temporal logic of linear progress and integration.

5.8 Suspended Aspirations and the Temporal Governmentality of Precarity

RBS' aspirations are at times suspended owing to temporal reasons, too. This section traces how legal precarity and undocumented status shaped the suspension or deferment of aspirational planning in transit contexts. Jamir's narrative highlights that refugee aspirations are formulated as a result of biopolitical practices that can be formed under regimes of legal and linguistic precarities. A conspicuous example is when Jamir talked about the impossibility of making a plan before resettlement due to his undocumented status: "Because of the same reason, I had no specific plan at that time … when I do not have stability … I know I am an illegal person in that country" (Interview 2).

Jamir's comment underscores how aspiration itself is controlled by regulatory power; without documentation or protection, even the imaginative act of planning a future becomes unthinkable. Without having legal status in the country, the prospect of having stability as a citizen in both personal and professional life is deferred. Jamir's inability to plan before resettlement suggests how the emphasis on measurable aspirations of the RfRS assumes a level of stability and legal certainty that many refugees do not possess until well after resettlement. Even as the Strategy acknowledges that "settling as a refugee in a new country is difficult" (p. 4), it offers little in the way of structural solutions beyond efficiency-driven interventions like orientation and employment placement. Jamir's words challenge the Strategy's implicit linear model of integration, where goals, education and employment evolve predictably, by highlighting how legal precarity suspends the very possibility of aspiration. His shift from uncertainty to goal setting upon receiving legal recognition illustrates how "life politics", the spontaneous negotiation of lifestyle, identity and risk (Giddens, 1991; Rose 2001, 2007), via refugee status and documentation, becomes the precondition for "productive participation", as defined by the Strategy. Jamir's experience underscores how aspiration formation is

deeply temporal, aligning with UNHCR's (2019a) staged model of refugee recognition, where futures are suspended until documentation permits their articulation.

Following Foucault, it can be observed that time itself becomes a target of governmentality. Refugees are not only governed spatially but also temporally, through the deferral of eligibility, opportunity and futurity. Jamir's narrative exemplifies what Ticktin (2011) conceptualises as the "slow death" of ambition under humanitarian regimes. Jamir's experience indicates how temporal governmentality functions to defer the very conditions of aspiration, rendering the refugee subject perpetually suspended in bureaucratic time.

5.9 RBS' Subjectivities: Educational and Career Aspirations

RBS' educational and career aspirations emerged as sites where subjectivities are shaped through discourses of productivity, belonging and responsibility. Rather than emerging from innate desire, these aspirations are continually negotiated within the constraints of family expectations, institutional pathways, and state policies. Aspirations serve as significant indicators of one's identity, ability to act, and personal longing within broader cultural and communicative structures. The aim is to trace how state discourses of aspiration are taken up, negotiated, and occasionally disrupted in the lived experiences of students.

This section employs FDA of student interviewee responses to investigate how broader educational and societal discourses contribute to the formation of personal ambitions. The following excerpts from the student narratives illustrate recurring thematic patterns across the broader data set. RBS' aspirations are shaped through diverse discursive formations that operate as affective and institutional technologies of subjectification. Across the accounts that follow, aspirations are articulated through shame and normative pressure, authority and empowerment, ethical self-formation, and entrepreneurial agency, each articulating how RBS negotiate subject positions within contexts of displacement and resettlement.

5.9.1 Discourses of Authority and Self-empowerment (Saleha)

Among several participants, aspirations for public service or state authority roles emerged as a response to previous experiences of disempowerment. Saleha's aspiration to become a police officer illustrates how discourses of authority and self-empowerment are entangled with broader dynamics of shame and normative pressure. Her desire for a

position of public authority can be read as both a response to experiences of disempowerment and as an attempt to achieve social visibility and legitimacy within the resettlement context. Saleha's aspiration signifies a strategic engagement with state authority as a means of reclaiming agency and stability:

> I want to do police. Maybe physical education. Sometimes I want to do arts. But if I do arts then I cannot be a police … I want to be a police officer, not a constable. Because if I become a police officer then I will get everything in life … position, money, and freedom. I will enjoy my life. I always think of becoming a police officer. It comes to my mind all the times. I eat, drink, and dream police officer. (Interview 2)

In South Asian countries, the rank of police officer usually refers to the Gazetted Officer level (such as an assistant superintendent), which is much higher than the rank of constable in New Zealand. Saleha's reference to "position, money, and freedom" suggests that her aspiration is not only about career ambition but also about reclaiming control over her life circumstances. Her emphatic phrasing, "I will get everything in life ... I will enjoy my life ... I eat, drink, and dream police officer", points to her vision of the police officer role as a source of stability, status and empowerment in contrast to previous experiences of constraint or marginalisation.

Examining Saleha's ambitions allows us to explore her identity beyond the immediate material and social circumstances. Her desire indicates a complex constellation of motivations, including a need for security, social legitimacy, and economic independence, aspirations shaped by both personal experience and the institutional framing of "success" in her new context. Therefore, this desire suggests a deep-seated need for self-empowerment in her life. The police officer role embodies authority for Saleha, which contrasts with her previous experience of powerlessness. Her ambition also suggests her quest for economic security, indicating a need to overcome her past experiences of being uprooted and feeling unsafe. Moreover, opting for such a professional trajectory, particularly in a foreign nation, suggests a strong desire for independence and liberty.

Upon closer analysis, each facet of her determination holds significant consequences. By drawing on Foucault's ideas, one might understand the police force as a tangible expression of the state's authority, which organises and gains value from its citizens. Saleha's aspiration to become a member of the police force suggests her pursuit of a

sense of stability that she may not have previously experienced. In addition, her distinct engagement with persons of authority during her journey as a refugee brings a subtle and intricate dimension to her ambition. Although Foucault's analysis of authority might imply that Saleha's previous traumas and encounters with persons of power could lead to a dislike for positions of authority, Saleha's account contradicts this notion.

Contrasting with the narrow vision of the RfRS, Saleha's police ambition embodies Foucauldian subjectification, reclaiming state power for self-empowerment. Her pursuit of a role in the police force both affirms the legitimacy of institutional power and reclaims it on her own terms, signifying a complex relationship between trauma, agency, and neoliberal creation of responsibility. Saleha aspired to pursue a profession in law enforcement not only to ensure her own safety, but also to actively contribute to maintaining stability within the community. Her perspective allows us to observe the complex interaction between individual ambitions impacted by larger systems of authority, which both confront and broaden our comprehension of the refugee subject formation.

Saleha's aspiration to become a police officer offers a distinctive insight into her perception of power hierarchies and societal positions, impacted by her experiences in Burma, Malaysia and New Zealand. In Burma and Malaysia, the perception of authority officials may have differed from that in New Zealand, where law enforcement is regarded as a more transparent and protecting institution. Saleha's ambition in New Zealand is in line with her focus on maintaining social stability and organisation. Furthermore, it might be interpreted as an effort to navigate and undermine power imbalances, striving for autonomy in a society that frequently portrays migrants and former refugees as individuals to be regulated.

Saleha's encounters with displacement had probably sharpened her capacity to recognise roles and identities as flexible and contingent on the situation. Consequently, this ability to adapt and change might serve as a means of gaining power and control. In nations where the function of police officer is often associated with authority or power, Saleha's perspective, guided by her exposure to different cultures, enables her to view the profession in terms of its service, protection, and contributions to the community. This understanding provided Saleha with a distinctive perspective from which she could actively engage in negotiations and potentially even redefine her position within power hierarchies, while opposing any singular or oppressive storyline.

Similar discourses of authority and self-empowerment were evident in other participants' narratives. For instance, Rokaiya stated, "People will value me when I have my own business. I mean I will be the owner and decision-maker" (Interview 3). Halima, meanwhile, showed her confidence by commenting, "When I become a doctor, people will listen to me" (Interview 2). Both Rokaiya and Halima framed authority as a pathway to self-empowerment, imagining futures in which social recognition and authority transcend the constraints of their refugee status. Rokaiya envisioned business ownership as the means to become a valued decision-maker, shifting from a position of dependency to one of governance over her own affairs. Halima located authority in the prestige and institutional legitimacy of the medical profession, anticipating that her voice will be heard without reference to her refugee background. In Foucauldian terms, both articulate technologies of the self-aimed at transforming their subject positions from governed to governing, constructing empowered identities that counter discourses of refugee inferiority through economic autonomy or professional credibility.

5.9.2 Discourses of Ethical Self-formation (Halima)

This subsection demonstrates how Halima's aspirations were shaped by her ethical commitments and religious imaginaries, foregrounding care and responsibility rather than economic gain. A number of participants articulated aspirations grounded in ethical self-formation in the form of moral responsibility, community care, and spiritual duty rather than economic ambition alone. Halima explained her desire to become a medical specialist as a noble, faith-inspired goal. This orientation towards ethically grounded aspirations was echoed in at least six participant interviews. Halima stated:

> When a doctor does her job, gives treatment to any sick person, she does a noble job. They are the people who save people's lives on behalf of Allah. So, this is not only a matter of doing something and earning money … it is a beautiful life, a noble profession … serving human beings at the point of their life and death and showing them new hope for life. (Interview 2)

Her narrative demonstrates a tension between self-realisation and the demands of neoliberal respectability. This intention, viewed from the Foucauldian perspective, aligns with the overarching objectives of several RBS who aimed to establish themselves and enhance their social standing in their host country. Engaging in a noble vocation such as medicine indicates a dual aspiration: attaining personal fulfilment while making a meaningful contribution to the lives of other people. As discussed

earlier, Halima framed her pursuit of medicine as both service and self-improvement. She thus positioned herself as a subject who has internalised and actively performs the identity categories made available by discourse, particularly those of moral responsibility and resilience (Rose, 1999).

Halima's intention to pursue a specialised medical career as opposed to becoming a general practitioner, within the specific context of refugee aspirations in New Zealand, indicates a deliberate response to power relations and societal norms. Lippert (1999) argued the refugee system is a form of governmentality with many restrictions. Halima's resolute ambition to become a specialised doctor underscores her expressed desire for societal acclaim and economic security. She expresses both her desire for personal achievement and her goal to make a significant impact on her adopted country. Halima expresses her belief that having a high-ranking position will result in her being given greater importance and respect, leading to increased attention and consideration for her opinions and decisions.

Several other participants resonated similar discourses of ethics of self-formation as well. For instance, Anas stated: "Through establishing and upholding Rohingya rights we will be able to overcome all our problems one day" (Interview 2). Jamir's words may be quoted as an example of refugee constantly remaking himself: "When you are husband and a father, you have to keep your family running and try to face the situation, therefore, I am doing whatever I can … study, general part-time work, again study, full time work … still aiming for study but [working as] an electrician" (Interview 3).

Both Anas and Jamir articulated ethical self-formation in ways that resist deficit-oriented framings of refugees. Anas positioned himself as a politically engaged subject, rejecting discourses of refugee powerlessness by framing his moral selfhood around the collective struggle for Rohingya rights, seeing emancipation as inseparable from communal justice. Jamir, by contrast, embodied ethical self-formation as constant remaking, adapting through cycles of study, part-time and full-time work, and skill acquisition to meet his responsibilities as a husband and father. While Anas's subjectivity centres on political-ethical commitment and Jamir's on adaptive resilience, both constitute themselves as active agents shaping the conditions of their existence, countering imposed subject positions through purposeful self-conduct.

Discourses of Entrepreneurial Agency

Participants articulated entrepreneurial aspirations not as self-interested pursuits but as collective strategies of survival and family support, complicating the neoliberal emphasis on individual gain. Across most of the interviews, participants framed entrepreneurship as a duty to enhance family security rather than a quest for individual wealth. This discourse can be analysed as a means of self-regulation and as a reaction to wider society norms and power structures. McPherson (2010) used Foucault's framework to explore how integrationism governs immigrant subjectivities. The author described how individuals resist the conventional integrationist narrative by emphasising their agency and autonomy in integration. She argued that political dissent and contestation undercut integrationism's normalisation and empowered refugees. Refugees face several difficulties when displaced, and their pursuit of independence goes beyond a personal goal because it becomes a strategic reaction to both internal desires and external demands. Entrepreneurial aspirations driven by familial obligations and collective economic survival emerged frequently among participants. Rokaiya, for example, described her ambition in terms of familial support and financial independence:

> I will run a business and earn money for my family. By doing this, I can give more time to my family than doing a job. Also maybe more money. My father is an aged person … When I earn money, I can help my family. (Interview 1)

Rokaiya's words resonate with a broader pattern across participants who linked entrepreneurship to familial obligation and flexible caregiving roles. She added: "It's not just about money. If I have a business, I can take care of my parents and still be around for them" (Interview 3). These findings complicate the dominance of neoliberal individualism and suggest that many students think of their ambitions relationally. Rokaiya's entrepreneurial aspiration, a way for her to support her family and retain flexibility, illustrates the neoliberal valorisation of self-reliance. Yet her emphasis on familial care challenges the atomising logic of entrepreneurial discourse, pronouncing a hybrid subjectivity rooted in collective obligation. This "hybrid subjectivity" resonates with Bhabha's (1994) notion of "hybridity" as an ambivalent space of negotiation, while remaining attentive to Foucault's insight that subjectivities are constituted through, yet also rework, prevailing discourses of power. Whereas Bhabha locates hybridity in postcolonial cultural in-betweenness, Foucault emphasises how power

relations and discursive regimes shape subjectivity. Bringing them together here highlights how refugee aspirations negotiate both cultural ambivalence and governmental rationalities.

Halima's desire to become a doctor and Rokaiya's entrepreneurial goals illustrate a recurring pattern in the data: Rohingya RBS often framed their aspirations in terms of both personal success and communal uplift. This duality resists neoliberal individualism, emphasising collective well-being over purely economic gains.

Similar discourses of entrepreneurial agency were apparent in several other participants' narratives. For instance, Anas shared, "I am actively involved in this [reconditioned car dealership] business with my brother … It's our family business and my time here is unpaid, and the profit goes to family" (Interview 2). Amir echoed these sentiments: "The painting and decoration business I run … You know, I spend plenty of time in it because I need to make money for my family here and for my other [extended] family members" (Interview 3). Both Anas and Amir articulate their entrepreneurial activities through a discourse of collective uplift that reworks dominant neoliberal narratives of individual profit-seeking. For Anas, participation in the family's reconditioned car dealership is unpaid, with profits channelled directly to the family, framing his entrepreneurial agency as a moral duty embedded in relational subjectivity rather than personal accumulation. Similarly, Amir's account of running a painting and decoration business centres on sustaining both his immediate household in New Zealand and extended family abroad, positioning his enterprise as a transnational support mechanism. In Foucauldian terms, these accounts demonstrate how entrepreneurial subjectivities can be regulated by ethical commitments to kinship networks, producing a form of counter-conduct that resists atomised, competitive market identities while still operating within the technologies of self-management and productivity associated with neoliberal enterprises.

5.10 Alternative Aspirational Logics: Recalibration and Ethical and Political Subjectivities

This section explores aspirational logics that transcend neoliberal norms, foregrounding political solidarity, gendered empowerment, and moral obligation as central to RBS subjectivities. In contrast to dominant narratives of individualised, entrepreneurial or

market-oriented success, it examines alternative aspirational judgements: political, ethical, gendered and collective, that RBS articulated.

Participants commonly altered and/or recalibrated their initial career goals because of language challenges and immediate financial pressures. This is shown by Jamir's shift from aspiring to become a lawyer to pursuing electrical engineering: "Initially, here I wanted to be an electrical engineer, but I am not sure I will be able to do it or not, you know, when you have family and other things, you cannot do something straight" (Interview 2). He went on to explain the added complexity of becoming a lawyer given his self-perceived limited English. His recalibration of his career, from law to engineering, implies the disciplining effects of linguistic governmentality, where English proficiency is silently policed through market logics (Martin Rojo, 2018); I discuss this further in Chapter 7. Anas's story is an example of how neoliberal subjectivity is shaped by institutional definitions of success and employability, not personal desire or intellectual engagement. Anas described postponing postgraduate study to support his family, though he later reframed education as a pathway to advocate for Rohingya rights.

Anas's desire to work in human rights suggests a trajectory of ethical self-formation, where the project of self is aligned not with market metrics but with a politicised form of care and advocacy. Foucault (1988) calls this a "practice of freedom", an ethical self-formation that emerges as a counter-conduct, a form of resistance that operates through the appropriation of institutional credentials for subversive political ends. Anas's subjectivity resists neoliberal legibility by mobilising aspiration as a terrain of political struggle and moral accountability.

Amir recalibrated from postgraduate study to vocational training, aligning education with immediate economic survival. His narrative explores individual goals and wider community activism in greater depth and points to wider conversations around the discursive trajectory of resettlement. Relocation to New Zealand through the UNHCR quota is embedded in the complex power dynamics involved in global migrations. Adult participants framed their aspirations around obligations that transcended national borders, driven by transnational familial responsibilities. Anas also clearly illustrated this perspective through his narrative:

> Of course, you need to support your siblings that are back home, that are back in refugee camp; and you need to support your family here.

> Because I have got only one elder brother who is supporting the entire family. For me to get a job was very important as soon as I finished my degree. I did want to continue my study, but a job was my priority. (Interview 2)

His prioritisation of immediate employment in order to support family, both in New Zealand and in refugee camps abroad, implies a transnational dimension to his aspiration that diverges from the focus of the RfRS on individualised economic integration within the national economy. Anas's case challenges this by foregrounding familial obligations that extend beyond national borders, thereby unsettling the Strategy's assumption of bounded, individualised economic participation. His experience serves as an example of the financial limitations that refugees frequently face that hinder their academic ambitions, primarily due to their marginalised status and restricted access to resources. Viewed through a Foucauldian lens, Anas's struggles showcase the transformational power of the entrepreneurial spirit, not only as a business venture but also as a significant form of self-regulation and societal involvement.

Aspirations, commonly seen as evidence of human ambition and individual action, become more layered when examined within the context of refugee stories. The refugee, who is affected by displacement, trauma and adaptation, engages in a process of communication and compromise with the prevailing ideas and beliefs of their host societies. They construct a distinctive story that both conforms to and questions established frameworks. Dryden-Peterson and Reddick (2017) highlight how promoting inclusion in education signifies a form of governmentality, using normative discourses to determine the appropriate kind of educational engagement for RBS. Their work explores the various aspects of resilience, adaptability and tenacity that are deeply embedded in the refugee experience, under the theme of overcoming the odds.

This section has examined the nuances of career aspirations among refugees within a neoliberal framework. It is evident that these aspirations are multifaceted and shaped by societal norms, individual agency, and the power structures of the host society. For example, Saleha's desire to become a police officer extends beyond a career choice. It signifies a quest for empowerment and stability to cope with a past marked by vulnerability. Halima's ambition to be a specialist doctor represents a commitment to contributing to society and achieving respect, a common thread among refugees who seek to establish themselves in their host countries. The narratives of Jamir and Anas, meanwhile, highlight the need for adaptability and practicality in career choices, with

entrepreneurial endeavours representing their response to the constraints and opportunities they encounter. More than just personal goals, these aspirations are also shaped by the refugees' interactions with authority and their desire for recognition and empowerment in a new country. Educational and career ambitions therefore shine a light on the interplay of desire, identity and power.

Through the Foucauldian frameworks of governmentality, technologies of the self, and counter-conduct, we see how RBS navigate neoliberal scripts of success while forging alternative visions of self and community. Their aspirations are simultaneously governed and generative, signalling possibilities for resistance, collective flourishing, and ethical becoming. This yearning for such positions is no doubt a response to past experiences of disempowerment and a proactive stance against the vulnerabilities faced during displacement Having established how educational and/or career aspirations function as sites of power and agency, we now examine their concrete manifestations in refugees' educational and career trajectories.

While many RBS arrive in New Zealand with specific career goals, their pathways often shift in response to systemic obstacles. Participants described recalibrating their aspirations at least once within the first two years of resettlement. Halima stated, "I came to study medicine, but now I think nursing makes more sense because I can work sooner and help more quickly … I just want to get into the workforce quickly. Nursing is still about care, and I like that" (Interview 3). Similarly, Amir shared, "It's better to do something short and real than dream too big and wait forever" (Interview 2), and Saleha reconsidered the position of police constable instead of a higher rank: "I will still be in the same job, but this one will be easier for me to get in and I don't need to study many years" (Interview 3). As noted earlier, In South Asian countries, the rank of police officer usually refers to the Gazetted Officer level (such as an assistant superintendent), which is much higher than the rank of constable in New Zealand. Police officer roles typically require a university degree, whereas the minimum educational requirement for a constable is completion of secondary education. Table 5.1 summarises the shifts in aspirations of the participants.

Table 5.1

Shifts in the Aspirations of Four Student Interviewees

Participant	Original Goal	Revised Pathway	Reason Given for Shift
Halima	Medical doctor	Nursing	Quicker qualification, caregiving values
Amir	Master of Business Administration	Construction Apprenticeship	Financial constraints
Jamir	Lawyer/electrical engineer	Electrician	English barrier, fast entry to work
Anas	Computer/ICT professional	Social work	Political visibility, stability

Standardised testing, performance indicators, and credential hierarchies function as technologies of discipline, guiding students towards particular trajectories deemed productive within a neoliberal framework (Foucault, 1977). Most participants reported recalibrating their educational goals due to financial precarity and market-driven constraints in New Zealand. Amir's trajectory was emblematic of this trend:

> I had a plan to do a master's in business management as I was doing in my home country. However, considering my new situation practically, I decided to do a bachelor's degree. Later … I had to re-fix my plan… now I am doing a certificate course in electrical engineering. This is … in line with my business … I can apply my education in my business. (Interview 2)

Amir's narrative illustrates not only his resilience but also how market logics and the instability of refugees' lives govern the range of intelligible aspirations. Amir's iterative reshaping of his educational pathway, from a master's to a certificate course, testifies how refugees internalise the performance targets of the RfRS and recalibrate their goals towards immediate employability. This progression is emblematic of how the Strategy positions education as instrumental to labour market access. At the same time, Amir's recalibration also demonstrates an urgent need to support his family materially. For many participants, aspirations for advanced study were tempered by familial obligations and the pressure to secure income quickly. Thus, the drive to enter the workforce was not only a response to state expectations of employability but also to the moral economy of family responsibility. However, rather than simply "fitting into" the policy frame, Amir was actively negotiating it, aligning with state expectations of self-reliance while tactically leveraging education to support his entrepreneurial ambitions.

Amir's case illustrates how policy logics are lived as both constraints and opportunities, which signifies Foucault's concept of governmentality where individuals internalise economic rationalities and redirect their goals in alignment with state-sanctioned productivity. His case also shows the tension between ambition and survival, and between dreams of academic advancement and the need for flexible, immediately employable skills, implying "anticipatory governance". This refers to the way individuals pre-emptively shape their behaviour to align with expected future evaluations or institutional goals (Adams et al., 2009), wherein state-sanctioned visions of employability are internalised and acted upon even before institutional contact. Amir's path demonstrates the production of a docile yet productive subject, calibrated to labour market rationalities yet also navigating spaces of ethical self-definition.

Jamir recalled that during periods of legal precarity he could not even imagine a future for himself. Only after resettlement could he begin to set goals. As he struggled with language requirements and the financial realities of supporting a family, he shifted his focus to electrical engineering, a discipline perceived as more accessible and market relevant. His trajectory underscores how linguistic governmentality, the state's use of language policy to manage access and inclusion, redirects RBS into fields aligned with economic productivity rather than intellectual desire.

In the cases of both Jamir and Amir, aspirations are not merely self-generated but are profoundly shaped by what is structurally permissible and economically viable. The shift from high-prestige degrees to vocational credentials demonstrates how neoliberal systems valorise adaptability, individual responsibility, and rapid economic integration over longer-term or culturally situated educational ambitions.

Anas's narrative further complicates this picture. While he initially prioritised immediate employment to support his family in both New Zealand and the refugee camp, his long-term aspiration exhibited a form of ethical self-formation:

> I am aware of the fact that the Rohingya community has been deprived of basic human rights for a long time, therefore, I am keen on representing my community, which prompts me to do a master's in human rights or a similar subject. (Interview 2)

Anas's desire to pursue higher education as a way of advocating for Rohingya human rights problematises the RfRS definition of participation. While the Strategy celebrates active contribution to New Zealand society, it frames participation primarily in

economic terms: employment, self-sufficiency, and compliance with institutional norms. Anas redefines participation as transnational advocacy, connecting education to political voice and group representation. His narrative exemplifies how refugee participation is not just about fitting into society, but also about reshaping the structures that have historically excluded them.

Anas's vision of becoming a human rights advocate resists the purely economic benchmarks of success. Yet even his trajectory is shaped by biopolitical constraints such as no passport and restricted mobility (in a Bangladeshi refugee camp), the need to be employable, and the burden of transnational familial obligation. His desire to "qualify" gestures towards the symbolic capital of institutional legitimacy, which, while empowering, remains governed by exclusionary norms.

Together, these accounts illustrate how refugee aspirations, far from being stable or linear, are in constant negotiation with social, linguistic, legal, and economic forces. They demonstrate how dreams must be tempered, rerouted or deferred, and how educational systems simultaneously offer opportunity and reproduce inequality. As Foucault reminds us, aspirations are not only expressions of agency but are also produced within, and disciplined by, regimes of power. While the narratives above highlight recurring modes of aspiration, this section has traced additional patterns, especially around political visibility, gendered ethics, and recalibration under pressure, that emerged more clearly when examining cross-participant themes. The data suggest a less common but powerful theme of political and transnational aspiration, where education is framed as a tool for collective liberation. Anas exemplified this theme:

> Being a Rohingya, I can see there are so many persecutions, so many, you know, lack of human rights, so many violations of human rights. I always try to advocate for our nation in order to give them the justice that they deserve. In order to give them rights that they deserve as a human being, at least to be able to get basic human rights. There are so many interviews that I have done in order to just promote the human rights and the reason for me behind doing the master's degree is just to be able to qualify. (Interview 1)

Anas's deliberation on education offers a counter-narrative to the neoliberal standardisation of education as a path to personal excellence. The ethical self-formation that has taken place over time has made Anas believe that education and only education can pave the way for better prospects for a nation. When he said things like "I thought maybe this is my chance to help my people … I am not only studying for myself. I feel

like someone has to speak up for us, and maybe I can" and "Promoting a higher-level education … bring[s] a nation from darkness to light", he was perceiving education not as a means of individual mobility but as a tool for collective communal empowerment. His desire to become a human rights activist underscores how credentialism is at times co-opted for radical ends.

Seeing education as a tool for mobility in society, Anas's position aligns with that of Bhabha's (1994) "hybrid subject", where he contests the institutional structures on one side and finds validity in the power structures on the other. Spivak's (1988) notion of "sanctioned speech" can also be linked to Anas's hybrid position as she argues that the subalterns are only heard in the speech of the powerful and therefore must become legible first to be listened to. Anas's aspirations denote the tensions between hegemonic visibility and subaltern solidarity. His narrative suggests that education for him is not linked with personal mobility; it is a tool of communal liberation and a way to enter the system of power. While Anas's account frames education as a political tool for transnational advocacy, other participants described aspirational trajectories that emerged through ethical caregiving, gendered labour, and the embodied precarity of life in transit spaces.

5.11 Counter-discourses of Community-based Collective Aspirations

Sometimes counter-discourses become apparent from collective aspirations related to family and community. This section theorises aspiration as a field of governance in which RBS' desires are shaped, restricted, and sometimes subverted by the normative logics of neoliberal education systems. Neoliberal discourses often emphasise individual achievement and personal advancement as hallmarks of educational success. However, within communities facing displacement and resettlement, academic pursuits operate as technologies of the self that embody collectivised forms of responsibility, shaped through both familial biopolitics and state discourses of success. These communities, and particularly RBS, approach education not just as a means of personal fulfilment but as a vital instrument for uplifting their families. Their academic objectives are often interwoven with the pressing need to contribute to the well-being of their families, both immediate and extended.

Drawing on Foucault's concept of governmentality, this section highlights how familial and community expectations function as competing forms of power, often reinforcing obligations but also enabling forms of ethical resistance. The Foucauldian perspective

enriches this exploration by considering how power dynamics within families, communities, and the larger societal discourse shape these community goals. It illuminates how an intricate tapestry of social expectations, cultural duties, and the pressing need for community cohesion and support contributes to educational choices. The work of Erçetin and Kubilay (2019) on refugee mothers' expectations clearly illustrates how state educational systems impose normative roles, shaping family expectations in line with broader societal goals. In this context, lofty aspirations act as tools of exclusion as they endorse neoliberal values that do not align with the refugees' lived experiences and requirements. In this light, the academic journey of RBS is a testament to their resilience and commitment to shared progress, defying the conventional neoliberal narrative of education as a purely individualistic quest for success.

