

# The Roles of Settings in Supporting Immigrants' Resistance to Injustice and Oppression: A Policy Position Statement by the Society for Community Research and Action

## A Policy Statement by the Society for Community Research and Action: Division 27 of the American Psychological Association

### Highlights

- Oppression of immigrants is organized, unrelenting, and embedded into all aspects of societies.
- Immigrants and allies resist oppression individually and collectively in overt and covert ways.
- Settings varying in size and scope can facilitate resistance through their structures and practices.
- Settings can focus on systems of oppression, oppressors, and those being oppressed.
- To facilitate resistance, settings must start by dismantling oppression within their own systems.

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Sara L. Buckingham,<sup>1</sup> Regina Day Langhout,<sup>2</sup> Dana Rusch,<sup>3</sup> Tara Mehta,<sup>3</sup> Noé Rubén Chávez,<sup>4</sup> Kevin Ferreiravan Leer,<sup>5</sup> Ashmeet Oberoi,<sup>6</sup> Monica Indart,<sup>7</sup> Virginia Paloma,<sup>8</sup> V. Elizabeth King,<sup>9</sup> and Bradley Olson<sup>10</sup>

This paper examines the ways in which settings of various sizes and scopes support immigrants' resistance to oppression. This review of the scientific and practice literature is situated in the frameworks of change through social settings, empowering settings, healing justice, and decolonization. Settings must start by dismantling oppression within their own structures, processes, and practices, and can facilitate resistance by focusing on systems of oppression, oppressors, and those being oppressed.

✉ Sara L. Buckingham  
 sbuckingham@alaska.edu

<sup>1</sup> University of Alaska Anchorage, Anchorage, AK, USA

<sup>2</sup> University of California, Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz, CA, USA

<sup>3</sup> University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL, USA

<sup>4</sup> Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science, Los Angeles, CA, USA

<sup>5</sup> California State University, Sacramento, Sacramento, CA, USA

<sup>6</sup> University of Miami, Coral Gables, FL, USA

<sup>7</sup> Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ, USA

<sup>8</sup> Universidad de Sevilla, Seville, Spain

<sup>9</sup> University of Georgia, Athens, GA, USA

<sup>10</sup> National Louis University, Chicago, IL, USA

**Abstract** In 2018, in response to increasingly oppressive and widespread federal immigration enforcement actions in the United States (U.S.) and around the globe – including family separation, immigration raids, detention, deportation of people who have lived in the country for much of their lives – the Society for Community Research & Action produced a statement on the effects of deportation and forced separation on immigrants, their families, and communities (SCRA, 2018). The statement focused exclusively on the impacts of deportation and forced family separation, documenting the damage done by oppressive U.S. policies and practices. We felt it was imperative to document this harm, and yet were uncomfortable producing a narrow paper that focused solely on harm. There are multiple ways immigrants and their allies resist deportation and other forms of oppression. This resistance is done individually, collectively, and in settings that vary in size and scope, including community-based, faith-based, direct care, and educational settings, as well as entire municipalities and transnational organizing settings. Settings facilitate resistance in many ways, focusing on those who are oppressed, their oppressors, and systems of oppression. In this statement, we describe the unique and overlapping ways in which settings facilitate resistance. We situate this review of the scientific and practice literature in the frameworks of change through social settings, empowering settings, healing justice, and decolonization.

We also document recommendations for continued resistance.

**Keywords** Resistance · Settings · Oppression · Immigration · Healing justice · Empowering settings · Decolonization

## Introduction

The ‘nation-state’, its sovereignty, and its contemporary power under international law is a product of imperialism and colonization and has a tendency to exclude many people, especially people of color, from becoming full members and exploiting them for their labor (Castles, 2007). Aside from certain categories of immigrants<sup>1</sup>, such as refugees, international law allows for nation-states to keep people outside of the political borders they created through force (e.g., coercion, occupation, invasion; Achiume, 2019). Often, these political borders do not coincide with natural or historical physical and cultural boundaries, artificially dividing people into nation-states that prevent the previous flow of people, such as the case of the Gwich’in people divided by the U.S.-Canada border. People from certain nations travel the world much more freely than others, determined largely by power and domination, while others are systematically excluded and oppressed through the systems that have created the phenomenon of immigration (Achiume, 2019). Around the globe, rising nationalism has increasingly fueled anti-immigrant movements and exclusionary policies and practices (Betz, 2017; Young, 2017).

Despite attempts to exclude immigrants by many nation-states, the scale of international migration has grown. A variety of circumstances – such as climate change, poverty, and war – push people to leave where they were born while other circumstances – including employment opportunities, political security, safety, social mobility opportunities, and social networks – pull them to enter new nations (Lee, 1966; Van Hear et al., 2018). Today, 272 million people (3.5% of the world’s population) are immigrants, compared to 150 million (2.8%) in 2000; that is, approximately 1 of every 30 people worldwide is an immigrant. Most immigrants (74%) are working age and approximately 14% are children (International Organization for Migration, 2020; IOM). The U.S. is a top destination, with 1 in 6 residents (51 million) having been born outside of its geopolitical borders. Germany is also popular, with 13.1 million immigrants. Yet, the

continents of Asia and Europe are home to the largest number of immigrants, 84 million and 82 million, respectively. Worldwide, more than 40% of immigrants were born in Asia (largely India, China, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Afghanistan), and many people from Mexico, Russia, Syria, Ukraine, and the Philippines have also migrated. Migration within Africa and to other global regions has continued to grow. Countries in the Caribbean and Latin America – that have been and continue to be colonized – have had many of their citizens emigrate (IOM, 2020).

Immigrants often face oppression prior to, during, and after migration. Researchers have generally characterized migratory processes in three stages: *pre-migration* (life prior to migration), *perimigration* (travel), and *post-migration settlement* (life in the new country); Bhugra & Jones, 2001). Recently, migration has been described in a five-phase model to acknowledge that policy and climate mediate success (Zimmerman et al., 2011). Pre-departure, travel, and destination phases map onto pre-migration, perimigration, and post-migration. *Interception* represents the experiences of any immigrant whose process is interrupted through detention or a temporary facility, like a refugee camp. *Return* represents the phase of returning to one’s country of origin, whether voluntary or forced (Zimmerman et al., 2011).

## Oppression of Immigrants

Oppression is connected to power and operates at multiple levels. At the individual level, oppression is the process by which those with more power exercise their power to dominate and subordinate those with less power (Prilleltensky, 2003). At the organizational level, oppression can be woven into norms and dominant narratives regarding who can do what tasks in the organization (Shpungin et al., 2012). At the institutional level, oppression can be seen through the barriers embedded in laws, customs, and practices that mistreat and produce inequities for groups of people (Kelly & Varghese, 2018). Indeed, oppression takes many forms and is carried out individually and collectively through political and psychological processes, including categorization, seclusion, and forced separation that creates a dehumanized ‘other’ (Martí & Fernández, 2013; Sonn & Fisher, 2003). Deportation and forced family separation are forms of oppression documented in our previous policy statement (SCRA, 2018). We delineate other forms of oppression immigrants often encounter to provide context for their resistance.

Pre-migration oppression is often the impetus for migrants to flee from their countries of origin (Van Hear et al., 2018). During perimigration, migrants frequently experience oppression at the hands of individuals and nations, including exploitation and sexual assault by human smugglers (Yakushko & Morgan-Consoli, 2014).

<sup>1</sup> With the term ‘immigrants’, we refer broadly to foreign-born individuals living in an adopted country; they may be naturalized citizens, lawful permanent residents, refugees, asylees, and the unauthorized (or undocumented).

Exposure to violence or natural elements places migrants at risk of medical trauma, the psychological effects of which are increased when immigrants, due to fears for their security or deportation, avoid obtaining medical care (Medicin Sans Frontiers, 2017). Nations often engage in perimigration oppression in their attempts to intercept migrants. For example, European Union (E.U.) nations have contributed to deaths in their attempts to obstruct rescue efforts of people in distress at sea. Italy and Malta often prevent those rescued from being allowed to disembark (Human Rights Watch, 2019a). In recent years, the U.S. has restricted immigration; banned immigrants from certain nations; set the refugee admission ceiling to the lowest on record; barred entry to asylum seekers, forcing them to stay in Mexico until a verdict is issued, and proposed a new rule to use public health as a rationale to deny asylum seekers; and separated children from their families and placed them in detention (Human Rights Watch, 2019b; NIJC, 2020; Pierce & Bolter, 2020). Many E.U. leaders have also called for asylum seekers to be processed outside of their countries, akin to the U.S.'s policy (Human Rights Watch, 2019a). During interception, migrants are denied the right to provide for themselves, while frequently facing violence, extreme poverty, and exploitation (Human Rights Watch, 2019; Yakushko & Morgan-Consoli, 2014).

