Refugee "In-betweenness": A Proactive Existence

Lalai Manjikian

Abstract

This paper challenges the focus on marginalization that is commonly associated with refugee claimants. By proposing a closer look at the critical period during which refugee claimants residing in Montréal wait for their status to be determined, this paper suggests that "in-betweenness" can be a moment and site that engenders social inclusion.

I argue that during the re-settlement process, certain circumstances can foster pathways of agency and engagement as opposed to reproducing cycles of exclusion, commonly associated with refugee claimants that other authors have documented. Drawing on participant narratives, this paper demonstrates how refugee claimants awaiting determination can become active social and political subjects.

The paper underscores that in-betweenness, in both temporal and spatial dimensions, can foster a proactive stance despite refugee claimants' lack of status, limited access to resources, and possibly reduced mobility.

Résumé

Cet article conteste l'accent sur la marginalisation qui est couramment associée aux demandeurs d'asile. En proposant d'étudier de plus près la période critique pendant laquelle les demandeurs d'asile résidant à Montréal attendent que leur statut soit déterminé, cette étude suggère que l'« intermédiarité » peut former un cadre spatio-temporel qui engendre l'inclusion sociale.

L'auteur soutient que pendant le processus de réinstallation certaines circonstances peuvent favoriser des filières d'agence et d'engagement plutôt que de reproduire des cycles d'exclusion, souvent associés aux demandeurs d'asile que d'autres auteurs ont constatés S'appuyant sur les témoignages de participants, cette étude montre comment les demandeurs d'asile en attente de détermination de leur statut peuvent devenir des sujets sociaux et politiques actifs.

L'étude souligne que l'« intermédiarité », dans sa dimension tant temporelle que spatiale, peut favoriser une attitude proactive en dépit de l'absence de statut des demandeurs d'asile, de l'accès limité aux ressources et éventuellement d'une mobilité réduite.

Refugee claimants[1] who re-settle[2] in urban centres embody a complex predicament. Their condition is controlled by regulations and often marked by circumstances of social, racial, and economic marginalization, but also is defined by instances where refugee claimants manifest their belonging to the city, create meaning in their lives, and carve out agency as non-citizens.

This paper underscores how, during the re-settlement process, certain circumstances can foster pathways of agency and engagement as opposed to strictly reproducing cycles of exclusion commonly associated with refugee claimants that other authors have documented. Based on participant narratives, I demonstrate how refugee claimants awaiting determination can become active social and political subjects. As claimants are confronted with indefinite waits, which may extend anywhere between nine weeks and nine years, I argue that this in-betweenness, in both temporal and spatial dimensions, can foster a proactive stance despite their lack of status, limited access to resources, and possibly reduced mobility.

Part of a larger research project within Communication Studies, which examines the everyday lives of refugee claimants residing in Montréal through tensions of social exclusion and inclusion; and, in addition to conducting media discourse analysis of local media coverage surrounding refugees re-settled in Montréal, this paper draws on refugee

© Lalai Manjikian, 2010. This open-access work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License, which permits use, reproduction and distribution in any medium for non-commercial purposes, provided the original author(s) are credited and the original publication in Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees is cited.

narratives to elucidate how both spatial and temporal "in-betweenness" can engender social inclusion, as refugee claimants can partake in and contribute to local community life whether through volunteerism, community involvement, or political activity surrounding other refugees and immigrants.

It has been well documented that public perception and certain media discourses generally frame refugees as being "bogus" claimants, opportunists who abuse and live off the system, as outlined by Valverde and Pratt; who pose a threat to national security, as described by Bigo; and, as argued by Ong, who are deemed invisible in national consciousness.[3] In order to counter such stereotypes and misconceptions that circulate around refugee claimants, I pursue a closer examination of the critical period integral to urban refugee re-settlement, during which indefinite waiting periods are imposed. Furthermore, the refugee predicament, particularly in urban settings, is at times oversimplified and often addressed only in terms of social exclusion, based on factors such as poverty, for instance.[4] This trend is even noticeable in Montréal, where for instance Germain and Rose note that Montréal's Haitian community is strongly bifurcated in economic terms between the families of professionals who arrived in the 1960s and 1970s and more recent arrivals of refugees with low levels of education, who are among the city's poorest residents.[5] Although it is impossible to neglect economic factors, especially tied to race, I deem it necessary to broaden our understandings and applications of social exclusion – first, to consider social inclusion as a construct just as useful for study as social exclusion, and secondly, to study other sites, besides economic factors for example, in order to provide further insight into the lives of refugees residing in urban settings.