5.12 Familial Duty as an Expression of Biopower

Across the data, RBS articulated strong commitments to familial duty despite personal hardships and economic constraints. Familial duty works as a form of biopower: through the moral obligation to care for relatives, refugees are guided into particular roles and responsibilities that regulate their aspirations and conduct. For instance, Amir emphasised the overwhelming sense of responsibility he carried:

> So, about the situation that happened in 2012 back home and my house was burnt and destroyed, and my siblings were affected. So, at that time, they need money. They need financial support from me as well because they are in a very dangerous situation. Also, my parents both passed away in 2011. So that was a quite recent situation. So, I am the only person who can only support my family. And then I had to actually work. (Interview 1)

Amir's narrative illustrates biopolitical interpellation, in which the moral imperative to support one's family becomes a structuring force in how refugees' career and educational subjectivities are formed and regulated (Palombo, 2014). Regarding emotional bonds, Amir speaks to family members on the phone but doesn't share his problems with his family: "I don't normally share my difficult situation" (Interview 2). Amir's subject position is shaped by the power relations within the discourse of the refugee. His sense of duty towards his family is guided by the power structures that dictate familial responsibilities and obligations. This obligation to support his family, even in the face of personal challenges, is a form of subjectification that shapes his identity and actions.

Furthermore, Amir's reluctance to share his problems with his family is also a result of this same process of subjectification, as he has internalised the idea that he must bear his burdens alone and not burden his family with his struggles. This indicates the power dynamics within the family structure and the social norms that dictate how individuals should behave concerning their family. Foucault's framework highlights how power relations and subjectification shape individuals' subject positions and the choices they make in their lives. Amir's experiences illustrate how power relations and subjectification can regulate an individual's sense of duty and obligation to their family, and their willingness to seek help and share their struggles with others. These individual struggles coalesce into collective resistance when examining community-based aspirations, where familial duty disrupts neoliberal individualism.

While the narratives above highlight individualised trajectories of aspirational success tied to economic output, they also proclaim alternative frameworks, grounded in gendered care, collective ethics, and embodied strength, that pre-date and sometimes resist the disciplinary logics of formal education systems. Importantly, they offer a foundation for understanding how aspirations do not simply originate within the classroom or through contact with state institutions, but are sedimented in histories of survival, responsibility, and moral formation.

5.13 Conclusion

This chapter has examined how the New Zealand RfRS frames refugee futures through a neoliberal framework of policy aspiration. Rather than treating aspiration as a neutral or organic desire, the RfRS constructs it as a measurable outcome within a regime of governmentality. This policy rationality operates less through coercion than through the subtle alignment of subjectivities with the state's economic and social objectives.

However, the narratives of the RBS in this study complicate this logic. While some participants aligned their goals with state-defined pathways, prioritising employability, technical credentials, or English proficiency, others approached aspiration as an ethical or collective project, rooted in family obligation, gendered empowerment, or transnational responsibility. Participants' accounts illustrate that even where aspirations appeared to align with state logic, they often involved strategic recalibrations in response to structural constraints, or were reoriented towards ethical, familial and political commitments. These accounts demonstrate that while state policy attempts to shape not just livelihoods but subjectivities, such power is never absolute. The

contradictions in participants' accounts, between compliance and critique, and between personal advancement and collective duty, are themselves evidence of how subjectivities are negotiated under competing discourses. RBS are not simply recipients of aspiration discourses; they are active interpreters, critics and reshapers of them. They negotiate policy expectations within the complex terrains of race, precarity, gender, family and memory.

This chapter has foregrounded aspiration as a key site where power operates, not just through what refugees are allowed to do, but through what they are expected to want. Yet the data also show how aspiration becomes a space of agency, contradiction and possibility for RBS. The Foucauldian lens explains how participants simultaneously inhabit and unsettle the discursive boundaries imposed upon them. As Halima's account makes clear, RBS' aspirations often carry traces of camp life, memory, and collective responsibility. In this light, aspiration becomes a discursive negotiation through which students attempt to reconcile conflicting pressures (familial responsibility, structural marginalisation, and the promise of education) with their own evolving imaginaries.

The impact of governmentality on aspiration cannot be underestimated. Legal precarity and temporality under refugee regimes suspend the very conditions under which aspiration becomes possible, producing lives lived in deferment. Applying a Foucauldian lens, I analysed how personal aspirations were shaped by both individual agency and the subtle logics of New Zealand's market-oriented education system, which elevate certain competencies and career pathways while marginalising others.

The discussion also engaged with the collective dimensions of aspiration, highlighting the deep-seated sense of familial duty that frequently underpinned students' educational pursuits. As Anas affirmed, "We didn't come to New Zealand to just dream. We came to do something for our people" (Interview 2). These collective aspirations of community echoed the interplay of power and social norms, where students' desires and ambitions were inseparably linked to the expectations and necessities of their families, entrenching a sense of responsibility that transcended individualistic goals. While educational and career goals were often aligned with state-defined outcomes, participants' narratives impart an alternative ethic of aspiration, one grounded in community responsibility and transnational solidarities.

This chapter has focused on the RfRS and discourses of aspiration; the next chapter builds on this analysis by examining how educational policy and institutional practices shape the everyday navigation of RBS. Chapter 7 then turns to language and pedagogy as key sites where belonging and voice are negotiated. Together, the three findings chapters provide a layered account of how various policy instruments construct and constrain refugee futures across educational, economic and linguistic domains. Collectively, the findings call for analyses of aspiration that move beyond neoliberal framing to include ethical, collective and transnational dimensions. In policy terms, they point to the importance of recognising multiple pathways of belonging and contribution, rather than reducing refugee success solely to economic integration.

Chapter 6 Neoliberal Education as a Site of Governmentality

6.1 Introduction

Building on Chapter 5's exploration of how policy and aspiration intersect within rationalities of governmentality, this chapter examines the school as a micro-site where those rationalities are operationalised in the formation of RBS' subjectivities. The previous chapter traced how national policy and RBS' narratives of aspiration formation converge within governmental discourses that organise RBS' futures into measurable domains of employment, education, health and participation, thereby producing the ideal subject as employable, English-speaking and autonomous. The chapter first situates Aotearoa New Zealand (hereafter New Zealand) schools as sites of governmentality, framing everyday schooling as a mode of governance rather than neutral instruction. Drawing on the Refugee Handbook for Schools (MoE, 2016; hereafter "the Handbook"), the New Zealand Curriculum (MoE, 2007), and related policy texts such as the New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Strategy (INZ, 2012; hereafter RfRS) and the Tertiary Education Strategy 2014–2019 (MoE & MBIE, 2014; hereafter TES), the chapter examines how guidance aligned with inclusion and participation is interpreted and operationalised in practice. The analysis then follows teachers and refugee coordinators in their roles as pastoral brokers and educators, mediating between care and discipline, as they translate official aims into pathway advice and "realistic" futures. It proceeds to foreground counter-conduct in its mundane forms: micro-refusals and peer tactics that subtly rework institutional boundaries, and concludes by tracing spaces of affirmation and belonging, such as study groups and peer networks. In these spaces, RBS reconstituted subjectivity through knowledge-sharing, cultivating technologies of the self as modes of academic endurance, and assembling tactical solidarities that both inhabit and exceed the institutional shaping of aspiration.

For RBS, educational institutions function as nodal points within the wider apparatus of refugee governance, organising placements, progress, and conditions of success. Everyday routines: placement, testing, attendance logging, referrals, shape how students are rendered knowable and valuable. Viewed through a Foucauldian lens, these procedures operate as technologies of governmentality, which translate policy rationalities into practices of self-regulation among learners. Teachers and refugee coordinators, constrained by assessment regimes, often reproduce these logics, leaving

little space to recognise the knowledges and histories students carry. In this way, the ordinary operations of schooling participate in a broader regime of truth that makes difference intelligible only within deficit frames, normalising marginalisation and anchoring particular forms of subjectivity (Foucault, 1980).

The analysis draws on Foucault's concepts of "governmentality", "examination", and "subjectification". As established previously, governmentality refers to the management of populations through subtle forms of self-regulation aligned with policy aims (Foucault, 1991). In schooling, governmentality appears as students monitoring their progress, aligning choices with institutional expectations, and internalising categories such as "ESOL learner" or "regular student". Examination, meanwhile, encompasses classificatory practices: tests, logs and prerequisites that make individuals visible and comparable (Foucault, 1977). Subjectification names the processes through which students come to govern themselves as responsible, employable and resilient (Foucault, 1982). Together, these ideas present how power in schooling works not only to regulate students' conduct but also to produce particular forms of subjectivity, defining how students come to understand themselves and their place within the educational order.

Through this analytic frame, this chapter explores how such governing logics are inhabited, negotiated, and selectively contested in everyday school life. While policy and institutional discourses often constitute RBS as governable subjects in need of support, the analysis foregrounds their practices of agency and counter-conduct, moments when they renegotiate labels such as "at-risk", "ESOL learner", or "aspiring professional" and subtly rework the routines and interactions that structure school life. The chapter thus extends the macro-level policy and micro-level aspirational discourses examined in Chapter 5 by tracing their institutional enactment within schooling practices.

Rohingya RBS' school experiences can be understood not only as individual narratives of success or struggle, but also as empirical sites through which neoliberal governmentality, operating through auditability, benchmarked progression, and responsibilised conduct, takes shape in everyday educational life. Student accounts of placement, attendance, assessment and guidance are read here as evidence of how school routines, policies, and institutional expectations govern conduct, shape aspiration, and produce particular educational subjectivities. In this way, schools are

examined as operational sites of governmentality, where power is exercised through ordinary administrative and pedagogical practices rather than overt coercion.

6.2 Schools as Sites of Power and Regulation

Schools operate as sites of power and regulation through which Rohingya RBS are governed via routinised institutional practices that classify, monitor and normalise their conduct and educational trajectories. Within this institutional framework of governance, student placement functions as a governing technology through which schools sort students according to institutional expectations of ability, language and readiness. This section examines how schools exercise power through routinised practices such as examination, normalisation, and pastoral power that regulate RBS' conduct and future possibilities. By analysing both policy documents and RBS' narratives, we can see how schools function as technologies of governance, shaping the conditions under which RBS encounter, interpret, and at times contest, these structures. These institutional dynamics underscore the need to analyse policy and practice not as neutral supports but as instruments of regulation that organise access, movement, and aspiration within schooling. The analysis is grounded in concrete routines, including placement testing, attendance logging, and teacher brokerage, as evidenced in expert interview accounts and policy texts. In this context, teachers function as institutional brokers, shaping which pathways are considered possible while simultaneously mediating students' sense of belonging within the school.

In Foucauldian terms, schools function as institutional interfaces where state priorities are enacted at the level of the individual. They act as capillaries of power, transmitting policy ideas into daily school life through irregular and contingent trajectories, which are often reshaped, delayed, or reinterpreted before surfacing within everyday student experience through procedures that appear neutral but are regulatory in their effects. As with the policy texts listed above, such as Handbook, the RfRS, and the TES, these priorities are translated into institutional routines that operate unevenly in practice rather than uniformly. Placement testing individualises and ranks (disciplinary power), attendance tracking renders students' bodily presence visible and auditable (examination), prerequisite structures gatekeep future options (normalisation), and pastoral monitoring fuses care with conduct-shaping (pastoral power). In these ways, schools become sites where the conduct of RBS is organised, monitored and aligned

with resettlement and employability objectives, not through overt coercion but through everyday institutional management.

When refugee students of Rohingya background arrive in New Zealand, their schooling starts at the Māngere Refugee Resettlement Centre before they are placed in local schools, often in lower-income areas (INZ, 2016). Placement is based on age and diagnostic assessments, where English proficiency dominates evaluation. As one refugee coordinator interviewed for this study explained, “We don’t really have a system for recognising what students did before. The test and English standard decide everything. I mean the admission is age-specific, but placement cohorts are English-based” (Lauren, Manorgreen High School). This account exemplifies how placement testing transforms previous experience into a measurable “profile”, foregrounding English as the primary indicator of readiness. In Foucauldian terms, this placement practice functions as an examination: it renders the student visible through processes of classification and comparison, while simultaneously constructing linguistic and academic hierarchies that shape future educational possibilities.

This section therefore begins by examining key policy texts as governing scripts that establish the categories and indicators through which RBS are known. It then turns to the institutional technologies that materialise these scripts, from placement exams to attendance registers, before considering the brokerage practices of teachers and refugee coordinators who interpret and enforce these expectations in daily school life. By marking these layers of governance, the analysis demonstrates how aspirations and opportunities are continually recalibrated within institutional logic.

6.3 Policy as a Script for Governing Refugee Learners

Policy texts serve as governing scripts that translate national aims into everyday school practices, regulating RBS’ educational trajectories. The Handbook, for example, functions as the key policy instrument through which national aims are operationalised in school practice. It instructs teachers to monitor attendance, ensure measurable English-language progress, and facilitate students’ movement into regular classrooms:

> Effective enrolment and appropriate placement have a crucial role in the future success of students from refugee backgrounds. Placement of students should be flexible, so that there is sufficient time allowed to collect relevant information and conduct assessments. (p. 14)

This policy emphasis on “effective” and “appropriate” enrolment frames assessment as a neutral and beneficent process. By coupling placement with “positive outcomes”, the policy masks how testing predetermines which trajectories are deemed legitimate.

Though framed as supportive guidance, the Handbook presents support as a mode of information-gathering that simultaneously renders students visible and assessable. Pastoral work is described as a process of information-gathering: “Information needs to be gathered sensitively and … from a number of people so that a rounded picture of the learner is formed” (p. 18). The ethic of knowing formalises a continuous observation that converts care into a recorded visibility, the precise condition that enables the examination to classify, compare, and correct conduct.

At the same time, the Handbook also talks about helping schools foster a sense of inclusion and support, while simultaneously producing students as legible objects of scrutiny, and strengthening links with families. This policy emphasis constructs RBS as objects of scrutiny while invoking care. Categories such as “ESOL learner”, used in the Handbook, and broader policy terms like “at-risk” and “successfully integrated” make refugee learners legible to schools and the state, enabling classification and adjustment of trajectories in line with policy priorities. These labels do not merely describe learners; they hail them into subject positions (the diligent improver, the compliant attender) that must be continually proven through metrics.

In this sense, the Handbook functions as a technology of governmentality. It uses a language of support that works by converting relational care into measurable, recordable indicators, through phrases such as “knowing the learner”, “gathering background information”, and “tracking English language progress” (pp. 7–22), but these phrases turn support into something that can be measured, recorded and compared. This policy logic of support-through-measurement is enacted through everyday classroom monitoring and encouragement, which is evident in Halima’s dual experience of care and evaluation: “When I was running slow and [was lagging] behind … she [the homeroom teacher] supported me, always saying good words to me … like … don’t worry, focus more on English lessons now, you will be okay” (Interview 3). Through this policy framing of care and evaluation, RBS come to understand themselves as resilient learners responsible for self-discipline, and as future workers whose value is tied to measurable attainment. This configuration of care and assessment exemplifies pastoral power, in which care-based encouragement operates alongside

assessment to cultivate self-regulating subjects. As May and Sleeter (2010) and Wylie and Bonne (2016) both observe, such policy approaches risk reinforcing deficit views of linguistic and cultural difference by linking success to conformity rather than reciprocal learning.

Education policies that aim to include RBS often link inclusion to measurable achievement, leaving little space for the complexities of resettlement. The Handbook offers practical resources to help schools support RBS, support that simultaneously embeds accountability through documentation and review, including templates for enrolment and pastoral records, guidance on initial English-language assessment, and suggestions for mentoring and family engagement (pp. 7–22). While framed as inclusive, this policy guidance enacts a policy environment that values accountability and measurable progress. The New Zealand Education and Training Act 2020 embeds these priorities by requiring schools to report annually on student achievement and participation. The TES emphasises learner outcomes, employability, and English-language proficiency as key indicators of academic participation. Taken together, these policy frameworks illustrate how educational policy translates care into regulation, positioning refugee learners as responsible for measurable self-improvement while marginalising the social and linguistic intricacies of resettlement.

The effects of the Handbook's integrationist discourse become visible in everyday school encounters. While it promotes belonging and well-being, the Handbook frames care in ways that align belonging with behavioural norms and progress targets. This emphasis can render difference visible in ways that mark students as outsiders. It asks schools to collect "sufficiently comprehensive" information at enrolment to evaluate progress and to use diagnostic tools such as "Knowing the Learner" to decide placement and teaching plans (pp. 16–19). Support also extends beyond the classroom. This support often conditions belonging on demonstrable effort and monitored participation. It operates through study centres that record attendance and reward effort (pp. 38–40), as well as through "protocols" that guide how schools refer students to external agencies for additional help (pp. 58–59). These processes are designed to ensure care and support, which works by making participation, compliance and progress continuously provable, but they also make belonging something that must be proven through participation and measurable progress. These expectations of monitored participation and normative behaviour are legible in Saleha's account: "Sometimes when I went to assembly room, the students next to me move from their chair to other

chairs" (Interview 1). This moment points to normalisation, where institutional definitions of appropriate participation render difference visible without securing social recognition. Belonging is thus governed through compliance and monitoring, even as it remains fragile in everyday peer interactions.

6.4 The Tertiary Education Strategy and the Logic of Employability

The TES situates education within a discourse of employability and productivity, exemplifying the broader policy rationalities that also underpin the Handbook. Phrases such as "delivering skills for industry" (p. 9) and "boosting achievement of at-risk young people" (p. 11) merge equity with productivity, suggesting that the social value of refugee learners lies in their capacity to supply labour to the economy. In these policy phrasings, inclusion is rendered through usefulness and efficiency rather than through rights or belonging.

The Handbook positioned RBS within deficit framings that emphasised their risks and gaps, while the TES framed education through opportunity and productivity. The TES positioned tertiary education as both a "passport to success" (p. 3) and a mechanism for economic growth, linking learning outcomes to national productivity and competitiveness: Tertiary education offers a passport to success in modern life. It helps people improve their lives and the lives of those around them. It provides specific tools for a career and is the engine of knowledge creation (p. 3). Framed in this way, success is operationalised as labour-market utility; the TES re-routes aspiration into benchmarked employability pathways, a form of governmentality that governs not by forbidding but by specifying the desirable self. By equating success with market productivity, the TES codes aspiration as employability, steering choice through benchmarks and progression expectations rather than coercion. Although replaced by the 2020–2025 version (MoE, 2020b), the TES 2014–2019 remains significant, as it directly shaped the period during which this study's participants were attending formal education. The later strategy continued the same emphasis on employability, innovation, and measurable outcomes, demonstrating the persistence of audit-driven and responsibilised approaches that define education through productivity and self-management.

The TES set six strategic priorities, such as "delivering skills for industry", "getting at-risk young people into a career", and "boosting achievement of Māori and Pasifika" (pp. 9–13). The significance of Māori and Pasifika students signals the broader equity

frameworks that RBS are placed within. These priorities framed educational success primarily in economic terms, as measurable contributions to the labour market. As the following student accounts make visible, tertiary pathways were often framed through employability logics. The TES is explicit that transitions must be governed. The "getting at-risk young people into a career" priority "recognises the importance of effective transitions for all young people … [T]he government, TEOs [tertiary education organisations], and schools need to work together to support at-risk young people into tertiary education, higher levels of study and on to employment" (p. 11). Here "transition" is less an open pathway than a managed funnel into employability, exemplifying governmentality by transforming students' aspirations into state-defined benchmarks of employability and productivity.

Although refugee learners were not explicitly named as a priority group in the TES, they were indirectly captured within categories of "at-risk youth" and equity planning. This is evident in the TES instructions that TEOs should "recognise the diverse needs of their communities and have appropriate mechanisms for meeting these needs … for example, learners from low socio-economic backgrounds, people with disabilities, and refugee and migrant learners" (p. 12). In this way, RBS' aspirations became legible only within deficit framings that position them as potential risks to be managed through pathways into employability, rather than as subjects with heterogeneous, potentially community-rooted futures.

Read alongside the Handbook, which directs teachers to track students through diagnostic testing, closely monitor attendance, and prepare learners for rapid entry into mainstream classes, the TES demonstrates the continuity of biopolitical aspiration-shaping across the transition from school to tertiary education. Both texts reduce the complexity of RBS' desires to measurable standardised outcomes: English proficiency, attendance, National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) completion, and entry into labour markets. Together, these policy documents establish the governing framework through which placement, attendance and testing are justified as instruments of inclusion. The next section examines how these policy ideals become embedded in the institutional routines of schooling.

6.5 Institutional Technologies: Examinations, Prerequisites and Attendance

This section examines how institutional routines (placement exams, prerequisite structures, and attendance monitoring) function as technologies of power that classify students, regulate progress, and foreclose certain futures. The governing scripts of the Handbook, with its focus on English progress, attendance and integration, and the New Zealand Curriculum, with its emphasis on key competencies and achievement benchmarks, materialise in schools through institutional technologies that shape how RBS are classified, supported and advanced. These procedures are not neutral administrative tools; they function as mechanisms of power, positioning students as governable by placing them within hierarchies of achievement and possibility.

The most visible of these technologies is the placement examination system, which includes diagnostic interviews, English-language assessments, and class-placement tests drawn from MoE (2016) guidelines. As the Ministry itself notes, “It is critical that students from a refugee background are given a comprehensive diagnostic assessment before placement” (p. 16). An ESOL teacher interviewed for this study said: “They [Saleha and Halima] are taking the intensive [English] course because that is essential for them in order to get to the mainstream” (Melita, Tiptonwhite College). The demand for comprehensive assessment here scales up the examination: producing a dossier that fixes learners to institutional trajectories and transforming assessment from a snapshot of ability into a durable itinerary. This institutional emphasis turns assessment into both a gateway and a barrier, making English ability the main standard by which RBS are recognised and placed within the system.

Subject prerequisites and the NCEA credit system reinforce these classificatory logics. NCEA provides the formal structure through which secondary schooling in New Zealand is organised and credentialed. Achievement is structured across three cumulative levels (Levels 1–3), with students required to accumulate a specified number of credits at each level in order to gain certification (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2023). Credits are earned through internally and externally assessed standards, making assessment a continuous feature of schooling rather than a singular evaluative event. A central component of certification is the literacy co-requisite. Students must demonstrate competency in approved reading and writing standards to be awarded NCEA qualifications. In this way, literacy functions not only as

a foundational skill but also as a threshold through which readiness, capability, and eligibility for further study are determined.

Alongside national certification requirements, schools implement subject-specific prerequisites that regulate movement between levels. Entry into higher-level courses, such as Level 2 or Level 3 subjects, commonly depends on prior achievement in those subjects, often requiring a minimum number of credits or attainment at specified grades (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2023). While such prerequisites are framed as supporting academic preparedness, they also establish a sequential ordering of opportunity. Students who begin in foundation or intensive English programmes may experience delays in accessing credit-bearing subjects that feed into academic or professional pathways. In this sense, prerequisites do not merely indicate prior achievement; they structure the pace and direction of educational mobility. What appears as neutral sequencing thus carries differential consequences, particularly for students whose initial placement situates them at a temporal and linguistic disadvantage.

Professional pathways frequently depend on early enrolment in specific science and language courses, meaning that students placed in lower English or foundation classes may be effectively excluded from such trajectories. Aspirations must therefore be recalibrated within limits schools deem “realistic”. In this way, prerequisite structures operate as a technology of power, narrowing available futures through seemingly neutral course sequences. This use of assessment as a gatekeeping tool contrasts with the New Zealand Curriculum’s expectation that “effective assessment benefits students … [so that] their motivation is sustained and their confidence increases” (p. 39), highlighting how diagnostic placement can erode rather than support learner confidence.

The institutional checkpoints of placement, prerequisites, credit thresholds, and pathway guidance gradually teach students how to align their ambitions with what schools define as achievable. Against these checkpoints, such recalibrations exemplify what Foucault (1982, p. 789) terms “subjectification” and the “government of conduct”: the process through which individuals are urged to regulate themselves according to prevailing norms. Through these self-adjustments, students internalise institutional expectations, demonstrating how subjectification fuses autonomy with regulation. When in Chapter 5 we saw Amir taking employability to be the ultimate measure of success and adjusting his aspirations to match labour-market expectations, or when we saw Halima framing

medicine as conditional on checkpoints, they were participating in producing themselves as governable subjects organised through benchmarked progression and responsibilisation (a governing logic through which responsibility for educational success, compliance and risk is displaced onto students themselves, rendering outcomes as matters of individual conduct rather than institutional structure) of schooling. This happened because their ambitions were adjusted to what schools and policies define as "realistic", and their choices ended up endorsing institutional rules rather than only their own hopes. In this way, school becomes a "microphysics of power" (Foucault, 1977, p. 139), where small everyday actions like placement tests, subject advice, and teacher recommendations work together to guide students' behaviour and ambitions.

The Handbook similarly emphasises pathway planning, where teachers and coordinators guide students into "realistic, achievable, and coherent" subject and career routes based on their assessment data and school resources (pp. 64–67). Halima came to understand herself as a student whose aspirations must be regulated through institutional checkpoints. What looks like an individual choice is in fact a negotiation with power, where aspiration is remade into something "realistic". The contradiction is that self-formation is simultaneously autonomy and compliance. Her narrative therefore demonstrates how students learn to govern themselves in alignment with institutional expectations.

Another institutional technology is attendance monitoring, which extends these disciplinary logics into the everyday rhythms of school life. Attendance requirements and pastoral monitoring are additional disciplinary techniques. The Handbook foregrounds regular attendance as a marker of integration and predictor of achievement: "Schools are expected to monitor attendance and progress regularly to ensure successful integration" (p. 52). The verbs "monitor" and "ensure" construct teachers as agents of surveillance and responsibility, positioning integration as a measurable outcome rather than a relational process. In Foucauldian terms, this produces visibility and accountability as disciplinary mechanisms within the school. Schools implement strict tracking and require refugee coordinators or deans to intervene when patterns of absence emerge: "Attendance problems: lateness, frequent absences from school or dropping out, are indicators that students may be at risk and require early intervention and monitoring" (MoE, 2016, p. 52). Here, risk is made by inscription; the ledger creates the problem it resolves, legitimising deeper surveillance as care, care that works by tightening expectations of presence, punctuality, and moral responsibility. This

process couples discipline (individual correction) with biopolitics (population-level risk management): records of lateness aggregate into risk profiles, justifying intensified oversight as care. Taken together, attendance requirements operate as a disciplinary mechanism that renders student presence measurable, enforceable, and morally charged, linking compliance with legitimacy and future educational possibility.

These practices link directly to the education goal of the RfRS, which specifies that "refugees' English language skills [must] enable them to participate in education and achieve qualifications, and support them to participate in daily life" (p. 3). One teacher interviewed for this study described how this played out: "We're told to keep weekly logs of lateness, but it feels more like paperwork than support. The Ministry wants the records, not the student" (Melita, Tiptonwhite College). These placement routines align with Foucault's (1977) concept of the examination. In this context, the examination is not a single event but a dispersed technique that renders RBS visible and comparable, sustaining normalisation within the schooling apparatus. Attendance registers, diagnostic tests, and prerequisite rules form a loop of observation and assessment, which Foucault (1977) calls "a network of writing" through which individuals are made visible, comparable and governable.

The Handbook reinforces this disciplinary logic by requiring each refugee-background student to have an Individual Language and Learning Plan. This plan specifies short-term goals, learning outcomes, and regular progress reviews designed to "identify achievable outcomes", "monitor progress", and "record achievements" (pp. 31–33). In this planning process, targets are converted into benchmarks, producing learners as auditable subjects whose value appears as measurable gains.

Taken together, the Handbook, the New Zealand Curriculum, and the TES articulate a regime of inclusion grounded in surveillance, linguistic competence, and employability. Across the policy texts analysed, inclusion was repeatedly tied to measurable outputs such as English progress, attendance, and employment readiness. These converging metrics make visible how New Zealand's refugee-education policies transform integration into a disciplinary project of productivity and self-management.

6.6 Teachers as Brokers of Aspiration and Belonging

Teachers operated as brokers of aspiration and belonging, translating the abstract goals of the RfRS into everyday guidance that channelled RBS' choices and future pathways.