Post-migration is often a time of continued oppression in negative 'contexts of reception' (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006), where immigrants are isolated, discriminated against, and barred from opportunity structures such as home ownership and employment (Schwartz et al., 2014; Stepick & Stepick, 2010). Oppression takes place through xenophobic and racist narratives locally, nationally, and transnationally. For example, in the U.S. and around the world, racist, xenophobic, anti-Muslim, and nationalist rhetoric have propagated oppressive federal policies (e.g., Travel Ban or "Muslim Ban") and local policies (e.g., Georgia's board of regents' policy to prohibit immigrants without authorization from enrolling in public universities). Some U.S. communities allow local law enforcement to collaborate with federal immigration officials; require the immigration status of applicants for employment or a driver's license; ban landlords from renting to immigrants without authorization; and bar tenants without immigration authorization from accessing public utilities (ILRC, 2015a, 2015b; NCSL, 2018; Shahshahani & Madison, 2017). Immigrants across many low-wage labor sectors experience exploitive, high risk, and health-compromising work conditions, including agriculture, slaughterhouses, airports, restaurants, hotels, hospitals, schools, and factories (Chuang, 2013; Lo & Jacobson, 2011; Misra, 2007). This year, many immigrant workers have been infected with COVID-19 at higher rates, exposing their families to a greater possibility of infection (Dyal et al., 2020).

Oppressive threats of interception also continue post-migration. In the U.S., this includes interior immigration enforcement, such as large-scale Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) 'raids'; the potential cancellation of immigration-related programs, such as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for many countries (NIJC, 2020).

In sum, immigrants experience oppression from many sources, at every stage of the migration process. Oppression is organized, unrelenting, and embedded into all aspects of societies (Langhout & Vaccarino-Ruiz, 2020; Martí & Fernández, 2013). Although oppressive legislation denies migrants basic human rights and targets all facets of their lives (McKanders, 2010), the consequences go beyond the specific laws. Signals of who can be oppressed and in what ways and contexts are echoed throughout public discourse.

## Resistance

People respond to oppression in diverse ways. They may reject their membership in an oppressed group to align with the dominant group (e.g., 'passing', masking the social identity of 'immigrant'); they might adapt by withdrawing from an oppressive setting, finding solidarity with other immigrants (García & Keyes, 2012; Sonn & Fisher, 2003; Tajfel, 1981; Valdez et al., 2013). These forms of coping can be critical in navigating oppressive systems and may contribute to wellbeing. Yet because they do not challenge oppressive structures, we instead focus on *resistance*, the engagement in *any* action that undermines oppressive power structures, regardless of intent or outcome (Vinthagen & Johansson, 2013).

There are many ways resistance can be categorized – by intended target, purpose, actors, or form. Resistance can be *targeted* at individuals, groups, policies, structures, and systems; regardless of target, resistance reverberates across ecological levels and is thus simultaneously local, regional, and global (Mittelman & Chin, 2005). The *purpose* of resistance can be to bolster power of those who are oppressed by providing emotional, social, and fiscal support; and/or undermine the power of people, policies, and practices that oppress. *Actors* can range from a single person to entire communities, as people resist individually and collectively (Raby, 2006). Finally, the *forms* of resistance can be active or passive, organized or unorganized, overt or covert, ranging from social movements to everyday resistance (Raby, 2006). Everyday resistance includes covert acts designed to be hidden from the view of the powerful, which are often the only options available to those who have little room to maneuver (Cruz, 2016; Langhout, 2005; Rosales & Langhout, 2020). Accounts of resistance in

academia preclude many forms of resistance that operate in oppressive spaces, as academics may not effectively recognize resistance (Cruz, 2011), and, in some circumstances, might be better prevented from such knowledge (Rosales & Langhout, 2020). Resistance takes place alongside other ways of coping with oppression, and resistance in one setting can have impacts across ecological levels.

#### Resistance in Counterspaces

Resistance frequently happens in spaces uninhabited by oppressors (Sonn & Fisher, 2003). Immigrants have formed and engaged in ‘counterspaces’ to withstand and resist oppression, spaces in which they could find a sense of community with one another and heal from their daily experiences of oppression (e.g., Pérez Huber & Cueva, 2012; Solórzano & Villalpando, 1998; Yosso, 2006; Yosso et al., 2009). Such counterspaces enable the development of alternative narratives and identities, practice of culture stigmatized by the broader society, critique of oppressive conditions, provision of social support, and sharing of strategies to cope with and respond to oppression (Case & Hunter, 2012).

#### Resistance in Communities

Resistance is not confined to spaces uninhabited by oppressors, however. As immigrants celebrate and confer their identities with one another post-migration, they create local ecologies centered on cultural and social practices and bring their full selves to their broader community. Members of oppressive groups in receiving communities frequently demand that immigrants adapt or assimilate to the dominant cultural practices of the new community, and immigrants resist such oppression by continuing their own cultural practices. Through living their lives in ways aligned with their cultural values and practicing their indigenous languages in both private and public spaces, immigrants resist this cultural oppression, and pass on values, practices, and identities onto subsequent generations (Ochoa, 1999). They also resist being homogenized and categorized into the broader groups that oppressors attempt to fit them into (e.g., along racial/ethnic lines), by practicing and sharing their cultural diversity. Claiming the right and freedom to develop, navigate, and pass on their identities and cultures post-migration is a critical aspect of resisting the oppressive assimilation demanded by colonialism (Bernal, 2001).

#### Resistance in Community-Based Organizations

Immigrants also participate in developing their communities to resist oppression, mentoring younger immigrants,

serving as language brokers for older immigrants, and providing practical and social support to newly arrived immigrants (Seif et al., 2014). For example, as states changed their laws to allow for undocumented immigrant young people raised in the U.S. to attend university at in-state tuition rates, students organized to provide academic, financial, and social support to one another, creating their own organizations and raising funds to attend university, since they were still barred from receiving federal loans (S. I. N. Collective, 2007). Such civic engagement serves not only to resist oppression, but also to help combat the negative emotions and beliefs about oneself that stem from oppression (Perez et al., 2010).

#### Resistance in Local Organizing Settings

Resistance that is visible to those in power often takes place through movements in local organizing settings. For example, local movements to resist the oppression of unauthorized<sup>2</sup> immigrants across the U.S. have often been started by unauthorized young people who have come together to resist oppressive narratives in their own communities. Denied the right to vote, these young people have found other ways of making their voices heard, creating grassroots movements (Negrón-Gonzales, 2014; Seif et al., 2014). What sometimes has started as one or two young people sharing their testimonies and narratives, has quickly grown into counter-storytelling in concert with others, in books, rallies, and self-produced radio programs (e.g., Abrego, 2008; Cornejo Villavicencio, 2020; Garibay, 2018; Morales et al., 2011; Muñoz & Maldonado, 2011; Negrón-Gonzales, 2014; Petrone, 2016; S. I. N. Collective, 2007). Young people have organized local and state immigrant youth-led organizations to organize mass mobilizations of votes, rallies, acts of civil disobedience, sit-ins, and direct contact with their elected officials (e.g., Brumback, 2011; Gonzales, 2008; Preston, 2010). In recent years, immigrant activists have purposefully gotten themselves detained so that they could expose conditions at a for-profit immigrant detention center and organize detained immigrants (Elfrink & Stanley-Becker, 2019). Young people have also trained immigrant and non-

<sup>2</sup> We use the term ‘unauthorized’ to refer to a person who has entered into a country without the sanction of the federal government. We also use the term ‘undocumented’ interchangeably, particularly when it is the term used by the setting or people we are describing. Although ‘undocumented’ may not accurately describe all immigrants who are unauthorized to enter – as many immigrants without authorization do indeed have documents but not ones that sanction migration (e.g., expired tourist visa), and are indeed documented by the government – it is one that is frequently used throughout the scientific literature and in communities (Merolla et al., 2013).

immigrant community members to nonviolently disrupt deportation actions (Dance, 2019; Kocher, 2017).

### Resistance in National Organizing Settings

Resistance efforts have grown into movements to address national oppressive narratives and policies. For example, it has been less than two decades since Julieta Garibay, a co-founder of United We Dream, the largest youth-led immigrant rights organization in the U.S., and her sister first spoke their truth in their community (Garibay, 2018; United We Dream, 2020). Through the reverberation of resistance across ecological levels, young people have ‘come out’ of the shadows, no longer engaging in secrecy of status to withstand oppression, instead saying they are “undocumented, unafraid, and unapologetic” (DREAMActivist, n.d.) in movements such as the nationally organized ‘National Coming Out Week’. In 2013, a group of nine unauthorized young people who grew up in the U.S., known as the DREAM 9, crossed into Mexico and re-approached the U.S. border wearing graduation regalia, asking for humanitarian parole to raise awareness of accelerated deportation rates, the deportation industrial complex, the construction of immigrants as threats, and the oppression that immigrants face in all facets of their daily lives. They advocated for immigration reform, freedom of movement, and freedom to pursue their aspirations (Bogado, 2013). Although young people are frequently at the forefront of visible national movements, organizing has not been restricted by age. For example, on May Day in 2006, in response – at least in part – to proposed federal legislation (H.R. 4437) that would have increased penalties for those who were unauthorized and made it a felony to transport someone who was unauthorized, over a million immigrants boycotted work and school. This nation-wide rallying cry indelibly shaped future resistance movements (Engler & Engler, 2016).

