

Educational experiences of Canadian school students from post-Soviet backgrounds: A systematic review of the literature

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May 19, 2022



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OISE | ONTARIO INSTITUTE
FOR STUDIES IN EDUCATION



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Transitions

Introduction

- Educational experiences, challenges, and opportunities of the families who come from the former Soviet Union.
- Systematic review of the literature: qualitative, thematic and critical analysis
- Post-Soviets are a growing and distinct group that is understudied and misunderstood



Objectives

- Draw attention to the group
- Analysis of educational life of post-Soviets
- Provide a framework for knowledge sharing and partnerships



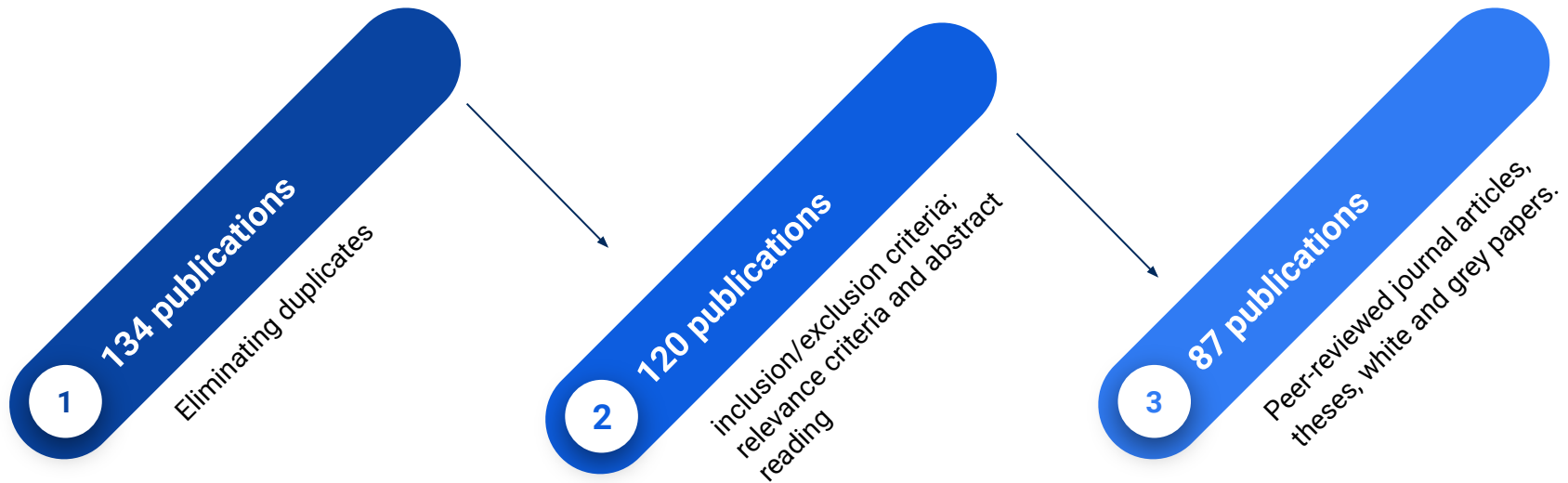
Study Design

Systematic Review of Literature

- Research question: What are the experiences of post-Soviet immigrants and refugees in Canadian schools?
- Databases: ERIC (EBSCO) and Education Source
- Main keyword searches: “Post-Soviet students”, “immigrant students”, “refugee students” OR “elementary”, “secondary” AND “Canada”, “in Canada” or “in Canadian schools*” ...



Three stepped elimination approach



Major coded themes

Major Themes	Sub-themes	Frequency
Integration Problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Language - Occupational - Financial - Identity 	232
Other Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emotional and mental health - Educational 	216
Expectations, Hopes, Aspirations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Academic - Economic - Social - Personal - Biases 	212
Curriculum Matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Heritage - Language - Skills - Subject related - Artistic 	70



Who are post-Soviets?



Post-Soviets in Canada

- 2,219,525 people who have an ethnic origin from a post-Soviet state (Statistics Canada, 2016a)
- 240,860 post-Soviet immigrants (Statistics Canada, 2016a)



Integration challenges

- Downward occupational and social mobility (Liebert, 2010).
- Invisibility as a minorities (Morozovskaia, 2021; Sadowski-Smith, 2018).
- Being lumped together without awareness of their vast in-group diversity and complexity (Tereshchenko et al., 2019).



Findings: What do we know?

How do post-Soviet students and families differ from their Canadian-born and raised peers?

- Preferences regarding curriculum (Antony-Newman, 2020a)
- Parental involvement (Nesteruk et al., 2009)
- Interaction with teachers (Robila & Krishnakumar, 2004).



Findings: Are post-Soviets visible?

Invisibility as immigrants facing prejudice:

- Educational struggles are invisible for policymakers and educators
- Issues of identity and belonging are not addressed
- Lack of targeted and appropriate support due to invisibility



Implications & Discussion Questions

Is Post-Soviet a Coherent Macro-level Group

- Common orientations to education / identity as a student?
- Broad post-Soviet immigrant community mediated by Russian as “language of interethnic communication in USSR”?
- OR more local identity than Post-Soviet / Russian?



Implications & Discussion Questions

- **Educational Beliefs, Attitudes & Practices from:**
 - pre-, non- Soviet / post-Soviet traditions ?
 - migration & post-migration experience?
- **Hybridized educational beliefs, attitudes & practices?**
 - How do youth negotiate their identities:
 - Multiple, Blended, situational (Gee, 2000)?



Implications & Discussion Questions

Schools and Teacher Development

- How do / should schools~ teachers~peers see or treat these “Post-Soviet” youth?
 - as part of the mainstream due to their whiteness?
 - as “educationally” distinct?
 - as benefitting from culturally & linguistically relevant approaches?



Thank you!



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