Teachers interpreted policy directives alongside students' lived experiences, translating policy categories, progression rules, and assessment thresholds into practical advice about subject selection, course placement, and expected behaviours. By "broker", I refer to educators who occupy a mediating role between policy and students, shaping access to courses, opportunities, and future pathways. Alongside teachers, refugee coordinators and advisors also played brokerage roles, translating policy expectations into "realistic" guidance for students. The brokers' roles were visible in subject selection, as progression is tied to prerequisites and credit accumulation, making teachers' recommendations crucial in determining the plausibility of ambitions.

Teachers' guidance was shaped by the structural conditions of the schools that refugee families entered. The neoliberal Tomorrow's Schools reforms turned New Zealand schools into competitors for funding (Taskforce to Review Education Administration, 1988). The RBS in this study were often placed in low-income areas and attended lower-decile schools with larger classes, fewer resources, and limited English as an Additional Language (EAL) provision (Kennedy & Dewar, 1997). Many relied on paraprofessionals with little training, even though RBS had complex needs (Harvey et al., 2014). Within these constraints, teachers and refugee coordinators often steered aspirations towards less-demanding options.

Several students recalled staff intervening to secure placements or to provide additional support. These interventions simultaneously reproduced institutional logics of progress, readiness and employability, for example through subject advice or placement in EAL classes. These actions made visible the ambivalent position of teachers, who were constituted between enforcing institutional rules and supporting individual students. On the one hand, they reproduced institutional logics of progress and employability; on the other, they occasionally bent rules in tactical and reversible ways, advocating for students without altering the institutional rules themselves. Brokerage was thus a relational practice through which movement within institutional constraints was negotiated, rather than one through which institutional possibilities were fundamentally expanded. These pastoral and brokerage practices were enacted through staff-student relationships, and Saleha described sustained involvement from both teaching staff and senior leadership. Sharing the positive experience of teachers visiting her Auckland home after the Christchurch mosque shootings in 2019, Saleha recounted:

> Our English head of department and refugee focal person likes us very much, care for us; she always extends support and guidance to us. When we got scared after the Christchurch mosque shooting incident, she came to our house with lots of gifts. Also, the principal came to our house and spoke to our family, and we got relieved. (Interview 1)

These gestures operate as pastoral power (Foucault, 1982), where care and reassurance are inseparable from guidance, operating by shaping appropriate conduct and narrowing acceptable responses to institutional norms. Across the teacher interviews conducted for this study, this work was consistently described as a balance between empathy and enforcement embedded within institutional expectations. Educators routinely balanced encouragement with a discourse of "realism", through which aspirations were aligned with institutional assessments of feasibility. One refugee coordinator stated: "If a student says they want to be a doctor, we look at credits and English and sometimes have to say, maybe nursing will be a good choice" (Eliza, Tiptonwhite College). A teacher acknowledged, "We may sound rude, but we have to go by the book" (Sunita, Tiptonwhite College). Teachers consistently invoked the language of realism when advising students. In doing so, aspiration was redefined in relation to institutional thresholds of progress rather than students' stated desires (Ball, 2013; Gale & Parker, 2017). Invoking realism responsibilised pathway decisions by positioning students as accountable for aligning their ambitions with institutional measures of readiness, thereby narrowing which futures could be legitimately pursued.

Brokerage towards "realistic" course choices was not always accepted, as students often experienced such guidance as constraining rather than supportive. Some students described partial and tactical redirection of the advice they received, consulting siblings or cousins while remaining subject to school-defined thresholds and outcomes. Halima stated, "My cousin said just try the higher class first. If I fail, I fail; but at least I try" (Interview 3). These practices function as situated and temporary forms of counter-conduct, subtly re-routing institutional guidance without escaping the aspiration logics that structured acceptable futures. Such responses were shaped not only by individual interactions with teachers but also by a broader policy environment in which success was increasingly defined through employability, self-reliance, and measurable outcomes. Across the interviews, brokerage emerged as a conditional form of support. It enabled movement through institutional pathways only insofar as students aligned their aspirations with recognised institutional futures. In this way, movement was permitted only within futures already recognised as legitimate. This ambivalence framed the

forms of subjectification that students themselves took up and negotiated, which are examined in the next section.

6.7 Rohingya RBS Navigating and Resisting Neoliberal Schooling

Rohingya RBS navigate and resisted neoliberal schooling through processes of subjectification that organise responsibility, aspirations, and self-management, while also giving rise to forms of counter-conduct within everyday educational decision-making. Building on the preceding analysis of how brokerage moralises "realistic" choices, casting certain aspirations as reasonable and others as unreasonable, this section examines how neoliberal schooling operates through benchmarked progression, employability alignment, and responsibilised choice. It traces how the Rohingya RBS in this study internalised, negotiated, or refused these governing cues in their everyday educational decisions. Within a Foucauldian framework, education functions as a technology of power that organises knowledge, regulates conduct, and produces subjects within particular regimes of truth. In this context, students' aspirations are shaped not only by individual desire but by institutional expectations that render success and failure matters of personal responsibility, even as these same conditions open limited spaces for reinterpretation and resistance.

Foucault's concept of subjectivity is central to understanding how RBS navigated educational landscapes, balancing being "subject to" institutional authority with practices of self-formation that remain constrained by policy and assessment structures (Foucault, 1982). Within educational contexts structured by auditability and responsibilisation, subject formation is linked to ideals of self-management, competitiveness, and measurable achievement, encouraging students to interpret success and failure as matters of personal responsibility. For the Rohingya RBS, aspirations were more than individual dreams; they take shape within these governing expectations while also being inflected by socio-political conditions, institutional arrangements, and their lived histories.

6.8 Silenced Knowledges and Limited Choices

It can be argued that silenced knowledges and limited choices underscore how institutional power marginalises RBS' prior experiences, narrowing the range of legitimate pathways through which their aspirations can be pursued. Foucault conceptualises these processes as "subjugated knowledges": forms of understanding and

subjectivities that remain marginalised or suppressed through dominant power relations (Leo, 2021a; Morrice et al., 2020). In the context of refugee resettlement in New Zealand, RBS encounter two governing demands: to integrate into neoliberal labour-market arrangements, here operating through employability alignment, and to assimilate culturally. Both are underpinned by a more fundamental requirement: the acquisition of English-language proficiency as a condition of recognition and progression. This subsection examines how institutional categories subordinate RBS' own knowledges and experiences to assessment and benchmarked progression logics, constraining viable choices even when aspirations themselves remain unchanged.

Schools often overlook the knowledge RBS already have, especially when progress is mainly judged in terms of English skills (McMaster, 2013). Teachers and refugee coordinators in this study acknowledged this gap, noting that students' multilingual or vocational skills "don't count" towards advancement. Across interviews, recognition of prior learning remained the exception, underscoring how assessment regimes privilege English proficiency as the sole marker of value. The Handbook does note that "it is essential that the initial information gathering about each student includes checking to see what schooling (if any) they have had, and how interrupted it was, as well as what language it was in" (p. 17). Acknowledging literacy or proficiency in a student's first language can boost both learning and confidence, which aligns with the Handbook's reminder that "students who are pre-literate … have much greater learning challenges than those who can read and write in first language/s" (p. 17).

Intake processes that document prior schooling or informal education also provide a fuller picture of ability and challenge the assumption that refugee learners begin from nothing. These practices do not remove systemic barriers, but they show the value of recognising the skills and resilience RBS already bring with them. As a deputy principal of Manorgreen High School explained, "The system wants neat categories, but the reality is messy. We're always negotiating between what the Ministry expects and what students actually need" (Sally, focal person for Rokaiya). This negotiation illustrates how recognition of prior knowledge remains contingent, vulnerable to institutional priorities, and dependent on individual advocacy rather than structural change.

While placement frameworks create the structural entry point into education, the broader policy landscape highlights a series of expectations that intersect directly with the kinds of educational uncertainties evident in Rokaiya's and Jamir's narratives

described in Chapter 5. The Handbook observes that refugee-background learners often arrive with “seriously disrupted” or minimal formal schooling and therefore require “expert support” to bridge significant academic gaps (p. 7). This observation aligns with Rokaiya’s admission that her earlier religious schooling left her feeling academically “not enough” for New Zealand. The Handbook also emphasises that learning can only begin effectively once students’ “physical and emotional needs have been met” and they feel welcomed and safe (p. 27). This emphasis helps us understand why building confidence after displacement can take time. Rokaiya’s tentative educational goal-setting, starting with a diploma and only later imagining a master’s degree, mirrored the Handbook’s recognition that resettlement pressures, including unfamiliar social norms and linguistic demands, can “weigh heavily” on learners who are “still fragile from past trauma” (p. 7).

Jamir’s experience of receiving harsh, public correction points to a further layer to how institutional power is enacted through everyday classroom interactions. His teacher told him that what he submitted was “not professional” and “not acceptable”, which left him embarrassed and exposed in front of classmates who he felt were progressing more confidently. Although the Handbook does not give specific rules for giving feedback to students, it repeatedly stresses the importance of gathering information “sensitively” (p. 18), building trusting relationships, and creating school environments where students feel supported rather than exposed. Jamir’s embarrassment, and the feedback being given in front of his classmates, shows how easily an ordinary classroom moment can undermine a student’s confidence. This experience is at odds with the New Zealand Curriculum’s assertion that “students understand the desired outcomes and the criteria for success” and are guided by feedback that supports their progress (p. 40). What Jamir experienced was feedback that operated as disciplinary exposure rather than pedagogical guidance. The Handbook, meanwhile, instructs schools to share information carefully, work collaboratively with students, and understand their needs across different settings (pp. 18–19). Jamir’s explanation that he “did not know the exact way” to complete the assignment illustrates precisely the kind of uncertainty the Handbook expects teachers to respond to with guidance rather than criticism. His response points to a gap between the policy ideal of sensitive, supportive practice and the actual dynamics of classroom interactions.

While the Handbook emphasises recognising students’ prior learning and skills, such recognition is enacted unevenly through institutional hierarchies of language,

qualification and confidence. Rokaiya's account illustrates how prior educational experience is re-evaluated through English-dominant standards that reposition students as provisional or incomplete learners. Drawing on her experiences of religious schooling in Malaysia, she described recalibrating her aspirations in response to what was considered adequate preparation for the New Zealand context:

> Initially, I was suffering from a lack of confidence because in Malaysia, I received a religious education only, which may not be enough for New Zealand. Because English is the first language in New Zealand. I am still doing English courses. Therefore, at the moment, I plan for a diploma. But hopefully, by the time I complete my diploma level, I will gain enough confidence and then re-fix my target for higher education up to the master's level ... I will apply my knowledge and start a business and grow bigger ... When I have money, I have freedom. (Interview 2)

Here, aspiration is responsibilised through a staged logic of progression, where confidence, language proficiency, and credential accumulation become prerequisites for legitimacy. Entrepreneurial ambition is not articulated outside institutional constraint but reorganised through it, aligning future possibility with incremental compliance to recognised pathways. This configuration illustrates how recognition operates less as validation of prior learning than as a conditional process that reshapes how RBS imagine viable futures.

Anas's account demonstrates how social visibility and shame can shape RBS' early sense of belonging at school. Feeling "like an alien" in the classroom, and receiving unwelcoming comments from peers, left him discouraged and unsure of his place [Interview 1]. His experience echoes the Handbook's observation that newly arrived students often face "unfamiliar social norms" and may struggle emotionally until they feel recognised and welcomed (p. 7). The awkwardness Anas described also aligns with the Handbook's emphasis that learning can only begin effectively once students' "physical and emotional needs have been met" and schools provide an environment where they feel safe and valued (p. 27). His determination "to do something so that these students cannot treat me the same way" indicates the pressure students feel to prove themselves in response to social judgement.

Over time, as Anas gained confidence in English and began receiving praise from teachers, his social positioning within the classroom shifted. This trajectory resonates with the Handbook's guidance that supportive teacher relationships play a key role in

strengthening confidence and promoting positive peer interactions (pp. 45–46). Anas's journey shows how shame and visibility can initially undermine belonging, yet recognition, especially through language development and teacher affirmation, can transform a student's place within the school community.

6.9 Adapting Aspirations within the Market Rationalities of Tertiary Education

This section examines how RBS adapted their educational aspirations in response to tertiary systems organised around market rationalities, including prerequisites, subject streaming, and credit requirements tied to employability. As Foucault (1977, pp. 177–179) observes, disciplinary power operates through "a perpetual economy of surveillance" that ranks, compares and normalises individuals, ensuring that institutional order is maintained through self-regulation. Amir's post-school pathway demonstrates how institutional constraints established during schooling continue to delimit the options available to former RBS. At the time of interview, Amir was engaged in the pursuit of a certificate in electrical engineering at a vocational institution. He stated:

> It will take me less time to finish this certificate course, and I can use what I learn right away in my work. So, the things I learn in class are immediately useful for my business. I mean, people like us don't have many options, especially adults who came here as refugees. Even so, I'm happy because I have some freedom in my studies, which means I can balance school, work, and family. (Interview 2)

Amir's recalibration foregrounds how post-school options remain structured by institutional categories that privilege short-term employability and flexibility over expanded educational choice. Rafferty et al. (2020) similarly document how inconsistent enrolment practices and limited recognition of refugee learners' prior experiences in New Zealand narrow educational trajectories beyond compulsory schooling.

Jamir likewise reconsidered his educational choices in New Zealand. In his transition, his decision to switch from law to electrical engineering highlights a practical approach to securing stability. Jamir had planned to balance employment and studies but experienced challenges juggling both. As Spoonley (2015) notes, market-oriented tertiary structures in New Zealand tend to steer migrant and RBS towards shorter,

employment-focused programmes, a pattern captured in Jamir's recalibration. Furthermore, his trajectory illuminates how language proficiency operates as a policy-driven gatekeeping mechanism. The insistence on "competence" in the New Zealand Curriculum frames literacy as an individual mastery that can be observed and assessed: "Students will be competent users of language, symbols, and texts" (p. 12).

Within the New Zealand education system, different fields of study carry uneven language demands, shaping how options are differentiated for RBS. As a refugee in the early phases of English-language acquisition, Jamir described how institutional language requirements and labour-market signals rendered electrical engineering more accessible than law, despite the latter's higher status and earning potential. This pattern of differentiation exemplifies examination as a governing logic, where language benchmarks and market criteria classify educational trajectories and delimit which options are made viable.

As these constraints extended beyond school into post-settlement life, Jamir described pacing his educational progression alongside family and migration milestones. When outlining his current circumstances after gaining legal stability in New Zealand, he explained:

> Now I have stability and the [New Zealand] passport … my new permanent address. I am willing to continue EE [electrical engineering] up to the highest level, but maybe little by little … I have family … You know I got married when I was in Malaysia. So, I am like … for me … may not be possible to do all [successive education] at a time. (Interview 2)

Here, legal status, family responsibility, and credential pacing intersect to shape how educational participation becomes fragmented and incremental rather than continuous.

6.10 Resistance and Everyday Counter-conduct

Resistance, belonging, and counter-conduct capture how RBS disrupted governing rationalities from within and reclaimed a sense of belonging. Their subtle practices unsettled the smooth functioning of neoliberal schooling, here operating through audit-driven assessment, streaming, and outcome-focused routines. Students consistently framed small acts such as forming study groups, negotiating subject entry, or redefining success, as ways to push back against institutional containment. Across accounts,

counter-conduct operated less as open rebellion than as tactical self-formation within constraint.

At times, teachers themselves unsettled the rigidities of assessment. One ESOL teacher recalled, “I sometimes encourage students join mainstream classes earlier than their test score allowed. Often, they rose to the challenge, and it felt unfair to hold them back just because of one number” (Sunita, Tiptonwhite College). This discretionary act exemplifies what Foucault (1982) called “counter-conduct”: practices that resist governance from within. By bending rules, the teacher undermined the authority of the examination as the sole arbiter of progress.

In the early stages of her schooling, Saleha described how classroom support coexisted with peer dynamics that marked her as socially peripheral. While teachers intervened to manage behaviour, Saleha described repeated experiences of exclusion among peers:

> At the beginning many things happened … not good, the assembly room matter … students not sitting my beside … is one example. Then … if I go to play, nobody wanted to play with me and I got sad. I am not going to ask them why they don’t play with me. Because they are with their group and I feel shy for my poor English. (Interview 1)

Here, exclusion operates through normalisation, as peer groupings establish informal benchmarks of belonging that Saleha recognised but did not contest. Teacher intervention mitigated overt behaviour without disrupting the social norms through which linguistic difference was rendered marginal.

6.11 Precarity, Citizenship, and the Politics of Belonging

This section examines how precarity, citizenship, and the politics of belonging intersect to shape RBS’ educational subjectivities, showing that schooling is entangled with wider legal and political technologies that govern who may belong and under what conditions. RBS’ capacity to belong, to aspire, and to imagine a viable future was mediated not only through educational policy but also through the state’s apparatuses of migration, citizenship and recognition. These operate as mechanisms through which neoliberal rationalities and long-standing colonial logics shape the conditions of recognition. These logics delineate who may be recognised as a legitimate subject of the nation.

6.11.1 Legal Precarity and the Politics of Belonging

Legal precarity shapes the politics of belonging by positioning Rohingya RBS within shifting legal categories that condition access to education, stability and recognition. Within these constraints, RBS are not simply passive recipients of governance. The precarious conditions that shape their belonging also generate limited spaces for agency, negotiation and refusal, as acts of resistance and everyday counter-conduct emerge from within the very structures through which legitimacy, aspiration and recognition are governed.

During Amir's earlier life in Thailand as an undocumented individual without a passport or work permit, he had lived under constant threat of detection. Gradually, he moved from "illegal" to "refugee" and later "student". These shifts configured how he understood stability and opportunity once he entered the New Zealand education system. Arriving with few resources, he faced pressure to manage independently and meet the expectations of self-reliance that were built into his schooling. From a Foucauldian perspective, the shift from "illegal" to "refugee" to "student" exemplifies biopolitical governance, where the state produces life categories that determine who can study, who can work, and who remains in precarity.

Ethical self-formation also shaped Amir's subjectification as a student in New Zealand. His account illustrates how educational participation and ethical decision-making are shaped by legal and economic constraints:

> I feel quite pity for her [his future wife], and I decided to get married. In this case, she was refugee at the moment. So, at that time, when I decided to get married, she was struggling with the documentation … to be together, get married. So, we decided to go to Malaysia in 2015 … and we went to Malaysia to get married and then she went to US and I came back to New Zealand. (Interview 1)

Here, ethical decision-making is inseparable from shifting visa, documentation and mobility regimes that condition family formation, work, and study. Educational participation becomes contingent on legal stability and financial viability, rather than on aspiration or prior preparation. Amir's account thus illustrates how governance operates across intimate and educational domains, producing fragmented trajectories rather than linear pathways.

Negotiating National and Cultural Belonging.

This subsection examines how RBS articulated belonging within national and cultural frames shaped by displacement, restriction and governance. While schools promoted integrationist narratives, students described forms of identification structured by histories of confinement, conditional inclusion, and mobility control. Anas's account illustrates how national belonging was articulated less as attachment to place than as a negotiation shaped by confinement and exclusion. Born in Bangladesh to a family originating from Burma, he described gratitude towards Bangladesh for its support of Rohingya people while rejecting identification as Bengali due to prolonged restrictions on movement and social participation:

> I mean putting myself as Bengali or Burmese or anything, it does not matter at the end of the day. Although I lived in Bangladesh, I can never deny that Bangladesh has been one of the greatest countries, and they have all supported the Rohingya people. The only reason I don't feel a part of Bengali because we have been confined to the area where we lived. I have not had any opportunity to go out to Chittagong area, Dhaka area in order to stay there. So I never felt, you know, I am a Bengali. But I never differentiate who is Bengali and who is non-Bengali. I would always say that I was born as a Rohingya and I am always proud to say that I am a Rohingya. (Interview 2)

Here, belonging is articulated through experiences of spatial regulation rather than cultural affinity, producing identification grounded in exclusion rather than assimilation. Rohingya identity emerges not as elective affiliation but as a position forged through restricted mobility and denied recognition. Anas extended this positioning through his strong advocacy for education, framing it as the primary mechanism through which collective futures could be secured. Speaking about what he believed organisations should prioritise for Rohingya communities, he stated:

> I think providing a mentoring programme would be really helpful … Promoting a higher-level education, of course this is the only means in order to bring a nation from darkness to light. I would always promote that. I would always urge any single organisation in order to provide that kind of education. (Interview 2)

This framing signals a responsibilised vision of education as moral and civic uplift, aligning collective liberation with educational attainment. While this framing exceeds state narratives, such as the RfRS, that position education primarily as a tool for individual employability and integration, it remains shaped by the same governing assumption that education is the principal route to legitimacy, stability, and social

recognition. Belonging is thus articulated not as unconditional inclusion but as something to be secured through educational contribution and moral responsibility. Power in this context operates through diffuse, everyday interactions that shape how futures are imagined and foreclosed. When considering the possibility of returning to Myanmar, Anas described it as effectively foreclosed by ongoing persecution:

> This is a very hypothetical situation. I can, I can never think that is going to happen and we can only imagine and wish it to be true. The way that they are playing the game, to be honest, I cannot see that is happening not even in this generation, probably not even in future generations … Because this persecution has not only started this year or last year, you know, it has been happening for decades. (Interview 2)

The impossibility of return operates as a structuring condition, narrowing the horizon of viable futures and reorienting attachment towards settlement in New Zealand. Education emerges here not as aspiration but as an anchoring infrastructure through which continuity, legitimacy, and forward movement are made possible. Subjectification thus evolves through constrained futurity, shaped by geopolitical exclusion rather than individual choice. Anas's realisation that the political machinations are likely to persist across generations highlights the entrenchment of a neoliberal world order, which often sidelines humanitarian concerns for geopolitical strategy and economic gains. His narrative implies that refugees are entangled in a web of global power plays that overshadows their personal histories and aspirations. Enduring persecution, within the neoliberal critique, is not just a failure of political will but also a consequence of a global system that devalues the individual in the face of state and market forces. These findings suggest that attention must be redirected towards multilingual students of diverse backgrounds and their distinct encounters within educational environments. The Handbook, significantly, also stresses the need to recognise students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds as strengths (pp. 45–46).

The linguistic talents of RBS are typically disregarded within formal schooling. Yet these talents operate as a source of empowerment insofar as they challenge educational arrangements organised around individualised assessment, benchmarked progression, and responsibilised achievement. Instead, they foreground the value generated through cultural and linguistic plurality. This perspective aligns with the Handbook's emphasis on recognising first-language literacy and prior educational experiences as resources rather than deficits (pp. 38–40; see also p. 27). The Handbook also underscores the

importance of educators' support in acknowledging and valuing multiple identities, particularly religious ones, and similarly encourages inclusive and sensitive teaching practices that respond to diverse learner identities (p. 53). Viewed through Foucault's (1988) technologies of the self, these supportive interactions become sites where students practise ethical self-formation amid structural constraint.

Despite encountering prejudiced assumptions and unequal treatment, RBS in this study demonstrated legible forms of tenacity in navigating and reworking their academic trajectories. Their accounts highlight the need for educational systems to deepen inclusive practices by recognising that educational achievement is not solely an individual endeavour and is closely intertwined with cultural identity and community support. The focus now turns to discourses of aspiration, drawing on Appadurai (2004) and Schneider (2018), which challenge neoliberal education, characterised by individualised success and competitive attainment, by foregrounding community-based and collective orientations to aspiration. This perspective is crucial for understanding Rohingya RBS' aspirations within a Foucauldian framework, where power, knowledge and subjectivity interact to configure educational and personal goals (Foucault, 1982; McLaren, 2002). These narratives and theoretical insights converge to raise key implications for policy and practice, providing a basis for the critical interrogation that follows.

6.12 Creating Alternative Spaces of Belonging

Alternative spaces of belonging and affirmation make legible how RBS created spaces of resilience and agency within, beyond institutional constraints. The analysis now turns from institutional policies and teacher interventions to the everyday practices through which students responded to these structures, namely the institutional expectations and pathway constraints shaping their schooling. The following subsections trace three interrelated strategies: reclaiming religious and cultural identities as counter-narratives to deficit framings; developing "technologies of the self" to manage academic survival; and forming peer-led study groups as tactical solidarities. Together, these examples highlight how RBS negotiated, resisted and reimagined their schooling beyond the limits set by neoliberal governance, here operating through auditability, benchmarked progression, and responsibilised pathways.

6.12.1 Reclaiming Identity through Knowledge-sharing

Reclaiming identity through knowledge-sharing occurred when Rohingya RBS exchanged socially legible forms of knowledge with peers, enabling moments of belonging that partially displaced refugee status without dismantling institutional hierarchies. Through peer-to-peer interactions, students sometimes exchanged forms of knowledge that lay outside formal curricular recognition, shaping everyday experiences of belonging within school spaces (Leo, 2021a; Morrice et al., 2020). While such exchanges did not overturn institutional hierarchies, they could momentarily reconfigure how difference was read and valued among peers. Rokaiya described how her background of growing up in Malaysia became a point of connection rather than marginalisation in a context where few Malaysian students were enrolled. Rather than foregrounding her refugee status, classmates responded to her national background as familiar and socially legible:

> In my early days, I was feeling lonely in my class … [I] did not have friends here … Being Malaysian is a very big blessing because when people ask me where are you from? And I say "Malaysia", they are so happy to hear that as there are not many Malaysian people here. So … the refugee-background identity is not a big issue for them because they do not even care about it as they always respect each other. They don't care whether the person is refugee or any other international citizen. (Interview 2)

Here, belonging is mediated through recognisable national categories that temporarily displace refugee status as the primary marker of difference. Rokaiya also described how teacher encouragement to participate in social activities created opportunities for visibility and interaction, without necessarily undoing broader institutional hierarchies. In this context, peer interest in her background operated as a form of conditional inclusion rather than unqualified acceptance.

Following the 2019 Christchurch mosque attacks, Rokaiya noted heightened peer awareness of Muslim identity, which shaped expressions of solidarity:

> Mostly no one does that to me and they respect me as a Muslim student, since that incident happened in Christchurch, they know what a Muslim is, what Muslim people are, so they know everything. So, they're also sad about that incident. (Interview 2)

These moments illustrate how recognition can emerge through shared events and moral discourse, rendering Muslim identity temporarily intelligible and sympathetic within

peer relations. Such recognition, however, remained situational and dependent on broader social narratives rather than representing a durable transformation of power relations. Peer interactions thus functioned less as resistance than as negotiated spaces where marginalised identities could be repositioned under particular conditions.

6.12.2 Technologies of the Self and Strategies for Academic Survival

'Technologies of the self' fostered strategies for academic survival as Rohingya RBS adopt practices of self-management and self-surveillance to meet institutional expectations of progress, assessment and completion. In this context, RBS took up practices of self-management in direct response to assessment-driven expectations, aligning their conduct with performance thresholds rather than operating outside governance. While these practices allowed limited room for negotiation, they primarily functioned to organise effort, risk and responsibility in ways consistent with institutional demands. Anas described navigating academic requirements by closely monitoring his performance and seeking targeted support when required:

> At times I used to study at uni [Daffodil International University in Bangladesh] the whole nights. Sometimes I used to come back home at 3, sometimes at 4 o'clock in the morning in order to make sure that I was able to submit the homework that was given to us. So, there was a lot of struggle for me because, even the passing rate for that programming language was not really that great. I think probably they have 50% or only 75% passing rate for that class. So that was the class that a lot of students used to fail, they used to repeat. But for me I had to study so hard as I did not want to repeat anything by myself. So I would rather dedicate my time for that class specifically. (Interview 1)

Here, sustained effort functions as a mode of self-regulation shaped by institutional benchmarks of success and failure. Avoiding repetition and delay became personal responsibilities, requiring intensified time investment and self-surveillance. Anas's account illustrates how self-management operates as a practical response to assessment regimes, aligning individual conduct with institutional expectations rather than exceeding them.

Saleha's experiences and aspirations were shaped by the refugee discourse surrounding her. Her subjectivity and ethical self-formation were shaped by her experiences of displacement and marginalisation. Her decision to pursue physical education was due to her belief that it offered more secure employment options. This negotiation echoes the

New Zealand Curriculum's emphasis on "pathways to work", which prioritises career readiness over alternative or creative educational routes. Saleha's subject position illustrates how policy frameworks channel RBS into securitised and vocational futures aligned with state interests. I will expand on the strategies Saleha employed to navigate her adversities in Chapter 7. Halima's trajectory, already discussed in earlier sections, also demonstrates how migration reshaped her sense of belonging and future horizons, intertwining her Burmese heritage with her ambitions in New Zealand.