### Resistance in Transnational Settings

Resistance also happens in complex networks across national borders, as immigrants engage in cultural, social, economic, and political relationships and activities across nation-states (Basch et al., 1994; Portes, 2001). At its core, this resistance can defy, challenge, and extend beyond the formal institutional parameters or policy structures of nation-state governments (Basch et al., 1994; Kastoryano, 2018). For example, in the 1980s, Nicaraguans across the globe organized and developed a transnational movement – which included many U.S. citizens – to end U.S. policies that supported and backed the 45-year-long Somoza family dictatorship, as well as U.S. aggression designed to overthrow the socialist *Frente Sandinista de*

*Liberación Nacional* (FSLN) once they had been elected (Perla, 2016). This movement opposed U.S. financing of the Contras, provided aid to those negatively affected by the Somoza regime, and worked to change the U.S.-based dominant narrative about the Contras and the FSLN.

### Resistance as Migration

Finally, migration itself is a form of resistance, with the movement across nation-states as actions aimed to counter legacies of colonial and neoliberal oppression (Achiume, 2017, 2019). Motivations for migration can be conceptualized as reverse colonization, a moral assertion of the right to the resources of the colonial power (Pasura, 2010). Relatedly, the patterns of population movement from colonized territories to colonizing countries can be seen as civil disobedience meant to reject oppressive policies and laws. The transnational lives of migrants, with families and communities connected, socially and economically, across borders also suggests a rejection of nation-states and international policies that seek to separate them (Lykes et al., 2020).

### Settings Facilitate Resistance

Just as oppression is carried out through settings, settings can facilitate resistance, though they must continuously self-monitor to ensure they do not perpetuate oppressive conditions and marginalize members through their structures and practices. Settings range in size, vary in focus, and are situated at multiple ecological levels, ranging from small groups to transnational movements. Numerous settings are well positioned to facilitate resistance, both by directly working toward dismantling systems of oppression and by providing safer, empowering brave spaces in which people who are being oppressed in other settings may access the tangible and intangible resources needed to resist oppression. Through social processes (people interacting with one another, often creating norms and culture), a setting can focus on resources (material, psychological, and/or temporal), and/or the organization of resources (how resources are allocated) to affect outcomes (Seidman & Tseng, 2011; Tseng & Seidman, 2007). Settings focus on social change by taking a systems-level approach, attempting to change policies, role relationships, the balance of power, and/or the direction the setting is heading rather than attempting to change people/populations (Seidman & Tseng, 2011; Tseng et al., 2002). Different settings might take divergent approaches to intervention or promotion, depending on their values, culture, and theory of action or change (Seidman & Tseng, 2011; Tseng et al., 2002).

## Resistance Frameworks

Although no model cohesively captures how settings facilitate resistance, in addition to Seidman and Tseng's broad framework for how social settings facilitate action, three other frameworks – empowering settings, healing justice, and decolonization – help us to describe how oppression can be resisted. While only the empowering settings framework was developed for settings, we use each of these frameworks to identify ways in which settings can structure themselves and operate to facilitate resistance to oppression.

### *Empowering Settings*

Settings can seek to create spaces that are empowering, or operate in ways consistent with the liberatory world they hope to create. An empowering setting includes four facets: (1) a culture of growth and community building, (2) opportunities to take on meaningful and multiple roles, (3) peer-based support, and (4) shared leadership committed to individual and group development (Kieffer, 1984; Maton, 2008; Maton & Brodsky, 2011; Wandersman & Florin, 2000; Zimmerman, 2000). A culture of growth and community helps the setting create a sense of 'us', developing and maintaining positive relationships and a sense of collectivity (Maton, 2008; Maton & Brodsky, 2011; Zimmerman, 2000). This foundation supports members as they begin to take up meaningful and multiple roles. Through these new roles, members develop self-efficacy and realize how central their contributions are for the group's goals (Kieffer, 1984; Zimmerman, 2000). This can be challenging for those who have had few structural opportunities to take up such roles, due to institutionalized oppression (Dworski-Riggs & Langhout, 2010). For example, immigrants without authorization to reside in a country might need extra support to engage civically because of dominant narratives that they do not have a right to shape society. Peer-based support helps the group maintain competency, via skill development (Zimmerman, 2000), and cohesion, via emotional support (Kieffer, 1984; Silva & Langhout, 2016). It is essential to honor the caring labor done by those in the setting because this emotional support is vital, yet often unacknowledged and usually done by women of color (Ellison, 2018). All members should have an opportunity to take on leadership roles so that all in the organization can develop skills and contribute in meaningful ways (Wandersman & Florin, 2000; Zimmerman, 2000). To achieve these ends, settings can designate multiple leaders or rotate roles to increase a sense of community and collective purpose. Taken together, when a setting is empowering, members believe they can create social change (Wilke & Speer, 2011).

### *Healing Justice*

Healing justice was collectively created by organizers in the Southern U.S. who were mostly Black feminists and/or radicals (Page, 2013). They developed the concept in response to Hurricane Katrina, but saw it as useful for the ongoing violence, social conditions, and trauma faced historically and currently in Black, Indigenous, and communities of color (Page, 2013). Healing justice emphasizes that people engage in a cyclical process where they build community, develop courageous vision, heal from oppression, and take action toward liberation (Chavez-Diaz & Lee, 2015; Ginwright, 2015a, 2015b). Focusing on the micro and macro simultaneously, settings attend to structural systems of oppression and how members suffer based on those structures (Gemignani & Hernández-Albújar, 2019; Horowitz & Maceo Vega-Frey, 2006). By directly acknowledging that oppressive conditions create much of the trauma immigrants experience, settings recognize that solutions are political rather than clinical and focus attention accordingly. By providing spaces for culturally-grounded rituals and activities, settings can facilitate healthy identity development, sense of belonging, and collective healing. And, by making sure people's assets drive solutions – centered on their existing knowledge, experiences, skills, and hopes – as opposed to seeing them solely through a lens of harm and oppression, settings can be most relevant and build upon community strengths (Ginwright, 2018). This framework has shown positive results, in that the merging of the micro and macro enables the development of collective hope and wellbeing, alongside taking socially just action (Ginwright, 2015a, 2015b).

### *Decolonization*

Settings can also use a decolonization framework to facilitate resistance. Decolonization is the decentering of western ways of knowing that enables the resurfacing of truths from counter-discourses, creative acts, practices, and knowledge (Maldonado-Torres, 2016). The goal of decolonization is to restore a world full of love and understanding, rather than perpetual war and metaphysical catastrophe, the goal of dominators. As discussed, nation-states, their borders, and power to exclude have largely been developed through colonization. Colonization is an ongoing process that is extractive and puts control over land, laws, language, education, health, family structures, and culture – that is, material and psychological resources – into the hands of colonizing groups (Maldonado-Torres, 2016). Some immigrants (namely, those with 'appropriate' degrees of whiteness) are invited to be 'settlers' whereas

others (often those of color) are made ‘illegal’ or ‘criminal’ by colonial systems (Tuck & Yang, 2012). Immigrants of color therefore inherently resist colonialism through migration (Achieme, 2019; Lykes et al., 2020). Decolonization offers a fundamental shift in perspectives on justice and challenges neocolonial structures (Tuck & Yang, 2012). It draws attention to intersectionality, calling on immigrants, allies, and settings to reflect on power and privilege and how they participate in and resist colonialism (Chandrashekar, 2018). Through this framework, settings can challenge the status quo, build alliances among all who are oppressed, and foster resistance.

### Settings

In the pages that follow, we highlight some settings that can support resistance. Often, settings overlap, so the categories we designate are not mutually exclusive. We describe each type of setting and use the aforementioned frameworks to organize the key ways they facilitate resistance, followed by an exemplar of the setting and its work toward immigrant justice.

#### *Community-based Organizations (CBOs)*

CBOs are nonprofit groups located within communities that aim to improve community wellbeing; many are led by immigrants. Various types of CBOs are positioned to facilitate resistance (Winders, 2011), including direct service-oriented organizations that provide tangible and intangible resources and focus internally (i.e., on people impacted by oppression), and rights-oriented organizations that advocate for social justice and focus externally on the organization of resources (i.e., on actively seeking to change oppressive policies). Not surprisingly, many CBOs fall somewhere along this spectrum, ranging from small organizations located in neighborhoods dedicated solely to the residents of that neighborhood to large organizations that span nations.

