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Le refuge en période de pandémie

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Celebrating 40 years: The Origins of Refuge

Howard Adelman

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I was asked by the current editor of *Refuge*, Professor Dagmar Soennecken, to write a short piece on the origins of *Refuge* on the occasion of the journal's fortieth anniversary. There were only two problems. First, I have little memory of the beginnings — or of many other things for that matter. Second, I was NOT the first editor; Kristin Hanson was.

Kristin Hanson is currently a professor of English at the University of California, Berkeley. Her specialization is poetic meter. For an illustration of her research, see her contribution on "Linguistics and poetics," in the Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics (2012) as well as her ongoing book project, *'An Art that Nature Makes': A Linguistic Perspective on Meter in English*.

What has the study of poetry to do with refugees? I suspect just serendipity. I doubt if anyone in the nascent refugee field at the time read about "stylization of the phonology of rhythm in natural language." No more than any of them read Hegel's Phenomenology (my own specialty at the time). What had either field to do with refugees? Intellectual skills and the ability to analyze and communicate did.

In 1979 and the early 1980s, Kristin arrived at Operation Lifeline, the organization being formed to promote and assist in the private sponsorship of refugees, then specifically, Indochinese refugees, as a volunteer. She had returned from a year of study in London to continue her study of English at the University of Toronto. She read Beddoes (1979) column in the Globe and Mail in June of that year where he named *Operation Lifeline* and published my phone number. Kristin called, got through and showed up at my house as a volunteer. Over the next year, Operation Lifeline became a formal organization supported by government grants to help the tens of thousands of private citizens who had undertaken to sponsor refugees. When she finished her studies, she began working at Operation Lifeline full time.

What had become obvious at the time was the need for a publication that would connect sponsors and communicate information about how to go about sponsorship and deal with the many problems that arose. *Refuge* was initially created to serve that very practical purpose. From her work at the office, Kristin knew firsthand a lot of

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those questions – and their answers. And she was an English specialist. I asked her if she would edit the publication that I and Wendy Schelew, the administrator of Operation Lifeline, envisioned. We obtained a government grant for the publication, formed a volunteer editorial board and put out our first issue in 1981.

It quickly became evident that sponsors, refugees and others not only needed information, but also wanted a deeper knowledge of the reasoning behind certain policies and the basic premises behind them. However, as I recalled, a controversy emerged when *Refuge* published a positive take on the 1980 announcement that Lloyd Axworthy, the Liberal Minister of Employment and Immigration (as the position was then called) in Pierre Elliot Trudeau's government, that the government would increase the intake of Indochinese refugees from 50,000 to 60,000 (Johnson, 1981; Trudeau, 1981).

In my reconstruction of that event, I surmised that letters had arrived lambasting *Refuge* and Operation Lifeline for publishing hagiography instead of information and critical analysis, for the article did not give appropriate attention to the innovative role of Ron Atkey as the previous Conservative Minister and his government's imaginative initiative in the policy of bringing 50,000 Indochinese refugees to Canada through a government/private sponsorship matching program.[1]

But that was not what happened as Kristin reminded me. Rather, it had to do with the constant in the Canadian polity — federal-provincial relations, and, more particularly, the relations between the federal and Quebec governments. Refugee advocates in Quebec objected to our showcasing cooperation with a federal government whose authority they rejected. Thus, even universal humanitarian issues can become quickly embroiled in the issues endemic to any nation. Controversies over refugees have often more to do with local politics than refugees themselves.

With future academics involved, *Refuge* soon strayed into publishing academic articles, particularly on policy questions and on theory as well. James C. Hathaway eventually became the James E. and Sarah A. Degan Professor of Law and a leading authority on international refugee law and the founder of the University of Michigan's program in refugee and asylum law. In the beginning of the 1980s, he was a graduate student writing his pioneering thesis attempting to place refugee law within a human rights frame. If I am correct, his first published and very memorable academic article (written in French and co-authored with Michael Schelew from Amnesty International) appeared in Refuge: "Persecution by Economic Prescription: New Dilemmas for Refugees" (Hathaway & Schelew, 1981). It was an initial intellectual effort in the attempt to fit the 1951 Refugee Convention within the latest developments on human rights law. As Fransesco Maiani almost thirty years later wrote (2010):

> UNHCR has long advocated for the inclusion of this class of persons [access to refugee status for genuine conscientious objectors to military service], and the "Hathaway approach," strictly identifying persecution with breaches of universally recognized human rights has long stood in the way […] The evolution of human rights law on this point […] has however reversed the situation. Hathaway's approach is now, arguably, of considerable assistance for the recognition of genuine conscientious objectors as refugees.
>
> *(footnote 31)*

[1] Atkey contributed the foreword to a 2017 volume on Canada and the Indochinese Refugees edited by Molloy et al.. Molloy, together with James Simeon, also guest edited a 2016 special issue of *Refuge* on the same topic, based on a conference held at York University in 2013.

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Intellectual innovation quickly became a hallmark of *Refuge*. But so did controversy over academic issues. Were Hathaway's innovative claims justified? Did another early article's account of African refugees perpetuate a stereotype of Africans living in an abject region off the earth (Adelman, 1985)? I myself published an early essay on the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) that became a focus of controversy (Adelman, 1982).

Operation Lifeline was committed to not outliving its founding purpose by taking on another mission. As the resettlement of Indochinese refugees stabilized, Wendy stepped down and other staff members moved on as well. Professor Irving Abella, from his own experience in writing about Jewish refugees coming to Canada in the thirties and forties (e.g., Abella, 1985), recognized the importance of preserving archives. He helped arrange a grant to preserve the records of Operation Lifeline. The Refugee Documentary Project at York University was initiated in 1982 for that purpose. The archives of Operation Lifeline and its small library of refugee volumes were transferred to York University. So was *Refuge* and as part of that, it became an academic journal. As the Director of the Refugee Documentation Project, I then became the second editor of *Refuge*. It is that step that brought about my change in roles. I would like to close by celebrating Professor Kristin Hanson as the first editor of *Refuge* — she deserves that honour.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Howard Adelman retired as Professor Emeritus of Philosophy York University in 2003. He was the founder and director of York's Centre for Refugee Studies and also the editor of Refuge for 10 years.

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Quarante ans de partenariat : Refuge et le Centre d'études sur les réfugié.e.s

Sean Rehaag

HISTORY Published 28 April 2022

Au nom du Centre d'études sur les réfugié.e.s de l'Université York (CER), j'aimerais féliciter Refuge pour son 40e anniversaire.