6.12.3 Study Groups as Tactical Solidarities

Study groups operate as tactical solidarities through which RBS mobilise technologies of the self to manage academic demands and sustain educational participation within neoliberal schooling. For Rohingya RBS, study groups were small, peer-led gatherings where students met after school or online to complete assignments, share notes, and practise English together. Beyond providing academic support, these spaces enabled students to collectively organise study routines, regulate effort, and offer mutual care in response to institutional expectations. Read through the notion of technologies of the self, study groups can be understood as practices that both complied with and subtly resisted neoliberal schooling, operating within regimes of individualised assessment, auditability, and responsibilised academic progress.

Study groups functioned as peer-mediated spaces where students collectively managed academic demands under institutional expectations. Anas described joining a study group that supported him in managing coursework demands:

> The first couple of weeks [were] quite challenging, but after that we had our own group where we would be able to study together. There are so many, I think there was one Indian girl … and the other two they were Kiwis. For study group I used to mix with that Indian girl because I found at least I can just talk to her. And if I make a mistake, she used to correct me. (Interview 1)

Through shared study practices, RBS distributed responsibility for correction, pacing and persistence across the group. These peer arrangements aligned individual effort with assessment expectations, extending self-regulation into collective form. Anas's experience foregrounds the importance of peer support, as study groups became spaces for learning and resilience. The formation of such groups illustrates how students from diverse backgrounds resisted isolation and exclusion, asserting agency within structures organised through auditability, benchmarked progression, and responsibilised

achievement, rather than as abstract resistance to an ideological system. By correcting one another's mistakes, scheduling sessions, and motivating persistence, students enacted forms of self-regulation and peer discipline. Such moments show, at the level of everyday practice, that refugees are not passive recipients of governing narratives but rather active agents who shape and reshape their identities through interactions in educational settings.

6.13 Reframing Navigations: Towards Collective and Culturally Grounded Futures

This section explores how RBS reframed their educational navigations towards collective and culturally grounded futures, negotiating the constraints of neoliberal schooling and operating through employability alignment and individualised pathways. Rather than rejecting these logics, students layered alternative meanings onto them, prioritising community well-being, drawing on cultural values for guidance, and pursuing careers that supported their families and ethnic communities. In tracing alternative discourses of aspiration within the educational milieu, the experiences of multilingual students foreground a complex interplay of identity, cultural recognition and resilience. This reframing is substantiated by examples from RBS' narratives and their school encounters.

6.13.1 Religious Identity and Educational Stigma

Religious identity and educational stigma foreground how students negotiated exclusion and stereotyping, as practices such as wearing the hijab both exposed them to marginalisation and served as resources for asserting dignity and affirming community belonging. This stigma can shape aspirations and choices to engage or withdraw from school life.

As discussed in the preceding analysis, Rokaiya often negotiated how her hijab was read, sometimes as a respected symbol, sometimes through Islamophobic stereotyping. In this context, the hijab can be read through the Foucauldian notion of the examination: a visible marker that subjects Rokaiya to scrutiny, classification and commentary. As with school examinations, her religious identity was constituted as governable by others' gaze, producing subjectification as a "Muslim student" who must continually negotiate belonging under disciplinary observation. Rokaiya's hijab is one example of a broader pattern in the data, where Rohingya RBS use religious and cultural markers as

symbolic and local forms of resistance against assimilationist pressures, a site of counter-conduct as participants assert identities within systems that seek to homogenise them.

6.13.2 Islamophobia and Social Alienation

Islamophobia operates as a circulating discourse through which Rohingya RBS are differentially positioned, producing experiences of both conditional inclusion and social alienation within and beyond school spaces. Rokaiya's account illustrates how moments of conditional inclusion coexisted with experiences of suspicion and exclusion, foregrounding the fragile and contingent nature of belonging under racialised and religious scrutiny. She described growing sentiments in New Zealand in which Muslims were broadly associated with terrorism. Commenting on how Muslims were discussed in public discourse after resettlement, Rokaiya observed: "New people who came to New Zealand, like us Muslims, they call us as a terrorist" (Interview 2). She also recalled unfriendly encounters at school. Describing specific interactions with peers in the classroom setting, she explained: "Some students were giving me an unfriendly look when I spoke to them … I think my poor English could be the reason or maybe I looked different" (Interview 1).

These encounters demonstrate how Muslim identity becomes hyper-visible through dominant security and suspicion discourses, shaping everyday interactions even in the absence of formal institutional sanction. Rokaiya's subject position was thus produced through normalisation processes that rendered difference legible and consequential, while leaving its attribution ambiguous between language, appearance and religion.

6.14 Conclusion

This chapter has examined how policy, institutional routines, and teacher brokerage govern RBS' aspirations. It has argued that aspiration is not merely personal desire but a product of governance, emerging through the intersecting rationalities of policy, school practice, and everyday negotiation. Policy scripts such as the RfRS and Handbook define integration through measurable achievement; schools translate these scripts into placement tests, attendance records, and pathway advice. Teachers mediate these logics, mobilising care as a disciplinary technique rather than as a counterweight to discipline, while students navigate and sometimes resist them through acts of counter-conduct and collective solidarity.

These findings illuminate how New Zealand schooling operates simultaneously as a technology of governance and a site of agency. The cracks within these governing structures lead directly to the next chapter's focus on language and belonging, where students are shown reconfiguring the discourses that shape them. Drawing together the four analytic stages: policy scripts, institutional technologies, brokerage, and student responses, this chapter has shown how the governance of RBS operates across multiple levels of schooling. Seen through a Foucauldian lens, these levels correspond to distinct technologies of power: scripts that categorise, examinations that classify, and pastoral practices that guide students into self-regulation. This process exemplifies subjectification: students are produced as responsible, employable learners through compliance with placement rules, attendance registers, and English-language benchmarks. These technologies render students intelligible to the system as subjects expected to conform to institutional norms. Yet, as their narratives illustrate, RBS also negotiate and at times resist these logics, enacting small, situated, and reversible forms of agency within tightly regulated structures. These practices, whether forming study groups, reclaiming religious identity, or pursuing collective visions of education, can be read as counter-conducts that complicate the orderly functioning of neoliberal schooling. Here, schooling operates through auditability, benchmarked progression, and employability alignment. They underscore not only the limits of governmentality but also the possibility of alternative governmentalities grounded in solidarity, culture, and ethical self-formation. Everyday practices of placement, attendance tracking, and benchmarking demonstrate how power operates through diffuse, normalising logic rather than overt domination. At the same time, students' navigations foreground the "cracks" that invariably accompany governmentality. These are spaces where subjectification is briefly unsettled, where counter-conduct emerges in partial and reversible ways, and where alternative forms of belonging can be imagined without institutional reconfiguration. Taken together, these dynamics underscore the dual character of schooling as both a field of governmentality and a site of counter-conduct. While institutional technologies channel students towards narrow, market-oriented futures, their refusals, solidarities, and collective imaginaries mark the openings through which alternative subjectivities and modes of belonging can take shape. This chapter has highlighted governance as partial and contested, preparing the ground for the next chapter's focus on language and belonging. The very need for negotiation points to the cracks where pastoral care, resistance, and student agency complicate the state's categories. Such problematisations highlight the instability of subjectification,

reminding us that while RBS are shaped by institutional logics, they and their teachers also reshape those logics in practice. Together, Chapters 5 and 6 have articulated how aspirations are governed both discursively, through the language, categories, and expectations that frame what counts as a "realistic" future, and practically, through placement processes, pathways, and institutional routines. Policy constructs the ideal refugee subject, while schools translate those policies imperfectly into everyday practices of examination, guidance, recalibration and resistance.

This chapter has also illuminated that how policy expectations and school practices intersect through brokerage, producing subject positions aligned within pathways framed as "viable" or achievable. Yet, students' recalibrations and solidarities trace cracks in this order, where care can be repurposed and rules bent. These findings extend Chapter 5 by showing how macro framings materialise in schools and set up Chapter 7 by focusing on English as the linchpin technology of governance. Together, the analyses in Chapters 5 and 6 clarify that aspiration is not a private desire but a governed field where policy, institutions and students co-produce futures.

The next chapter extends this analysis by examining how language, identity and belonging materialise these governing logics in students' everyday communicative practices. It takes up the subject of English-language acquisition directly, analysing how it functions simultaneously as capital and discipline. By shifting focus from institutional routines to the discourse of language itself, Chapter 7 extends the analysis of governmentality to foreground how English-language benchmarks both enable and constrain RBS' horizons of possibility.

Chapter 7 Neoliberal Discourses of English Language Acquisition

7.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the English language as a governing technology in the schooling of Rohingya refugee-background students (RBS) in Aotearoa New Zealand (hereafter New Zealand). Chapter 5 traced how national policy articulated a regime of truth in which "successful resettlement" is rendered auditable; Chapter 6 then showed how schools operationalised that regime through examination, normalising judgement, and pastoral power. Building on this trajectory, the present chapter focuses on the English language as the means through which RBS are rendered legible, comparable and allocable, tracing how they are summoned to govern themselves in line with these measurements. Throughout this chapter, neoliberalism is understood not as a general economic backdrop but as a governing rationality operating through responsibilisation, benchmarked progression, and the linking of English-language proficiency to future economic participation.

The analysis proceeds in three interlinked thematic threads. First, it situates English within policy and school discourse as the taken-for-granted medium of curriculum, citizenship, and economic participation, installing a monolingual norm that quietly devalues RBS' existing multilingual repertoires. Second, it traces diagnostic tests, progression matrices, and intensive English placements as technologies of examination that classify, rank and delay, producing a persistent "not-yet" subject whose access to subjects, credentials and futures remains conditional and revisable. Third, it turns to RBS' own navigations of these arrangements, attending to how they recalibrated aspirations, forged peer solidarities, and articulated multilingual pride in ways that both inhabit and unsettle the prevailing script.

Taken together, these threads show how English folds academic progression, labour-market legibility, and belonging into a single field of governmentality, while also marking the small but consequential cracks through which alternative ways of knowing, relating and becoming continue to persist. This chapter completes the analytic arc of the thesis by isolating English as a governing technology that operates across schooling, aspiration and self-formation. Whereas earlier chapters examined policy rationalities and school-level routines, the analysis here demonstrates how English functions as the

connective infrastructure through which RBS are rendered governable across time and institutional contexts.

7.2 Language as Governance: English as Power and Control

The English language exemplifies language as governance, operating as a technology through which power circulates and control is normalised in educational contexts. Building on this, English is positioned not merely as a medium of communication but as a regulatory mechanism through which language proficiency becomes a means of exercising power and governing access to education. Within policy and institutional discourse, English proficiency is framed not simply as a tool for communication, but also as a prerequisite for academic success, a gateway to social integration, and a measure of one's readiness to contribute to society. This section interrogates how this construction attests to broader neoliberal logics, operating through responsibilisation, benchmarked progression, and the linking of English-language proficiency to future economic participation. It also examines how biopolitical logics transform language learning from a pedagogical process into a mechanism of discipline, classification, normalisation, and market-oriented subject formation. Within this framework, English proficiency is constituted as anticipatory participation in the economy.

As previously discussed in Chapter 2, New Zealand's education policies repeatedly emphasise English proficiency as essential for accessing the curriculum. The New Zealand Curriculum (MoE, 2007), for instance, clearly asserts that "success in English is fundamental to success across the curriculum", establishing English not as a support but as the baseline through which all other forms of learning are made possible. The same document notes that "all learning areas (with the possible exception of languages) require students to receive, process, and present ideas or information using the English language as a medium" (p. 18). This framing places English at the centre of the educational system, shaping how success is defined and measured. In this way, English operates not only as a measure of competence but as an allocative mechanism, regulating access to curriculum participation, institutional recognition, and future educational trajectories.

Such a discursive script enacts a neoliberal rationality, operating through responsibilisation, efficiency metrics, and the conversion of English proficiency into economic participation. Language is thereby commodified, treated as a form of human capital that students must develop to secure employment and social legitimacy. As

Olssen and Peters (2005) and Ball (2013) have argued, this systematic individualisation of responsibility is a hallmark of a neoliberal educational governance, where success is framed as the outcome of self-regulation, discipline and adaptability rather than systemic support. Responsibility for overcoming linguistic barriers is thus displaced onto RBS themselves, despite the compounded structural constraints shaping their resettlement and schooling.

This discourse is deeply embedded in the language policies and support programmes that govern refugee education in New Zealand. The Refugee Handbook for Schools (MoE, 2016; hereafter "the Handbook") notes that "[senior secondary] students with no to very low literacy and numeracy skills need to remain in intensive English classes for most of a school week for at least a year, and often two years" (p. 21). While presented as supportive, this policy constructs a rigid timeline of progression, aligning with Foucault's (1977) notion of the exam as a disciplinary technology. Through standardised assessment matrices, RBS' linguistic development is rendered legible and comparable, enabling classification, ranking, and administrative management. These matrices become what Foucault (1979) refers to as "grids of specification", producing legibility while governing conduct through ongoing surveillance organised along panoptic lines.

In this way, English operates not only classificatorily but allocatively: progression in English regulates access to subjects, credentials, and tertiary pathways, sequencing educational futures through linguistic audit. Data from this study confirm how these disciplinary techniques are enacted in everyday practices. For example, Lauren, the designated English focal person at Manorgreen High School, noted:

> Yes, English is crucial in admission to new class and promotion to an upper-level class. First of all, we assess an incoming refugee-background student's level of English and place them into an English class in accordance with his English standing. Mostly they need to start with foundation level. Gradually the student is assigned other subjects depending on his ability and English learning progress. We need to follow the English-language progression matrices developed by the Ministry [of Education]. (Interview 1)

Here the emphasis on "progression matrices" serves as an example of how RBS are systematically positioned within a normative developmental trajectory. Despite their diverse educational backgrounds and abilities, they are channelled through a homogenising process of assessment and streaming. This sorting mechanism does not

merely operate within schools; it stabilises English as a temporal and allocative threshold, shaping when RBS may access subjects, credentials, and recognisable futures beyond schooling. This pattern is especially apparent in the accounts of RBS, whose experiences underscore the intersection of language, power, and social inclusion. Responding to normative expectations about English-language proficiency and academic capability, Saleha's confidence was evident in this assertion: "We [Saleha and Halima] know more languages than them. Most of them know only English [language]. But we know seven languages in total" (Interview 1).

Moreover, Saleha's experience of being socially, intellectually, and even physically isolated in the classroom traces the "microphysics of power" at work (Foucault, 1977, p. 139). The empty chairs beside her, as analysed in Chapter 6, were not merely a social slight; they constituted spatial enactment of linguistic hierarchy. As Piller (2006) and Leung and Creese (2010) note, classrooms are key sites of linguistic regulation, where English-language proficiency determines access not only to knowledge but to recognition, friendship and belonging. This spatial marginalisation is articulated through wider regimes in which English governs visibility and legitimacy across institutions, extending linguistic hierarchy beyond classrooms into social and civic life.

Within this system, English-language learning exceeds a purely academic or technical process; it becomes a political technology shaped by discursive norms and institutional expectations. The requirement to demonstrate progress according to preset benchmarks transforms RBS into measurable, and governable, subjects. Yet these norms are not absorbed uncritically. As the following subsections show, RBS navigate, resist, and at times rework these expectations, producing moments of alternative discourse and subjectivity that unsettle, without displacing, the neoliberal logic of English linguistic governmentality.

7.2.1 English Language Acquisition and the Biopolitics of Access

Within the New Zealand education system, English-language acquisition functions as a biopolitical mechanism: one that regulates access, progression, and future participation, rather than as a neutral pedagogical process. While English-language acquisition figures centrally within educational discourse, it functions as part of a broader regime governing access to education itself. This framing illuminates the pathways through which knowledge acquisition, skill cultivation, and adherence to institutional norms collectively shape RBS' educational trajectories. Within this biopolitical frame, English

operates as an allocative device, sorting RBS into differential timelines of access to credentials, post-secondary pathways, and social participation. This allocative ordering is constituted within the neoliberal assumption, operating through responsibilisation and market-linked benchmarking, that individual progress depends on cultivating skills valued by the economy and made intelligible through market participation, rather than recognising knowledge pluralism or collective forms of learning. As Ball (2015) and Schneider (2018) argue, aspirations are increasingly shaped by state-sanctioned imaginaries of success, typically individualised, credential-based, and economically productive.

To situate this process historically and politically, the analysis now turns to Foucault's account of "normalisation". Foucault (1977) reminds us that normalisation is not only about alignment with market demands; it also about the subtle exercise of power through the production of knowledge and the construction of "docile bodies". These processes are historically situated and deeply tied to the state's imperatives, including those shaped by shifting nationalist projects. Within this analysis of educational access, attention is now directed to the intersection of power, knowledge and normalisation that structures RBS' experiences within New Zealand's educational script.

7.2.2 Assessment Matrices as Instruments of Classification

Assessment matrices function as instruments of classification through which biopolitical governance is operationalised in refugee education. These governing dynamics become most explicit in the biopolitical dimensions of English-language acquisition, where neoliberal principles transform linguistic proficiency into a metric of market readiness and social sorting. English-language acquisition is structured around two interconnected strands considered necessary for education, as outlined in the Handbook. This document guides New Zealand schools in implementing policies and routines for RBS. While these strands claim to address diverse communicative modalities, they function primarily as mechanisms of classification. By framing English-language learning in developmental stages and aligning them to normative benchmarks, the matrices enact a biopolitical sorting process that transforms student diversity into hierarchies of proficiency.

Importantly, these processes of English-language learning are not neutral; they function as what Foucault (1979) terms "technologies of government": discursive tools for shaping conduct, producing certain kinds of subjects (in this case, "proficient" and

"productive" learners). These technologies also sort populations through expertise-laden apparatuses such as the English Language Learning Progressions (ELLP) and assessment matrices. The ELLP are a set of four booklets that guide assessment, planning and teaching for English-language learners in New Zealand schools (MoE, 2008). The ELLP matrices structure how linguistic development is assessed and how progression is sequenced within ESOL programmes. At the curriculum level, achievement objectives require students to practise meaning-making at each stage, with progression tied to engagement with tasks and texts of increasing complexity and depth. English-language acquisition is further disaggregated into discrete domains: speaking, reading, writing, and vocabulary, forming a comprehensive grid of assessment. This arrangement signals a governing logic aimed at ensuring students' full alignment with English as the dominant medium of academic legibility. During one classroom observation, an ESOL teacher shared the following with me:

> There are different aspects of the language [English]. We cover all aspects of speaking, reading, and writing. Also, vocabulary is an important part for most of them since they are new learners. Therefore, we provide them with vocabulary … [I] suppose sometimes … 100, 500, etc. … with the easiest ones at the initial level. A student [RBS] has to fulfil all aspects of the language up to a certain level to proceed to the next level. You will find the specific requirements and skills to acquire in them [the bunch of papers she gave me to read]. (Sunita, Triptonwhite College)

This routine produces a persistent "not-yet" subject position in which English proficiency sequences access to subjects, credentials and futures, normalising delay as an administratively legitimate outcome within the examination process. In Foucauldian terms, as outlined in Chapter 3, this "not-yet" positioning is constituted within the processes of subjectification and biopower, in which institutions govern student populations through classification, normalisation, and temporal regulation rather than through outright exclusion (Foucault, 1977, 1978).

Through the examination process, time, value and legitimacy are reorganised around normative conceptions of English fluency. This examination structure not only governs progression but also imposes normative conceptions of fluency, erasing linguistic histories and establishing English as the exclusive currency of academic legibility. Sunita's framing was articulated through a deficit logic, in which RBS are positioned as inherently lacking and must be remediated through measured increments. This aligns

with the examination as a technology that not only ranks learners but allocates their access to time, opportunity, and post-school trajectories through English proficiency.

7.3 Erasing Linguistic Capital: Multilingualism and Epistemic Injustice

Neoliberal discourses of English-language acquisition enact epistemic injustice by erasing multilingualism as a form of legitimate linguistic capital. Within institutional regimes of assessment and progression, multilingual knowledge is not excluded but rendered non-convertible, lacking currency within the dominant economy of educational value. The reassertion of multilingualism in the RBS narratives is not only personal but political. It contests the script that renders non-English languages invisible or irrelevant within educational settings. As Leung and Creese (2010) argue, classrooms often serve as sites of linguistic gatekeeping, where dominant language ideologies define what counts as legitimate or illegitimate knowledge. Saleha's recognition of her multilingual capacity, as presented earlier in this chapter, becomes a subtle but powerful form of resistance, an act of counter-conduct that challenges the dominance of English-centric education. While this counter-conduct does not reconfigure institutional authority, it delineates the limits of what the system can register as legitimate.

Yet, despite their confidence, both Saleha and Rokaiya acknowledged the institutional constraints on their ability to use or share their linguistic knowledge in class. Saleha noted that although she could speak many languages, this had little bearing on her academic success, explaining, when considering classroom expectations and the medium of instruction, that "in my college, I cannot use all languages. Our medium [of study] is English-only" (Interview 3). Rokaiya similarly described the lack of classroom opportunities to demonstrate her abilities, speaking about participation in subjects beyond English class: "I enjoy learning here [English class] though it is condition for taking part in my other subjects … But those [other languages] … I cannot utilise here … in my school, I mean not much" (Interview 1). This absence of meaningful classroom space points to a broader structural silencing of multilingualism. Despite the pedagogical value of linguistic diversity, the school system continues to function on a monolingual paradigm where English dominates both curriculum and evaluation. Students' multilingual capital, while nominally acknowledged in policy rhetoric, is rarely legitimised in institutional practice.

Multilingual pride repositions language as an asset, yet English remains the gatekeeping currency through which institutional legitimacy and future opportunity are distributed. This form of counter-conduct, grounded in multilingual pride, is therefore structurally constrained: affirmation without institutional uptake.

These effects are not incidental but emerge from institutional arrangements that recognise English as the sole legitimate medium of academic personhood. As Higgins and Norton (2010) argue, learners' identities are shaped by their perceived value within classroom hierarchies. When languages like Rohingya, Burmese, Malay or Arabic are sidelined, RBS are implicitly taught that parts of their identities are unacknowledged and unvalued. This dynamic of selective linguistic recognition is particularly complex in New Zealand, where the revitalisation of te reo Māori (the Māori language) has been a national priority. While te reo Māori has gained recognition through initiatives like kura kaupapa Māori (Māori-medium schooling) and the Maihi Karauna strategy (the Crown's Māori Language Revitalisation Strategy), the broader embrace of linguistic diversity remains uneven and selective. This tension does not suggest a contradiction between Māori language revitalisation and migrant multilingualism; rather, it highlights how institutional recognition remains selectively distributed across linguistic communities. Despite their linguistic richness, Saleha and others were offered few institutional opportunities to use or celebrate their multilingualism in the classroom.

The absence of institutional recognition constitutes a form of epistemic injustice, where knowledge and abilities outside the dominant linguistic script are systematically dismissed or devalued. This understanding aligns with Fricker's (2007) theorisation of epistemic injustice as the harm done to individuals specifically in their capacity as knowers. In this sense, RBS experience both testimonial injustice, when their multilingual knowledge is afforded little credibility within classroom hierarchies, and hermeneutical injustice, when institutional frameworks lack the conceptual resources to recognise multilingualism as legitimate epistemic capital. This marginalisation of multilingual knowledge aligns with what Chapter 3 identified as the production of subjugated knowledges: forms of linguistic and cultural capital that remain unrecognised within dominant institutional regimes of truth (Foucault, 1978; Leo, 2021a; Morrice et al., 2020). English monolingualism thus operates not only as a pedagogical norm but as an epistemic filter that determines what forms of knowledge are recognised, valued or dismissed. Students' multilingual self-assertion thus functions as epistemic resistance, subverting the dominant regime of truth (Foucault, 1978) that

privileges monolingual, Anglophone norms while excluding other knowledges from institutional recognition.

This structural erasure is compounded by the monolingual structure of dominant schooling regimes, which positions non-English languages as peripheral or irrelevant. Students with diverse linguistic backgrounds are expected to suppress these skills in favour of English acquisition. In doing so, their full identities are fragmented, and their potential contributions to the classroom are suppressed. Yet within these constraints, RBS find ways to assert their agency. By taking pride in their multilingualism, RBS resist the narrative that equates English proficiency with intelligence or worthiness. These acts of discursive resistance do not dismantle the system; they expose its limitations and the narrowness of the frameworks through which linguistic value is recognised. This tension is articulated in Rokaiya's observation that, despite her pride in her linguistic abilities, "not much" of her languages could be used in school. Her narrative signals how institutional structures continue to silence or sideline linguistic diversity, even as they purport to value inclusion.

This dynamic is further illustrated in the comments of Lauren, the designated English focal person at Manorgreen High School, which were discussed previously. Lauren underscored how English proficiency operates as a disciplinary filter. Placement decisions were guided not by overall academic aptitude or prior knowledge, but by how well a student performed in English. The reference to "foundation level" as the default entry point for RBS signals an implicit assumption of deficiency, which becomes institutionalised through progression matrices that prescribe when and how students may be deemed ready for "mainstream" education.

The condition of linguistic insufficiency translates into social alienation. While feelings of alienation are common in new environments, in Anas's case they persisted, contributing to the development of a "reserved" trait. He spoke about lacking friends at high school and sometimes encountering racial discrimination. Recalling an incident that occurred during his early days at his school, he stated:

> I still remember that someone was … someone was swearing at me, saying like, "You bloody Indian." So I went back to him. I told him like, "You bloody American." He said, "I am not American." And then I told him, "I am not Indian." (Interview 1)

Anas's experience signals power relations that privilege certain subject positions while marginalising others. Alienation fostered a reserved trait as ethical self-formation in response to the dominant norms prevailing within the institution. He nevertheless pursued academic success, working to overcome language barriers and shyness. It took him three to four months to improve his spoken English:

> I was enrolled in an ESOL class. And then I always used to go to my teacher and used to ask for additional homework, like how I would be able to improve my English, how I would be able to improve my listening skills and reading skills, and such issues. He gave me books and CDs. (Interview 1)

Here we see how dominant discourse marginalises non-conformity while simultaneously compelling RBS like Anas to govern themselves towards future recognition, where English proficiency becomes the condition for recognised adulthood, participation and opportunity. This system of regulation is further illustrated by the Handbook's case study of a student who arrived as an unaccompanied minor:

A student arrived in New Zealand in 1999 as an unaccompanied minor. He came from a multicultural, multilingual background and was able to speak 5 languages. He was literate in the language of last country of asylum before coming to New Zealand which was different from his own native language. He stayed with a foster family and immediately enrolled in a high school in Christchurch. He experienced teasing and bullying from other students in school which caused some social difficulties for him. He focussed on improving English and establishing strong academic foundations while the integration process was taking place. After 2 years of being in school his English was up to a level which allowed him to do mainstream subjects. He intends to enrol in tertiary education. (p. 71)

Although, the student's five-language fluency is acknowledged, it is ultimately rendered irrelevant when measured against the benchmark of English. His success is measured not by multilingual capacity but by progression within the English-medium system. This exemplifies linguistic governmentality in action: English functions as the sole convertible capital through which access to credentials, tertiary pathways, and legitimate futures is authorised. Notably, the case study presents a narrative of success that aligns closely with neoliberal values: individual perseverance, academic self-discipline, and eventual integration. At the same time, it reinforces a normative trajectory in which RBS are expected to adapt, remediate perceived deficits, and

assimilate into “mainstream” linguistic and cultural norms, implicitly erasing alternative pathways, identities, and forms of value.

As discussed in Chapter 6, Saleha recalled being socially isolated when classmates refused to sit beside her because of her “broken” English and expected that “they would not do that if I could speak English like them” (Interview 2). This example highlights how linguistic exclusion operates as a micro-discipline, where proficiency becomes a moral obligation and failure to meet the norm produces shame. The scene produces a “not-yet” subject position that governs conduct through self-correction. Saleha’s reframing of multilingual pride marks counter-conduct that opens a small crack in monolingual norms.

At the level of everyday classroom interaction, these institutional dynamics become materially and affectively visible. The act of exclusion, such as leaving empty seats beside Saleha, becomes a form of bodily discipline that reinforces the hierarchies of belonging. Her effort to improve her English is embedded in a process of subjectification in which legitimacy is anticipated as future reward, conditional upon linguistic conformity. Saleha’s belief that speaking English “like them” would grant her acceptance also aligns with what Block et al. (2012) describe as the neoliberal logic of self-investment. Within this script, English-language learning is framed as an individual responsibility, and fluency becomes a form of capital, linked to social mobility and employability. Rather than questioning the legitimacy of exclusionary norms, her response is self-correction: working harder within the very framework that marginalised her.