CBOs facilitate resistance in diverse ways. Direct service CBOs provide support regarding material, psychological, and temporal resources (Seidman & Tseng, 2011; Tseng & Seidman, 2007), where the goal is to improve wellbeing, sense of community, and integration into communities (Maton & Brodsky, 2011; Zimmerman, 2000). Services range from adult learning, English and leadership programs, after-school programs, legal aid and advocacy, health education, arts and cultural events, and providing COVID-19 relief (NPNA, 2020). These social services build capacity, foster empowerment among immigrant communities (Hardina, 2005, 2006; Zimmerman, 2000), and create opportunities for civic engagement and activism to resist oppression (Dixon et al., 2018). CBOs are

often at the forefront of disseminating information about immigration policy actions and updates (e.g., Wilson, 2020). Moreover, CBOs often focus on addressing injustice through strategic, coalition-building partnerships with local and national advocates for political reform (e.g., Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund), representing a theory of action wherein organized groups are more likely than individual groups to affect change (Seidman & Tseng, 2011; Tseng & Seidman, 2007).

The literature provides key examples of how CBOs work within immigrant communities to combat the effects of oppression, as seen by efforts such as community-driven solutions to community violence (Kia-Keating et al., 2017), leadership opportunities for survivors of domestic violence (Serrata et al., 2016), health promoter models of community health navigation (Orpinas et al., 2020), and the engagement and activism of immigrant parents in urban schools (Jasis & Ordoñez-Jasis, 2012). In these multiple ways, CBOs provide a platform for responding to oppression, offering opportunities for individual growth through education and sharing of information, providing technical support and funding for initiatives, developing community solidarity through social support groups and mentorship, and taking direct collective actions.

CBOs can inadvertently perpetrate oppressive practices if they do not, for example, continually evaluate their leadership and advisory board membership, or if programmatic goals align too swiftly with funders’ priorities instead of community empowerment.

*Case Study: Puente Movement, Phoenix, Arizona, U.S.* The Puente Movement is an immigrant-led organization situated in a community known for its oppressive immigration-related policies. Their aim is to “develop, educate, and empower migrant communities to protect and defend our families and ourselves in order to enhance the quality of life of our community members. ... With a closed fist, we fight enforcement that criminalizes our people through racial profiling, police-ICE collaboration, and the detention and deportation system. With an open hand, we combat attrition policies that try to make our lives unlivable, by building an inclusive community” (Puente Movement, n.d.). In this way, the CBO operates from a decolonization lens (Maldonado-Torres, 2016) and also follows many tenets of empowering settings (Maton, 2008) and healing justice (Chavez-Diaz & Lee, 2015; Ginwright, 2015a, 2015b; Page, 2013) frameworks. They offer educational programs to provide resources and tools for resistance, such as community defense courses to defend families and neighborhoods, and help immigrants apply for DACA. Their classes extend to bilingual programs for children to learn about their history and develop cultural tools and self-efficacy (Ginwright, 2018). Moreover, the CBO has

community health promoters who provide health education and outreach, focusing on health disparities that arise from oppression, simultaneously addressing community needs while developing leadership skills (Zimmerman, 2000). Additionally, the CBO offers programs to ‘re-awaken’ history and provide cultural modalities for community members to express themselves to facilitate healing and resistance (Ginwright, 2018). As political organizers, they cultivate collective actions to end detention and deportation via mobilizing people on the ground and through social media. Thus, the CBO enacts social change by working at both individual and systems levels to change policies and the balance of power (Seidman & Tseng, 2011; Tseng et al., 2002). They facilitate resistance locally with impacts that ripple nationally and transnationally (Puente Movement, n.d.).

### *Faith-based Organizations (FBOs)*

FBOs can look similar to CBOs, yet their mission is grounded in the values of their faith/belief system. Values can be an important foundation for an organization’s theory of change (Seidman & Tseng, 2011; Tseng et al., 2002). FBOs include congregations (e.g., mosques, synagogues, churches), freestanding religious organizations (e.g., interfaith and ecumenical coalitions, nonprofit religiously-affiliated institutions such as hospitals and universities), and large national and international networks (e.g., services arms of national and international denominations) (Urban Institute & Vidal, 2001). They also include interfaith coalitions, which often center human rights tenets in their teachings and practice. Similar to CBOs, FBOs are focused both inward, providing resources to develop communities impacted by oppression, and outward, engaging in political activism to facilitate change based in faith teachings (Zimmerman et al., 2010). Some FBOs are led by immigrants and others by allies.

FBOs facilitate resistance in diverse ways. They provide a spiritual home and offer services to immigrants (e.g., legal aid, housing, health care navigation), focusing on direct material resources (Seidman & Tseng, 2011; Tseng & Seidman, 2007). Although immigration enforcement policies have strained the work of many FBOs (Kerwin & Nicholson, 2019), these settings offer opportunities for resistance through religious and political activism (e.g., Kotin et al., 2011) and work to change policies (Seidman & Tseng, 2011; Tseng et al., 2002). For instance, beginning in the 1980s, U.S.-based FBOs sheltered immigrants who were subject to deportation (Stoltz Chinchilla et al., 2009). Contemporarily, the work of FBOs has spurred movements that go beyond faith-based calls for sanctuary from deportation, to calls for universal human rights that demand for racial and immigrant justice

(Kunichoff, 2017). This includes protection from detention, displacement, and state-sanctioned violence across all spaces – homes, schools, medical centers, social services, businesses, streets, cities, etc. – to restore safety and challenge colonial immigration policies (Maldonado-Torres, 2016; Tuck & Yang, 2012). Houses of worship remain visible in the media as sanctuary strongholds (e.g., Goodstein, 2016; Gunn, 2017; Romo, 2019). FBOs also serve as meeting grounds for immigrant movements and provide spaces in which immigrants can organize (Seif et al., 2014). In these ways, FBOs are positioned to facilitate resistance if they focus on the micro and macro simultaneously, attending to (1) structural systems of oppression and calling for political solutions, as well as (2) how members suffer based on said oppression by providing spaces for culturally-congruent healing (Gemignani & Hernández-Albújar, 2019; Horowitz & Maceo Vega-Frey, 2006).

*Case Study: The Catholic Church.* The Catholic Church is a potentially impactful setting for facilitating resistance among its parishioners because nearly 1.1 billion people identify as Catholic (Pew Research Center, 2013), one in four Catholics in the U.S. is an immigrant (Lipka, 2015), and more than half of immigrants to the U.S. are Catholic (Pew Research Center, 2013). The Catholic Church incorporates diverse types of FBOs – international networks, freestanding religious organizations, and local churches – some of which are led by immigrants and others by allies, and all of which have facilitated resistance in their settings.

In 2003, North American bishops published a joint letter that presented a faith-guided framework for responding to immigration, shaped by discussions with immigrants, social justice activists, pastors, parishioners, and others (USCCB & CEM, 2003). With U.S. policymakers and parishioners as their intended audience, the bishops acknowledged injustice, pledged solidarity with immigrants, and urged immigration reform. Recognizing the harm caused by oppression, U.S. Catholic bishops committed to “creating a culture of welcome in which all migrants are treated with respect and dignity” and united national Catholic organizations under the ‘Justice for Immigrants Campaign’. Through this campaign, the church aimed to address oppression by educating the public on their faith-based teachings on migration and creating political will for humane, dignified, and just immigration reform. Many Catholic organizations have testified before the U.S. Congress, taught parishioners how to support immigrants and facilitate resistance in local congregations, and offered accompaniment to immigrant community members. The social service arm of the Catholic Church has provided legal aid, housing, health care, social support, and educational programming for

migrants. Local churches have served as meeting grounds to organize resistance actions, facilitate social support and information-sharing, and provide needed resources following immigration raids (Amy, 2019). Church leadership have also led actions to block migrant detention centers in their communities (Davidson, 2019).

Critiques of the Catholic Church's resistance are notable; for example, their support for LGBT-identified immigrants has varied (Long-García, 2020) and practices like sanctuary can reproduce the exclusion of oppression (Paik, 2017). Still, guided by faith, the Catholic church has facilitated resistance through engaging local entities and global networks led by church leaders and parishioners; incorporating immigrants and allies; providing tangible and intangible resources; and focusing on internal support and external actions. Therefore, they have focused on resources and the organization of resources to affect social change (Seidman & Tseng, 2011; Tseng & Seidman, 2007), and they have sought political solutions for oppressive conditions while attempting to create space for collective healing (Gemignani & Hernández-Albújar, 2019; Horowitz & Maceo Vega-Frey, 2006; Page, 2013).

### *Educational Settings*

The multitude of spaces that provide knowledge and skills to people across their lifespans (early childhood through adult education) can play a key role in supporting resistance. Educational settings that successfully facilitate resistance often incorporate an empowering settings framework by seeking to support their members to grow and develop content knowledge and technical expertise; by facilitating the development of a critical consciousness of injustice; and by supporting a sense of community and solidarity among their members (Maton & Brodsky, 2011; Negrón-Gonzales, 2014). Educational settings can also focus on direct resources as a way to affect change (Seidman & Tseng, 2011; Tseng & Seidman, 2007), which can help people gain power to influence their environments.