J'ai découvert *Refuge* pour la première fois alors que j'étais étudiant au doctorat à la Faculté de droit de l'Université de Toronto, il y a environ 15 ans. Je travaillais sur un projet concernant les façons dont les États localisent stratégiquement les activités de contrôle des frontières dans des sites où les protections juridiques (y compris le droit administratif, constitutionnel et international) sont atténuées. Dans le cadre de mes recherches, je suis tombé sur un excellent numéro spécial de *Refuge*, coédité par Janet Dench et François Crépeau (2003), sur les droits de la personne et l'interception des demandeurs d'asile.

Quelques années plus tard, alors que je venais de terminer mes études doctorales, je cherchais une revue prête à publier un numéro spécial que je coéditais avec Randy Lippert sur l'asile religieux. *Refuge* a fini par être le forum idéal pour ce projet (Lippert & Rehaag, 2010), qui comprenait l'un de mes premiers articles publiés en tant que nouveau professeur de droit (Rehaag, 2010).

Plus récemment, en ma qualité de directeur du CER, qui héberge *Refuge*, j'ai appris à connaître le côté administratif de la revue.

Dans ce rôle, je suis impressionné par l'engagement de *Refuge* en faveur du libre accès – un engagement qui assure que la recherche qui concerne les réfugié.e.s soit librement accessible aux chercheur.e.s des pays du Sud, aux chercheur.e.s qui ne sont pas liés aux universités, et au réfugié.e.s. Le succès de la revue dans le cadre de plusieurs demandes de financement auprès du *Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines*, qui rend possible son modèle de libre accès, est également impressionnant. Je célèbre aussi le fait que *Refuge* soit un forum qui publie des articles provenant d'étudiant.e.s, de chercheur.e.s communautaires et d'universitaires à tous les niveaux. Comme directeur d'un centre de recherche d'une université bilingue, je célèbre également le fait que *Refuge* s'engage à publier des articles en anglais et en français. En tant que premier directeur de CER basé dans une faculté de droit, et en tant que per-

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sonne qui s'identifie comme un spécialiste en droit et société, je suis reconnaissant du fait que *Refuge* soit une revue interdisciplinaire et accueillante pour la recherche juridique.

Je suis heureux d'avoir participé au parcours de *Refuge* au cours des 40 dernières années en tant que lecteur, auteur, rédacteur invité et directeur du CER. J'ai hâte de voir où la revue – en partenariat avec le CER – ira au cours des 40 prochaines années!

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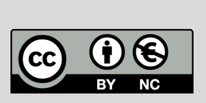

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Celebrating 40 Years — Reflections on Refuge : 2012-2018

Christina Clark-Kazak[a], Johanna Reynolds[b] and Dianna Shandy[c]

HISTORY Published 28 April 2022

As one of the longest-standing bilingual, open access, peer reviewed journals in the field of forced migration, *Refuge* has always been an important source of inspiration and knowledge for us. So, we were honoured to take up the challenge of stewardship of the journal as the editorial team from 2012 to 2018.[1] As we look back on this period, our key learnings are: a deep commitment to open access; efforts to broaden and diversify forced migration scholarship; the importance of a reflective book review section; and, the use of special issues to highlight emerging research in the field. Our *Refuge* editorial team was also marked by a deep sense of feminist praxis, or care, comradery and collegiality particularly in navigating the occasional rough spots.

Open access is growing in popularity in academia generally, but in the field of forced migration it is particularly important. Due to structural inequalities in the production of knowledge, academics and journals based in the Global North dominate forced migration scholarship, while the majority of displacement occurs in the Global South. Open access is a small step towards redressing these inequities by ensuring that the research is accessible — and therefore accountable — to people most affected by the research. It also means that copyright remains with authors and that publicly-funded research is publicly available.

With *Refuge*'s transition to full open access in 2012, our editorial team spent a lot of time and energy making the journal's digital presence and online publishing more streamlined and thus our decades of archives more accessible. With a grant from the Canadian Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), we completely overhauled our website, created a new logo and revised our publication agreement to reflect our open access commitment. We started a partner-

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[1]We gratefully acknowledge the contributions of Managing Editor Nausheen Quayyum from 2013 to 2015 and Book Review Editor Nergis Canefe to 2014. We also thank Ian MacKenzie, at ParaGraphics for his invaluable copy-editing work.

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ship with *Érudit*, a French dissemination platform for peer-reviewed journals in North America, which facilitated our presence in library searches and in impact indices (Érudit, n.d.). We also made the difficult decision to cease printing hard copies for free distribution. We moved to a cost-recovery, print-on-demand service. Throughout all of these necessary but time-consuming structural changes, we benefited greatly from the support of the *Refuge* International Advisory Board, the Open Journal Systems (OJS) software team, the York University librarians and the copyright office at the University of Ottawa.

Refuge has always had a strong commitment to publishing under-represented scholarship. During our editorship, we collaborated closely with the Canadian Association for Refugee and Forced Migration Studies (CARFMS) to mentor winners of the CARFMS student essay contest towards publication of peer-reviewed articles. We also had a workshopping process for papers that had great potential, but that needed additional editorial input to increase their chances of positive peer review. Less successfully, we reached out to francophone authors to encourage publication in French, but our efforts were somewhat curtailed by the hegemony of English in academia. During our tenure, we also made concerted efforts to grow the journal's authorship and readership across disciplines and geographies. We were able to showcase *Refuge* at a number of Canadian and international conferences including the CCR consultations, Metropolis, CARFMS and IASFM — reaching both established and emerging scholars as well as practitioners. These new professional and personal connections broadened the journal's scope.

The book review section grew in both depth and breadth and emerged as one of the most visited parts of the journal. This section also furthered our commitment to amplify the work of underrepresented authors and reviewers – those whose primary language is not French or English, emerging scholars, scholars located in places where it was challenging to get a copy of the book to them (where the post was unreliable or the cost of getting the book to them prohibitive). We endeavoured to publish a mix of reviews written by emerging scholars but also pushed established scholars to continue to contribute to this side of the scholarly process. We strove to review books published by some lesser-known publishers to promote a diverse landscape of publishing venues. We made a persistent, if not always successful, effort to publish reviews in French and of books written in French, alongside the reviews in English. We strove to be timely in our reviews, working directly with publishers to send manuscripts to reviewers in galley format when possible and even managed to have the review roughly coincide with the book's publication date several times. We commissioned several review essays, and the section soon became one of the key features of the journal.