Other authors have also considered refugee claimants' involvement in the community, rather than focus solely on social exclusion, describing refugee claimants as active subjects, despite finding themselves in an in-between position. Danso has discussed how Ethiopian and Somali refugees in Toronto, for instance, have attempted to reconstruct "their social geographies" during the initial settlement experiences.[6] Mohamed has outlined resistance strategies during resettlement, in particular how "Somali women […] negotiate dynamic identities of resistance and defy prescriptions and stereotypes in their daily lives."[7] Kumsa addresses questions of "be-longing" and underpins both the fixed and ever-shifting nature of selfhood based on empirical work conducted on Oromos refugee youth in Toronto.[8] Authors, such as Indra and Israelite et al., have highlighted the shift that takes place in gender roles during resettlement.[9] Moreover, previous work on how newcomers access various social networks and community organizations has been addressed by Rose, Carrasco, and Charbonneau, as well as by Walton-Roberts,[10] who consider the dynamics in the formation of social capital through weak and strong ties.[11]

It is a common occurrence for refugee claimants to use the term "being in-between" when waiting for their status to be determined. Drawing from the narratives provided by individuals who once claimed refugee status in Montréal, I highlight that, despite enforced in-betweenness, refugees can succeed in forging a meaningful life where they play a pivotal role in managing their agency. The ways in which refugee claimants can overcome, circumvent, and even defy limitations and restrictions imposed on them due to immigration status offers particular insight into understanding the in-between condition of claimants in a more comprehensive manner. Specifically examining in-betweenness through temporal and spatial angles can shed further light onto the conditions of refugee urban re-settlement, viewed from the perspective of inclusivity. After all, as Danso argues, "the initial settlement experiences of any immigrant group are very much instrumental in setting the tone for the way the integration process proceeds for the group in the adopted country."[12] I therefore choose to emphasize the realm of social inclusion—a less explored facet of refugee urban re-settlement—as a productive and positive site of analysis, where social capital can be built and the actions and the notions of civic participation start to develop within the new urban dwelling place.

Even though the distinct dynamics of the plural landscape of Montréal are not detailed in this paper, it is important to note that the local urban context and its effects on claimants' experiences cannot be overlooked. Through their empirical research, Ley and Smith have recognized that place has a profound impact on shaping immigrants' experiences.[13] In fact, the duality of social inclusion and exclusion unfolding in everyday refugee life in Montréal is likely further exacerbated by what Sherry Simon calls the politics of a "divided city."[14] Montréal, as a distinct urban setting, continuously grapples to reconcile its bicultural and bilingual nature alongside the implications of immigration influxes within a culturally, racially, and religiously diverse city space. The way in which refugee claimants occupy space and attempt to establish belonging unfolds on this backdrop of multiplicity. Such urban plurality echoes Leonie Sandercock's definition of a cosmopolis, "which is an always unfinished and contested construction site, one characterized, above all, by its space for difference."[15] Even though I do not elaborate on it here, I do recognize, in my larger project, the role played by place, in this case, the city of Montréal, and how it can shape the nature, scope, and motivation of refugee claimants' involvement and engagement vis-à-vis spaces, social networks, and organizations based in Montréal.