This phenomenon is echoed in the broader policy landscape. According to the New Zealand Curriculum, English is positioned as the primary medium for processing and presenting ideas across most learning areas. While the document affirms the cultural value of diverse languages, its pedagogical emphasis clearly centres on English as the dominant medium of knowledge and participation. INZ (2017) reinforces this narrative by presenting English-language acquisition as essential for integration, education and participation in New Zealand society.

The cumulative effect is a system where English-language proficiency becomes the central metric for student progress, social acceptance, and future opportunity. Yet, this system frequently fails to recognise or value the existing linguistic capital of RBS. By

privileging monolingual English fluency, it marginalises the broader capacities, cultural knowledge, and life experiences that RBS bring with them.

7.3.1 Surveillance and Normative Progression

Surveillance and normative progression operate together as regulatory mechanisms through which English-language benchmarks sort, monitor and sequence RBS' educational trajectories. The regulation of these benchmarks also performs a sorting function, one with historical continuity. Language has long served as a filtering device in immigration and nation-building projects, pre-dating neoliberal governance. As highlighted by Yilmaz (2022), RBS must meet language and admission norms set by host nations, which serve as systemic barriers regulating their educational aspirations. In settler-colonial contexts like New Zealand, linguistic proficiency has historically been tied to one's perceived capacity to integrate into a desired national identity, a point that complicates any assumption that linguistic governmentality is solely a product of recent neoliberalism.

This historical logic is operationalised in contemporary schooling through tightly monitored regimes of assessment. RBS are under continuous observation to determine if they have met the outlined criteria, a process that operates simultaneously as support and control. The English language, broken down into its specific components (speaking, reading, writing, and vocabulary), becomes a set of knowledge units. The power to proceed academically rests on the acquisition of these units. As an institution, the school holds the power to determine what constitutes adequate knowledge and when a student has acquired it. As Foucault (1977, p. 184) notes, "The examination combines the techniques of an observing hierarchy and those of a normalising judgement. It establishes over individuals a visibility through which one differentiates them and judges them." RBS are measured against this norm. Those who lag behind are rendered administratively deficient, positioned in extended waiting states where access to futures remains conditional and revocable. This governing logic was expressed to me by an English teacher during one of my classroom observations:

> In today's session they [Halima and Saleha] are practising vocabulary. We need to take care of their reading, writing, and speaking as well because each of these has different levels or steps and they need to make progression accordingly … The steps are mentioned in the curriculum. Here at school level, we follow the ESOL handbooks for detail breakdown and we make lesson plans accordingly so that they

> can make overall progress and none of them [RBS and other ESOL learners] remains behind. (Sunita, Triptonwhite College)

Halima reproduced these themes when describing her early experiences of learning English and navigating classroom expectations, stating:

> At the beginning, we learned easy English words. Our teacher said that we had to memorise a word bank; otherwise, we could not read and write properly. I am happy that I am making progress in all areas: reading, writing, and others. I have to learn all of them. (Interview 2)

Sunita's account illustrates how normative progression is sustained through panoptic forms of surveillance embedded in everyday pedagogical routines. By breaking English into discrete, assessable components: vocabulary, reading, writing, and speaking, the curriculum establishes a continuous field of observation in which RBS' linguistic development is constantly monitored, compared and adjusted. Progression is rendered conditional upon compliance with these calibrated steps, ensuring that learners remain visible to institutional scrutiny even in moments framed as support or care. In this sense, assessment operates less as a neutral pedagogical tool than as a disciplinary mechanism that aligns RBS' temporal movement through schooling with externally imposed benchmarks.

Halima's narrative further demonstrates how temporal governance is internalised by RBS themselves, as they come to orient their aspirations around incremental progression and comprehensive mastery of prescribed skills. Her emphasis on memorisation, sequencing, and "making progress in all areas" embodies an acceptance of delay as a normal and necessary feature of learning, rather than as an effect of institutional design. Through this process, responsibility for advancement is individualised, and RBS learn to self-monitor their alignment with progression norms. Surveillance and normative progression thus operate in tandem, producing subjects who not only submit to assessment but actively participate in regulating their own educational timelines, with access to future pathways remaining provisionally granted and continuously deferred.

Yet, in the Foucauldian sense, "deficiency" is also a productive label, one that invites intervention, support, and even exclusion. This tension renders legible the double-edged nature of pastoral care in liberal democracies. In addition, evaluating a refugee student's

learning cannot be reduced to observable performance alone**,** as resettlement histories fundamentally shape educational engagement. As stated in the Handbook:

> There are many social and emotional needs that need to be met for all students. Students from a refugee background, in particular, however, are likely to have additional needs as a result of both pre-settlement and re-settlement trauma and stress. Pre-settlement factors are those which affected students prior to their arrival in New Zealand. Re-settlement factors are those which are ongoing areas of risk or stress at home or at school that affect students. In spite of good preventative policies and support in school, some children will require more attention because they are not learning or because of their behaviour at home or at school. Early assessment of children with difficulties in behaviour or learning is important to ensure that the children make maximum progress at school and to ensure that they receive appropriate and adequate support. (p. 52)

This framing situates English acquisition as both remedy and requirement, tying emotional recovery to future institutional access and acceptable trajectories. English-language proficiency thus becomes the means through which care is administered, risk is managed, and access to educational futures is regulated.

7.3.2 Trauma-informed Support as Linguistic Governance

This subsection examines how trauma-informed support operates not as an interruption to English-language governance but as a mechanism through which it is reorganised and rendered legitimate. By framing extended English acquisition as a therapeutic necessity, trauma becomes a humanitarian rationale for delay, intensified monitoring, and differentiated pacing. In New Zealand, tertiary education has been expected to ensure "equity of access" and contribute to the "development of cultural and intellectual life" (Education Act 1989, repealed 2020, p. 239). In practice, however, equity often functions rhetorically, while English proficiency continues to govern allocation, sequencing who may proceed, when, and under what conditions.

In Chapter 3, educational aspirations were conceptualised not as freely chosen desires but as discursively shaped orientations formed under conditions of structural constraint, surveillance, and neoliberal responsibilisation (Appadurai, 2004; Bellino, 2021; Dryden-Peterson & Reddick, 2017). The accounts that follow demonstrate how English proficiency becomes the primary object through which such aspirations are organised, measured, and rendered legitimate. Building on this dominant aspiration script, Halima's narrative situates English proficiency as a non-negotiable threshold for

professional legitimacy and future belonging. She noted that, in New Zealand, “only English matters for study and work”, and that knowing multiple other languages did not count towards success (Interview 2). Across her interviews, she repeatedly emphasised that her multilingualism held little value in New Zealand, where only English counted towards her academic and professional goals. English thus structures aspiration allocatively, defining which futures appear attainable, when they may be pursued, and under what conditions legitimacy is granted. Halima’s account frames English as a conditional threshold for participation: the examination sorts and delays, while her tactical switching between English and peer languages marks counter-conduct that preserves peer belonging even as institutional norms remain monolingual.

Jamir’s account similarly demonstrates how English remains positioned as the primary condition for educational and economic legitimacy. He articulated this tension even more explicitly. Describing his experiences of navigating both education and the job market in New Zealand, he explained:

> Yeah, I am still suffering. I have learned English but not very good. My languages don’t give me credit in education and the job market here … When you are from a refugee group you have to learn their language, I mean English … Yeah, Kiwi English accent gives you more value. (Interview 1)

Jamir’s self-audit exemplifies governmentality in routine, operating within a neoliberal logic that responsibilises linguistic deficit and links accent and proficiency to future employability, where English proficiency and accent operate as anticipatory measures of legitimacy. This does not constitute a separate aspiration framework, but a deepening of the same dominant aspiration script, experienced under conditions of prolonged precarity, family obligation, and perpetual comparison. The subject position is the responsible improver: visible, comparable, and always short of “advanced”. His emphasis on accent underscores how not just proficiency but also performance of “local” English becomes a key marker of value. His struggle exemplifies how neoliberal discourses naturalise inequality by framing linguistic difference as a deficit to be overcome through individual effort, rather than questioning the systemic exclusion of multilingual or non-norm speakers.

Amir shared that his proficiency in English allowed him to navigate systems more effectively and secure employment. English here appears as credential and passage into markets: the examination is not only diagnostic but allocative. His narrative produces a

responsibilised subject for whom English investment governs access to income, recognition, and durable futures beyond schooling. Describing how his English-language proficiency shaped his resettlement and economic mobility, Amir stated:

> Still, I must say that in New Zealand I got things sorted mainly because of the English knowledge I have, I could communicate and I did well in Māngere [Refugee Resettlement Centre], got uni admission and manage job … work and business. I mean for the sake of income for my family … if I did not have this [English proficiency] it would be difficult to do these things by myself and earn money. (Interview 1)

Amir's narrative is steeped in neoliberal responsibilisation and the translation of English proficiency into market participation, self-sufficiency, and moral worth. This configuration establishes the dominant aspiration script against which subsequent accounts should be read, not as variations in logic but as variations in pressure, timing and constraint. His ability to capitalise on English education is framed not as a collective right but as an individual triumph, a product of strategic self-investment and entrepreneurial initiative. This orientation to responsibility and self-sufficiency operates as ethical self-formation under linguistic governmentality, where Amir's sense of dignity and moral worth becomes tethered to his capacity to convert English proficiency into recognised economic and familial responsibility.

Yet, as Canagarajah (2013) and Higgins and Norton (2010) have noted, the discourse of the "self-improving subject" obscures the uneven terrain on which English-language acquisition occurs. Many RBS, like Jamir, struggle with competing responsibilities, working to support their families, managing the emotional toll of displacement, and adjusting to unfamiliar educational systems, all of which complicate the narrative of English-language learning as a meritocratic ladder.

At the limits of these processes, following a Foucauldian sensibility that finds hope in the failure of governance projects, the extensive surveillance and normalisation efforts might themselves sow the seeds of resistance. Teachers, students and families, through everyday negotiations and refusals, may undermine the neat ordering envisioned by policy. The limits of English-language governance, particularly when faced with the resilience of multilingual identities, mark possible cracks in otherwise tightly administered educational trajectories.

7.4 Becoming Governable: Hierarchies, Surveillance and Subjectivity

This section examines how English-language dominance functions as a technology of governance that organises educational hierarchies, enables surveillance, and shapes the subjectivities of RBS. English operates as a surveillant standard through which students are rendered measurable and intelligible to institutions, positioning it not merely as one language among many, but as the dominant and universal medium through which all legitimate knowledge is transmitted and received. The implications for RBS are significant: regardless of their proficiencies in other languages, their capacity to succeed is largely measured by how well they acquire English. As discussed in Chapter 3, neoliberalism interprets English-language proficiency as a form of human capital. Within this view, the value of a language lies not in its cultural or emotional resonance but in its utility: its capacity to facilitate employment, upward mobility, and participation in the national economy. As Humpage (2001) has noted, even ostensibly race-neutral immigration policies reproduce exclusions by valuing individuals based on their alignment with market ideals such as formal education, employability, and English fluency. Refugees are thus not only expected to learn the language of the host society but to internalise the neoliberal rationalities that render that language as capital. This neoliberal logic is clearly present in Jamir's narrative. Describing the barriers he encountered while attempting to pursue further study alongside family responsibilities, he explained:

> My education in New Zealand hampered due to several reasons, you know I have my family, I need to look after them, I need to earn money. I do different types of job. But the main problem is English … I know the basics and I can speak and communicate in English but I have to learn more … I need advanced level English to study, I mean for my degree. (Interview 1)

Jamir's account signals the pressures faced by RBS as they navigate their educational aspirations alongside immediate economic needs. His framing of English as "the main problem" underscores how language becomes both a personal hurdle and a systemic filter. His recognition that a degree, and by extension, a more stable livelihood, is dependent on "advanced level English" exemplifies the biopolitical regulation of refugee trajectories.

Unlike overt discrimination, linguistic governmentality functions through encouragement, aspiration and self-improvement. It is not that RBS are explicitly

forbidden from using their own languages; rather, they are taught, implicitly and explicitly, that those languages do not count. While RBS' multilingual fluency is recognised, it is excluded from institutional recognition within the script of linguistic governmentality, which constructs English as the sole valid form of capital. The pressure to conform to monolingual norms is thus internalised as a moral imperative to try harder, learn faster, and perform better.

Yet, this process is not unidirectional. Many RBS displayed a remarkable capacity to navigate these pressures with critical awareness and resilience. Saleha, for example, explained how the social exclusion she experienced initially due to her limited English was eventually overcome through focused self-discipline. Across these accounts, identity, confidence and resilience emerged not outside power but as modes of ethical self-formation shaped through linguistic governmentality, as RBS learned to govern themselves in relation to English while sustaining attachments that exceed institutional recognition.

7.5 Aspiration and Assimilation: The Burden of Linguistic Success

English-language success operates as a disciplinary demand through which aspiration is channelled into assimilation, placing the burden of legitimacy, belonging and futurity on RBS. Chapter 3 conceptualised educational aspirations as relational and constrained rather than freely chosen, shaped by systemic inequalities, disciplinary norms, and neoliberal meritocratic promises (Appadurai, 2004; Bellino, 2021; Dryden-Peterson, 2016). Read in this light, the accounts that follow show how English proficiency becomes the condition under which aspirations are rendered legitimate through assimilation rather than recognised on their own terms. In the lived experiences of Rohingya RBS in New Zealand, the pursuit of English-language acquisition is deeply interwoven with aspirations for economic stability, social inclusion, and personal fulfilment. Here, aspiration refers to the futures RBS hope to attain, while assimilation governs the linguistic and cultural conditions under which those futures become recognisable as legitimate, an asset that individuals must acquire, improve and market to access opportunity.

Amir's experience exemplifies this dynamic. Upon arrival in New Zealand, he enrolled in English classes at the Māngere Refugee Resettlement Centre (MRRC), treating English-language learning as a prerequisite for university admission and employability. Recalling his early resettlement period and the significance of completing the English-

language programme, Amir stated: “I would say it was an opportunity for me passing the Refugee Centre English course and got recommended for uni entrance. I utilised the opportunity to prove myself as a competent uni student” (Interview 2).

Amir’s framing of English as an “opportunity” aligns with the neoliberal logic that positions individuals as self-managing agents responsible for investing in their own skills. His emphasis on “proving” himself and gaining official certification exemplifies how English proficiency is constituted not simply as a communicative tool but as a measurable commodity through which one becomes recognised by educational and economic institutions. Amir’s story exemplifies how neoliberal interpellation can coexist with civic commitment and entrepreneurial resilience; he enacts the figure of the responsibilised refugee while maintaining ties to collective care. Amir’s successful use of his English skills to obtain a recommendation for university entrance and run a small business points to the ideal neoliberal subject: self-sufficient, adaptable, and entrepreneurial. Yet, his narrative also gestures towards the emotional and structural pressures underpinning this subjectivity. As discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, he was having to support his family in New Zealand and send remittances back to Myanmar. English language thus becomes both a lifeline and a burden, carrying immense economic and moral weight.

Jamir’s experience offers a parallel but more precarious trajectory. Despite his commitment to work and support his family, his limited English proficiency presented a barrier to higher education, and thus greater opportunities in general. Jamir was quoted above as saying English remained the central barrier to his aspirations, underscoring how linguistic proficiency operated as the primary gatekeeper for further study. Discussing the challenges he faced while attempting to prepare for university alongside work and family responsibilities, Jamir explained:

> Initially, when I was planning for uni education here, I knew English, but it was not enough for New Zealand uni’s … You know, I have been trying little by little to improve my English, which will allow [enable] me to study at uni level. It is true that I could not focus intensively for my English improvement … When you have family here and back home, you must work here to earn money, think about families in both countries, you can’t do well in new learning I mean a language [English] in a short time. I am improving slowly. You know I came here from a non-English country. I have to accept this country’s standards and rules. (Interview 3)

Jamir's account can be read as an instance of governing through delay, in which aspirations are sustained but perpetually deferred through regulatory demands that appear reasonable and attainable yet remain structurally out of reach. His commitment to improving English "little by little" embodies an internalisation of responsibilisation, where stalled progression is reframed as a personal timing issue rather than an institutional effect. At the same time, this delayed horizon of mobility resonates with what Berlant (2011) terms "cruel optimism": the condition in which the very object of aspiration, in this case, English proficiency as a pathway to higher education and stability, becomes an obstacle to flourishing. Jamir's narrative thus exposes how linguistic self-improvement is sustained as an ethical and moral obligation even when the conditions required to realise it are systematically undermined by economic precarity, transnational family responsibilities, and uneven access to learning time.

Jamir's account further illustrates how linguistic governmentality operates through delay, sustaining aspiration while deferring its realisation. While the rhetoric of meritocracy suggests that success is available to all who work hard, RBS like Jamir are constrained by intersecting pressures: family responsibilities, financial strain, and language barriers. English thus becomes not only a gatekeeper for education but a determining factor in his self-worth and perceived potential.

Halima, too, recognised the necessity of English for realising her academic dreams. Despite her fluency in multiple languages, she felt compelled to master English in order to become a doctor. Her aspirations were filtered through the dominant educational and societal expectations that equate English fluency with intelligence, professionalism and worthiness. Her trajectory exemplifies what Canagarajah (2013) describes as the "neoliberalisation of the self", where individuals are expected to continually invest in self-improvement, while structural inequities remain unaddressed.

Across these accounts, it can be seen that RBS were oriented towards English proficiency as the condition under which aspirations become intelligible and actionable to success, speaking with determination and pragmatism about linguistic improvement. They also embodied moments of resistance and resilience, strategic efforts to navigate exclusionary systems on their own terms. For example, Rokaiya took her English studies seriously, not only because of institutional requirements, but because she recognised the social implications of English-language acquisition. Recalling guidance she received from the deputy principal during her early period of resettlement, she

stated: “I took it seriously from the beginning because I understand that our deputy principal [refugee coordinator] told me that time that my whole path will become smooth in NZ if I do it seriously” (Interview 1).

Rokaiya’s use of the phrase “whole path” suggests that English proficiency was presented to her as the master key that unlocks all forms of success, from education to employment to social belonging. This view supports the rationality of linguistic governmentality, where English language becomes the mechanism through which individuals are regulated and aligned with the normative expectations of mainstream New Zealand society, and those of the state.

Building on this dominant aspiration script, Saleha internalised English as a condition of survival, while simultaneously articulating its limits through multilingual pride. While she recognised the social capital attached to English proficiency, she also highlighted the contradictions and exclusions it produced. Speaking about her current priorities in adjusting to life in New Zealand, Saleha stated: “I am focusing on English now … My other languages are already useful for my daily life and different contexts, whereas English is essential for living, learning, and securing decent employment opportunities in the country” (Interview 1). Saleha acknowledged the value of her existing multilingual skills, yet positioned English as indispensable for navigating life in New Zealand. Here, aspiration is not reorganised but lived under heightened conditions of vulnerability, where English becomes a technology of survival rather than advancement.

In many of these cases, English is not simply something to be learned but a project of the self. To learn English is to become desirable citizen, capable student, and productive worker, identities constructed not only through curriculum and policy but through internalised norms of success and achievement. This represents a shift from institutional coercion to self-regulation, or what Foucault (1991) describes as governmentality: the governance of individuals by themselves in accordance with state goals.

Still, moments of agency emerge. Saleha’s pride in her other languages, Halima’s determination to become a doctor, and Amir’s entrepreneurial ambition all indicate desires that exceed the logic of neoliberal discipline. These RBS are not passive recipients of language policy; they are active negotiators of its terms. Their stories

invite us to question how English language is framed in refugee education, not merely as a skill but as a structure of inclusion and exclusion.

Amir's narrative exemplifies this dynamic. A former UNHCR volunteer in Malaysia, Amir arrived in New Zealand already possessing a functional command of English. Yet he still enrolled in English-language classes at the MRRC, viewing the opportunity not merely as educational, but as a strategic investment. Amir's narrative was articulated through a conscious alignment with the logic of neoliberal governance. He identified the English course as a credentialing mechanism, essential not only for education but also for employability. His reference to "official proof" underscores the institutionalisation of English language as a measurable and regulated form of capital. This reinforces the role of the state and educational institutions in defining and policing what counts as legitimate knowledge, aligning again with Foucault's concept of governmentality.

Likewise, Rokaiya's narrative articulated the centrality of English acquisition to her imagined future, even as she felt conflicted about the loss of value placed on her other languages. Speaking about how English-language learning shaped her academic progression and sense of belonging, she explained:

> I enjoy learning here [English class] though it is condition for taking part in my other subjects … I took it seriously from the beginning because I understand that our deputy principal [refugee coordinator] told me … my whole path will become smooth in NZ if I do it seriously … I am proud of my other languages though. But those … I cannot utilise here. (Interview 2)

Here Rokaiya recognises the necessity of English as a precondition for success and yet mourns the sidelining of her multilingual background. Her aspirations are thus framed within a constrained choice structure: while she aspires to thrive within the New Zealand system, she must first suppress or defer the parts of her identity that do not fit the dominant linguistic order. This is emblematic of neoliberal assimilationist models that reward conformity to specific norms: language, behaviour and identity, rather than embracing pluralism.

For Jamir, this sense of limitation was constant: across his interviews, he described English as the "main problem" shaping what he could do next in education, no matter how hard he worked to support his family or manage other responsibilities (Interview 3). This highlights the way English proficiency functions as both a gatekeeper and a

leveller. The need for “advanced” English is positioned as a prerequisite for tertiary education, regardless of prior knowledge or capability in other subjects. His experience underscores the risk of conflating English-language ability with intellectual potential, a dynamic that privileges those who enter the system with fluency while marginalising others, particularly refugees, who may have limited access to structured English-language learning before resettlement.

The emphasis on self-responsibility for English proficiency is echoed in Saleha’s account. Discussing how she prioritised her studies in response to institutional expectations, she explained: “I am focusing on intensive English because my other languages are already useful for my daily life, but English is essential for living, learning, and securing decent employment opportunities in the country” (Interview 2). This highlights how RBS’ linguistic aspirations were shaped not just by internal motivation but also by structural imperatives. Saleha’s prioritisation of the English language was strategic, it was what she needed to survive and thrive in a society where all key systems (education, employment, health, housing) operate in English. This perspective reinforces the neoliberal emphasis on English language as a tool for individual advancement.

However, these aspirations should not be viewed solely as examples of conformity. There are moments of agency, resistance and redefinition in how RBS articulate their goals. Amir’s pride in being able to communicate and support his family, for example, speaks to an ethic of care and responsibility that exceeds neoliberal norms. His English skills are not just a means to a job, but a way to navigate life with dignity and autonomy. Speaking about his sense of responsibility towards his family, Amir stated, “If I did not have this [English proficiency] it would be difficult to do these things by myself and earn money for myself and my family … I had to support them when they were alive” (Interview 1). His use of English was tied to familial obligation, survival and self-worth, not only to market success. Likewise, Rokaiya and Halima, while acknowledging the constraints of English-based systems, also expressed pride in their other languages, suggesting that the desire for English fluency can coexist with a deep attachment to one’s heritage and identity.

The prominence of English-language aspirations in the RBS’ narratives indexes how deeply neoliberal discourses have penetrated refugee education. Across these accounts, aspirations were shaped by a system that links English-language ability to economic

survival and social legitimacy. The promise of social mobility through education is contingent upon linguistic conformity, a condition that places the burden of adaptation squarely on the shoulders of RBS. At the policy level, this dynamic is reinforced by documents such as the New Zealand Curriculum, which emphasises English as the default language of learning across all subjects, and the New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Strategy (INZ, 2012), which prioritises English-language acquisition as essential for successful integration. These frameworks cast English not just as a communicative tool, but as a discursive imperative, an internalised obligation tethered to worth and belonging.

The implications of these findings are significant. While English-language proficiency is undoubtedly valuable, the current framing reduces multilingual RBS to their deficits rather than recognising their linguistic assets. It also obscures the structural inequities that produce language-based exclusions in the first place, such as unequal access to quality English instruction, culturally responsive pedagogy, or recognition of prior knowledge and skills. Thus, the RBS' narratives serve as both evidence of systemic inequities and testimony to their resilience. Their English-language aspirations are not merely expressions of individual ambition but responses to institutional constraints. These narratives call for a more equitable educational approach, one that honours the complex linguistic identities of RBS and provides meaningful pathways for their success without erasing who they are.

7.6 Placement and Its Discontents

This section examines placement as a technology of governance that produces managed delay and its attendant discontents within English-language education systems. Placement practices render legible the operational logics of English-language governance, as English functions as an allocative device that sequences access to mainstream subjects, credentials, and post-school futures through managed delay. At the time of data collection, two RBS participants were attending an intensive English course. This logic was echoed in an ESOL teacher's explanation during a classroom observation: "They [Saleha and Halima] are taking the intensive [English] course because that is essential for them to get to the mainstream. Also, they are now doing some mainstream courses, but the English is not done yet" (Sunita, Triptonwhite College). Here, placement functions as a temporal holding mechanism: RBS were partially included in mainstream learning while their progression remained conditional

on English completion. Access is thus staggered rather than denied, normalising delay as a legitimate institutional outcome. This form of managed delay exemplifies what Chapter 3 identified as "disciplinary governance" operating through temporal regulation rather than outright exclusion, where RBS remain included only provisionally while progression is continuously deferred (Dryden-Peterson, 2016; Foucault, 1977; Morrice et al., 2020). Placement thus functions as a mechanism through which inequality is normalised and rendered administratively acceptable.

This placement logic is embedded in broader neoliberal rationalities embedded in education policy, where English proficiency is tied to market readiness, individual responsibility, and assimilative competence. English-language mastery is framed less as communicative development than as preparation for participation in a competitive economy. Curricular language acquisition frameworks operationalise this placement logic by translating English-language learning into a tightly regulated, criteria-driven script. This trajectory traces a broader system of surveillance and control that oversees and regulates student growth. Moreover, the system's emphasis on developing a wide range of English-language skills for RBS highlights an effort to shape these individuals into conforming participants in the educational system who can satisfy the requirements of a competitive, market-driven society.

7.7 Multilingualism and the Limits of Monolingual Governance

This section analyses multilingualism and the limits of monolingual governance in recognising language as central to identity, learning and belonging. While English-language acquisition is central to refugee integration policy and routine in New Zealand, the experiences of Rohingya RBS demonstrate alternative discourses that challenge the dominance of English monolingualism. In these counter-narratives, multilingualism emerges not as a deficiency but as a rich resource, a form of cultural capital and an expression of identity, resilience and empowerment.

Rokaiya's narrative illustrates a form of counter-conduct that operates within, rather than against, dominant linguistic hierarchies. She consistently reframed her multilingualism as a source of strength and resilience, resisting the marginalising gaze of her monolingual peers and instructors. Her defiance represents a counter-discourse that contests the current system's assumptions and reclaims dignity through the recognition of alternative forms of knowledge. Yet, her account also presents the limitations of such resistance. Despite her confidence, she acknowledged that her

languages are “not much” utilised in school. This highlights the structural constraints that prevent RBS from fully leveraging their multilingual identities in classroom settings. Similar experiences were voiced by other participants, who also described their home and community languages as largely invisible or unusable within classroom spaces. Together, these accounts underscore that the marginalisation of multilingualism is systemic rather than individual. The education system still operates within a narrow monolingual script, even as it gestures towards inclusivity.

Foucault’s discursive method focuses on the power mechanisms that operate when many discourses compete, and how the oppressive power eventually prevails. This is similar to what is shown by Rokaiya’s discursive actions. Rokaiya showed her character strength by rationalising that she knew more languages than mainstream students. This gave her confidence that she was not lagging behind them. She consistently framed her multilingualism as a strength, resisting the deficit view that positioned her only through the lens of English proficiency.

Rokaiya was a hard-working student who confidently communicated with teachers and excelled in her studies. She aspired to be a successful businesswoman while retaining her South Asian cultural identity. Despite facing adverse reactions towards her emergent English, Rokaiya showed strength in her multilingual abilities. She borrowed academic materials from teachers to better understand the material. These efforts to succeed academically demonstrate another dimension of adaptation: the strategic use of digital tools to navigate linguistic and cultural gaps. As argued in Chapter 3, such adaptive practices can be read as ethical self-formation under conditions of governance, where subjects work on themselves in order to remain intelligible and valued within institutional regimes that continue to privilege dominant norms (Clark & Lenette, 2020; Foucault, 1982; Leo, 2021a).