Because educational settings are diverse, there are many ways in which they facilitate resistance, only some of which we highlight here. Some educational settings are rooted in a healing justice framework (Chavez-Diaz & Lee, 2015; Ginwright, 2015a, 2015b), serving as aforementioned 'counterspaces' developed by and for immigrant youth and adults to find a sense of community with one another and heal from their daily experiences of oppression (e.g., Case & Hunter, 2012; Pérez Huber & Cueva, 2012; Solórzano & Villalpando, 1998; Yosso, 2006; Yosso et al., 2009). Immigrant students in one such educational setting shared that the setting supported them to challenge dominant deficit narratives; gain social support and critical information needed to navigate oppressive

spaces; and maintain and gain cultural resources and assets (Pérez Huber & Cueva, 2012). Some educational settings also develop relationships with family members to transmit key information, support community development, and shape the space, creating empowering settings to facilitate resistance (Silva & Langhout, 2016; Yoshikawa, 2011).

Curriculum and programming within educational settings is also critical to resistance by, at best, decentering western ways of knowing to resurface truths (Maldonado-Torres, 2016). Although educational curricula often include acontextual and tokenized stories of individual heroes engaging in extraordinary actions to spur societal change, young people have nonetheless identified figures like Cesar Chavez as sources of inspiration for the actions they later took in pursuit of immigrant justice (Negrón-Gonzales, 2014; Wilke & Speer, 2011). Alternatively, educational settings may forgo mainstream curricula and utilize pedagogical strategies, such as popular education, that situate students' everyday experiences as central, which facilitates learning and social transformation by having students critically analyze their experiences. Finally, educational settings present opportunities for solidarity with immigrant and non-immigrant peers who are also facing oppression (Negrón-Gonzales, 2014). Thus, through their structure, programming and curriculum, and opportunities for developing connections and a sense of community, educational settings are well positioned to facilitate resistance.

*Case Study: Social Justice Education Project, Tucson, Arizona, U.S.* The Social Justice Education Project (SJEP) was a collaboration between faculty at the University of Arizona and the Tucson Unified School District (Camarrota & Romero, 2008). The project infused critical race theory, critical pedagogy, Chicana studies and youth participatory action research (YPAR) into a social sciences curriculum for high schoolers to fulfill U.S. History and Government requirements. It aimed to counter systemic racism perpetuated through schools and develop the academic success and critical awareness of Chicana and other youth. The program began in 2003 and by 2008 there were eight concurrent classes serving over 250 students per year in four high schools (Camarrota, 2015). The project was later banned as part of an anti-ethnic studies bill that passed in the state's legislature (Camarrota, 2015).

Nevertheless, the SJEP facilitated resistance through decolonization and empowering settings frameworks. The SJEP countered systemic oppression practices in school structures through curriculum wherein students conducted critical analysis of their contexts through YPAR projects. Students met daily for a class period over two years to engage both typical content material and their research

projects. Drawing on the work of Paolo Freire, students in the program utilized poetry as a means of documenting and exploring their contexts, ultimately generating themes for research projects (Cammarota & Romero, 2009, 2011), which ranged from immigration policies to discrimination faced by Latinx students. Students were guided through research methodologies and were exposed to Chicana and critical race theory as frameworks for their analyses. Students presented their research results to families, teachers, school administrations, and local elected officials, with the intention of validating their knowledge, identifying policies and practices that underlie structural inequities in their social contexts, and ultimately improving their conditions (Cammarota & Romero, 2009, 2011).

SJEP enabled simultaneous focus on resources and the organization of resources (Seidman & Tseng, 2011; Tseng & Seidman, 2007) through YPAR projects that provided opportunities for students to explore their sociocultural context and engage in personal and institutional transformation (see Cammarota & Romero, 2011). The project contributed to the development of critical consciousness, academic identity, and academic achievement of students as well as the development of students' abilities to illustrate structural injustices facing their communities (Cammarota, 2015; Cammarota & Romero, 2009). Despite being suspended, SJEP demonstrates how educational settings can facilitate immigrant resistance.

### *Direct Care Settings*

Direct care settings include a host of agencies that provide services to meet people's core needs, such as health, food, shelter, and employment. They include physical and mental health care systems, food banks, public housing, and employment services. These settings may be public or private, for-profit or not-for-profit, and encompass many CBOs and FBOs. Direct care workers include doctors, nurses, social workers, psychologists, counselors, therapists, personal care aides, and more. These settings focus on creating resources to meet particular needs of their clientele (Seidman & Tseng, 2011; Tseng & Seidman, 2007) and are therefore positioned to facilitate resistance.

If they adopt a healing justice framework, direct care settings may facilitate resistance through their structures, policies, and practices. This involves simultaneously attending to suffering while acknowledging that it stems from oppression, therefore maintaining a systemic focus with political solutions that minimizes the tendency to 'blame the victim' (Gemignani & Hernández-Albújar, 2019; Horowitz & Maceo Vega-Frey, 2006; Ryan, 1976). For example, acknowledging the impact of racism on child development, pediatric health care leaders have provided policy recommendations (Trent et al., 2019).

Moreover, such a paradigm emphasizes asset-driven solutions, and centers clients' existing knowledge, experiences, strengths, and coping to address wellbeing (Boat et al., 2017; Ginwright, 2018). For example, providers in family violence settings consider how the local context of reception for immigrants may affect an individual's willingness to leave unsafe relationships or to access protective police services (for fear of deportation) and adjust their structures, services, and advocacy accordingly (National Network to End Domestic Violence, 2017). Community health workers, often immigrants themselves, play an essential role in addressing health disparities in underserved communities (Barnett et al., 2018). Providers can also incorporate the practice of 'accompaniment' (Bucholtz et al., 2016; Nuñez-Janes & Ovalle, 2016; Wilkinson & D'Angelo, 2019), offering solidarity and actionable support for resistance movements guided by those impacted by oppression. In some cases, direct care settings have organized actions to support immigrant resistance, directly attending to structural systems of oppression as they provide services to address the impacts of oppression (Gemignani & Hernández-Albújar, 2019; Horowitz & Maceo Vega-Frey, 2006).

*Case Study: El/La Para Translatinas.* El/La Para Translatinas ("El/La") began in 2006 as a publicly funded project to prevent HIV, involving outreach, education, and access to contraception. However, the founders of El/La, transgender Latinas themselves, recognized this was only part of what their community needed; they maintained an intersectional, holistic outlook and collaborated with clients to develop a vision while working to gather needed resources (Hing, 2014). With a mission "to build a world where translatinas feel they deserve to protect, love and develop themselves. By building this base, we support each other in protecting ourselves against violence, abuse and illness" (El/La Para Translatinas, n.d.-b), El/La exemplifies how direct care settings may implement a healing justice framework to facilitate resistance.

Developed, led, and carried out by people directly experiencing oppression, El/La maintains an outward focus on changing oppressive conditions that harm transgender Latina people while providing direct care to address harm. As direct care providers, El/La connects clients to needed resources for immigration, housing, food, and healthcare; delivers educational programming; provides HIV testing; practices accompaniment; and holds skills groups (El/La Para Translatinas, n.d.-a). El/La serves many Spanish-speaking clients who have sought asylum in the U.S. due to transphobic violence. These clients often continue to face transphobic violence post-migration, but do not always report this to authorities or seek needed resources for fear over how they will be

treated because of their gender identity, language, and/or immigration status (Hemmelgarn, 2013). Accordingly, El/La aims to build community and foster an environment where clients can share experiences via an evening drop-in space with a kitchen; family-style celebrations, events, and networking; opportunities for artistic expression, spiritual practice, and cultural traditions; and retreats and a support group (El/La Para TransLatinas, n.d.-a). To address systemic transphobic violence, El/La developed a program in which transgender Latinas (known in the program as *luchadoras*) do outreach, run a support group, facilitate healing through cultural practices, and brainstorm ways to advocate for just policies and funding (Hing, 2014). El/La advocates for systems change on a host of issues that harm clients, such as immigration, violence, and health. Through this work, El/La supports client leadership in collaborative meetings and paid positions for clients as interns, fellows, *luchadoras*, and council members.

El/La's work has not been without challenges. El/La faced a fiscal crisis when its largest funder, the city of San Francisco, allocated funding previously awarded to El/La elsewhere (Hemmelgarn, 2009), and recently, COVID-19 forced El/La to close its physical space. However, El/La continues its work remotely, communicates via social media, and is currently funded through the city and philanthropic organizations (El/La Para TransLatinas, n.d.-a). In sum, as a direct care setting led by people it serves, simultaneously addressing the needs of those harmed by oppression while seeking to dismantle systems that perpetuate it, El/La demonstrates key ways direct care settings can facilitate resistance if they adopt a healing justice framework. In the words of one advocate with El/La, Isa Noyola, "We no longer can wait for other people to get it together. We are demanding an acknowledgement. We want total liberation" (Hing, 2014).