In order to explore how in-betweenness is a moment and site which can engender civic engagement, this paper draws on qualitative data collected for a larger doctoral project that investigates the everyday life practices of refugee claimants. One of the central aspects of my larger project is the integration of refugee voices, particularly around their day-to-day experiences, as well as when addressing their own existential condition of asylum, namely that of being in-between. Therefore, I find it necessary to acknowledge how refugee claimants themselves perceive and formulate their experiences of inclusion and exclusion in/on their own terms. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with individuals who were once refugee claimants.[16] The same questionnaire was utilized for all participants, with interviews conducted either in French or English. The questionnaire contained open-ended questions for the most part, which covered issues such as refugee claimant experiences at the border, immediately upon arrival, their reception and initial impressions of the city and of the people they met, and whether they encountered any hostility. Also, the respondents were asked to describe, among other aspects of urban re-settlement, their everyday life, where they went and what they did to socialize, how they went about circulating in the city, which neighbourhoods they felt more secure in, who they turned to for front-line services, and if they were involved in refugee and immigration activism at all. I also inquired about conditions prior to their departure from the homeland, and only proceeded if the respondents were willing to revisit that portion of their trajectories. The narratives collected were intended to provide some insight into the personal experiences of refugee claimants in Montréal and to include their voices in the project, of which only a small proportion appears here. In terms of recruiting the ten participants, the sample selection process entailed having to establish contacts with individuals who had ties within the refugee advocacy community. Given the delicate and private nature of the topics discussed, the primary sampling strategy utilized was that of snowball sampling which relied on referrals, personal contacts with individuals active in refugee advocacy circles, and word of mouth. It was imperative to build a rapport and establish trust with both the contacts and with the respondents. This method of recruiting the research participants likely speaks to the fact that these individuals were in a less vulnerable position in terms of circumventing exclusion due to the strong ties within ethnic communities and especially weak ties they had established with members of advocacy groups, with workers in the para-public milieu, and with other front line service providers. Nevertheless, the participants did recall encountering extensive barriers, but were proactive based on their own will and resources, as well as with the help of their networks to overcome a number of the difficulties.

In terms of the specific barriers, the indefinite wait for status was one of the recurring themes throughout the interviews. Individuals who claim refugee status in Canada and find themselves channelled into the refugee determination system are confronted with potentially years of legal limbo, during which there are significant barriers to accessing employment and social services. Other important barriers include the non-recognition of education and professional credentials, difficulties in securing employment and housing, barriers in host language, everyday and institutional racism, separation from their families for indefinite periods—aspects connected to social exclusion.[17]

Nevertheless, to focus solely on social exclusion when addressing the predicament of refugee claimants who resettle in urban contexts overlooks other dynamic aspects of their everyday lives. I turn to the notion of social inclusion as a productive concept to frame social and civic engagement. The term became popularized when social inclusion was initiated by the French in an effort to reintegrate the large numbers of ex-industrial workers and an increasing number of young people in the new economy labour force of the 1980s and 1990s.[18] Prior to those decades, the term "social exclusion" was popularized by French social theorist René Lenoir and consists of being a concern with the relationship between members of society and the nation-state.[19] Stemming from his deliberations published in *Les exclus: un Français sur dix*, Lenoir discusses social exclusion as he shows another side of an opulent France, what he refers to as "*l'autre France*." He describes how "the others" are individuals historically disregarded by the social contract of the French Republic. Lenoir also highlights how the "other" is unable to fend for him or herself, requires constant assistance, and furthermore is perceived as a threat to society.[20]

There are numerous legal and political complexities attached to the notion of social inclusion, in particular, how the concept is defined and perceived, how it is implemented, and by whom. Questions of citizenship and rights also surround the rhetoric of social inclusion, though I do not elaborate in much detail here, given the scope of the paper. However, I do believe that reframing social inclusion outside the, at times, narrow confines of citizenship is essential, especially when addressing the social inclusion of refugee claimants, who are de facto outside the mesh of traditional citizenship. Thus, linking social inclusion in this context to social citizenship allows us to enlarge the discussion surrounding refugee claimants' involvement and participation, as well as possibilities for engagement, namely within the multicultural Canadian context.

As Omidvar and Richmond point out in their work "Immigrant Settlement and Social Inclusion in Canada," the notion of social inclusion is the antithesis of social exclusion.[21] They define social exclusion primarily in economic terms, as a way of understanding the impact of existing socio-economic systems on marginalized groups. Social inclusion, on the other hand, they write, is about finding out what works and mobilizing resources to resolve the problems brought about through social exclusion. Interestingly, the authors stress the blatant contradiction between official inclusion policies and the reality of growing social exclusion for Canada's newcomers in both the economic sphere and in public life in general, which surfaces in the interviews conducted for the purpose of my larger project. Omidvar and Richmond, in fact, sound an alarm by highlighting the creation of a new Canadian underclass of persons without status who are in need of assistance.[22]