Rokaiya described using Google Translate and body language to bridge linguistic gaps, alongside brief participation in Māori cultural learning. She highlighted her hijab and Muslim identity as sources of strength, noting that these markers of difference also enabled her to take on leadership roles within her school community. Rokaiya was a cultural representative for her school and had spoken at different events, sharing her feelings and thoughts about being a Muslim in New Zealand after the Christchurch mosque attacks in 2019. She saw her religion as a source of identity and strength, and felt accepted by her peers and teachers. Her ability to represent her school at various

events shows her negotiation of subjectivities within the context of her educational institution. In doing so, Rokaiya embodied a form of resistance to dominant discourses that may seek to marginalise or stigmatise minority groups. Overall, Rokaiya's experience demonstrates how power operates through school, community and family to shape her identity within New Zealand's dominant discourses. These practices of religious commitment, leadership and confidence can be read as ethical self-formation within linguistic governmentality, through which Rokaiya sustains moral worth and belonging while navigating a system that continues to measure legitimacy primarily through English.

7.8 Conclusion

Drawing on Foucault, this chapter has established the dominant discourses surrounding English-language acquisition for Rohingya RBS in New Zealand, situating these within the broader frameworks of neoliberalism, Foucauldian governmentality, and linguistic hierarchies. Through the integration of RBS' narratives, it has shown that across these domains, English emerges as an allocative mechanism that governs access to time, credentials, institutional recognition, and future participation, extending its regulatory force beyond schooling into aspiration and self-formation.

Drawing from the experiences of RBS such as Saleha, Halima, Amir, Jamir, Rokaiya and Anas, this chapter has illustrated how English-language learning is deeply entangled with issues of identity, belonging, power and aspiration. Educational institutions, while offering pathways to inclusion, often replicate exclusionary logics that frame success through a narrow, market-oriented lens, prioritising individual achievement, English proficiency, and economic contribution.

RBS are not simply learning English to communicate; they are engaging in complex acts of self-positioning within systems that often marginalise, exclude and devalue their existing knowledge, languages, and cultural capital. Saleha's determination to "speak like them" and Rokaiya's assertion that her multilingualism is a strength both underscore the ways RBS navigate linguistic expectations as sites of both conformity and resistance. These are not neutral linguistic journeys; they are moral, economic and social ones, laden with consequences for success, failure and self-worth.

Neoliberal discourses compound this effect by reconfiguring English-language learning as an individual responsibility, operating through responsibilisation, benchmarked

progression, and the conditional linking of English proficiency to future economic participation. Participants' narratives often demonstrate this internalisation, registering a sense of urgency, accountability, and internalised obligation to "catch up" in English, not only to succeed academically but to earn social and economic legitimacy. This is evident in Amir's framing of the MRRC English programme as an opportunity to "prove himself", and in Halima's focus on mastering English as a prerequisite for becoming a doctor. The emphasis on individual effort obscures the structural inequities that hinder equitable access to language resources and overlook the rich linguistic repertoires RBS already possess.

Despite the dominance of these discourses, this chapter has also illuminated the limits and frictions of linguistic governmentality. While RBS often speak about the importance of English for success, they simultaneously express pride in their home languages and articulate a sense of self that is not reducible to English fluency alone. Saleha's joyful proclamation that she speaks seven languages and Rokaiya's dismissal of English monolingualism as a narrow worldview both point to a counter-discourse, one in which multilingualism is reclaimed as a form of identity, power and resistance. These assertions of multilingual pride do not displace the dominance of English within institutional routines; rather, they expose the narrowness of what linguistic governmentality is able to recognise and reward.

The analysis further highlighted tensions within the wider New Zealand educational system, particularly around the disconnect between official policy support for bilingualism (e.g., Māori language revitalisation) and the limited institutional space for other minority or refugee languages. While te reo Māori is increasingly recognised as a legitimate and valued language, RBS' native tongues often remain invisible, unacknowledged in classroom routine or school culture. This contrast raises critical questions about whose languages are deemed worthy of preservation and what this implies about the broader structures of linguistic governmentality in New Zealand. It also renders legible how policy valorises te reo Māori / bilingualism as heritage and obligation, while other minority languages remain largely illegible within school routines, except as targets of remedial English.

RBS' testimonies serve as both data and counter-narrative, offering insight into how they make sense of, resist, or comply with the linguistic expectations placed upon them. This chapter has isolated English as a governing technology that structures access, delay

and legitimacy across RBS' schooling and aspirations, and explored how these same students continue to negotiate their identities, rights and futures within the broader architectures of education, resettlement, and national belonging in New Zealand. Overall, Chapter 7 has presented a self-contained diagnosis of linguistic governmentality, showing how English operates as an allocative and normalising technology that governs RBS' trajectories while systematically failing to recognise their multilingual capacities.

Chapter 8 Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

This thesis set out to examine how Rohingya refugee-background students (RBS) come to understand themselves within the Aotearoa New Zealand (hereafter New Zealand) education system, and how that system simultaneously shapes what becomes possible for them. Drawing on Foucauldian concepts of power, discourse, and subjectification, the study approached refugee schooling not as a neutral site of inclusion but as a governing apparatus through which RBS' futures are organised, regulated, and made intelligible.

The central research question guiding this inquiry was:

How do Rohingya refugee-background students (RBS) negotiate, resist and shape neoliberal discourses in New Zealand in pursuing their educational aspirations?

This question was supported by two subquestions:

1. What are the educational aspirations of Rohingya RBS in the context of policy discourses in New Zealand?
2. How are Rohingya RBS' educational subjectivities co-constructed through the interplay of education policies, education actors, and these students' agency?

In Chapters 5–7, these questions were addressed through a layered analysis that moved from policy frameworks to institutional practices and finally to RBS' lived experiences. Chapter 5 examined how refugee resettlement and education policies articulate normative expectations of integration, employability, and linguistic progression, demonstrating that RBS' aspirations are shaped within discursive conditions rather than formed independently of them. Chapter 6 analysed institutional technologies such as placement, assessment, prerequisites, and credit structures, showing how subjectivities are co-produced through routine schooling practices. Chapter 7 extended this analysis by foregrounding English-language acquisition as a dominant organising principle of legitimacy and futurity, demonstrating how belonging and educational progression become conditional upon linguistic advancement.

Taken together, the findings of Chapter 5–7 respond directly to the research questions. They demonstrate that Rohingya RBS' aspirations are neither purely self-determined

nor wholly imposed. Their aspirations are formed through ongoing negotiation within institutional conditions that align belonging with English proficiency, responsibilised self-management, and market-oriented definitions of success. Subjectivities emerge at the intersection of policy discourse, institutional regulation, and everyday effort, where RBS internalise certain norms while also carving out limited spaces of tactical manoeuvre.

Viewed as a whole, the study elucidates that refugee resettlement policy, schooling practices, and English-language acquisition operate as interconnected mechanisms that shape what counts as progress, responsibility and belonging. Education does not function merely as a site of opportunity; it acts as a governing apparatus through which RBS are rendered visible, comparable, and oriented towards particular futures. Assessment regimes, language requirements, and pathway guidance do not simply measure readiness; they organise it.

8.2 How Schooling Organises Refugee Futures

The ordinary institutional practices of the New Zealand education system actively shape which forms of aspiration, progress and belonging are made possible for RBS. What is striking across the findings of this study is not simply the presence of familiar challenges associated with refugee education, such as language barriers or disrupted schooling, but the way these challenges are organised and normalised through ordinary institutional practices. In contrast to dominant refugee education research that frames schooling primarily as a site of support, inclusion, or individual resilience, this study shows how education functions as a governing process that actively shapes which aspirations, forms of progress, and futures are recognised as legitimate. Rather than positing a gap between policy intent and practice, the analysis highlights how policy, assessment, and everyday schooling routines operate coherently to align RBS with restrictive, language-mediated, and market-oriented pathways. This finding complicates existing theoretical accounts that treat language acquisition and aspiration as largely technical or motivational concerns. Instead, it demonstrates how these processes are embedded within broader regimes of governance that take on specific form in the New Zealand resettlement context and in the lives of Rohingya RBS.

Across the thesis, educational participation for RBS was demonstrated to be structured through a dense and interlocking set of expectations that link language proficiency, aspiration, and belonging to normative visions of social order. Schooling did not emerge

as an open-ended space of possibility but as a system that aligns RBS with predefined trajectories of productivity, integration and self-management. These expectations were not confined to formal policy texts alone; they were enacted through everyday institutional practices in which students were assessed, guided and positioned within hierarchies of educational value.

The findings demonstrate that aspiration functioned not as an expression of unbounded personal desire but as a governed orientation towards the future shaped through institutional cues. Across participant accounts and policy frameworks, certain futures were consistently presented as legitimate, realistic, and worthy of pursuit, while others were implicitly rendered unattainable or inappropriate. Educational success was repeatedly framed in terms of employability, credential accumulation, and linguistic conformity, which narrowed the range of imaginable outcomes while presenting these constraints as neutral or self-evident. Responsibility for achieving these outcomes was individualised, with limited acknowledgement of the structural conditions shaping educational pathways. In this way, aspiration was understood to operate as a site through which governance was internalised and reproduced.

As shown through analysis of policy frameworks and participant narratives in Chapter 5, aspiration was produced through institutional cues that defined which futures were realistic, responsible, and worthy of pursuit. While RBS actively articulated high aspirations, these were continually calibrated in relation to policy-defined timelines, employability expectations, and linguistic benchmarks, rather than emerging as freely chosen or unlimited orientations towards the future.

Language emerged as a central organising feature of these governing dynamics. The analysis showed that English proficiency functioned as an infrastructural condition of participation, regulating access to curriculum, assessment, and institutional recognition. Through placement decisions, progression benchmarks, and assessment regimes, linguistic competence became a proxy for academic ability, effort and readiness. As a result, RBS were frequently positioned as continually in need of improvement, even where their educational knowledge or multilingual capacities were evident. The findings further demonstrate that multilingual knowledge and previous learning experiences were routinely marginalised or devaluated, despite their ongoing significance within RBS' lives and communities. Language therefore operated not only as a pedagogical medium, but as a classificatory mechanism through which educational

futures were allocated and constrained. This pattern was traced most clearly in Chapters 6 and 7, where placement and assessment practices consistently organised RBS' access to progression and recognition on the basis of English proficiency.

Collectively, the findings indicate that Rohingya RBS were situated within institutional frameworks that anticipated their alignment with dominant norms of aspiration, responsibility and progress, particularly those tied to English proficiency, employability and integration. Within these frameworks, educational success and failure were constructed as matters of individual conduct and self-regulation, rather than as effects of institutional design and governance. Experiences of displacement, interrupted schooling, and linguistic marginalisation were thus displaced from view, even as they continued to shape RBS' educational trajectories.

Across the findings chapters, education was shown to function as a key site through which norms of belonging and legitimacy were produced and enforced. Access to schooling was formally guaranteed, yet recognition and future opportunity were distributed unevenly through mechanisms that privileged linguistic conformity and individualised responsibility. These dynamics underscore how educational inclusion was frequently conditional rather than unconditional, with participation tied to ongoing demonstrations of progress towards institutionally defined benchmarks. At the same time, RBS' experiences illustrated the ongoing negotiation required to navigate these expectations, as they sought to reconcile institutional demands with personal, familial and community commitments.

8.3 Key Contributions of the Analysis

This section outlines the key contributions of the analysis to understandings of refugee education, governance, and schooling. Using a governmentality framework, this study has demonstrated that Rohingya RBS are positioned within educational systems that anticipate and require their alignment with dominant norms of aspiration, responsibility and progress (Foucault, 1982). These norms are closely tied to English-language proficiency, employability, and individual self-management, and they operate as institutional benchmarks through which educational success and failure are defined. Rather than emerging organically from RBS' own goals or capacities, these expectations are embedded within policy, assessment practices, and everyday schooling routines that shape how students are evaluated, guided and positioned.

The findings show that educational success is constructed as a matter of individual conduct and self-regulation, with responsibility for progress placed primarily on RBS themselves (Foucault, 1975). Structural conditions associated with forced displacement, interrupted schooling, and linguistic marginalisation were systematically backgrounded within institutional discourse, even as they continued to shape RBS' educational trajectories. As a result, aspirations come to be understood not as personal or collective orientations towards the future but as dispositions that must align with institutionally sanctioned pathways in order to be recognised as legitimate.

As shown through analysis of the New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Strategy (INZ, 2012, 2017) and participants' narratives in Chapter 5, aspiration did not operate as purely individual motivation. Instead, it functioned as a governed field shaped by policy-defined metrics of success, economic self-sufficiency, and temporal urgency (Appadurai, 2004; Chen & Hesketh, 2021). Participants' aspirations were frequently articulated in ways that aligned with institutional expectations, yet these accounts also demonstrated ethical, familial, and political orientations that exceeded what policy frameworks rendered intelligible or valuable. This duality was produced through the interaction between state-defined futures and RBS' lived histories of displacement, interrupted education, and responsibility, rather than arising from inconsistency or ambivalence on the part of students.

English-language proficiency emerged as a central mechanism through which access, legitimacy, and future possibility were organised (Christie & Sidhu, 2006; Foucault, 1975). Across the analysis, language functioned not only as a pedagogical requirement but as a primary criterion through which RBS were rendered comparable, assessable and governable. Placement decisions, progression benchmarks, and assessment regimes consistently positioned English as a proxy for ability, effort and readiness, producing ongoing expectations of improvement regardless of RBS' prior knowledge or multilingual competencies. In this way, language operated as an infrastructure through which educational pathways were opened or constrained. In Chapters 6 and 7, this pattern was traced across institutional practices, including placement decisions, assessment benchmarks, and language support structures. It was also evident in RBS' own accounts of being positioned as ready, deficient or progressing through their demonstrated English proficiency.

By foregrounding these dynamics, the analysis shifted attention away from deficit-based explanations of RBS' educational outcomes towards the institutional conditions that actively produce them. Rather than framing Rohingya RBS as lacking motivation, ability or aspiration, the findings demonstrate how schooling itself actively organises norms of success, belonging and worth. Educational participation thus emerges as a negotiated process shaped by governance, rather than as a neutral or purely supportive pathway.

Viewed in synthesis, these contributions establish refugee education in New Zealand as a field structured by power relations that operate through ordinary institutional practices. Assessment, placement and guidance do not simply express educational intentions; they function as techniques through which futures are anticipated, allocated and regulated. Recognising these processes is essential for understanding how educational inequality is produced and sustained, even within systems formally committed to inclusion and access.

8.4 What Counts as Educational Value

This section draws on the study's findings to demonstrate how educational value is produced and what counts as legitimate within refugee education. This research highlights how dominant institutional benchmarks shape which forms of knowledge, ability and aspiration are recognised as legitimate within refugee education, pointing out broader processes through which educational value is institutionally defined (Christie & Sidhu, 2006; Foucault, 1975). The findings demonstrate that educational success is primarily organised around institutionally sanctioned indicators of linguistic proficiency, credential accumulation, and alignment with predefined occupational pathways. Within this framework, RBS' multilingual capacities, cultural knowledge, and prior learning experiences are frequently marginalised, not because they lack educational value but because they fall outside the metrics through which institutions allocate recognition and opportunity.

Across the analysis, a clear tension emerged between the multilingual resources that Rohingya RBS bring with them and the predominantly monolingual expectations embedded within schooling structures. English-language proficiency was consistently positioned as the primary gateway to academic participation, social legitimacy, and future possibility. While RBS actively engaged in learning English as a necessary condition of educational progression, this process extended beyond pedagogy and

operated within broader regimes of evaluation and judgement. Language acquisition became intertwined with broader expectations about identity, belonging, and social contribution, shaping how RBS understood both their educational standing and their prospects within New Zealand society.

The findings show that language learning was not experienced as a neutral or technical process but as an ongoing negotiation shaped by institutional hierarchies of value. English functioned simultaneously as a means of access and as a mechanism of regulation, structuring placement decisions, assessment outcomes, and perceptions of ability. In contrast, RBS' multilingual competencies were rarely acknowledged as assets within formal educational spaces, despite their central role in family life, community engagement, and informal learning practices. This asymmetry illustrates how institutional norms privilege certain forms of knowledge while rendering others peripheral or illegible.

The study further demonstrates that dominant narratives of educational aspiration tend to prioritise particular forms of labour and success, especially those associated with professional status, economic mobility, and individual advancement (Appadurai, 2004; Chen & Hesketh, 2021). Participants' accounts demonstrated how these narratives shape perceptions of what constitutes a "successful" future. They often elevate prestigious professions while obscuring the social value of other forms of labour, including caregiving, community support, and collective responsibility. These alternative forms of contribution, while essential to the functioning and well-being of communities, remain largely unrecognised within institutional definitions of achievement.

By foregrounding RBS' experiences, the analysis shows how aspirations are shaped not only by personal goals, but also by perceptions of which futures are institutionally recognised and socially validated. Educational pathways that align with dominant benchmarks are more readily affirmed, while aspirations grounded in relational, communal or non-market-oriented values remain marginalised within schooling discourse. This dynamic delimits the range of futures that are perceived as legitimate, even as RBS continue to hold and negotiate aspirations that extend beyond instrumental definitions of success.

Collectively, these findings underscore the need to broaden institutional recognition within refugee education. Rather than treating linguistic difference, interrupted schooling, or non-linear educational trajectories as deficiencies to be corrected, the study points to the importance of recognising diverse forms of knowledge, labour and aspiration as meaningful educational contributions. Such recognition has implications not only for how success is defined and assessed, but for how RBS experience belonging, legitimacy and possibility within educational systems.

8.5 When Educational Support Becomes Regulation

The findings of this study have significant implications for how educational support for RBS is conceptualised and delivered within New Zealand's schooling system. While national education policies formally emphasise inclusion, access and equity, the analysis demonstrates that these commitments are enacted through institutional arrangements that prioritise English-language proficiency as a central indicator of educational readiness, progress, and educational value. These arrangements align with broader neoliberal education policy frameworks that link support to performance and employability (Ball, 2013). In this context, support does not operate solely as assistance or accommodation, but as a mechanism through which RBS are assessed, classified and directed along particular educational pathways.

Across the findings, language emerged as a key organising principle in the governance of refugee education. English proficiency functioned not only as a medium of instruction, but as a regulatory benchmark through which access to curriculum, assessment and credentialing was structured. Placement decisions, progression criteria, and evaluation practices consistently positioned language competence as a proxy for ability and potential, shaping how RBS were perceived by institutions and how they understood their own educational standing. As a result, educational support became closely tied to ongoing demonstrations of linguistic improvement, rather than to recognition of prior knowledge or learning capacity.

The effects of this linguistic hierarchy extended beyond academic assessment to shape RBS' experiences of recognition, legitimacy and belonging within educational spaces. For Rohingya RBS, aspirations were formed not solely through personal ambition, but through perceptions of how securely they were positioned as legitimate participants in schooling and society. This illustrates how institutional recognition conditions the "horizon of aspiration" available to marginalised learners (Appadurai, 2004).

Educational progress was thus experienced as contingent, with belonging and future opportunity conditional upon sustained alignment with institutional expectations of language, conduct and achievement.

The findings further show that responsibility for educational progress was systematically individualised within these support structures. Students were expected to manage their own advancement through effort, motivation and self-regulation, even as structural constraints related to displacement, interrupted schooling, financial pressure, and family obligations continued to shape their educational trajectories. Within this framework, support mechanisms often obscured the broader conditions that limited opportunity, presenting educational outcomes as matters of individual success or failure rather than as effects of institutional design, a pattern widely identified in critiques of responsibilisation in education policy (Olssen, 2006).

These dynamics illustrate how refugee education operates through a shift from support to governance. This shift was documented through combined analysis of policy texts, institutional support frameworks, and RBS' accounts of how care, monitoring and evaluation operated simultaneously within everyday schooling. Practices intended to facilitate inclusion simultaneously function to regulate participation, distribute recognition, and organise futures. Rather than being neutral or purely benevolent, educational support structures play an active role in shaping which RBS are seen as progressing appropriately and which are positioned as needing continual remediation. Recognising this shift is essential for understanding how educational inequality can be reproduced within systems formally committed to inclusion, and for reconsidering how support might be organised in ways that genuinely expand opportunity rather than condition it.

8.6 Methodological Contributions

This thesis makes a methodological contribution by demonstrating how a governmentality-informed approach can be used to analyse refugee education. It conceptualises refugee education as a field structured by institutional practices, discursive norms, and processes of subject formation, rather than as a collection of individual experiences or measurable outcomes. By combining Foucauldian discourse analysis with sustained attention to policy texts, schooling practices, and student narratives, the study has demonstrated how ordinary educational processes such as assessment, placement, and language support function as mechanisms. Through these

mechanisms, aspiration, responsibility, and educational worth are actively organised. The research's methodological approach enabled the analysis to move beyond descriptive or deficit-oriented accounts of refugee schooling and to instead foreground the governing conditions under which educational participation becomes intelligible and evaluable. Reading across these sites together made it possible to trace how power circulates through ordinary educational processes, linking policy intent, institutional routine, and student experience in ways that are not accessible through outcome-focused or surface-level descriptive approaches alone.

Methodologically, the study underscored the value of reading RBS' accounts as situated responses to institutional arrangements, rather than as transparent indicators of individual capacity, motivation or resilience. Attention to recurring discursive patterns across policy, institutional practice, and student experience made it possible to trace how norms of success, belonging and progress circulate and are taken up within schooling. In doing so, the methodology supports a rigorous and ethically grounded analysis of refugee education that remains attentive to lived experience while situating that experience within broader structures of governance. This is in line with governmentality approaches that treat subjectivity as produced through institutional and discursive practices (Foucault, 1982). This approach offers a transferable analytic framework for examining how power operates through everyday educational processes across other resettlement and schooling contexts.

8.7 Scope and Boundaries of the Study

This section outlines the scope and boundaries of the study and clarifies what the analysis did and did not seek to accomplish. This research is necessarily shaped by its theoretical commitments, methodological choices, and empirical scope. Its use of a governmentality framework foregrounds the operation of power through discourse, institutional practices, and norms of subject formation. It offers a particular way of understanding refugee education that privileges structural and relational dynamics over causal explanation or outcome measurement. While this orientation enabled a critical examination of how aspiration, language and governance intersect within schooling, it did not aim to provide predictive claims or comprehensive evaluations of policy effectiveness. Instead, the analysis was concerned with elucidating the conditions under which RBS' educational experiences are rendered meaningful, governable and legitimate.

The empirical focus on Rohingya RBS in New Zealand represents both a strength and a limitation of the study. Concentrating on a specific community allows for an in-depth exploration of how governance operates within a particular historical, political and educational context. At the same time, the findings are not intended to be generalised across all refugee populations or resettlement contexts. Rohingya RBS' experiences are shaped by distinct trajectories of displacement, statelessness and marginalisation that interact with national education policies in specific ways. The insights generated here are therefore best understood as analytically transferable rather than universally representative, offering conceptual tools that may inform analyses in other settings rather than prescriptive conclusions. While the number of participants is necessarily limited, the analytic framework employed in this study is designed to attend to institutional complexity rather than statistical representation, offering an approach that future research could extend across policy, school and student levels to examine refugee education in similarly structured contexts. While empirically grounded in a specific community and national context, the analytic approach developed here offers a way of examining how governance, aspiration and recognition operate across refugee education systems structured by similar policy logics.

Methodologically, the study relies on qualitative approaches that prioritise depth, interpretation and reflexivity over breadth or statistical representativeness. This orientation allows for a nuanced account of how RBS navigate schooling within regimes of governance, but it also limits the capacity to capture the full range of institutional perspectives or policy enactments across the education system. The analysis foregrounds RBS' experiences and interpretations, recognising that these accounts are situated within broader power relations and shaped by the contexts in which they are produced. While this approach has provided insights into the lived effects of educational governance in the New Zealand refugee context, it did not seek to exhaustively map all institutional practices or policy intentions.

The study's reliance on Foucauldian concepts also entails certain analytic constraints. Governmentality and biopower are used here as sensitising frameworks rather than totalising explanations, yet their application inevitably foregrounds particular dimensions of power while leaving others less explored. For example, the analysis attended closely to discourse, regulation, and subject formation, but engaged less directly with material resource allocation, classroom-level pedagogical variation, or the

perspectives of educators and policymakers. These dimensions remain important areas for further investigation and would complement the insights developed in this thesis.

Finally, this research is shaped by ethical and practical considerations inherent in working with RBS. Access, trust and representation require careful negotiation, and participants' accounts must be understood as partial, situated and produced within specific relational contexts. The study does not claim to speak for Rohingya communities as a whole, nor to capture the full complexity of their educational experiences. Rather, it offers a critical account of how schooling is experienced and navigated within particular institutional arrangements in New Zealand, contributing to broader conversations about power, education, and refugee resettlement without claiming definitive or exhaustive authority.

8.8 Rethinking Refugee Education

This section rethinks refugee education as an institutional and governing process. The findings of this study indicate that refugee education is best understood as an institutional process through which educational value, legitimacy, and future possibility are actively organised. Rather than operating as a neutral system of inclusion, schooling structures participation through normative benchmarks that privilege particular forms of language proficiency, aspiration and progression. Conceptually, this reframing shifts attention away from individual attributes or outcomes and towards the institutional conditions that shape how educational success is defined and distributed.

The findings indicate that English-language proficiency functions as a central organising principle within these conditions. Language operates not only as a pedagogical requirement, but as an institutional benchmark through which RBS are rendered legible, comparable and evaluable, consistent with Foucault's (1975) analyses of assessment and normalisation within institutions. This has implications for how educational readiness and ability are conceptualised, as linguistic performance frequently substitutes for broader assessments of knowledge, learning capacity, or educational potential. As a result, multilingual knowledge and non-linear educational trajectories are systematically undervalued when they fall outside dominant institutional metrics.

The findings also suggest the need to conceptualise refugee education as a field structured by differential recognition rather than by equal access alone. While formal

access to schooling may be guaranteed, recognition, legitimacy, and future opportunity are distributed unevenly through routine practices of assessment, placement and guidance. Conceptually, this underscores the importance of examining how ordinary institutional processes shape educational futures, and how educational inequality can be reproduced even within systems formally committed to inclusion and equity. While grounded in the specific context of New Zealand, the findings speak to refugee education systems internationally where language, assessment and aspiration are similarly organised as mechanisms for allocating recognition, legitimacy, and future possibility.

8.9 Belonging, Legitimacy, and Educational Participation

This section synthesises how educational participation shapes belonging and legitimacy for RBS. The findings highlight the broader social implications of how refugee education is organised and experienced. Educational participation plays a significant role in shaping RBS' sense of belonging, self-worth, and social recognition. Across the analysis, RBS' aspirations were shown to be closely tied to how they were positioned within schooling and society, with educational progress functioning as a marker of legitimacy and social acceptance. When educational success is narrowly defined through linguistic proficiency and credential accumulation, belonging emerges as conditional rather than secure. Educational participation thus becomes intertwined with broader judgements about social contribution and worth, shaping how RBS experience integration.

At the same time, the findings indicate that RBS' aspirations are not reducible to individual advancement or economic mobility. Many aspirations were shaped by commitments to family, community, and collective responsibility. The social implications of this mismatch between institutional definitions of success and RBS' lived priorities point to the need for educational environments that recognise a wider range of aspirations and forms of contribution as socially meaningful.

8.10 Implications for Language and Education Policy

This section outlines implications for language and education policy. It argues that policy must attend more closely to how language-based hierarchies structure access, progression, and recognition within schooling. The findings indicate that education policy would benefit from closer attention to how language-based hierarchies structure

access, progression, and recognition within schooling, a concern widely documented in refugee education research that examines how policy logics shape educational futures (Christie & Sidhu, 2006; Dryden-Peterson, 2016). While policies frequently emphasise inclusion and equity, this study shows that these commitments are mediated through assessment and placement practices that prioritise English proficiency as a primary indicator of readiness and potential. This has implications for how opportunity is distributed, particularly for students with interrupted schooling or strong multilingual backgrounds. The findings suggest that policies which frame language support primarily as remediation risk reinforcing deficit-based assumptions about RBS. Recognising multilingualism as an educational resource rather than as a barrier would allow policy frameworks to better incorporate the knowledge and capacities RBS bring with them. This requires reconsidering how language proficiency is assessed, how progress is measured, and how support structures are designed, rather than treating English acquisition as a linear technical problem.

More broadly, the findings indicate that policy definitions of educational success would benefit from being expanded beyond reductive economic or employability outcomes. Policies that acknowledge diverse educational pathways and forms of contribution are more likely to support meaningful participation and long-term engagement, particularly where aspiration is understood as socially and institutionally shaped rather than as an individual trait (Appadurai, 2004; Chen & Hesketh, 2021). Such an approach would align policy commitments to inclusion with institutional practices that genuinely broaden, rather than constrain, educational possibility.