In addition to the annual publication of a 'general' issue, the period of 2012-2018 also saw the curation, editing and publication of key special issues on emerging issues, including: racialized refuge (2019); historical and new approaches to private sponsorship of refugees (2016 & 2019); feminist perspectives on the Syrian refugee "crisis" (2018); power imbalance in the refugee regime (2017); refugee voices (2016); making home in limbo (2015); and, environmental displacement (2014). These special issues were topical, and also engaged with broader social and political questions of our times. Working with guest editors was one of the highlights of our time at *Refuge*. These collaborations not only brought in fresh and

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diverse perspectives, but also allowed *Refuge* to extend our reach and relevance. Indeed, Refuge consistently delivered cutting-edge, open access scholarship. Free from the constraints of a large publisher, the editorial team had considerable latitude and flexibility to respond to good ideas. Many of our special issues were published in less than one year from receipt of articles through peer review to publication. This is a testament to the dedication of the *Refuge* team, but also to our commitment to doing things differently. Notwithstanding the important critiques of measuring impact (e.g., DORA 2012), we were proud to watch *Refuge's* impact factor more than double between 2014 and 2018 and triple by 2020.[2]

Another intentional commitment for us was to provide an avenue for the publication of research findings or recommendations that may not be accepted in traditional academic journals due to their community-based nature. An example of this was the collaborative work of the Canadian Council for Refugees, Centre for Refugee Studies, and CARFMS on ethical considerations in research with people in situations of forced migration. This document has been widely cited and used by both academics and community-based researchers refugee-led and advocacy organizations, providing foundational elements for other groups to build their own guiding principles. Similarly, the 2016 special issue on the launch of Canada's Private Sponsorship Program included reflections by Casasola from UNHCR Canada, and Michael Molloy, long-standing public servant, collaborated with historian Laura Madokoro to offer insights from civil servants in the 2017 issue on power in the global refugee regime.

We would like to end with some personal reflections.

Johanna:

While I was a PhD student at York University, *Refuge* was instrumental to my own academic research and development and soon became a key teaching tool given its open access content. For many emerging scholars in the field, *Refuge* is our first experience with academic publishing. It was thus a great honour to serve as the journal's Managing Editor from 2015 to 2018. I reflect on this period as a time of deep academic growth, as this role allowed me to engage with critical scholarship and broaden my own personal and professional networks. I learned a great deal about the publishing process, the technical frustrations of Open Access Systems and how much time and work goes into publishing just one issue. I also learned to savour the final moment you hit 'publish' and see it all come together! I am especially grateful to Christina and Dianna for showing me the true meaning of feminist praxis and mentorship.

Dianna:

Like many wonderful opportunities in my life, I learned of the *Refuge* Book Review Editor position through my affiliation with the International Association for the Study of Forced Migration. I was drawn to this opportunity to work with scholars from diverse disciplines, to immerse myself in the latest forced migration literature, and to work bilingually in French and English (uncommon for those based in the United States). As I've embarked on an academic leadership chapter in my career, I credit working collaboratively with the *Ref*uge editorial team, supporting other scholars and managing the

[2] There are a number of ways in that journal-level (vs. article-level) impact metrics are measured. One is by using Google Scholar's journal ranking tool (https://scholar.google.com/citations?view_op=top_venues), another is Scopus' CiteScore (https://www-elsevier-com.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/solutions/scopus/how-scopus-works/content), which counts the citations received in a given time period (e.g. 2017 to 2020) to articles, reviews, conference papers, book chapters and data papers published in the same period, and divides this by the number of publications published in that period.

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administrative logistics in my *Refuge* role as an early litmus test for my appetite for this kind of work. One of my favorite *Refuge* memories is tucking copies of books for review in my suitcase when traveling internationally to hand deliver books to reviewers. *Refuge* was the kind of gig that inspired that kind of entrepreneurial spirit. I am grateful to have had this opportunity.

Christina:

I was Editor-in-chief of *Refuge* during a significant period of my early to mid-career as an academic. I started my mandate the year after my first book was published and our second child was born, and ended the year after I had moved to the University of Ottawa. My years at *Refuge* gave me some of the greatest learning opportunities of my academic career. While administrative and leadership jobs in academia are too often undervalued, I benefited from reading widely across forced migration scholarship. I also developed close professional relationships with the editorial team, authors, peer reviewers and guest editors. Working behind the scenes at a journal on a shoestring budget created a shared sense of solidarity and commitment amongst the editorial team, whom I still consider trusted colleagues and friends. I was mentored by Susan McGrath, Jennifer Hyndman, Sharry Aiken and the members of the international advisory board. Michele Millard at the Centre for Refugee Studies took care of many, many administrative and financial issues. In the context of academia's relentless drive for impact and metrics, it is important to recognize the huge amount of unremunerated and uncounted care work that goes on behind the scenes at any journal. *Refuge*, for me, exemplifies a deep commitment not only to quality, diverse scholarship, but also to fostering connections and relationships across the forced migration community.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Christina Clark-Kazak, Editor-in-chief, Refuge, 2012-2018

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"More Important than COVID-19": Temporary Visas and Compounding Vulnerabilities for Health and Well-Being from the COVID-19 Pandemic for Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Australia

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ABSTRACT

Refugees and asylum seekers on temporary visas typically experience interacting issues related to employment, financial precarity, and poor health and well-being. This research aimed to explore whether these issues were exacerbated by the social impacts of COVID-19. Interviews were conducted both prior to and during the COVID-19 pandemic with 15 refugees and asylum seekers living in South Australia on temporary visas. While this research found that COVID-19 did lead to a range of negative health and other outcomes such as employment challenges, a key finding was the reiteration of temporary visas as a primary pathway through which refugees and asylum seekers experience heightened precarity and the associated pervasive negative health and well-being outcomes. The findings emphasize the importance of immigration and welfare policy.

KEYWORDS

temporary visas; mental health; refugee; asylum seeker; COVID-19

RESUMÉ

Les réfugiés et demandeurs d'asile détenant un visa temporaire font généralement face à des problèmes interdépendants en ce qui concerne l'emploi, la précarité financière et la fragilité de la santé et du bien-être. Cette recherche visait à explorer dans quelle mesure ces problèmes ont été exacerbés par les impacts sociaux de la COVID-19. Des entrevues ont été menées avant et pendant la pandémie de COVID-19 avec 15 réfugiés et demandeurs d'asile vivant en Australie du Sud et détenant des visas temporaires. Bien que cette recherche ait montré que la COVID-19 a mené à une variété de conséquences négatives sur la santé ainsi que dans d'autres domaines tels que les défis liés à l'emploi, l'une des constatations clés était la réaffirmation des visas temporaires comme principale voie par laquelle les réfugiés et les demandeurs d'asile font l'expérience d'une précarité accrue et de ses effets négatifs sur la santé et le bien-être. Les résultats soulignent l'importance des politiques d'immigration et de sécurité sociale.