Besides economic considerations, Saloojee discusses the potential of social inclusion to move beyond the limitations of multiculturalism by "democratizing democracy" and developing active and meaningful forms of social citizenship. Like a number of scholars, he critiques multiculturalism as a policy model, for leaving communities on the margins and creating fragmentation within society. Instead, he proposes social inclusion as a way of overcoming the limits of multiculturalism policy, which, despite its ideals, has not necessarily brought forth valued recognition and participation for minority communities.[23] Therefore, one can speculate that social inclusion can foster a proactive stance towards democratic citizenship and multiculturalism—regardless of immigration status. As such, being "in-between" and facing precarious conditions do not necessarily imply being passive. On the contrary, many refugee claimants are able to take on political positions or, in Saskia Sassen's words, produce "new types of political subjects and new spatialities for politics"[24] which destabilize the formal and narrow apparatus of citizenship as an institution. By engaging in such acts, they temporarily alleviate their alienation and isolation by solidarity and a sense of community, where silenced voices, as Jacques Rancière recognized, "speak against injustice and vocalize grievances as equal beings."[25]

As a point of departure of my discussion of how social inclusion can emerge from liminality, I rely on Saskia Sassen's notion of the "informal" citizen, which she defines as a citizen who is unauthorized, yet recognized; for instance, "undocumented immigrants who are long-term residents in a community and participate in it as citizens do."[26] Engin Isin's ideas on what it means "to be" political are also useful for framing my discussion of refugee claimants' social inclusion and self-determination. He views "being political"

as a "means to constitute oneself simultaneously with and against others as an agent capable of judgement about what is just and unjust."[27] Such concepts allow me to explore how refugee claimants can emerge as political and social subjects who demonstrate civic engagement, "social deservedness," and "national loyalty," which as Sassen points out often allows long-term undocumented residents to gain legal residence in many countries.[28] In addition to potentially gaining recognition from the state and the community, such involvement on behalf of refugee claimants can institute their agency and belonging to their local dwelling place, despite living in limbo as non-citizens. By citing concrete examples drawn from the interviews conducted with respondents who once sought asylum in Montréal, I illustrate how these individuals can become active social and political actors, taking on the role of informal citizens in the city.

It is inconceivable to address these questions without considering elements that define the refugee condition on a daily basis, namely temporal and spatial limitations, which are two fundamental aspects of the urban re-settlement of refugees. In fact, temporal and spatial limitations are at the root of refugee in-betweenness. Given that the notion of time (such as departures, deadlines), waiting times (like in detention or for status, for family reunification), and timelines (life chronologies, for instance) are inherent to the refugee experience, how does temporality manifest itself through refugee experiences of social inclusion and exclusion in the city? When time is suspended for refugees, particularly as they wait for their status to be determined, what are the ways in which they carve out agency and meaning under temporal conditions typically less conducive to such possibilities? And in terms of refugee mobility around the city and access to services and benefits, how do questions of spatiality surface in relation to exclusion and inclusion? What are the roles refugee claimants take on when they find themselves in cases of spatial restriction, even confinement, for instance during detention or while living in church sanctuary to evade deportation?

To shed light on some of these questions, I turn to refugee narratives I gathered in 2008 and 2009 which consist of in-depth semi-structured interviews. The ten informants interviewed sought asylum in Montréal at some point in time during the past twenty years from the following countries: Algeria, Congo Brazzaville, Mauritius, Zimbabwe, Pakistan (two individuals), Lebanon, Colombia, Venezuela, and Mexico. All informants fell under the "refugee" definition as outlined by the UN Convention and eventually were either were granted refugee status or were accepted on humanitarian and compassionate grounds (H&C). The questions and themes covered during these interviews included the

respondents' individual life trajectories, namely experiences immediately upon entry to Canada. I sought to understand how refugees began to establish daily life patterns, family and social networks, and other requirements of everyday life in Montréal as precarious status migrants. The personal narratives were apt in demonstrating that these individuals, who were forced to wait, could not wait and, in some cases, simply refused to just wait.

Sixty-two-year-old Azar[29] was a church pastor in Pakistan. Upon his arrival in Montréal in 2000, he quickly became an active member of the community. When asked to describe his day-to-day life while waiting for his status to be determined, which exceptionally took only nine weeks, he recalls that time as being rather fulfilling. Azar explained that he was very busy once in Montréal, because people here knew that not only was he a church pastor in Pakistan, but also a musician, singer, and composer, all skills and roles which the community here needed. Azar was therefore able to contribute to community life, as he transplanted his knowledge and talent—making other citizens in the city value his presence. In his own words:

I was very busy over here. Because here, so many people knew me that I was a church pastor over there, I was a musician and composer over there, and everybody needed me here till now [sic]. Singer, arranger, composer, so many things … . so that is why I kept busy … everybody liked me to go to his or her home and be with them. Everybody was loving me and I spent all those days when my family was not here and when you are speaking particularly about those 9 weeks [before he was granted status] I was very happy and at home because the people over here love me and still they love me.

