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**Immigrant Families and U.S. Schools**  
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“Immigrant Families and U.S. Schools” is the theme of *Theory Into Practice*, Winter 2008, Volume 47, Number 1, guest edited by Bic Ngo of the University of Minnesota.

In our era of globalization, as immigrants establish lives and communities in the United States and expand in number, their experience and entrance into mainstream institutions such as schools, politics, and the workplace have garnered much attention. Newspapers report stories on Somali, Asian, and Hmong refugees, among others. These stories announce that immigrants are putting down roots and becoming a significant part of U.S. society. In a similar vein, headlines attest to the importance of education for immigrants. These stories underscore the critical role of schools as a medium for assisting immigrants with literacy, opportunity and upward mobility.

While educators and educational researchers have been concerned with the education of immigrant students for several decades, globalization and the new immigration make attending to the education and experiences of immigrants in U.S. schools and society more important than ever before. Immigration in the global era is marked by the fact that large numbers of immigrants are from the non-European, non-English-speaking developing world. In some cases, what this means is that children and families are coming into U.S. communities and schools from war situations in Somalia, Afghanistan, and the Sudan. For these students, their experiences fleeing from violence and persecution in their native country adds another dimension to the contexts of being a student in a new country. For teachers and schools, teaching these immigrant students effectively may mean being aware of and addressing issues related to post-war trauma.

This issue illustrates the complexity of immigrant education and the critical role of teachers and schools in the transformation of culture and identity and academic achievement. It is hoped that the perspectives presented in this issue will enrich and extend the current understanding of immigrant families in our schools and society. But moreover, this issue will hopefully encourage scholars, educators, and policymakers to think more deeply about how our practices and policies close off or open up possibilities for the teaching and learning of immigrant students.

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