### *Workplaces and Unions*

Given differential power between employers and employees, workplaces have often exploited labor, especially the labor of immigrants (Bacon, 2008). Unions, however, can support workers and collectively advocate for workers' rights. Many unions and some workplaces position themselves to support immigrants' resistance. Often, they unite immigrants and non-immigrants, which leads to collective action that addresses harms within and beyond the workplace. Examples abound in movements addressing labor exploitation; even in workplaces composed primarily of white men, workers have stood with their immigrant coworkers and resisted oppressive rhetoric and actions (e.g., Block et al., 2017; Gleeson & Sampat, 2018). For example, although trade unions supported the Trump administration's plan to build a wall between the U.S. and

Mexico, several members of the union protested with #RESIST signs when President Trump delivered a speech at the North America's Building Trades Unions Legislative Conference (Dimaggio, 2017). Moreover, Wayfair employees organized a walkout to protest the company selling furniture to detention centers (Garcia, 2019).

Unions and workplace organizing facilitate social processes that establish a culture that empowers; fosters community building and allyship among immigrants and non-immigrants; and allows for skill development, shared leadership, and the possibility of taking on meaningful, varied roles in the setting. This, in turn, leads members to believe they can create social change and then supports them in doing so through the creation and organization of resources (Kieffer, 1984; Maton, 2008; Seidman & Tseng, 2011; Tseng & Seidman, 2007; Wandersman & Florin, 2000; Wilke & Speer, 2011; Zimmerman, 2000). As such, unions may facilitate resistance to oppression both within workplaces and throughout the broader community, nation, and globe.

*Case Study: United Farm Workers Organizing Committee.* The United Farm Workers Organizing Committee was formed to facilitate immigrant resistance to oppression within the agricultural sector, where labor exploitation is rampant. In 1942, the U.S. signed the Mexican Farm Labor Agreement with Mexico to fill labor shortages in agriculture, which was extended as an amendment of the Agricultural Act of 1949. This began the so-called 'Bracero Program', the largest guest worker program in U.S. immigration history, with 4 million Mexicans entering the U.S. as temporary guest workers over 22 years (Craig, 1971). Although the program created opportunity for some, it set the stage for exploitation with low wages and poor work conditions. In the 1940s and 1950s, Ernesto Galarza organized the National Farm Labor Union to address exploitation. Over time, activists Cesar Chavez (the son of farmworkers who became the director of the Community Service Organization) and Dolores Huerta (founder of the Agricultural Workers Association) built on his work to form the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA); others developed the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC). These groups were ethnically diverse (with a plurality of people of Mexican and Filipino descent) and brought together allies from unique spaces, such as unions, churches, and community groups. They successfully lobbied politicians to end the program in 1964 (United Farm Workers, n.d.-a).

Exploitation continued, however. Therefore, the NFWA and AWOC began to assist farmworkers in organizing strikes, pickets, and walkouts, successfully increasing wages but not leading to union contracts. They turned to the public, calling on people to refrain from buying grapes

without a union label, and organized public-facing marches and rallies for media attention and public support. At a rally of 10,000 supporters in 1966, a large grower agreed to contract with the NFWA. The NFWA and AWOC soon joined forces to become United Farm Workers (UFW) Organizing Committee under the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations, which allowed them to get support (e.g., food, money, equipment) from other unions so they could continue striking for justice. By 1970, most grape growers had signed union contracts and they had grown to 50,000 members, the largest agriculture union in California. Along with increased wages, the UFW established a health clinic and plan, credit union, community center, cooperative gas station, and union-run hiring hall to end discrimination by labor contractors (United Farm Workers, n.d.-a). Today, the UFW works across the nation to develop a “safe and just food supply” (United Farm Workers, n.d.-b). They have moved into other crops, and have helped put into place laws and regulations that protect all workers, such as overtime pay and safety regulations (United Farm Workers, n.d.-b; United Farm Workers, n.d.-c). As an empowering setting spurring social change, the UFW epitomizes resistance in pursuit of immigrant justice.

### *Municipalities*

Municipalities are incorporated communities with a local government. They can range in size from one resident (e.g., Buford, Wyoming in the U.S.) to tens of millions of residents (e.g., Tokyo, Japan; Jakarta, Indonesia). Municipal governments typically make laws that their residents must follow and provide an array of public services, including sanitation, utilities, roads and transit systems, police, fire departments, schools, administration and libraries. Municipalities impact many aspects of their residents’ daily lives through the policies they enact and how they enforce them, along with what services they provide and how they provide them. Municipalities thus impact on the degree of wellbeing enjoyed by their immigrant population and can facilitate their resistance to oppression (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006; Schwartz et al., 2014).

Municipalities can largely facilitate resistance through the creation and allocation of resources in their structures, laws, and services, along with the culture and norms they create through their social processes (Seidman & Tseng, 2011; Tseng & Seidman, 2007). The values that municipalities hold toward their immigrant community members are shown through their characteristics and functions. Municipalities create more positive contexts for their immigrant residents by demonstrating openness and sensitivity to diversity in municipal services (Paloma et al.,

2014, 2018). They create safer spaces by not allowing municipal workers to inquire about immigration status; providing public services to all community members; refusing to allow their local law enforcement to participate in immigration enforcement; and providing sanctuary to any person who requests it in all municipal institutions. They also promote resistance to oppression through social connectedness among neighbors and involving community members in municipal resources and organizations. These elements help people to overcome isolation, show confidence in community resources, develop critical thinking, allow some control in broader oppressive sociopolitical contexts, and encourage community participation (Paloma et al., 2018).

*Case Study: Chicago, Illinois, U.S.* In response to oppression waged nationally and locally, Chicago, IL has made efforts to facilitate resistance. Chicago has the sixth largest population of people with unauthorized immigration status in the U.S. (Passel & Cohn, 2019). Its state is home to over 37,000 DACA recipients (Zong et al., 2017). In 2012, Chicago established a Mayor’s Office of New Americans that set out a plan committed to immigrants’ rights and its Welcoming City ordinance banned agencies and police officers from asking about immigration status. Chicago also adopted a municipal identification program to improve service access for all residents regardless of immigration status. In 2016, city and state leaders created the *Chicago is With You Taskforce* to strengthen sanctuary efforts and ensure service access, bringing together stakeholders to collaborate on mental health, legal, employment, and education issues. The *You’re Not Alone* initiative mobilized advocacy and participatory development and implementation of capacity-building trainings to promote immigrant wellbeing following the U.S. presidential election (see Ford-Paz et al., 2019). This demonstrates components of an empowering setting, fostering community building and shared leadership (Maton, 2008).

Building on this momentum, the Coalition for Immigrant Mental Health (CIMH) – a multi-disciplinary, inter-institutional, academic-community partnership – developed to address harm from oppression. CIMH provides a forum for dialogue regarding challenges, needed resources, and program/service improvement. CIMH gives attention to the diverse municipal contexts that can facilitate resistance, leveraging member capacity and interdisciplinary collaboration. With 570 listserv members, CIMH focuses on resource development and information sharing for common goals and action. For example, CIMH hosts an annual Community Convening that brings people together in joint resistance efforts, which transitioned to virtual convenings during the pandemic. CIMH also created a virtual ‘Immigrant Wellness Space’, designed for

undocumented community members who are experiencing distress due to oppressive policies, which have become even more critical during the pandemic and related social isolation. Co-facilitated by a mental health practitioner and community-based staff member, these gatherings align with a healing justice framework, providing not only policy updates and wellness resources, but also time to share and hold space for collective healing.

Resistance city-wide have bolstered through and echoed by statewide actions. For example, earlier state legislation made in-state university tuition available for undocumented youth, universal child health care available regardless of immigration status, and driver's licenses available to state residents without sanctioned residency. Undocumented youth alongside an immigrant rights organization, Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR), are leading the way. In 2009, the Immigrant Youth Justice League formed in response to a member's deportation order (Mena Robles & Gomberg-Muñoz, 2016), and this group eventually expanded to form Organized Communities Against Deportations. Along with ICIRR, they were instrumental in the passage of the Illinois DREAM Act in 2011, which promotes access to higher education for undocumented students through improved school counseling and access to college saving programs and scholarships. ICIRR mapped out needed change with a multi-year advocacy agenda, Welcoming Illinois, and a new governor in 2019 heralded legislative victories aimed at dismantling systems of oppression (e.g., Voices of Immigrant Communities Empowering Survivors Act, The Retention of Illinois Students & Equity Act). Business and hospitality sectors formed a coalition focused on employees with DACA status and their employers.

Working with stakeholders across sectors and holding officials accountable has certainly been met with tension and challenges, and work continues, rippling across ecological levels. Most recently, the mayor earmarked COVID-19 relief funds for immigrants left out of federal relief; the county's legislators called for federal agencies to rescind family separation policies; the county created a specialized unit in their public defenders' office to provide counsel for immigrants in criminal court; and the state expanded medical coverage to low-income immigrant seniors. At the time of writing, activists are demanding the removal of exceptions around municipal police cooperation with federal immigration enforcement. In sum, by working across settings and through diverse stakeholder partnerships, Chicago facilitates resistance.