(Azar, sixty-two years old, from Pakistan, was a pastor, teacher, musician holding a master's degree. He arrived in Montréal on October 10, 2000. His status at the time of the interview was Canadian citizen.)

While Azar's period of limbo lasted only nine weeks, twenty-three-year-old Myriam, who had fled from Algeria, indicated how the interminable wait of nine years for status took a heavy emotional and financial toll on her and her family. This extreme case of what I refer to as "suspended temporality" was marked by several institutional and legal system obstacles, as well as deportation threats. Over the course of the interview, Myriam frequently mentioned struggling to make up for "lost time," whether in terms of finances, life dreams, or employment and education opportunities. When her parents were increasingly absent from home due to their involvement with the Action Committee for Non-Status Algerians[30] (Comité d'Action des Sans-Statut Algériens or CASS), Myriam found herself taking care of her three younger siblings alongside other household responsibilities. In retrospect, she describes herself as a teenager who instead led a life of a thirty-year-old, raising three children. She described her situation in the following words:

I would go to school then come home, spend time with my parents a bit and then with the lifting of the moratorium [of deporting Algerians[31]] my parents began attending meetings with the Action Committee for Non-Status Algerians. . So then, it started … we started to feel my parents' absence. I had to cook, take care of my sisters, I am the eldest. And I didn't have any activities as a … I think I was 16–17 years old. […] I didn't live what a girl between the ages of 15 to 20 should have lived. I lived between home and …, in fact, I lived like a thirty year old women with three children" (author's translation from French).

(Myriam, twenty-three-years old from Algeria, was working two jobs while pursuing an accounting certificate at the university level. She arrived in Montréal on January 22, 1996. Her status at the time of the interview was Canadian citizen.)

Myriam nonetheless recognized that the contributions made by refugee advocacy networks and organizations like No One Is Illegal[32] (NOII) along with the Comité d'Action des Sans Statut are what "saved our lives." During weekly protests in front of the immigration office in downtown Montréal, NOII and CASS members joined Myriam's family. She explained that if they were going to occupy an immigration office in order to speak to an immigration representative, members from these organizations were on the front lines in order to protect those without status. Occupying the space of immigration offices or street space when protesting articulate types of actions within everyday city life which can be viewed as "tactics," which de Certeau distinguishes from "strategies." He sees "strategies" as being the ordering and disciplining processes (or here mechanisms of social exclusion) that make distinctions between normal and deviant (normal being citizens and deviant being refugees), while "tactics" refers to the embodied actions of those who seek to escape these processes, using space to their own advantage.[33]

Such initiatives of resistance can ultimately engender a sense of belonging and solidarity throughout the community, which can help reduce hostility and intolerance towards immigrants and refugees, through the collaborative efforts between migrants and citizens. In addition, social activities such as community dinners, concerts, film screenings, and other social activities organized by such grassroots activist groups come to reinforce the bond between citizens and non-status individuals.

Myriam and her family were also active in a local Québécois community centre, which according to her allowed her to better integrate into Montréal life.

> My parents had the intelligence to start attending (local) community centres. By attending the community centres, it allowed us to better integrate ourselves, there were organized excursions, going to this place, or that place, apple-picking, all kinds of things … and at the time, we still had not been rejected by immigration, so we still had that hope in the beginning. […] It was a community centre that assisted young families, so my mother, she would go three or four times a week to the meetings, and it's by going there that my mother was able to better understand the Québécois accent. At the beginning, it was difficult to understand.

The spatial and temporal in-betweenness brought on by twenty-five-year-old Paola's stay in church sanctuary is extreme. In 2003, Paola and her parents spent over a year and a half, precisely 567 days, living in a Montréal church basement, after receiving a removal order to return to Colombia, where their lives where directly threatened. A local church accepted them and provided a complete network of support, from doctors who checked on the family, to volunteers who did grocery shopping and others who were paid to help them with doing laundry. Despite being spatially confined for such a long period of time, Paola managed to create meaning in her life while it was on hold and even succeeded in contributing to the community through voluntarily tutoring children with their homework. When speaking about her time in sanctuary, she said:

> It was hard, it was really hard. I kept up with my mom, my mom was my strength … my mom … was like my "bâton". She gave me all the strength. Like sometimes, I had really bad days … and she told me "No, we are gonna get through this." And I knew in my heart we were going to get through this … I knew it … but it was so hard … to know that you didn't know when you were gonna get out of there … and sometimes, it just felt terrible … I just wanted to go to … you know you just … can't bear it anymore … but the people … we always had a visit … the people … who supported us … so … I even gave classes … to little children … so that helped me a lot …

(Paola, twenty-five years old, was a student from Colombia. She arrived in Montréal on October 11, 2001. Her status at the time of the interview was permanent resident.)