8.11 Implications for Educational Practice

At the level of educational practice, the findings suggest the importance of approaches that recognise and value diverse linguistic and educational trajectories. Educators play a key role in how institutional expectations are enacted in everyday classroom contexts, particularly through assessment, feedback and placement decisions. Practices that rely heavily on language proficiency as a proxy for ability risk overlooking RBS' wider learning capacities and reinforcing narrow, deficit-oriented definitions of success. The study indicates that more inclusive practices would involve recognising multilingual knowledge as a legitimate component of learning, rather than treating it as peripheral or problematic. This has implications for classroom pedagogy, assessment design, and

support structures, where opportunities exist to build on RBS' existing knowledge rather than positioning them as continually behind or in need of remediation.

The findings also suggest that educational support should be delivered in ways that acknowledge the structural constraints shaping RBS' lives, including family responsibilities, financial pressures, and prior educational disruption. Practices that place sole responsibility for progress on individual student's risk obscuring these conditions and reproducing inequity. More responsive approaches would frame support as relational and contextual, fostering environments in which RBS can experience both academic development and a sustained sense of belonging. While grounded in the specific context of New Zealand, these findings speak to refugee education systems internationally, where language, assessment and aspiration are similarly organised as mechanisms for allocating recognition, legitimacy, and future possibility.

8.12 Seeing Refugee Education Differently

Read as a whole, this thesis calls for seeing refugee education differently by rethinking how it is understood, organised and evaluated within contemporary schooling systems. Rather than approaching education as a neutral mechanism of inclusion or a linear pathway towards integration, this study demonstrates that schooling operates as a governing apparatus through which refugee futures are shaped, constrained, and made intelligible, in ways that align with critical analyses of how education functions as an instrument of surveillance, regulation and productivity within refugee and asylum regimes (Kohl, 2020; Whyte, 2011). For Rohingya RBS in New Zealand, educational participation is structured by institutional expectations that align belonging with English-language proficiency, responsibilised aspiration, and market-oriented definitions of success. These expectations actively organise how RBS are positioned, assessed and valued within educational spaces.

By tracing how language, aspiration and assessment function as interconnected technologies of governance, this thesis shows that inclusion in education is frequently conditional rather than unconditional. Access to schooling is formally guaranteed by the state, yet recognition, legitimacy, and future possibility are distributed unevenly through mechanisms that privilege linguistic conformity and individual self-management. Responsibility for progress is individualised, rendering structural constraints associated with displacement, interrupted schooling, and marginalisation less apparent. In this

configuration, educational success and failure come to appear as outcomes of personal effort rather than as effects of institutional design and governance.

At the same time, however, this study resists framing Rohingya RBS as passive subjects of power. Students' educational trajectories point to ongoing negotiation with the governing conditions of schooling, characterised by endurance, strategic accommodation, and selective compliance. Multilingualism persists as a source of relational knowledge, cultural continuity, and collective belonging, even as it is marginalised within formal assessment regimes. This echoes research that documents the disjuncture between refugees' lived educational capacities and the narrow recognition afforded by institutional frameworks (Arar, 2021; Dryden-Peterson, 2016). Aspirations are shaped by institutional pressures, yet they are also informed by commitments to family, community, and collective responsibility that extend beyond market-centred visions of success. These orientations illuminate both the reach and the limits of educational governance, highlighting the complexity of RBS' engagement with schooling.

Adopting a governmentality perspective reframes refugee education as a field structured by power rather than by intention alone. This analytic lens renders intelligible how ordinary practices of assessment, placement and support function as techniques through which RBS are rendered legible, comparable and governable. Rather than relying on overt exclusion, governance operates through routine institutional processes that appear neutral, benevolent or necessary. In this way, schooling emerges as a key site where norms of integration, productivity and worth are produced and enforced.

Foregrounding these dynamics contributes to a more critical and decolonial understanding of refugee education. Specifically, this study contributes to decolonising scholarship by unsettling the taken-for-granted universality and neutrality of Western schooling norms, showing instead how they operate as historically situated regimes of truth that privilege particular languages, subjectivities and futures while rendering others deficient or unintelligible (Foucault, 1991; Mignolo, 2011). By tracing how refugee learners are produced as governable subjects through everyday institutional practices, the thesis exposes how colonial logics of hierarchy, civilisation and improvement persist within contemporary resettlement education systems, often in rearticulated and technocratic forms (Santos, 2014). In this sense, decolonising work here is not pursued through a separate theoretical framework but through a

governmentality analysis that denaturalises dominant educational rationalities and recentres attention on how power shapes what counts as legitimate knowledge, success and belonging (Andreotti et al., 2015).

Rather than positioning RBS as problems to be solved or individuals in need of remediation, this thesis highlights how educational institutions themselves participate in producing inequality. It does so through the normalisation of linguistic hierarchy, responsibilised aspiration, and market-aligned futures. English-language dominance functions not simply as a pedagogical concern, but as an organising infrastructure that governs access to curriculum, credentials, and imagined futures, while marginalising multilingual knowledge and alternative forms of competence. Recognising these processes shifts attention away from individual adaptation and towards the institutional arrangements that shape educational possibility.

A key contribution of this thesis lies not in offering prescriptive solutions but in elucidating the governing rationalities embedded within refugee education. By bringing together policy analysis, institutional practice, and student experience through a Foucauldian framework, the study illustrates how education functions simultaneously as a site of opportunity and constraint. This perspective complicates celebratory narratives of inclusion, while also resisting deterministic accounts of power. It opens space for questioning how education might be otherwise organised, without assuming that schooling alone can resolve the structural inequalities faced by refugee communities.

For Rohingya RBS, educational participation is constituted within a system that demands adaptability, resilience and self-regulation, while offering belonging on conditional terms. Without sustained attention to these governing dynamics, education risks reproducing the very inequalities it purports to address, presenting inclusion as an individual achievement rather than as a collective and institutional responsibility. Viewing refugee education through a governmentality lens does not resolve these tensions, but it does make them intelligible, contestable, and analytically unavoidable.

Ultimately, this thesis argues that refugee education must be understood as a deeply political domain in which futures are shaped through ordinary institutional practices. Seeing refugee education differently requires moving beyond technical fixes and humanitarian framings towards sustained critical engagement with how power operates through language, aspiration and assessment. Attending to these governing conditions

allows education to be reimagined not merely as a mechanism of integration but as a site where dignity, belonging, and meaningful possibility may be more equitably realised. This is particularly important in contexts where policy implementation continues to lag behind stated commitments (Altınkalp et al., 2022).

8.13 Contributions to New Knowledge

This thesis makes five interrelated contributions to knowledge in the field of refugee education. First, it offers a conceptual contribution by reframing educational aspiration as a governed horizon rather than an individual disposition. While much refugee education research treats aspiration as either a psychological trait, a cultural resource, or in terms of disparities in educational attainment, this study demonstrates that aspiration operates as a field structured by policy rationalities, institutional timelines, and linguistic benchmarks. Aspirations do not precede governance; they are formed within it. By conceptualising aspiration as a site of responsibilised futurity, this thesis extends Foucauldian analyses of neoliberal subject formation into the domain of refugee schooling.

Second, this thesis makes a theoretical contribution by demonstrating how refugee education in New Zealand operates as a site of English-language governmentality. English proficiency is shown not merely as a pedagogical requirement but as an allocative and regulatory threshold that structures access to curriculum, assessment, recognition and futurity. Through placement practices, progression benchmarks, and assessment regimes, language becomes an infrastructure of governance through which RBS are rendered comparable, legible and governable. This extends existing governmentality scholarship by showing how linguistic normalisation functions as a key technology in refugee resettlement education.

Third, it makes an empirical contribution by providing a sustained, policy-to-practice-to-subjectivity analysis of Rohingya RBS in New Zealand. While Rohingya education has been studied in camp and humanitarian contexts, this thesis offers one of the first in-depth examinations of Rohingya RBS' educational trajectories within a Western resettlement system through a Foucauldian lens. It demonstrates how global histories of statelessness and displacement intersect with national resettlement policy and everyday schooling practices to shape educational possibility.

Fourth, it makes a methodological contribution by operationalising a layered governmentality-informed analytic design. By reading policy texts, institutional practices, and student narratives together rather than in isolation, the study demonstrates how power circulates across levels of governance. This approach moves beyond outcome-focused or deficit-oriented research and offers a transferable analytic framework for examining how educational subjectivities are co-constructed across policy, institutional routine, and lived experience in other resettlement contexts.

Fifth, and finally, this thesis contributes to decolonising scholarship in refugee education by unsettling the assumed neutrality and universality of Western schooling norms. Rather than treating English dominance, credential accumulation, and linear progression as self-evident goods, the thesis shows how these norms function as historically situated regimes of truth that privilege particular languages, subjectivities and futures. Through a governmentality analysis, the study denaturalises these rationalities and exposes how colonial logics of hierarchy, improvement and civilisation persist in contemporary resettlement schooling in technocratic form. In doing so, it shifts attention away from RBS as sites of deficiency and towards the institutional rationalities that structure recognition and legitimacy.

Taken together, these contributions establish refugee education as a deeply political domain structured by ordinary institutional practices through which futures are anticipated, allocated and regulated. The study does not position itself as offering technical solutions. Rather, its contribution lies in rendering visible the governing rationalities embedded within refugee schooling, thereby making them available for critique, contestation and reimagination.

8.14 Recommendations for Further Research

This study points to several clear directions for further research that would extend and refine understanding of how refugee education is organised and experienced within contemporary schooling systems. While the findings are grounded in the experiences of Rohingya RBS in New Zealand, the governing dynamics identified in this thesis raise questions that warrant sustained attention across contexts, timeframes and institutional settings. Comparative research across national education systems would be particularly valuable for examining how language-based hierarchies and institutional benchmarks operate under different policy regimes. Investigating how assessment, placement, and language support are organised in diverse resettlement contexts could clarify which

governing dynamics are context-specific and which are indicative of broader patterns within neoliberal schooling systems, strengthening the analytic transferability of these findings.

Longitudinal research is also needed to trace how RBS' educational trajectories, aspirations, and experiences of recognition evolve over time. Following RBS across key transitions, such as movement between schooling levels, entry into post-compulsory education, or transitions into employment, would provide insight into how early educational positioning shapes their longer-term opportunities and belonging. This would allow future researchers to examine not only immediate educational experiences, but the cumulative effects of institutional expectations and support structures across the life course.

Future research should also engage more directly with institutional perspectives, including those of educators, school leaders, and policymakers. While this study foregrounds student experiences, examining how institutional actors interpret and enact policy mandates would offer a fuller picture of how governance operates across multiple levels of the education system. Such work could identify points of discretion, tension and possibility within everyday practice, informing more responsive and equitable approaches to refugee education.

Viewed as a whole, these directions call for research that remains closely attuned to institutional processes rather than focusing solely on individual outcomes. Advancing the field requires sustained empirical attention to how ordinary educational practices organise recognition, legitimacy, and future possibility for RBS. Yet within this critical account lies a basis for hope: the possibility of educational systems that recognise dignity rather than deficit, belonging rather than conditional inclusion, and futures shaped by meaningful participation rather than reductive measures of worth. By extending inquiry across contexts, timeframes, and institutional perspectives, future research can build on the insights of this study to support more informed, analytically grounded, and equitable educational systems.

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Appendices

Appendix A Ethics Approval

Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC)

Auckland University of Technology
D-88, Private Bag 92006, Auckland 1142, NZ
T: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 8316
E: ethics@aut.ac.nz
www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics

9 May 2019

Sharon Harvey
Faculty of Culture and Society

Dear Sharon

Re Ethics Application: **19/115 Young adult Rohingya negotiating New Zealand's educational practices and institutions**

Thank you for providing evidence as requested, which satisfies the points raised by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC).

Your ethics application has been approved for three years until 9 May 2022.

Standard Conditions of Approval

1. A progress report is due annually on the anniversary of the approval date, using form EA2, which is available online through http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/researchethics.
2. A final report is due at the expiration of the approval period, or, upon completion of project, using form EA3, which is available online through http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/researchethics.
3. Any amendments to the project must be approved by AUTEC prior to being implemented. Amendments can be requested using the EA2 form: http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/researchethics.
4. Any serious or unexpected adverse events must be reported to AUTEC Secretariat as a matter of priority.
5. Any unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project should also be reported to the AUTEC Secretariat as a matter of priority.

Please quote the application number and title on all future correspondence related to this project.

AUTEC grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval for access for your research from another institution or organisation, then you are responsible for obtaining it. If the research is undertaken outside New Zealand, you need to meet all locality legal and ethical obligations and requirements. You are reminded that it is your responsibility to ensure that the spelling and grammar of documents being provided to participants or external organisations is of a high standard.

For any enquiries, please contact ethics@aut.ac.nz

Yours sincerely,

Kate O'Connor
Executive Manager
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: xnx3446@autuni.ac.nz; Megan Lourie

Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC)

Auckland University of Technology
D-88, Private Bag 92006, Auckland 1142, NZ
T: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 8316
E: ethics@aut.ac.nz
www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics

3 May 2019

Sharon Harvey
Faculty of Culture and Society

Dear Sharon

Ethics Application: **19/115 Young adult Rohingya negotiating New Zealand's educational practices and institutions**

Thank you for submitting your application for ethical review. I am pleased to advise that the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC) approved your ethics application at their meeting on 29 April 2019, subject to the following conditions:

1. Amend the recruitment protocol for snowballing so that the initial contact passes along an invitation to a potential participant(s) who can get in touch with the researcher directly if interested in taking part. Reflect this recruitment procedure in the Information Sheet;
2. Justify the classroom observation and explain how the potential risks of this (e.g. stigma, embarrassment) are to be managed. The committee discussed whether the observed participant would be behaving naturally given the exceptional circumstances of being observed. The committee notes that if any observations are to be taken about the teacher's conduct in the classroom, then they are participants in the research and need to be properly consented;
3. Insert AUT's logo on the translated participant facing documents;
4. If a translator/ interpreter is to be used, provide a confidentiality agreement for them to sign;
5. Use the full withdrawal statement on the Information Sheet;
6. Inclusion of a date on Consent Form to align with the Information Sheet.

Please provide me with a response to the points raised in these conditions, indicating either how you have satisfied these points or proposing an alternative approach. AUTEC also requires copies of any altered documents, such as Information Sheets, surveys etc. You are not required to resubmit the application form again. Any changes to responses in the form required by the committee in their conditions may be included in a supporting memorandum.

Please note that the Committee is always willing to discuss with applicants the points that have been made. There may be information that has not been made available to the Committee, or aspects of the research may not have been fully understood.

Once your response is received and confirmed as satisfying the Committee's points, you will be notified of the full approval of your ethics application. Full approval is not effective until all the conditions have been met. Data collection may not commence until full approval has been confirmed. If these conditions are not met within six months, your application may be closed and a new application will be required if you wish to continue with this research.

To enable us to provide you with efficient service, we ask that you use the application number and study title in all correspondence with us. If you have any enquiries about this application, or anything else, please do contact us at ethics@aut.ac.nz.

I look forward to hearing from you,

Yours sincerely

Kate O'Connor
Executive Manager
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: xnx3446@autuni.ac.nz; Megan Lourie

Appendix B Participant Information Sheet

Date Information Sheet Produced

05/04/2019

Project Title

Young adult Rohingya negotiating New Zealand's educational practices and institutions

An Invitation

My name is Sorowar Chowdhury. I am a student at Auckland University of Technology. I am inviting you to participate in my research which will form the basis of my doctoral thesis. In my study, I will examine the educational aspirations and experiences of Rohingya students in New Zealand.

Therefore, I would like to learn from you about your educational experience in New Zealand. If you agree, I will have a face to face interviews with you. This will be held in an informal way, in the form of discussion, at a convenient place in your office or home. Your participation in this research is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time.

What is the purpose of this research?

This research aims to investigate the educational aspirations of Rohingya students in New Zealand and their experiences when they receive education.

The results of this project will be written up in the form of a doctoral thesis and may also be presented at academic conferences and published in journals. Your identity will always be kept confidential.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

I am approaching you because you are a recently graduated or returning Rohingya student, or you started but could not continue study for some difficulties, your age is 16 years or above, and you have been living in New Zealand for at least two years. Members of your community told me about you, but this does not mean you have to participate in the research. Your participation in this research is voluntary. You can withdraw from the research up to the end of data collection. If you agree to participate in this research, please contact me through my email address, which is provided in this information sheet.

What will happen in this research?

This research project will include the following stages:

1) An initial face to face meeting for about 30 minutes
2) Interview (informal, discussion-type): about 60 minutes

Your participation in the research project will start with an initial introductory meeting with me for about 30 minutes followed by an interview. The interview will be in the form of an informal discussion, which will take place in a venue of your choice at a mutually convenient time. I will discuss with you your educational aspirations, and your experiences in attaining your aspirations. I will record and transcribe the interviews and then send you a copy of the transcriptions so that you can check it. If you are not happy with anything in the written transcriptions, I will be happy to modify or remove it. At this stage, you can decide that you do not want to participate in the research and your interview will not be used.

What are the discomforts and risks?

The discussion might touch upon your personal experience you went through and that you may feel uncomfortable about. However, in my thesis, discussion will be made relating to your education only, it will not highlight any other aspect of your personal life.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

To maintain your confidentiality, there will be no mentioning of your name, your organization's name and you may choose a pseudo name [different name] of your choice. In my thesis, I will not disclose your identity. In addition, in my thesis I will only mention information that is related to your education. In other words, the focus of this research is New Zealand's policies and practices relating Rohingyan students' education and how you manage or negotiate these. If you feel any discomfort during the interview You are encouraged to use the counselling services offered by the Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB).

What are the benefits?

Through taking part in this research you will be helping me to find out about the educational experiences of Rohingyan students in New Zealand. I will analyse and discuss the findings in the form of a doctoral thesis. Also, I will present the findings in international conferences. Therefore, New Zealand policy makers and international development actors will be better informed about their programme priorities.

How will my privacy be protected?

All the data collected from you will be kept on a memory stick and the transcriptions as a hard copy will be in a locked cabinet in my supervisor's office at AUT. You will be identified in the research by a pseudo name [different name] of your choice. I will also omit any parts your educational story that might identify you.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

The research will involve your time. In total you will be asked to use approximately three one hour and 45 minutes of your time. We will have an initial face to face meeting for about 30 minutes followed by an interview session for about 60 minutes, and another 15 minutes you will have to spend in reading the interview transcripts.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

Please let me know if you are willing to participate in the research project within one week of receiving the invitation.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

I will send you a consent form prior to the first meeting. Please sign and return it to me. Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and whether or not you choose to

participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You are able to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study, then you will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to you removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of your data may not be possible. Please remember that my highest priority will be to preserve your confidentiality. Any part of your personal story that make you identifiable will be changed or removed.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

Yes. I will send you a summary of the research findings if you indicate your interest when signing the Consent Form. Moreover, any journal articles published will also be forwarded to you.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

If you have any concern regarding the nature of this project, I would suggest you to notify in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Associate Professor Sharon Harvey, Sharon.harvey@aut.ac.nz or (09) 921 9999 ext 9659.

In addition, if you have any concern regarding the conduct of the research, you may notify the Executive Secretary of AUTEC, Kate O'Connor, ethics@aut.ac.nz, 921 9999 ext. 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact following members of the research team:

Researcher Contact Details:	Project Supervisor Contact Details:
Sorowar Chowdhury Email: xnx3446@autuni.ac.nz Mobile: (+64) 0204 075 8302	Associate Professor Sharon Harvey Faculty of Culture and Society AUT University Phone: (09) 921 9999 ext 9659. Email: Sharon.harvey@aut.ac.nz

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 09 May 2019 AUTEC Reference number 19/115

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.

Participant Information Sheet (Bengali)

পরিশিষ্ট ক: অংশগ্রহণকারী তথ্যপত্র

তথ্যপত্র প্রস্তুতের তারিখ: ০৫/০৪/২০১৯

প্রকল্প শিরোনাম: নিউজিল্যান্ডের শিক্ষাচর্চা ও শিক্ষাপ্রতিষ্ঠানের সাথে রোহিঙ্গা যুবদের সমঝোতা

একটি আমন্ত্রণ

আমার নাম সরওয়ার চৌধুরী। আমি অকল্যান্ড ইউনিভারসিটি অফ টেকনোলজি এর ছাত্র। আমার ডক্টরেট থিসিসের জন্য আমার এই গবেষণায় আপনার সহযোগিতা প্রয়োজন। নিউজিল্যান্ডের রোহিঙ্গাদের শিক্ষার জন্য প্রত্যাশা এবং তাদের অভিজ্ঞতা নিয়েই আমার গবেষণায় আমি কাজ করবো।

তাই, নিউজিল্যান্ডে আপনার পড়াশোনার অভিজ্ঞতা সম্পর্কে আমি আপনার কাছ থেকে জানতে চাই। আপনার সম্মতি থাকলেআমি আপনার একটি সাক্ষাতকার গ্রহন করবো। এই ঘরোয়া আলোচনাটি আপনার স্কুল/কলেজ বা বাড়ীর সুবিধাজনক যে কোন স্থানে হতে পারে। পাশাপাশি, আমি দুইবার আপনার ক্লাসে সহপাঠীদের এবং শিক্ষকদের সাথে আপনার কথোপকথোন লক্ষ্য করবো। আমি শ্রেণীকক্ষে শুধুমাত্র দেখার জন্য একজন পর্যবেক্ষক হিসাবে থাকব। আমি ক্লাসের কোন বিষয়েই কথা বলব না বা ব্যাঘাত সৃষ্টি করবো না। স্বাধীনভাবে আপনি এই গবেষণায় অংশগ্রহণ করবেন এবং যে কোন সময় আপনি চাইলে এ থেকে বিরত হতে পারেন।

এই গবেষণার উদ্দেশ্য কী?

নিউজিল্যান্ডে রোহিঙ্গা ছাত্রদের লেখাপড়ার জন্য প্রত্যাশা এবং তাদের অভিজ্ঞতা সম্পর্কে জানাই এই গবেষণার মূল লক্ষ্য ।
এই গবেষনার ফলাফলগুলো ডক্টরেট থিসিসের আকারে লেখা হবে এবং একাডেমিক সম্মেলনে উপস্থাপন ও বিভিন্ন জার্নালেও প্রকাশিত হতে পারে। তবে, নিশ্চিতভাবে আপনার পরিচয় সবসময় গোপন থাকবে।

এই গবেষণায় অংশগ্রহণের জন্য কেন আমাকে আমন্ত্রণ জানানো হচ্ছে এবং আমি কীভাবে নির্বাচিত হয়েছি?

আমি আপনার কাছে এসেছি কারণ আপনি একজন রোহিঙ্গা ছাত্র, আপনার বয়স ১৬ বছর বা তার বেশি এবং আপনি নিউজিল্যান্ডে অন্তত দুই বছর ধরে বসবাস করছেন। আপনার সম্প্রদায়ের সদস্যরা আপনার সম্পর্কে আমাকে বলেছে। যা হোক, আপনাকে এই গবেষণাতে অংশগ্রহন করতেই হবে এমন কোন বাধ্যবাধকতা নেই। এই গবেষণায় আপনার অংশগ্রহণ স্বেচ্ছাপ্রণোদিত। স্বাধীনভাবে আপনি এই গবেষণায় অংশগ্রহণ করবেন এবং শেষ হওয়া পর্যন্ত যে কোন সময় আপনি চাইলে এ হতে বিরত হয়ে যেতে পারবেন। আপনি যদি এই গবেষণায় অংশ নিয়ে আমাকে সহযোগিতা করতে চান, তবে আমার এই তথ্যপত্রের শেষপ্রান্তে ইমেল ঠিকানাতে আমার সাথে যোগাযোগ করুন।

এই গবেষণাটি কীভাবে হবে?

এই গবেষণায় নিম্নলিখিত ধাপগুলো অনুসরণ করা করা হবে:

১) আনুমানিক ৩০ মিনিটের জন্য মুখোমুখি আলোচনা
২) শ্রেণীকক্ষে পর্যবেক্ষণ-১: এক ঘন্টা
৩) সাক্ষাতকার (সাধারন আলোচনা)- ১: প্রায় ৬০ মিনিট
৪) শ্রেণীকক্ষ পর্যবেক্ষণ-২: এক ঘন্টা
৫) সাক্ষাত্কার (সাধারন আলোচনা)- ২: প্রায় ৬০ মিনিট

প্রথমত আমি আপনার সাথে প্রায় ৩০ মিনিটের মত একটি প্রাথমিক পরিচিতিমূলক আলোচনা করবো। তারপর আমি আপনার দু'টি ক্লাস দেখব, সেখানে আলাদা করে আপনার কোন সময় দিতে হবে না। প্রত্যেকটি পর্যবেক্ষণ এর পর একটি সাক্ষাত্কার হবে। সাক্ষাতকারটি একটি ঘরোয়া/সাধারণ আলোচনার মাধ্যমে হবে, যা একটি পারস্পরিক সুবিধাজনক সময়ে আপনার পছন্দসই স্থানেই হবে। আমি আপনার শিক্ষার প্রত্যাশা এবং আপনার অভিজ্ঞতা নিয়ে কথা বলব।

আপনার সাথে আমার আলোচনাগুলো আমি লিখবো এবং রেকর্ড করবো এবং আপনার দেখার জন্য তার একটি অনুলিপি আপনার কাছেও পাঠাব। এই লেখায় আপনার কোথাও কোন আপত্তি থাকলে আমি তা সংশোধন করবো এমনকি আপনি বললে মুছেও ফেলব। এ পযায়ে আপনি যদি এই গবেষণাতে অংশগ্রহণ থেকে বিরত থাকতে চান, সেক্ষেত্রে আপনার সাক্ষাত্কারটি কোথাও ব্যবহার করা হবে না।

আমার কোন অস্বস্তি বা ঝুঁকি আছে কি?

আমি যখন আপনার ক্লাসে বসে আপনাকে পর্যবেক্ষন করবো তা আপনার কাছে ভালো নাও লাগতে পারে। আমি কেবল এক কোনায় বসে আপনার ক্লাসটি দেখব। এমনকি আপনি ক্লাসে কী বলছেন তাও শোনা আমার জন্য জরুরী না। আপনার শিক্ষক এবং অন্যান্য বন্ধুদের সাথে আপনি ক্লাসে কীভাবে মিশছেন আমি তার একটি ধারণা নেব যাতে আপনার সাথে আমার সাক্ষাতকারের সময় আলোচনা করতে সুবিধা হয়। এই গবেষণায় শুধুমাত্র আপনার শিক্ষার বিষয়ে আলোচনা করবো, আপনার ব্যক্তিগত জীবনের অন্য কোন বিষয়ে কথা বলবোনা।

কীভাবে এই খারাপ লাগা/অস্বস্তি এবং ঝুঁকি কমানো হবে?

আপনার গোপনীয়তা বজায় রাখার জন্য, আপনার নাম, আপনার স্কুলের/কলেজের নাম কোথাও উল্লেখ থাকবেনা এবং আপনি আপনার একটি ছদ্মনাম ব্যবহার করতে পারেন। এই গবেষণায় আমি কোথাও আপনার পরিচয় প্রকাশ করবো না। উপরন্তু, আমার থিসিসে আমি শুধুমাত্র আপনার শিক্ষার সাথে সম্পর্কিত তথ্যগুলো তুলে ধরব। অন্য কথায়, নিউজিল্যান্ডের রোহিঙ্গা ছাত্রদের শিক্ষার সাথে সম্পর্কিত নীতি এবং চর্চাসমূহ এই গবেষণায়গুরুত্ব দেওয়া হবে এবং আপনি কীভাবে তা পরিচালনা ও সমাধান করেন তা তুলে ধরা হবে। সাক্ষাতকার চলাকালীন সময়ে যদি আপনার কোন বিষয়ে খারাপ লাগে তবে আপনি স্কুল/কলেজে আপনার শিক্ষক বা কাউন্সেলরের সাথে তা বলতে পারেন।

সুবিধাগুলো কী কী ?

এই গবেষণায় অংশ নেওয়ার মাধ্যমে আপনি আমাকে নিউজিল্যান্ডের রোহিঙ্গা শিক্ষার্থীদের পড়াশোনার অভিজ্ঞতা সম্পর্কে জানতে সাহায্য করবেন। এই ফলাফলগুলো আমি একটি ডক্টরেট থিসিসের আকারে বিশ্লেষণ এবং আলোচনা করবো। এছাড়াও, আমি বিভিন্ন আন্তর্জাতিক সম্মেলনেও এই ফলাফলগুলো উপস্থাপন করবো। যার ফলে, নিউজিল্যান্ড এর নীতিনির্ধারকগনও আন্তর্জাতিক উন্নয়ন কর্মকর্তাবৃন্দ আরো কার্যকরী কর্মসূচী প্রণয়নে ভূমিকা রাখবে।

কীভাবে আমার গোপনীয়তা রক্ষা করা হবে?