### *Grassroots Movements and Organizing Settings*

Finally, countless grassroots movements and organizing settings across the globe take direct, collective actions to

dismantle systems of oppression. Grassroots movements are defined as individuals coming together around a particular issue and mobilizing to bring other people into the movement to effect change, focused largely on the social processes that leads to the creation and organization of resources (Della Porta & Kriesi, 1999; Seidman & Tseng, 2011; Tseng & Seidman, 2007). Grassroots movements can be local, regional, national, or transnational, and often join immigrants and allies. Examples of grassroots movements abound, with varying foci and organizing strategies. At the local level, neighborhood-based coalitions serve as organizing settings. They facilitate resistance as empowering settings through mobilization, training, and local advocacy by focusing on capacity-building and centering community voices and actions (Kegler & Swan, 2011, 2012; Maton & Brodsky, 2011). Such coalitions are critical for addressing community-level health outcomes rooted in structural inequity through connection to other community settings (Butterfoss, 2006; Butterfoss & Kegler, 2009). The Logan Square Neighborhood Association, for example, began in the early 1960s in Chicago, to address economic conditions of its residents, and has since expanded its focus on social, political and educational justice. In particular, LSNA has organized for school reform (Warren & Mapp, 2011) and has a program to support members' capacity to serve as leaders and change-makers in their children's schools (Hong, 2011).

Grassroots movements at other ecological levels have diverse structures. Many are organized by a central body, with local organizing settings fueling and disseminating their work. For example, the centralized immigrant youth-led organization, United We Dream, works to change the narrative regarding undocumented immigrant youth, seeking to protect DACA while also fighting for their parents' rights (United We Dream, 2020). The centralized ally-led national grassroots movement, Welcoming America, seeks to promote dialogue between non-immigrants and immigrants to help all Americans recognize their shared humanity and rights to community membership, resources, and influence (Shutika, 2005; Winders, 2011). Other movements are decentralized with a large network of local groups who act autonomously but share the movement's values and vision. For example, the decentralized movement, Movimiento Cosecha, uses the power of labor and consumption to facilitate resistance, engaging in strikes and boycotts to show how the country could not function without immigrants (Movimiento Cosecha, 2020). The tenets of empowering settings are often visible in movements' structures and practices.

Movements facilitate resistance in many ways. They often challenge oppression directly by staging collective actions that seek to inform, influence, and/or demand that policymakers within the nation-state governments in

migrants' birth and/or receiving countries take action (Chaudhary & Moss, 2019). One could argue that this resistance is designed to facilitate empowerment, "an intentional, ongoing process centered in the local community, involving mutual respect, critical reflection, caring, and group participation, through which people lacking an equal share of valued resources gain greater access to and control over those resources" (Cornell Empowerment Group, 1989, p. 2). Many grassroots movements also aspire to create organizing spaces that are empowering by providing a culture of growth and community, opportunities to take on meaningful diverse roles, peer-based support, and shared leadership committed to individual and group development (Kieffer, 1984; Maton, 2008; Maton & Brodsky, 2011; Wandersman & Florin, 2000; Wilke & Speer, 2011; Zimmerman, 2000).

The rise of the internet and social media has increasingly facilitated the resistance work of organizing settings. For example, texting and messaging apps have been used to organize collective action, such as walkouts (Seif, 2011). Often, online platforms and particularly social media are a place to disseminate information about injustice and social action. For example, the aforementioned DREAM 9 live-streamed accounts of their experiences immediately following their release from detention, spurring conversation on Twitter that further raised awareness (Seif et al., 2014). Live-streams of attempted deportations have also spurred community demands for policy change (Dance, 2019). Online platforms and communities not only serve as extensions of organizing settings, but are sometimes the organizing setting itself, a place for people to share information, find social support, and spur collective action (Seif et al., 2014).

*Case Study: Asian Migrants' Coordinating Body, Hong Kong.* The Asian Migrants' Coordinating Body (AMCB) is an empowering setting that facilitates empowerment. AMCB is a coalition of grassroots migrant organizations that serve people of different nationalities (Hsia, 2009). As a grassroots, migrant-led organizing setting, AMCB is rooted in shared experiences of migrant workers that allow for the creation of cross-national alliances and trans-ethnic solidarity for transnational movement-building. The origins of AMCB date back to the mid-1990s, when more than 1,500 migrant workers from India, Indonesia, Thailand, Nepal, and the Philippines had an opportunity to meet, share their cultures through songs and dances, and begin working together at an Asian cultural festival in Hong Kong. Prior, migrant worker organizations existed, but were confined to national, racial, and gender groups, and thus limited in membership, scope, and organizing power. By forming alliances in Hong Kong and migrants' countries of origin, AMCB overcame policies used to divide them. AMCB is

composed of executives from member organizations that routinely discuss issues, share information, and plan actions (Hsia, 2009).

AMCB takes a multi-fold approach to organizing as their membership often lacks access to information and other resources; have experienced marginalization with severe consequences for taking collective action (i.e., reasons they were often forced to migrate); and have been divided strategically by employers and governments in ways that have fueled prejudice and 'in-fighting' among migrant groups so that they are more easily oppressed and exploited (Hsia, 2009). AMCB's multi-fold approach can be seen as an empowering setting (Maton, 2008) for their members as they engage in collective action. First, AMCB holds educational activities, which provides leadership training and enables migrants to share experiences and struggles. Second, they foster networking and cooperation through sharing cultural activities, focusing on common struggles, and openly communicating so members can raise and discuss critical issues. Third, they collectively organize, mobilize, and take action to fight oppression. For example, wages for domestic workers have been continuously threatened in Hong Kong. Each time the government threatens wages, AMCB has organized action, including signature campaigns and marches with upward of 12,000 migrant workers. As a result of their efforts, significant wage cuts have been halted. At the time of writing, AMCB is working on actions to address the vulnerability their membership faces with COVID-19 (Wong, 2020). Although the Hong Kong government is their regular target, AMCB also helps members understand how problems in their countries of origin fuel oppression, resulting in member organizations supporting actions around the world. AMCB's transnational organizing has inspired global movements (Hsia, 2009).

AMCB provides lessons for how transnational organizing settings further resistance in the pursuit of justice (Hsia, 2009). Inspiring collectivity among migrants of diverse nationalities, they defeated the 'divide and conquer' mentality instigated by oppressors while effectively harnessing the unique strengths of national and ethnic organizations that are critical to developing transnational organizing. Their continuous thoughtful actions have developed and sustained progress. In showing how non-governmental organizations can provide support for movement-building rather than speaking for migrants, they provide a model for linking struggles across countries and strengthening migrant organizations transnationally. Finally, by focusing on common experiences and concerns, as a transnational organizing setting, ACMB provides a roadmap of how to overcome cultural, linguistic, and border barriers, with the goal of unifying and working

toward a common cause: resisting oppression and pursuing justice.

## Conclusions

Immigrants and their allies resist oppression every day. Sometimes resistance is individual and covert; other times it is organized collectively and visible to the broader public (Raby, 2006). Resistance may be carried out locally but reverberates globally, and often takes place through transnational actions (Mittelman & Chin, 2005). Much resistance may remain unseen by researchers, such as ourselves, as everyday resistance is carried out in oppressive, tight spaces, and designed to be hidden from oppressors' views (Cruz, 2016; Langhout, 2005; Rosales & Langhout, 2020), and thus we cannot have described all types of resistance here.

Numerous settings are well positioned to facilitate resistance. They range in size, vary in focus, and are situated at multiple ecological levels. We can loosely organize settings' actions by

their focus – inward-facing toward those being oppressed and outward-facing toward those oppressing – although distinctions are hazy. With a focus on those being oppressed, settings may provide safer, empowering brave spaces in which people can gain the tangible and intangible resources needed to resist oppression. Faced inward, these settings can foster individual and collective growth, sense of community, and healing through education, information-sharing, mentorship, legal services, and social support groups. With a focus on oppressors, settings can work toward dismantling systems of oppression in concert with those being oppressed through direct actions. Faced outward, these settings use their power as a collective to take action through speaking out, calling for change by those in power, organizing and participating in rallies, and refusing to comply with oppressive policies and narratives. There are many ways that settings may support resistance along the continuum of the two foci. For example, settings may foster growth and facilitate action by providing technical support, financial resources, and organizational capacity, along with creating opportunities for civic engagement and activism.

There is no singular way for settings to support immigrant resistance to oppression and injustice. Rather, there are myriad ways to focus, act, and reflect. It is important to note that there may be additional limitations in how settings facilitate resistance beyond what we have noted in this paper and settings may fall short of their ideals, inadvertently perpetuating systems of oppression in their efforts. Below, we offer a number of broad recommendations on ways in which leaders and members within

settings can (further) work to facilitate resistance and (further) strengthen the structures, systems, processes, and actions of their settings to (further) promote resistance to oppression. We root our recommendations in the frameworks of change through social settings, empowering settings, healing justice, and decolonization.