As the community mobilized around Paola and her family's immobile reality, the weight of sanctuary was appeased as moments of leisure, and social events as well as spiritual comfort were created for them. Among several activities, a "sugar shacking" day organized for them in the confines of the church, as well as interfaith services, helped break the isolation.

In terms of community involvement, similar to Paola's volunteerism, the other informants had also engaged in volunteer work for local organizations during the indefinite wait for their cases to be processed. Fifty-two-year-old Donna, who fled from Venezuela, recalled how on Sundays, accompanied by her daughter, she would distribute food to the homeless. As a volunteer for the Salvation Army, she found helping others allowed her to cope while in limbo. Steven, a fifty-year-old who fled from Congo Brazzaville, volunteered for Project Genesis, an organization that defends the social and economic rights of the population, located in Côte-des-Neiges, a Montréal neighbourhood with a high immigrant population. Besides social issues such as homelessness and poverty, the interview respondents were naturally also invested in the cause of refugees and immigrants. Carol, a forty-five-year-old woman who fled from Zimbabwe, along with Myriam, who had fled from Algeria, addressed the crowd during the No One Is Illegal march from Montréal to the nation's capital, Ottawa, in 2005.[34] Both individuals, in fact, have been outspoken advocates by bringing public awareness to the pressing issue of the precarious situation of non-status individuals living in Canada.

Recognizing non-citizen participation in the city is necessary, seeing as refugee claimants can undertake legitimate political actions, which are constructive and cumulatively constitute modes of alternative citizenship, such as informal citizenship. Otherwise formulated as dissent, acts of refugee resistance must be recognized as collaborative instances of social inclusion and agency rather than simply disruptive action. They are essential to defining new forms and articulations of social and informal citizenship for asylum seekers. As Lucy Williams states, "periods of liminality can presage new cultural formations and the renegotiation of community values and spaces."[35] In framing non-status migrant individual and/or collective contributions and resistance through the lens of social inclusion, it becomes possible to understand how expressions and calls for action carried out by refugees can allow for their direct and conscious engagement with public space in the city, as well as with the public at large.

Refugee claimants who wait in the city are not just passive recipients of care, but can be active in finding the help appropriate to their own priorities and objectives, often with a considerable amount of community mobilization that takes shape around them. One of the most striking aspects to surface in the respondents' experiences was how refugees managed to contribute to the community they were a part

of, while striving to simply survive and get by, at times with deportation threats hovering above them.

Social inclusion can therefore emerge out of liminality, both spatial and temporal. During sanctuary or when waiting for a deportation order or just waiting, the refugee claimants' degree of civic engagement in terms of volunteerism and contributions to enrich the community is not what is typically expected of individuals without status. By vocalizing their rights when either occupying space, like in immigration offices or demonstrating in downtown Montréal, or being confined to a space, such as a church basement, refugees manage to establish belonging, carve agency and contribute to the community, while striving for their own self-determination—all crucial when considering the building blocks of civic participation, whether they are granted citizenship eventually or not.

Acknowledgement

Notes

1. The term "refugee claimant" is commonly used in Canadian government parlance. The Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR), a non-profit umbrella group committed to the rights and the protection of refugees, defines the term "refugee claimant" as a person who has made a claim for protection as a refugee. This term is roughly equivalent to "asylum seeker" and is considered standard in Canada, while "asylum seeker" is the term more often used internationally.

2. The use of the hyphen in the term "re-settlement" throughout the paper is intentional. It is meant to emphasize the multiple phases of movement and settlement refugee claimants experience, as their journeys often begin long before arriving in the country of asylum. Forced departure from the homeland and settlement in a new dwelling place are just two of phases of multi-staged and multi-faceted journeys that refugee claimants face.