আপনার কাছ থেকে নেওয়া সকল তথ্য একটি পেনড্রাইভে থাকবে এবং হার্ড কপি হিসাবে ট্রান্সক্রিপশনগুলো AUT বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে আমার সুপারভাইজারের অফিসে একটি তালাবদ্ধ আলমারীতে থাকবে। আপনার পছন্দের একটি ছদ্মনাম দ্বারা আপনার তথ্যগুলো খুজে পাওয়া যাবে এবং আপনাকে সনাক্ত করা যায় এমন কোন প্রেক্ষাপট থাকলে তা বাদ দেওয়া হবে।

এই গবেষণায় অংশগ্রহণের ব্যায় কী?

এই গবেষণার সাথে আপনার সময় জড়িত। সামগ্রিকভাবে, আপনার ক্লাসের পর্যবেক্ষণের বাইরে, আনুমানিক তিন ঘন্টা সময় দেওয়া লাগতে পারে। আমরা আনুমানিক ৩০ মিনিটের জন্য প্রাথমিক আলোচনা করবো, ৬০ মিনিট করে দুই বার আলোচনা করবো, এবং সবশেষে লিখিত তথ্যপত্রটি পড়তে আপনার প্রায় ৩০ মিনিটি লাগবে।

আমি কীভাবে এই প্রস্তাবটি গ্রহন করবো?

যদি আপনি গবেষণা প্রকল্পে অংশগ্রহণ করতে আগ্রহী হন, তাহলে এই প্রস্তাব পাওয়ার এক সপ্তাহের মধ্যে আমাকে জানানোর অনুরোধ করছি।

আমি কীভাবে আমার মতামত জানাবো?

আমি আপনাকে একটি সম্মতিপত্র পাঠাবো, অনুগ্রহ করে আপনি সেটি স্বাক্ষর করে আমাকে ফেরত পাঠাবেন।

আমি কি এই গবেষণার ফলাফল সম্পর্কে জানতে হতে পারি?

হ্যাঁ। আপনি যদি সম্মতিপত্রে ফলাফল জানার আগ্রহ প্রকাশ করেন তবে, আমি এই গবেষনার ফলাফলগুলোর সারাংশ আপনাকে পাঠাবো।

এই গবেষণা সম্পর্কে যদি আমার কোন মতামত থাকে তাহলে আমি কীভাবে জানাবো?

যদি আপনি এই গবেষণা সম্পর্কে কোন মতামত দিতে চান তাহলে প্রজেক্ট সুপারভাইজার শ্যারন হার্ভে, এসোসিয়েট প্রফেসর, Sharon.harvey@aut.ac.nz অথবা (০৯) ৯২১ ৯৯৯৯ ext ৯৬৫৯ এর সাথে সরাসরি যোগযোগ করতে পারেন।

পাশাপাশি এই গবেষণার বিষয়ে আপনার যদি কোন মতামত থাকে তবে আপনি AUTEC এর এক্সিকিউটিভ সেক্রেটার, কেট ও কনোর ethics@aut.ac.nz, ৯২১ ৯৯৯৯ext. ৬০৩৮ এর সাথে যোগাযোগ করতে পারেন।

এই গবেষণার অতিরিক্ত তথ্যের জন্য আমি কার সাথে যোগাযোগ করবো?

আপনার ভবিষ্যত যোগাযোগের জন্য এই তথ্যপত্রের একটি কপি আপনি সংগ্রহে রাখুন এবং গবেষণা দলের নিম্নলিখিত ব্যাক্তিবর্গের সাথে যোগাযোগ করতে পারেন।

গবেষক এর যোগাযোগ এর বিস্তারিত: সরওয়ার চৌধুরী ইমেইল:xnx3446@autuni.ac.nz মোবাইল: (+৬৪) ০২০৪ ০৭৫ ৮৩০২	**সুপারভাইজারের যোগাযোগের বিস্তারিত:** শ্যারণ হার্ভে এসোসিয়েট প্রফেসর ফ্যাকাল্টি অফ কালচার এন্ড সোসাইটি এ ইউ টি ইউনিভারসিটি ইমেইল:Sharon.harvey@aut.ac.nz ফোন:(09) 921 9999 ext 9659.

..... তারিখে AUTEC স্মারক নং..... অকল্যান্ডইউনিভারসিটি অফ টেকনোলাজি এর এথিক্স কমিটি কর্তৃক অনুমোদিত

অংশগ্রহনকারী এই ফরমের একটি কপি সংগ্রহ করবেন।

Participant Information Sheet (Burmese)

နောက်ဆက်တွဲဖြေပါဝင်သူပြန်ကြားရေးစာရွက်

ပြန်ကြားရေးစာရွက်ထုတ်လုပ်မှုနေ့စွဲ

05/04/2019

စီမံကိန်းခေါင်းစဉ်

လူငယ်လူကြီးကရိုဟင်ဂျာတို့ကညီနိုင်းနယူးဇီလန်ရဲ့ပညာရေးအလေ့အကျင့်များနှင့်အဖွဲ့အစည်းများ

တောင်းဆိုမှုတစ်ခု

ငါ့နာမကို သောရောဝရှ ချောင်ဒရီဖြစ်ပါတယ်။ ငါအော့ကလန်မှာကျောင်းသားတစ်ဦးဖြစ်ကြောင်းကို ဥနိvဧ္ဓရှိတ္တ သြf တေဆွောလော့ဂ္ဂ။ ငါသည်ငါ့သုတေသနတွင်ပါဝင်ရန်ရန်သင့်အားဖိတ်ခေါ်, သောငါ၏ပါရဂူစာတမ်း၏အခြေခံဖွဲ့စည်းပါလိမ့်မယ်။ ငါ၏အလေ့လာမှု၌, ပညာရေးမျှော်မှန်းချက်ကရိုဟင်ဂျာကျောင်းသားနယူးဇီလန်အတွက်ဆန်းစစ်ပါလိမ့်မည်။

ထိုကြောင့်, ငါသည်သင်တို့ထံမှလေ့လာသင်ယူချင်ပါတယ် နယူးဇီလန်၌သင်တို့၏ပညာရေးဆိုင်ရာအတွေ့အကြုံအကြောင်း။ သင့်သည့်သဘောတူပါက, ငါသည်သင်တို့နှင့်အတူနှစ်ခုတွေ့ဆုံမေးမြန်းယူပါလိမ့်မယ်။ ဤအရာသည်အလွန်အလွတ်သဘောဖြစ်လိမ့်မည်။ တွင် အဆင်ပြေရာအရပ်သင့်ကြောင်း / ကောလိပ်သို့မဟုတ်အိမ်မှာ။ ဖြည့်စွက်ကာ, ငါသည်သင်တို့နှင့်အတူဆရာများနှင့်သင့်သူချင်းရဲ့လဲလှယ်မြင်လိမ့်မည်။ ကြည့်ရန်, ငါသာတစ်ဦးလေ့လာသူအဖြစ်စာသင်ခန်းထဲမှာရှိလိမ့်မည်။ ငါမဆိုလမ်းထဲမှာလူတန်းစားအတွက်တစ်စိတ်တစ်ပိုင်းယူလိမ့်မည်မဟုတ်ပါ။ ဤသုတေသန၌သင်တို့၏ပါဝင်မှုမိမိဆန္ဒအလျောက်ဖြစ်ပါသည် သင့်တို့သည့်အချိန်တွင်မဆိုထုတ်ယူစေနိုင်သည်။

ဒီသုတေသန၏ရည်ရွယ်ချက်ကဘာလဲ?

ဒါဟာသုတေသနရည်ရွယ်ချက်တွေ, ကရိုဟင်ဂျာကျောင်းသားများ၏ပညာရေးမျှော်မှန်းချက်စုံစမ်းစစ်ဆေးရန် နှင့်၎င်းတို့၏အတွေ့အကြုံများကိုသူတို့ပညာရေးကိုရရှိသည့်အခါ။

ဤစီမံကိန်းများ၏ရလဒ်များကိုတစ်ပါရဂူစာတမ်း၏ပုံစံကိုတက်စာဖြင့်ရေးသားပါလိမ့်မည် နှင့်
လည်းပညာသင်နှစ်ညီလာခံမှာတင်ဆက်နှင့်ဂျာနယ်များထုတ်ဝေနိုင်ပါသည်။
သင့်ရဲ့အထောက်အထားကိုအမြဲလျှို့ဝှက်သိမ်းဆည်းထားပါလိမ့်မည်။

သင်မည်သို့ငါ့ကို ဖော်ထုတ်လုပ်နှင့်အာဃာတကြောင့်ငါသည်ဤသုတေသနတွင်ပါဝင်ရန်ဖိတ်ကြားခံရကြသလော?

သင်တစ်ဦးကရိုဟင်ဂျာကျောင်းသားကြောင့်ငါသည်သင်တို့ကိုချဉ်းကပ်ပါ၏, သင့်ရဲ့အသက် 16
နှစ်သို့မဟုတ်အထက်ဖြစ်ပါသည်, သဗျတို့သည်ျအနည်ျးဆုံးနှစ်နှစ်နယူးဇီလန်တွင်နေထိုင်ခဲ့ကြသည်။
ငါသည်သင်တို့၏အသိုင်းအဝိုင်းထံမှအကြောင်းကြားခဲ့ကြ, ဒါပေမဲ့ဒီမဆိုလိုပါ,
သဗျသည်ျသုတေသနတွင်ပါဝင်ရန်ရှိသည်။
ဤသုတေသနခွင့်သင်တို့၏ပါဝင်မှုမိမိဆန္ဒအလျောက်ဖြစ်ပါတယ်။
သင်ကမည်သည့်အချိန်ထုတ်ယူနိုင်ပါသည်။ သင်ဤသုတေသနတွင်ပါဝင်ရန်သဘောတူပါက,
ငါ၏အအီးမေးလ်လိပ်စာအားဖွဗျ့အကြှနျုပျုကိုဆက်သွယ်ပါ, ဤအချက်အလက်စာရွက်၌တည်၏။

အာဃာတအရာကိုဤသုတေသနအတွက်ဘာဖြစ်သွား?

ဒါဟာသုတေသနစီမံကိန်းကိုအောက်ပါအဆင့်များပါဝင်သည်ပါလိမ့်မယ်:

1) အကြောင်းကိုမိနစ် 30 တော့ဆုံရင်ဆိုင်ဖို့ တစ်ဦးကနဦးမျက်နှာ
2) လူတန်းစားခန်းထဲမှာလေ့လာရေး 1: တဦးတည်းအတန်းအစားနာရီ
3) အင်တာဗျူး (အလွတ်သဘော, ဆွေးနွေးမှု-type အမျိုးအစား); 1: 60 ခန့်မိနစ်
4) လူတန်းစားခန်းထဲမှာလေ့လာရေး 2: တဦးတည်းအတန်းအစားနာရီ
5) အင်တာဗျူး (အလွတ်သဘော, ဆွေးနွေးမှု-type အမျိုးအစား); 2: 60 ခန့်မိနစ်

မိနစ် 30 နှင့်အတူသင်၏ပါဝင်မှု, ငါကနဦးနိဒါန်းအစည်းအဝေးနှင့်အတူစတင်ပါလိမ့်မယ်။
ထိုအခါငါသည်သင်တို့၏စာသင်ခန်းထဲမှာသင်မြင်ပါလိမ့်မယ်, နှစ်ခုလူတန်းစား-
အစည်းအဝေးများအတွက်, သင်သည်မည်သည့်အပိုဆောင်းအချိန်ဆပ်ဖို့မလိုအပ်ပါဘူး။
တစ်ခုချင်းစီကိုလေ့လာအင်တာဗျူးခြင်းဖြင့်နောက်တော်သို့လိုက်ပါလိမ့်မည်။
အဆိုပါအင်တာဗျူးတစ်ခုအလွတ်သဘောဆွေးနွေးမှု၏ပုံစံအတွက်ဖြစ်လိမ့်မည်,
သောနှစ်ဦးနှစ်ဖက်အဆင်ပြေအချိန်တွင်သင့်ရဲ့ရွေးချယ်မှုတစ်ခုနေရာအတွက်နေရာတစ်နေရာယူပါ
လိမ့်မယ်။ သည်သင်တို့၏မျှော်မှန်းချက်မရရှိစရန်သင့်ပညာရေးမျှော်မှန်းချက်,
သင်၏အတွေ့အကြုံများအကြောင်းပြောဆိုလိမ့်မယ်။
ငါတွေ့ဆုံမေးမြန်းမှတ်တမ်းတင်ခြင်းနှင့်စာသားပါလိမ့်မယ် ပြီးတော့သင်မှတ်တမ်းမိတ္တူပေးပို့
သင်ကစစ်ဆေးနိုင်ပါသည်။ သင်တိကျမ်းစာ၌လာသည်မှတ်တမ်းနှင့်အတူမပျော်ရွှင်ဘူးဆိုရင်,
ငါကပြုပြင်မွမ်းမံသို့မဟုတ်ဖယ်ရှားပစ်ရန်ပျော်ရွှင်ကြလိမ့်မည်။

ဒီအဆင့်မှာသင်သုတေသနတွင်ပါဝင်ရန်ချင်ကြဘူးကြောင်းဆုံးဖြတ်နိုင်သည်နှင့်သင့်အင်တာဗျူးကိုအသုံးပြုလိမ့်မည်မဟုတ်ပါ။

အဆငျမပွမှုမြားနှငျ့အန္တရာယ်များဘာတွေလဲ?

ငါသည်သင်တို့၏စာသင်ခန်းထဲမှာသင်ကစောငျ့ရှောကျသည့ညျ့အခါ, သငျသညျမသက်မသာခံစားမိစေခြင်းငှါ။ ငါရိုးရှင်းစွာတစ်ထောင့်၌ထိုင်ခြင်းနှင့်အတန်း၌သင်တို့ကိုစောင့်ကြည့်ကပြုကြလိမ့်မည်။ ငါစကားကိုနားထောငျဖို့ကွိုးစားမည်မဟုတ်ပင်လျှင်။ ကြည့်လိုက်မယ်, သင်မည်သို့သင့်ရဲ့ဆရာနှင့်အခြားကျောင်းသားတွေနဲ့အတူသင့်ရဲ့လူတန်းစားအတွက်အပြန်အလှန်ပါဘူး ငါ၏အစာတမ်းမှာတော့ဆွေးနွေးမှုသာသင့်ရဲ့ပညာရေးနှင့်စပ်လျဉ်းလုပ်ပါလိမ့်မည်, ပုဂ္ဂိုလ်ရေးဘဝအဘယ်သူမျှမ။

ဘယ်လိုကဏ္ဍနာကျင်ကိုက်ခြင်းနှင့်အန္တရာယ်များကိုလျှော့ကျမညျနညျး

သင့်ရဲ့လျှို့ဝှက်ချက်များကိုဆက်လက်ထိန်းသိမ်းထားဖို့, သင်၏အမည်ကိုဖော်ပြထားခြင်းမည်မဟုတ် သငျတို့သတဲ့ကြားဖြတ် name ကိုရွေးချယ်နိုင်ပါသည်။ ငါသည်သင်တို့၏ဝိသေသလက္ခဏာကိုထုတ်ဖော်လိမ့်မည်မဟုတ်ပါ။ ငါသာသင့်ရဲ့ပညာရေးနှင့်ဆက်စပ်သောကြောင်းသတင်းအချက်အလက်ဖော်ပြထားခြင်းပါလိမ့်မယ်။ ဒီသုတေသနများ၏အာရုံစူးစိုက်ရခိုင်ကျောင်းသားများက " ပညာရေးနှင့်သင်မည်သို့သောဤစီမံခန့်ခွဲသို့မဟုတ်ညှိနှိုင်းရန်သက်ဆိုင်သောနယူးဇီလန်ရဲ့မူဝါဒများနှင့်အလေ့အကျင့်ဖြစ်ပါတယ်။ သင်အင်တာဗျူးကာလအတွင်းမအီခံစားရလျှင်, သင်သည်သင်၏ဆရာသို့မဟုတ်တိုင်ပင်အတူမျှဝေစေခြင်းငှါ။

အကျိုးကျေးဇူးများဘာတွေလဲ?

ဒီသုတေသနအတွက်တစ်စိတ်တစ်ပိုင်းယူအားဖြင့်သင်တို့နယူးဇီလန်အတွက်ရခိုင်ကျောင်းသားများ၏ပညာရေးအတွေ့အကြုံများအကြောင်းကိုအထဲကရှာတွေ့မှငါ့ကိုကူညီပေးနေလိမ့်မည်။ ငါပါရဂူစာတမ်း၏ပုံစံအတွက်တွေ့ရှိချက်ခွဲခြမ်းစိတ်ဖြာနှင့်ဆွေးနွေးရန်ပါလိမ့်မယ်။ ဒါဟာအပြည်ပြည်ဆိုင်ရာကွန်ဖရအတွက်ပေးအပ်ပါလိမ့်မည်။ နယူးဇီလန်မူဝါဒချမှတ်သူများနှင့်နိုင်ငံတကာဖွံ့ဖြိုးရေးဆိုင်ရာသရုပ်ဆောင်တွေဟာသူတို့ရဲ့အစီအစဉ်ကိုဦးစားပေးအကြောင်းကိုပိုကောင်းအသိပေးဖြစ်လိမ့်မည်။

Appendix C Consent Form

Consent Form for participants (for interview and life history interveiw)

Project title: Young adult Rohingya negotiating New Zealand's educational practices and institutions

Project Supervisor: Associate Professor Sharon Harvey

Researcher: Sorowar Chowdhury

- ○ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 05/04/2019.
- ○ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ○ I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- ○ I understand that I may withdraw myself at any time, and I may withdraw the information/data I have provided for this project at any time prior to the commencement of data analysis, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ○ If I withdraw prior to the commencement of data analysis, I understand that all relevant information including tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed.
- ○ I agree to take part in this research.
- ○ I wish to receive a copy of the report from the research (please tick one): Yes ○ No ○

Participant's signature : .....

Participant's Name : .....

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....

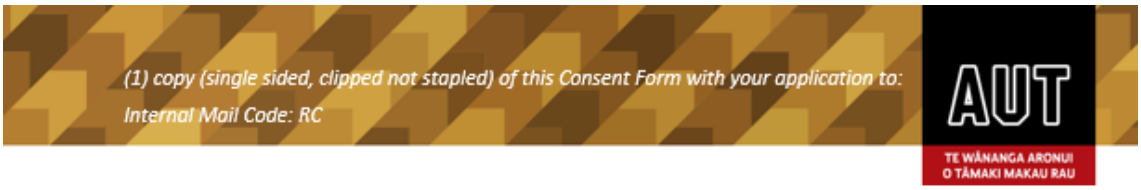
.....

Date:..... .....

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 09 May 2019 AUTEC Reference number 19/115

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.

Appendix D Interview Guide for Semi-structured In-depth Interview



Interview guide for semi-structured in-depth interview

Project Title: Young adult Rohingya negotiating New Zealand's educational practices and institutions

Project Supervisor: Associate Professor Sharon Harvey

Researcher: Sorowar Chowdhury

First (introductory) meeting for about 30 minutes

- Introducing myself...
- Thanking participant for his/her time and consent to participate
- Explaining my research in short
- Explaining the objective of interview
- Providing participant information sheet and participant consent form and obtain consent
- Informing that I will use MP3 in order to record our discussion in next two interview sessions

Original interview [two sessions each lasting 60 minutes]

- Asking if the participant needs any clarification from the last introductory session
- Seeking permission for (audio) recording of the interview
- Turning on the recording device [MP3]

Indicative questions for semi-structured in-depth interview

[Background information and ice-breaking]

1. Please tell me, in short, about yourself, your journey to New Zealand and your schooling.
2. What level are you studying at currently?

[Educational aspirations]

3. How far do/did you want to go in your study?

Hints: High school, Diploma, Undergraduate, Master's, PhD

[Educational experiences]

4. What experience did you have in reaching your educational goal? Positive and negative both… [these may include…]
   - Choice of educational institution, pre-requisites for entry level…
   - Interaction with students, teacher, library staff
   - Administrative aspects: admission, fees, exam, assessment
   - Study link or other loan from govt/educational institution
   - Gender-related: any special treatment/attention because of being male or female?
   - Experience of Maori culture, cultural diversity, and inclusion
   - Use of language: home, school, special/innovative, communicative

   Probing question: [experience + racialization]

   Experienced any positive experience or problem because of:

   - refugee-background identity
   - being South Asian
   - being Muslim
   - skin tone/colour, physical appearance, hijab, cap?

5. Being a refugee-background student, did you enjoy/are you enjoying any special advantages or incentives in your education in New Zealand?

   Hints:

   - Scholarship/Tuition waiver? If 'yes' …adequate or not?
   - Extra class? If 'yes'…adequate or not?
   - Other facility/incentive (if any)

6. Did/do you face language barrier, especially English language? **If yes**;
   - how much do you think you have overcome the problem so far? [If partial, what are the reasons that made it partial?]
   - how did you overcome the problem?…paid English literacy programme? Adequate?

[Negotiations]

7. When you experience any negative situation, i.e., when you are not satisfied with your classmates, teachers or other people's behaviour, how do you express your feeling?
   - With students… … … …
   - With teachers… … … …
   - With administrative staff… … … …

Hints:
special behaviour adopted? …

[compromising, i.e., moving ahead accepting difference of opinion; presenting yourself differently in different situation, protesting, resisting, being tough, ignoring, showing don't care attitude, speaking back, any gesture/body language, ignoring, skipping classes, adopting mechanisms other than formal academic procedures/systems]

communication made for discussion/consolation?...**[negotiation + transnational orientation]**

[physical/electronic/social media] with family/relatives/friends/community people in New Zealand/Myanmar/other countries for discussion/consolation/seeking advice.

[Transnational orientation]

- Do you consider yourself as Burmese/Myanmarese or New Zealander?
- What are the instances that you feel more a Burmese/Myanmarese?
- What are the instances that you feel more a New Zealander?
- Is there any important place/event/practice here that you feel home [Myanmar]? e.g., mosque, social or cultural event, on-line Burmese newspaper
- Would you like to go back to Myanmar? Yes/No, why? … … … .

[Supplement by participant; Optional]

8. Would you like to make any additional comments that you think would be useful for me?

Thank you very much for your time

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 09 May 2019 AUTEC Reference number 19/115

Appendix E Life History Interview Guide

Life History Interview Guide

Project Title: Young adult Rohingya negotiating New Zealand's educational practices and institutions

Project Supervisor: Associate Professor Sharon Harvey

Researcher: Sorowar Chowdhury

First (introductory) meeting for about 30 minutes

- Introducing myself...
- Thanking participant for his/her time and consent to participate
- Explaining my research in short
- Explaining the objective of interview
- Providing participant information sheet and participant consent form and obtain consent
- Informing that I will use MP3 in order to record our discussion in next two interview sessions

Original life history interview [One session lasting 60 minutes]

- Asking if the participant needs any clarification from the last introductory session
- Seeking permission for (audio) recording of the interview
- Turning on the recording device [MP3]

Appendix F Observation Protocol

Observation Protocol

Project Title: Young adult Rohingya negotiating New Zealand's educational practices and institutions

Project Supervisor: Associate Professor Sharon Harvey

Researcher: Sorowar Chowdhury

During the classroom observation, I will be looking at what is happening in the classroom from my participant's perspective only, not from the classroom teacher's perspective. In other words, I will observe the way my participant is initiating or responding to interaction with their fellow classmates and the teacher. In addition, I will focus on how the participant attend to the academic materials. This observation would enable me to relate the data collected from the classroom to the interview sessions that would follow. In the classroom, I will ask the teacher that I be seated in a position from where I can see my participant without interfering in the class.

School: _____

Date: _____

Time: _____

Teacher: . ...

(Pseudo) name of research participants in class: … … … … …

Subject: … … … … … … … … … …

Observation Number: 1/2 or 2/2

Interactions of participant(s):

With their teacher(s)/instructor(s):

… … …proactive/reactive, hesitant/spontaneous

With their classmates:

… … proactive/reactive, hesitant/spontaneous

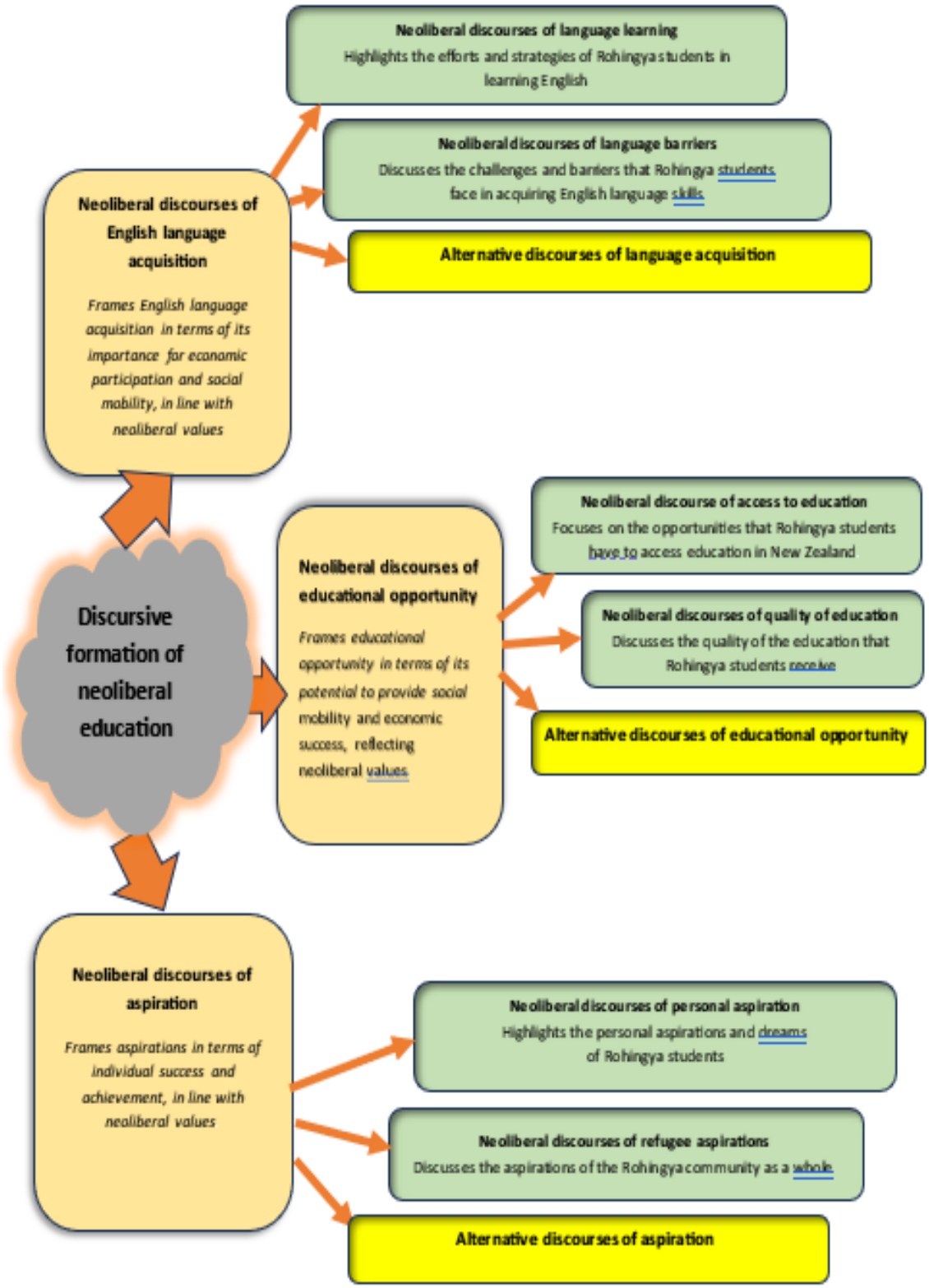
… … friendly/feel alienated?

… … participation in group work (if any)?

- Any gesture of the participant to discuss in the interview session … … …
- Participant learning by exchanging views with fellow learners and teachers… …

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 09 May 2019 AUTEC Reference number 19/115

Appendix G Discursive Map



Source: Author