### Recognize Oppression

Oppression takes many forms and is carried out individually, collectively, institutionally, and structurally. Because oppression is unrelenting and embedded into all aspects of societies (Martí & Fernández, 2013), it may be challenging for leadership within settings to recognize oppression, as it disguises itself as the status quo. All members within settings must stay alert to recognize their role in supporting resistance to oppression and working to dismantle associated systems. This is the case for all settings highlighted in this paper as well as those we have not directly addressed. Indeed, settings may be constructed in ways that are racist, classist, colonial, sexist, heterosexist, cissexist, adultist, and so forth (Beam, 2018; Haymarket People's Fund, 2014; INCITE!, 2017; Taft, 2019). Therefore, the leadership of settings should listen and look for the oppression their members face.

### Look for Resistance

Although some acts of resistance may be easy to recognize because they are meant to be highly visible, other actions carried out in oppressive spaces are hidden from oppressors and may be unseen (Rosales & Langhout, 2020). All members of settings must look for resistance already taking place in their communities and build from that resistance, centering the knowledge, experiences, skills, and hopes of those already engaged in resistance work to determine solutions and next steps (Ginwright, 2018).

### Listen and Learn

All members of settings should use resistance in their communities to guide their actions as a setting. Leaders should look to those who are resisting both within their setting and outside of the setting to identify how the setting might best facilitate resistance.

### Look to Models

Members of settings should look at settings similar to their own to note how they have facilitated resistance, what has worked well, and what needs further shaping. They may benefit from using the frameworks of change

through social settings, empowering settings, healing justice, and/or decolonization to guide their development, and they can use the case studies presented here to get inspired about how their setting might facilitate resistance.

#### Provide Resources

All settings can facilitate resistance through providing resources internally. Resources may range from legal aid, housing, and health care; to education, information-sharing, and skills development; to technical and fiscal support; to emotional and social support (Tseng & Seidman, 2007). These should always build on the existing assets and skills of those in the settings (Ginwright, 2018), be guided by community needs (Seidman & Tseng, 2011), and can be offered by peers (Zimmerman, 2000). While recognizing that solutions to oppression are inherently systemic and political, settings must also attend to the suffering of their members and should create space for culturally-grounded ritual and activities to facilitate healthy identity development, a sense of belonging, and collective healing (Ginwright, 2018).

#### Harness Technology

Technologies can facilitate communication and connection, disseminate information, and galvanize support for causes (Seif et al., 2014). Social media, for example, often makes injustices previously invisible to those not being directly oppressed visible to all, developing allies in resistance work. Technology can bring people together transnationally and meet people where they are. Technology can also serve to organize and coordinate resistance efforts, as adjunctive to the setting or even as the setting itself. However, technology can be used to harm; it can bring to light acts of resistance not meant for the public eye that provide ammunition for oppressors or place individuals experiencing oppression at risk. Technology is also unevenly distributed and accessed. Therefore, settings must dually consider how technology can support their resistance work and the potential challenges that may arise.

#### Use Power Wisely

Settings should recognize and use the unique power they hold to work toward dismantling oppressive systems. A municipality has the power to create more just and equitable local laws. A union has power in the solidarity of its members. A faith-based organization may have moral authority, spiritual support, and an ability to tap into an international network with political power. Leadership should reflect on their setting's unique strengths and

ensure that they use the strengths wisely toward dismantling systems of oppression.

#### Make Space

The members of settings, including those experiencing oppression, have existing knowledge, experiences, and skills. Settings should make sure that all members' voices are heard and that their strengths are built upon as processes are developed and actions are taken (Ginwright, 2018). This likely means decentering Western ways of knowing and challenging existing structures of settings that may be neocolonial (Chandrashekar, 2018; Maldonado-Torres, 2016; Tuck & Yang, 2012). Everyone within settings must take care to make space for those typically ignored, which tend to be women of color, those who are queer, those with a disability, those who are trans or non-binary, those with a criminal history, and children and youth. To truly make space for new ideas, practices, and positions to facilitate resistance, those with more power in settings will need to relinquish that power in their roles and step back. This also includes making space for the intersection between immigrant justice and racial justice, for example, and the myriad ways that settings can and do facilitate joint actions of resistance. Settings can intentionally build community to facilitate and strengthen resistance (Maton & Brodsky, 2011).

#### Honor Diverse Roles

All members within settings must have opportunities to take on meaningful and multiple roles, to share leadership, and to grow individually and together (Maton, 2008; Wandersman & Florin, 2000; Zimmerman, 2000). Settings must recognize that individuals' contributions may evolve over time based on changing life experiences and where they are in their own developmental trajectory. For example, young people are at the forefront of much visible resistance work, and their vision and contributions should be uplifted. Elders, meanwhile, are important in their own right, and are also critical in shaping and maintaining young people's senses of hope, agency, and self-efficacy, while also being able to provide wisdom about sustaining collective action and model effective ways of dismantling oppression (Petrone, 2016). Further, some roles in settings have been historically undervalued, such as the emotional labor tirelessly provided by advocates, healers, and facilitators (Lara, 2008). Ultimately, while there is no one way to do resistance work, settings must nevertheless honor the diverse roles undertaken by everyone in them, and honor the unique developmental insights participants filling those roles across the lifespan may provide. For true

sustainability, they should encourage their participants to appreciate the strengths provided by such diversity.

### Act in Solidarity

Any move that a setting takes to facilitate resistance must be in solidarity with those being oppressed. Those who have more power and privilege should be allies, accomplices, and partners to immigrants, resisting any internal or external narrative that pushes them to be saviors and to see immigrants solely through a passive victim lens. This will also require reflecting on individual practices, such as mansplaining, whitesplaining, ablesplaining, and other types of privilege-splaining (see, for example, Smith, 2010).

### Look in the Mirror

To support resistance and dismantle systems of oppression, settings must be anti-oppressive themselves. Settings should regularly reflect on their own structures, processes, and practices to examine the ways in which they may be reifying systems of oppression, and actively work toward dismantling systems of oppression in their own settings. For example, some members can reproduce the cycle of oppression through co-option, whereby they become part of the oppressive power structures that they originally opposed (Ife, 1995). Members might only have token participation rather than real decision-making power within the setting (Paloma & Manzano-Arrondo, 2011; Wright & Taylor, 1998). The frameworks presented – change through social settings, empowering settings, healing justice, and decolonization – provide strategies for reflecting on and working toward dismantling oppression in settings.

### Be Willing to Reflect and Change

Underlying all the recommendations thus far, facilitating resistance necessarily calls into question the status quo and requires constant change. Along the way, settings that seek to facilitate resistance will likely take missteps and make decisions that they wish they had not made. Settings should be prepared to be open to feedback from those whose resistance actions they seek to support, to continuously reflect on what they are doing and why they are doing it, to be ready to own their actions, and to make changes accordingly. When entire settings or those operating within them are called in by those who are oppressed, those called in should try to view the intervention as an act of love, designed to help the setting or person do better. This means the setting or person is viewed as having the capacity to grow, which makes the intervention an act of hope.

### Summary

In summary, people resist oppression constantly in highly visible and more hidden ways, and settings at all levels can play a critical role in facilitating resistance to oppression, regardless of the specific focus of their setting. Settings may range from small community-based organizations to transnational movements. Resistance often starts from within, in the dismantling of oppression within settings themselves. The interactions of people within settings can develop anti-oppressive cultures that set the stage for resistance. Settings can create material, psychological, and temporal resources and/or determine how resources are allocated to affect outcomes (Seidman & Tseng, 2011; Tseng & Seidman, 2007). Because settings are embedded within oppressive structures and cultures, settings must actively work to recognize and challenge the aspects of their own structures that are oppressive, decentering Western ways of knowing to make space for the many truths and knowledges too often obscured (Maldonado-Torres, 2016; Tuck & Yang, 2012). By attending to structural systems of oppression and advocating for political solutions alongside how those oppressed suffer from that oppression and attending to their trauma, settings can build community, support their members to develop courageous vision, heal from oppression, and work toward liberation (Chavez-Diaz & Lee, 2015; Gemignani & Hernández-Albújar, 2019; Ginwright, 2015a, 2015b; Horowitz & Maceo Vega-Frey, 2006). Settings can organize themselves to be empowering, fostering a culture of growth in which members have the opportunities to take on meaningful roles, provide and receive peer-based support, develop skills, share leadership, and build community (Maton, 2008; Maton & Brodsky, 2011; Wandersman & Florin, 2000; Zimmerman, 2000). The internal structures of settings then set the stage for external social change (Wilke & Speer, 2011). Settings can use their unique power as a collective to take action against oppression through words and actions. Regardless of the level at which they act, the resistance settings facilitate can have national and transnational impacts, empowering their members and working toward dismantling systems of oppression.

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## Conflict of Interests

The authors have no conflicts of interest to report.

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