3. See Anna Pratt and Mariana Valverde, "From Deserving Victims to 'Masters of Confusion': Redefining Refugees in the 1990s," *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 27 (2002): 135–61; Didier Bigo, "Security and Immigration: Toward a Critique of the Governmentality of Unease," *Alternatives* 27 (2002): 63–92; Aihwa Ong, *Buddha Is Hiding: Refugees, Citizenship, the New America* (Oxford: Polity; Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003).

4. Some authors who address migratory issues and social exclusion are David Ley and Heather Smith, "Even in Canada? The Multiscalar Construction and Experience of Concentrated Immigrant Poverty in Gateway Cities," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 98 (2008): 686–713; Robert Miles and Dietrich Thränhardt, *Migration and European Integration: The Dynamics of Inclusion and Exclusion* (London: Pinter, 1995); Jenny Phillimore and Lisa Goodson, "Problem or Opportunity? Asylum Seekers, Refugees, Employment and Social Exclusion in Deprived Urban Areas," *Urban Studies* 43 (2006): 1715–1736; Christopher McAll, "Les murs de la cité: territoires d'exclusion et espaces de citoyenneté," *Lien Social et Politiques* 34 (1995): 189–203; David Ley and Heather Smith, "Relations between Deprivation and Immigrant Groups in Large Canadian Cities," *Urban Studies* 37 (2000): 37–62; Luin Goldring, Carolina Berinstein, and Judith Bernhard, "Institutionalizing Precarious Immigration Status in Canada," *Citizenship Studies* 13 (2009): 239–65.

5. See Annick Germain and Damaris Rose, *Montreal: The Quest for a Metropolis* (Chichester, West Sussex; New York: Wiley, 2000), 235.

6. See Ransford Danso, "From 'There' to 'Here': An Investigation of the Initial Settlement Experiences of Ethiopian and Somali Refugees in Toronto," *GeoJournal* 56 (2002): 3–14.

7. See Hamdi S. Mohamed, "Resistance Strategies: Somali Women's Struggles to Reconstruct Their Lives in Canada," *Canadian Woman Studies / Les cahiers de la femme* 19 (1999): 55.

8. See Martha Kuwee Kumsa, "'No! I'm Not a Refugee!' The Poetics of Be-Longing among Young Oromos in Toronto" *Journal of Refugee Studies* 19 (2006): 230–55.

9. See Doreen Marie Indra, *"Resettlement and Gender Differences: A Lethbridge Community Study," Canadian Woman Studies / Les cahiers de* la femme 10 (1989): 63–66. Also see Neita Kay Israelite, Arelene Herman, Faduma Ahmed Alim, Hawa Abdullahi Mohamed, Yasmin Khan, and Lynn Caruso, "Waiting for 'Sharciga' Resettlement and the Roles of Somali Refugee Women," *Canadian Woman Studies* 19 (1999): 80–88.

10. See Damaris Rose, Pia Carrasco, and Johanne Charbonneau, "The Role of 'Weak Ties' in the Settlement Experiences of Immigrant Women with Young Children: The Case of Central Americans in Montréal" (working paper,

CERIS–Toronto Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Settlement, Toronto, 1998), http://ceris.metropolis.net/Virtual%20Library/community/Rose1/rose1.html; also see Margaret Walton-Roberts, "Weak Ties, Immigrant Women and Neoliberal States: Moving beyond the Public/Private Binary," *Geoforum* 39 (2008): 499–510.

11. Much work has been conducted on social networks. The concept of "weak ties" advanced by Granovetter refers to acquaintances, rather than close family and friends, which are viewed as being "strong ties." Thus, "weak ties" allow individuals "to diversify their social network and serve as a getaway to an array of socio-economic and cultural resources beyond those generally available in the person's ethnic or immigrant community." See Rose, Carrasco, and Charbonneau, "The Role of Weak Ties," and Walton-Roberts, "Weak Ties, Immigrant Women" for more on the dynamics behind strong and weak ties. Also see Karen J. Aroian, "Sources of Social Support and Conflict for Polish Immigrants," *Qualitative Health Research* 2 (1992): 178–207; Mark Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties," *American Journal of Sociology* 78 (1973): 1360–80; and Jacqueline Hagan, "Social Networks, Gender, and Immigrant Incorporation: Resources and Constraints," *American Sociological Review* 63 (1998): 55–67.