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INTRODUCTION

The coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) has triggered a severe crisis for global economies, labour markets, social life, and global movements of people. The measures taken to slow the spread of COVID-19 in many countries—including Australia—deepened existing social, economic, and health inequities (van Barneveld et al., 2020; World Health Organization [WHO], 1946). One key group for whom inequities have been likely worsened are refugees and asylum seekers, particularly those on temporary visas (Newnham et al., 2019; Steel et al., 2011). As of August 2020, there were over 30,000 refugees and asylum seekers living in Australia on temporary visas (Department of Home Affairs [DHA], n.d.) who faced compounding social, economic, and health inequities because of their hyper-precarious immigration status (Anderson, 2010; Benach et al., 2014; Bogic et al., 2015; Fazel et al., 2005; Hynie, 2018; Porter & Haslam, 2005; van Kooy & Bowman, 2019; Ziersch et al., 2019).

This article aims to explore the employment and financial impacts of public health measures taken in response to COVID-19 for asylum seekers and refugees on temporary visas, and the associated impacts on health and well-being of those measures. We report on longitudinal qualitative data from in-depth interviews with 15 refugees and asylum seekers living with temporary visas collected at two time points, one prior to the pandemic (September 2018–April 2019) and then during the pandemic (June–October 2020). The first-round interviews were part of research exploring temporary visas and health, in particular, in relation to the labour market and financial precarity, while the second-round interviews were prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The following sections present the immigration and welfare policy landscape in Australia to provide context for participants' experiences. The most pertinent literature on the health and well-being impacts of temporary refugee visas is then canvassed along with potential employment, financial, and health and well-being impacts of public health measures taken in response to COVID-19 for refugee and asylum seeker populations.

A Note on Terminology

Refugee and asylum seeker. We take the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' (UNHCR) (2020) definition of **refugees** as people who meet the criteria for refugee status and **asylum seekers** as people awaiting their claims to refugee status or other types of protection to be determined. For brevity, we use the terms **refugee** and **asylum seeker**; however, we acknowledge that this is only one aspect of identity.

Health and well-being. We take the WHO definition of **health** as "a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (WHO, 1946, p. 100). We use the phrase **health and well-being** to include both the WHO definition of health as well as the broad, multi-faceted, subjective account of mental health encompassed in the term **well-being** (Amerijckx & Humblet, 2014).

BACKGROUND

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Immigration and Welfare Policy in Australia

Australia has one of the strictest immigration regimes internationally, particularly in response to the arrival of more than 57,000 people by boat seeking asylum between 2009 and 2013. In response, a range of deterrence policies were enacted, including the following: transferring asylum seekers to Pacific Island nations for offshore processing and detention; issuing "bridging" (temporary) visas that give little or no possibility to settle permanently in Australia; reintroducing temporary protection visas as an alternative to pathways to permanent residency and citizenship; introducing a "fast-track process" for assessing asylum claims for those not transferred offshore, where avenues for appeal have been curtailed and funding for legal support has been removed; and introducing a closely monitored "code of behaviour" where minor breaches according to the Immigration Department could result in detention or deportation (Refugee Council of Australia [RCOA], 2017). Most of the asylum seekers who arrived by boat between 2009 and 2013 were granted permission to remain in Australia while their refugee claims were assessed; while some were given the chance to apply for a temporary protection visa at the time of their arrival, a backlog of approximately 300,000 asylum seekers (known as the legacy caseload) have faced extended delays in the processing of their claims (Kenny et al., 2016).

In addition, between 2014 and 2019, close to 100,000 asylum seekers arrived in Australia by plane (Davidson, 2019). Those with a valid visa and who are cleared for immigration who subsequently seek asylum are eligible to apply for permanent protection. Those arriving without a valid visa, similar to those from the legacy caseload, are ineligible for permanent protection and can only be granted another temporary visa—either a temporary protection visa (TPV)or a safe haven enterprise visa (SHEV)—regardless of whether or not they are determined to be refugees. TPVs and SHEVs are valid for three and five years, respectively, after which time, individuals either must have their refugee claims reassessed or—if they meet certain visa conditions—may apply for a non-refugee visa (e.g., a skilled migrant visa), though very few pathways exist to obtain permanent residency or citizenship. SHEVs are contingent on holders engaging in study at an approved institution or engaging in work in "regional Australia" (e.g., towns and the smaller cities of Adelaide, Darwin, and Hobart), which means they are not reliant on income support for more than 18 months in the five-year period. Holders of TPVs and SHEVs are not eligible for family reunion and can only travel with permission from the Australian DHA. In August 2020, of those in the legacy caseload, 5,594 had been granted TPVs, and 12,084 SHEVs (DHA, n.d.). Asylum seekers in the community are most often granted a three to twelve month bridging visa (BV) while awaiting determination of their refugee claim (DHA, 2020a; Reilly, 2018). BVs are even more restrictive in their entitlements than TPVs and SHEVs.

TPV and SHEV holders have conditional eligibility for social security, though they have fewer entitlements than refugees with permanent residency. For example, those 18 years of age or older can access accredited English-language classes but are ineligible for government-funded subsidies for other study, including higher education (Blythe et al., 2018). TPV and SHEV holders can also access a "special benefit" equivalent to 89% of the standard income support payment (regular financial assistance from the Australian government for citizens and permanent residents who are unable to work or

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find work) as well as medical care. BVs have more restrictions relating to work rights, and BV holders have less access to social security (Reilly, 2016). Asylum seekers waiting for their protection claims to be determined who are assessed by the DHA and the Status Resolution Support Service (SRSS) program as highly vulnerable can receive a special benefit, casework support, counselling, and some medical care; however, those who do not meet the high threshold of vulnerability are ineligible and receive no income (DHA, 2020b).

Refugees and Asylum Seekers on Temporary Visas and Health

Pre- and post-migration stressors mean that refugees and asylum seekers are at greater risk of poor mental and physical health compared with the general population and other migrant groups (Fazel et al., 2005; Hollifield et al., 2002). This is particularly so for temporary visa holders as evidenced by higher rates of negative well-being outcomes such as anger, sense of injustice, and perceived lack of control, as well as mental ill health including anxiety, depression, and suicidality (Hartley & Fleay, 2017; Johnston et al., 2009; Marston, 2003; Newnham et al., 2019; Steel et al., 2011).

Of particular note for this paper, ongoing visa uncertainty and difficulties accessing key social determinants of health such as employment and income are experienced by many temporary visa holders. Barriers to employment include limited English-language proficiency, discrimination on the basis of visa status, and lack of work experience in Australia, as well as greater exposure to precarious employment (Ahonen et al., 2007; Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007; Hargreaves et al., 2019; Syed, 2016; Ziersch et al., 2019). Resultant low incomes can mean medications and health services, adequate food, and other health resources are financially out of reach, which are all known risk factors for poor health and well-being (Hartley & Fleay, 2017; Hynie, 2018; Johnston et al., 2009; Marmot, 2002; Marston, 2003; Newnham et al., 2019; Nickerson et al., 2019; Steel et al., 2011).

Refugees and COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic and public health measures taken in response have exacerbated existing social and economic inequalities in Australia and overseas (De Nardi & Phillips, 2021; van Barneveld et al., 2020). Refugees have been estimated to be 60% more likely than the general population to lose jobs or income due to COVID-19 (Dempster et al., 2020). The Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA) estimates that close to 20,000 refugees and asylum seekers on temporary visas will lose employment as a result of the economic downturn caused by COVID-19 (van Kooy, 2020). Moreover, 92% of those who remain employed are projected to earn less than minimum wage, while those relying on services for support will confront reduced service access and availability (Newland, 2020). While the federal government introduced some financial support for people who lost their job or whose employers could not continue to pay them due to COVID-19, temporary visa holders were excluded from this assistance. TPV and SHEV holders were able to access small one-off support payments facilitated by the federal government, while BV holders could apply for income support through the SRSS, though they had to meet strict requirements.

Health scholars have highlighted the potential for these impacts of COVID-19 on employment and financial security to contribute to mental illness such as anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among refugees and asylum seekers (Júnior et al., 2020; Rees & Fisher,

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2020). Moreover, in a recent report from the Australian Red Cross detailing the emergency relief provided between April and July 2020, particular concern was noted about the impact of COVID-19 on the mental health of people seeking asylum and recognized refugees on temporary visa (Australian Red Cross, 2020). Using a qualitative longitudinal approach, our research builds on the existing literature and projected concerns associated with COVID-19 to explore the COVID-19 pandemic and associated impacts on the employment and financial circumstances and mental health and well-being of refugees with temporary visas. The study was guided by the following research questions: (a) What were the employment and financial impacts for asylum seekers and refugees on temporary visas resulting from public health measures taken in response to COVID-19? (b) How did these employment and financial impacts of COVID-19 public health measures affect the health and well-being of this group?

METHODS

Study Design

The study was qualitative, with data collected at two time points—one prior to the pandemic, in September 2018 to April 2019, and one during the pandemic, in June to October 2020. The first-round interviews were part of research exploring temporary visas and health, in particular, in relation to the labour market, while the second-round interviews were prompted by potential changes due to COVID-19.

Procedure

Ethics approval was obtained from the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Ethics Committee (Project 7847) and the University of Adelaide Human Research Ethics Committee (Project 18/87). The potential for issues of coercion and informed consent, confidentiality, and power imbalances was given close consideration (Ziersch et al., 2019). Written and verbal (in the case of phone and videoconference interviews) informed consent was gained from each of the participants prior to interviews. All first-round interviews were conducted face-to-face at various locations chosen by participants, and due to mandated social distancing rules, all second-round interviews were conducted over the phone or by videoconference. Participants were recruited through the research team's refugee and asylum seeker community and service networks. A total of 28 asylum seekers and refugees on temporary visas who had been interviewed prior to the pandemic were contacted again in June 2020, with 15 agreeing to a second interview. The participants in this study had all arrived by boat and were therefore not eligible for permanent protection.

The first-round interviews lasted, on average, 35.17 minutes, and the second-round interviews averaged 38.10 minutes. Two researchers from non-refugee backgrounds, who are women, conducted the interviews. The same three participants in the first and second rounds of interviews elected to use an interpreter. The first-round interviews covered people's experiences in the labour market and impacts on health and well-being as temporary visa holders. The interview schedule covered key aspects of temporary visas highlighted as relevant in the literature (Nickerson et al., 2019; Steel et al., 2011; van Kooy & Bowman, 2019; Ziersch et al., 2019), including facilitators and barriers to employment, experiences of discrimination and exploitation, and impacts on health. The second-round interviews included the same questions to gain comparative data, as well as additional questions developed in response

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to the pandemic including whether participants' work, visa, and health circumstances had been affected.

Data Analysis

The data were thematically analyzed using the five-stage framework approach (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994), which involves becoming familiar with the data (close readings of transcripts and field notes); developing a thematic framework across the first and second interviews (completed inductively and iteratively from the data with input from all members of the research team); indexing (coding with NVivo version 12, with a subset double coded); charting (thematic matrices charting each participant against emergent themes and changes in circumstances across the two time points); and mapping and interpretation—for example, where experiences relating to visa uncertainty, employment/financial precarity, impacts of COVID-19, and associated health and well-being impacts were outlined.

Participants

Participants were 15 people (6 women and 9 men) on temporary refugee visas and asylum seeker BVs, aged between 18 and 55 years (*M* = 34.4 years). Two participants had arrived in Australia as unaccompanied minors. In the first round, 10 people had SHEVs and 5 had BVs. Two people had SHEVs approved between interviews, so in the second round, 12 had SHEVs and three had BVs. Participants were from Iran (9), Afghanistan (4), Sri Lanka (1), and Sudan (1). Participants had been in Australia between 5 and 6.5 years. All names used herein are pseudonyms.

RESULTS

To begin, we detail the hyper-precarious nature of the participants' lives in relation to their temporary visa status and precarious employment and financial situations and reported impacts on health and well-being from the first round of interviews. This is to provide context for the changes (or lack thereof) brought about by COVID-19. We then report the themes identified in participants' interviews and the changes in their circumstances due to COVID-19 and health and well-being impacts drawn from the second-round interviews. All quotes included are verbatim.