12. See Danso, "From 'There' to 'Here'": 4.

13. Ley and Smith, "Even in Canada?"

14. Montréal's cultural geography and history are divided into two sides, the Anglophone West and the Francophone East. As Sherry Simon points out, "today Montréal is a cosmopolitan city, with French as the matrix of its cultural life." See Sherry Simon, *Translating Montreal: Episodes in the Life of a Divided City* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006), 3.

15. As cited in Engin Fahri Isin, *Being Political: Genealogies of Citizenship* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 266.

16. Qualitative research was undertaken in Montréal, Quebec, in the fall of 2008 and ended in early spring of 2009. I conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews with ten individuals who once sought asylum in Montréal. These individuals had fled their countries of origin due to persecution as outlined by the UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. Eventually, they were granted refugee status or were accepted on humanitarian and compassionate grounds (H&C). During the time of the interviews, the respondents were either granted permanent resident status or Canadian citizenship. From the ten interviewees, five were male and five were female, belonging to different walks of life, all living in various neighbourhoods on the island of Montréal. The countries of origin of the respondents are Algeria, Congo Brazzaville, Mauritius, Zimbabwe, Pakistan (two individuals), Lebanon, Colombia, Venezuela and Mexico.

17. Danso elaborates on these barriers. See Danso, "From 'There' to 'Here'": 4.

18. See Peter Askonas and Angus Stewart, eds., *Social Inclusion: Possibilities and Tensions* (Houndmills, England: Macmillan Press; New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 166.

19. See Jo Beall, "Globalization and Social Exclusion in Cities: Framing the Debate with Lessons from Africa and Asia," *Environment and Urbanization* 14 (2002): 44.

20. See René Lenoir, *Les exclus: un Français sur dix* (Paris: Seuil, 1974).

21. Ratna Omidvar and Ted Richmond, "Immigrant Settlement and Social Inclusion in Canada" (Working Paper Series on Social Inclusion, Laidlaw Foundation, Toronto, 2003, p.11), http://www.laidlawfdn.org/sites/default/files/laidlaw_publications/working_papers_social_inclusion/wpsosi_2003_jan_immigrant-settlement.pdf.

22. Ibid.

23. Anver Saloojee, "Social Inclusion, Anti-racism and Democratic Citizenship" (Working Paper Series on Social Inclusion, Laidlaw Foundation, Toronto, 2003) http://www.laidlawfdn.org/sites/default/files/laidlaw_publications/working_papers_social_inclusion/wpsosi_2003_jan_social-inclusion-anti-racism.pdf.

24. See Saskia Sassen, *Territory, Authority, Rights: From Medieval to Global Assemblages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 279.

25. Jacques Rancière, as cited in Engin Fahri Isin, *Being Political*, 277.

26. See Sassen, *Territory, Authority, Rights*, 294.

27. See Isin, *Being Political*, preface, x.

28. Sassen, *Territory, Authority, Rights*, 294.

29. The names of all interviewees were changed and replaced by pseudonyms.

30. Action Committee for Non-Status Algerians (CASS) is a self-organized group of Algerian refugees living in Montréal. Together with their allies, they have extensively campaigned to raise public awareness about their situation and to organize a political and legal response.

31. Canada lifted the moratorium on deporting Algerians in April 2002. To read more on the experiences of non-status Algerian migrants in light of the decision to lift the moratorium, see Michelle Lowry and Peter Nyers, "Roundtable Report 'No One Is Illegal': The Fight for Refugee and Migrant Rights in Canada," *Refuge* 21 (2003): 66–72.

32. The No One Is Illegal collective is composed primarily of young anti-globalization activists who are preoccupied with struggles and campaigns associated with migrant and indigenous justice issues in Montréal and across Canada.

33. See Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

34. *Solidarity Across Borders* (a Montréal -based coalition of self-organized refugees) and its allies walked from Montréal to Ottawa to demand the regularization of all non-status persons in Canada, to put an end to detention and deportations; and the abolition of security certificates,

which allow the government to jail and even deport any non-citizen who it deems a security risk. For detailed coverage, photo-essays, and accounts of the march, see http://solidarityacrossborders.org/en/taxonomy/term/34 (accessed January 31, 2011).

35. Lucy Williams, "Social Networks of Refugees in the United Kingdom: Tradition, Tactics and New Community Spaces," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 32 (2006): 876.

Lalai Manjikian is currently a PhD candidate in communication studies at McGill University. Her research interests are centred on social exclusion and inclusion of refugee claimants, media representations of migrants, and Diaspora studies.