Hyper-Precarious Lives: Temporary Visas, Employment and Finances, and Impacts on Health and Well-Being Prior to COVID-19

The analysis identified that precarious visa status directly impacted well-being through participants' reports of despair, frustration, hopelessness, and depression, prompted in particular by difficulties finding employment, difficulties within employment, lack of government supports, precarious finances, and ongoing immigration insecurity.

Precarious Visa Status

At the time of the first-round interviews, 10 of the 15 participants had been granted a SHEV after being on BVs for up to five years, and the remaining five participants were on 6–12-month BVs. Two of these five were awaiting their refugee claims to be determined, and three had been refused twice and were awaiting a ministerial review. The ongoing precarity associated with temporary visas, particularly those on BVs, is expressed by Jansher, from Afghanistan, who described "suffering" for six years on BVs before having his SHEV granted:

> Maybe seven or eight, up to ten [bridging visas] maybe. Since 2014 we [were] granted a visa for six months and for the second visa we could remember it was for one year but the third one is for six months,

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> I think, and after that we've been receiving, every three months, a bridging visa.

Yesal, an asylum seeker from Afghanistan who was denied refugee status twice, similarly experienced several years of BVs and at the time of the interview was still on a BV. The ongoing uncertainty, lack of work rights, and family separation left him "in depression a lot." Overall, participants reported ongoing uncertainty due to their temporary visa status, with associated negative impacts on well-being through reports of feeling, for example, "always different," "suffering," and "in depression."

Precarious Workers, Precarious Finances

Nine of the participants were employed during the first round of interviews: seven on a casual basis (one informally), three with full-time hours ($\geq$ 38 hours per week), with the rest working part-time hours ($\leq$ 38 hours per week), and three also engaging in tertiary study. Two participants were self-employed (one as an Uber driver and the other was a business proprietor). The remaining six were unemployed—three were full-time students and one was a part-time student. Those employed worked in transport, hospitality, education, construction, disability, and the aged care sector. Importantly, all participants had experienced between one and three years without work rights, resulting in a continuing cycle of precarity where they were either unable to break into the labour market or shifted between unemployment and informal and/or casual work, with poor working conditions.

All participants described their temporary visa status, lack of local experience, racial/ethnic discrimination, and lack of English-language proficiency as the major barriers to finding employment. Short-term BVs (3 and 6 months) were described as particularly unattractive to potential employers, as Firash and Esteri (both asylum seekers from Iran awaiting a decision on their SHEV applications) detailed: "I submitted my resume and I was rejected [...] I ticked every box but it wasn't for bridging visas" (Firash); "When they [employers] find out about your visa, they're not very keen on it" (Esteri). Both were ineligible for income support, and while they eventually found casual employment, they had to rely on charities to survive.

Fadil, also an asylum seeker from Iran, had her application and her appeal for refugee status denied and was at risk of being returned to Iran. With three preschool-aged children without childcare benefits, she was unable to work, and her husband was unable to find adequate employment. Without income support, the family's financial situation was highly precarious, and they were relying solely on charitable organizations. During the interview, Fadil was in despair: "It's immigration is difficult here [and] for apply job it's too hard! My husband applied for many, many jobs. He's waiting, waiting, waiting! It's hard." Difficulties securing employment were compounded by experiences of exploitation and discrimination once employed. Several participants indicated that they had been underpaid and treated poorly. For example, Lodhi, an 18-year-old refugee from Afghanistan, said regular underpayment in an informal job left him feeling hopeless: "I had no visa work rights so couldn't find any other job, so I was like this is my only option." Other participants said that they experienced bullying and intimidation, including insults, exclusion, and thinly veiled threats (e.g., being subjected to discriminatory language in the workplace) and felt unable to address their poor treatment because of their temporary visas. Iranian refugee Mirza recounted his efforts:

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> I talked to union about it and one of them told me […], "because of your situation, they will investigate more and more about you and if they start to do it and they find out about your visa, finally they've found a way to send you out."

For Mirza, the bullying, and his lack of power to have it addressed due to his temporary visa, left him so stressed he was unable to sleep.

In this first round of interviews, undertaken prior to COVID-19, temporary visas, employment, and financial precarity were reported as key factors affecting health and well-being. Next, we outline the changes in the participants' circumstances due to the measures taken to slow the spread of COVID-19 and the reported health and well-being effects of the COVID-19 pandemic considering these existing stressors.

Employment and Financial Precarity During COVID-19 and Reported Health Impacts

The analysis of the second round of interviews indicated a range of effects on participants' health and well-being through reported increased stress, despair, fear, and worry associated with lost or reduced employment, ineligibility for the federal government's COVID-19 income support, and associated financial precarity. Others were able to rely on some measures of government support and support from charities, though this was limited and conditional. Of significance were the accounts of several participants for whom the impacts of COVID-19 were less problematic than their precarious visa status.

As noted above, 12 of the participants had casual employment leading up to the pandemic, though 2 had changed jobs since the first interview (one moved into a fixed-term role and the other moved from informal hospitality work to Uber driving). At the time of the second-round interview, 10 people remained employed (with 5 unemployed). All but one of the participants who remained employed were in casual, low- to semi-skilled work in the service industry, disability care, health care, or education, with two of these self-employed as Uber drivers. These precarious workers were negatively impacted by COVID-19, through reduced or no hours, or its impacts on businesses for approximately three months (the approximate length of the more significant lockdowns in South Australia). The two additional unemployed people were a business owner who had to close his business and a casual building contractor who was unable to secure hours. The existing unemployed people were BV holders who were unable to secure employment and a SHEV holder caring for his sick wife.

Yesal (an asylum seeker from Afghanistan), who was being underpaid in hospitality when first interviewed, had begun working as an Uber driver in the months before COVID-19 arrived in Australia. He had no work for almost three months and since returning to work had been unable to earn enough money to buy the food he likes to eat. He has also struggled to pay his rent because of low demand for work. He described the impact of these circumstances on his well-being:

> I have a lot of problem with my memory during the COVID-19—it's getting more [worse] I just book an appointment […] I just forgot it so quick […] I—I forgot everything unfortunately. [It's caused] by stress, by, you know, just a lot of pressure, you know?

COVID-19 forced SHEV holder Lodhi, also from Afghanistan, to close his business, which he and his brother had built into a successful enterprise, leaving him unable to service the business loan he took out to pay for equipment. Lodhi described being frozen

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with fear at the time, which made it difficult to make decisions and look for alternative work: "I was stressing a lot rather than searching or looking around I was stressing, a lot, what to do." When interviewed, Lodhi had just come out of hospital, where he had been for several weeks after being assaulted and suffering a brain injury. His circumstances were such that he was unable to see a way to repay his loans or to find employment while waiting for medical clearance to work.

Other participants also gave accounts of their employment being negatively impacted by COVID-19. For example, Nousha, from Iran, had been on a BV without work rights for two years before being granted a SHEV in 2018. She had struggled to find work in her area of expertise—graphic design. Instead, she worked casually (often 30–60-minute shifts) in aged care and then disability support, which resulted in a chronic back injury, financial insecurity, and feelings of hopelessness, sadness, and frustration. After years of failed attempts, Nousha had secured an interview for a role in her area of expertise, but the COVID-19 outbreak meant that the company suspended all recruitment. Nousha described the emotional impact:

> When you are financially not secure, then the, ah, first mentally you're—ah, you feel more—you know, more down and anxiety of, ah, what's going to happen and we are not that young at the moment […] but we are still in the beginning, we have to just build everything back again.

With a turn of phrase used paradoxically, Nousha went on to express the compounding impact of COVID-19 on her sense of precarity and the anxiety that this induced: "We don't have a decent visa and we don't know what is going on. It's all this—it's a lot of anxiety and then—then this COVID was like an icing on top of it."

Tertiary students Arezoo and Ziba (SHEV holders) both worked at their university in student administration, but the pandemic led to the suspension of their work. Ziba described the devastating impact this had:

> I was getting very nervous, and very worried, what if I lose my job—um, so yeah. […] And I told you, like, sometimes I support my relatives in Iran as well. Like, myself, my family, and then my relatives—so, yeah. It wasn't a good situation, so yeah. I started panicking, and I was nervous a lot.

While both women returned to their jobs after three months, they expressed concerns about completing their degrees, undertaking hard-to-secure internships, and gaining jobs in their field and a potential pathway to permanent residency through applying for a skilled visa. Arezoo put it this way:

> In the terms of, ah, jobs opportunity and internship opportunity definitely the COVID-19 impact those. […] I'm trying to—I know I'm doing my best to go through this patch and get my permanent residency I'm really scared and stressed of the future. Like I'm just asking God to help me to get an internship and find a job. […] But it's been really hard because of our visa.

For other participants, COVID exacerbated not only visa issues but also discrimination. For example, construction worker and tertiary student Nehad from Sudan detailed losing his job because of construction work being suspended during the height of COVID-19 in South Australia and the difficulties securing work in a competitive environment because of his race and English-language skills. Nehad accessed casual employment through a labour hire company but at the time of the interview had not obtained further work despite hearing that some construction work had resumed. When asked why he thought this was the case, he stated that the labour hire company "is going to use race" and that language issues might

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also have an effect: "More people that can speak good language." Nehad was tearful when describing these challenges: "It's really hard, like, I really just want to go home […] back to my country."

Support: Non-Governmental Organizations and Government

The income support introduced by the federal government in April 2020 for those whose employment or job seeking was impacted by COVID-19 was not available to temporary visa holders. BV holders could access a one-off Economic Support Payment from Red Cross, and SHEV holders were only eligible to apply for a special benefit (89% of income support payment) and a small coronavirus supplement.

Four SHEV holders indicated that they were receiving income support because of COVID-19 (Jansher was already receiving a special benefit due to caring for his sick wife prior), while the others noted their ineligibility and did not bother applying. Those receiving the payments indicated that it was not a straightforward process. As Nehad shared, he applied through both departments before being approved for a special benefit through immigration: "I went to [the welfare office] and I applied for [assistance] and they rejected. I apply for special benefit, so they rejected and then they approved [through immigration] the last time, they accepted my request." These payments were described as helpful by recipients: "I'm receiving the payment from the government, so it didn't affect me that much, but if I didn't, I would have been in so much trouble" (Benham). However, Mirza offered a more troubling appraisal of the use of income support by those on SHEVs. Working as a volunteer for a refugee charity, Mirza observed the fear that many SHEV holders have that taking government assistance will impact their chances of staying in Australia:

> The worst part is you don't know what will happen to your visa, what was going on? We had this chat every day, that if you are on SHEV visa and you want to use this [income support], or things like this, you will lose opportunity for next visa, and many is afraid to go to Centrelink, explain what's their situation.

While the government loosened requirements for SHEV holders who have been impacted by COVID-19 and are seeking to meet the SHEV pathway requirements, the precarity with which refugees on temporary visas live can produce government agencies' suspicion in the way described by Mirza.

A small number of other SHEV holders who were ineligible for income support and had lost their jobs due to COVID-19 were receiving financial support through charities. Firash from Iran received ongoing support from an Australian couple who took him in to live with them and assist with his tuition and other expenses, which "means quite a lot because […] if something goes wrong, I can go out and ask help from them." For Firash, being relatively well insulated from the financial effects of the pandemic was protective for his health and well-being: "I would have ended up in hospital. So I don't know if […] I would have been alive today."

Yesal, a BV holder, borrowed money from family when his earning capacity as an Uber driver decreased. The two unemployed BV holders, Randul, from Sri Lanka, and Fadil, from Iran, were relying solely on charitable organizations for survival, which was problematic given the closing of many services during COVID-19 lockdowns in South Australia. For example, Fadil (through an interpreter) indicated challenges: "The supports that she used to get, like, many from other places like, you know, that was quite a lot less or it wasn't at all […] it definitely has affected her financially."

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Immigration Precarity Is Worse for Health than a Pandemic

While participants noted a range of negative effects from financial and job precarity during COVID-19, the ongoing uncertainty associated with living on a temporary visa was framed by several of the participants as the central factor affecting their health and well-being and was seen as far more damaging than the impacts of the pandemic itself. Yesal, from Afghanistan, was at risk of being returned to Pakistan at the time of the interview, after being refused protection. Having endured years of no work rights and financial precarity in Australia, he contrasted the impacts of COVID-19 with the health and well-being effects of chronic uncertainty:

> I have a—some mental problem health and other heart problem and forgetting problem, but I can't say it's [because of COVID-19]. I have those problems because of the waiting, the waiting, waiting for nothing […]. The COVID-19, it's not really important for me, because I—I couldn't work for five years […]. I spend this time without income, without the Centrelink, without any support. […] Sometime[s] I had nothing to eat and have no place to sleep; [with COVID] I just lost my job for two months and 20 days without any government support, whatever, I don't care about this. I can live without money here, but I can't live without [knowing], that waiting, waiting for nothing. I don't know anything about tomorrow, what's going to happen. Maybe they just kick me out from Australia. […] That's really hard for me [so] the COVID-19 is not that important. […] Yeah. Unfortunately, I have one other important [issue] very—more than important than COVID-19, the way visa has gone.

Other participants on SHEVs—which offer some certainty relative to BVs—mirrored the sentiments expressed by Yesal that their immigration circumstances had a greater impact on health and well-being than any effects the pandemic may have had on them:

> [I'm] suffering from things that every time affect my emotional things all the time. […] For 10 years […] we are like temporary people staying in Australia and we don't know what's happening next year. […] Always wishing, wishing but never our dream come true. […] I think it's a big problem for refugee with a temporary visa. (Jansher)

> Not a single day has passed that I'm not thinking about my visa. Yeah. Because it's been a barrier for me to live in Australia. I mean, like, in terms, like, getting a job. (Ziba)

They noted that the confusion and despair that is the result of living precariously was ever-present. Mirza put it like this:

> The concept of our visa make everything confusing. It is not about just—COVID was huge, but during the day it [temporary visa] is confusing, you can't imagine. It is happening every single day in your life. […] Many people can't manage it.

DISCUSSION

This article has sought to examine the impacts of public health measures taken in response to COVID-19 on employment and financial precarity experienced by refugees and asylum seekers on temporary visas and the associated effects on health and well-being. Most interviewees were experiencing significant financial precarity before COVID-19, which they attributed to their precarious employment or unemployment and conditions associated with their temporary visas. The effects of this interplay between visa, employment, and financial precarity were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in a range of reported negative impacts on health and well-being. However, for many of the participants in this study, the more general precarity of their visas overrode these concerns, since their lives were already so precarious, and COVID-19 was seen as having little additional impact. The findings have significant implications for immigration and welfare policy, particularly in relation to asylum seekers and refugees living in Australia on temporary or bridging visas.

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In relation to employment, the first- and second-round interviews provide a picture of the participants' precarious work trajectories, reflecting the findings of other studies on workers with temporary visas (Ahonen et al., 2007; Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007; Hargreaves et al., 2019; Syed, 2016; Ziersch et al., 2019). This study's participants were subjected to restrictive immigration policies through long periods on short-term visas and periods of time without work rights, which contributed to precarity more generally. For some participants, the public health measures taken in response to COVID-19 in South Australia (e.g., lockdowns and social distancing) had significant and compounding effects through loss of jobs or reduced hours or pay. Participants linked their difficult employment and financial circumstances to poorer health and well-being outcomes, reflecting previous research more generally, outside pandemic circumstances (Bogic et al., 2015; Funk et al., 2012; Hynie, 2018; Lund et al., 2010; Porter & Haslam, 2005).

Notably, as temporary visa holders, participants were ineligible for the suite of government assistance offered to permanent residents and citizens in Australia. van Kooy (2020) has estimated that the cost to the government of extending the financial safety net to the approximately 22,000 unemployed TPV, SHEV, and BV holders would have been insignificant—just 2% on top of existing COVID-19 budget measures—compared to the much greater projected longer-term costs in terms of homelessness, income losses, and health, social justice, and other services required. Instead, the government's focus on citizens and permanent residents reflected "prejudicial shortcomings" (De Nardi & Phillips, 2021) towards vulnerable migrant communities enacted in Australia in response to COVID-19. In later outbreaks of the virus in 2021, the Australian federal government was more inclusive in short-term financial relief payments, with temporary visa holders with work rights being eligible. This is a welcome development, but the most vulnerable—those with no work rights—remain excluded and in especially precarious conditions.

While public health measures taken in response to COVID-19 exacerbated employment and financial precarity for asylum seekers and refugees on temporary visas, a key finding of this study is that visa precarity itself causes the most harm to health and well-being. Other studies similarly highlight the broad range of negative health and well-being impacts on refugees of temporary visas themselves—namely, feelings of despair, sadness, worry and fear, and not having control over one's life, as well as, at times, symptoms associated with mental illness such as depression and anxiety (Hartley & Fleay, 2017; Johnston et al., 2009; Marston, 2003; Newnham et al., 2019; Nickerson et al., 2019; Steel et al., 2011). Uncertainty and its relationship to a fear of the unknown has been shown in broader literature to underly generalized anxiety (Carleton et al., 2013; Gentes & Ruscio, 2011) and is particularly harmful for people with PTSD (Oglesby et al., 2017) or who have experienced trauma (Oglesby et al., 2016). Importantly, the adverse effects of ongoing family separation on the mental health of asylum seekers and refugees have been repeatedly demonstrated (i.e., elevated depression, post-traumatic stress and anxiety symptoms, increased disability, and reduced quality of life) (Miller et al., 2018; Nickerson et al., 2010; Savic et al., 2013).

As such, punitive and restrictive Australian immigration and welfare policy "manufactures precarity" and underpins the key health risks to asylum seekers and refugees on temporary visas (van Kooy & Bowman, 2019).

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Under current policy settings, SHEV holders must overcome unreasonable barriers to satisfy the work and study requirements to be eligible to apply for a non-humanitarian visa (Reilly, 2018). While the government did institute a COVID-19 "concession period" for those seeking to meet the SHEV pathway requirements—which enables holders to count periods of time towards the pathway requirement if they access "special benefit" payments, are unemployed, or work outside a SHEV regional area in an essential service—pathways to non-humanitarian visas remain opaque at best. SHEVs started to come up for renewal from October 2020 (the point in time five years after the first SHEVs were granted). However, it remains to be seen whether SHEV holders will be able to access other migration visa pathways. This traps people in an ongoing cycle of insecurity, with the consequent negative impacts on health and well-being.

Overall, this study's findings indicate that TPVs and SHEVs must be abolished, and current holders transitioned to permanent visas. Notwithstanding the serious implications for health inequity embedded in Australia's immigration and welfare policies, questions remain as to whether temporary protection is consistent with international law (Kaldor & Kaldor, 2020). The punitive justification of temporary protection has also been highlighted as constituting a penalty in violation of article 31 of the Refugee Convention (UNHCR, 1951), as well as Australia's obligation under article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Edwards, 2003; McAdam & Garcia, 2009). Moreover, temporary visas create two classes of refugees—those who come to Australia by unauthorized means and those who do not—further constituting a breach of the right to non-discrimination (Kaldor & Kaldor, 2020; McAdam & Garcia, 2009). We acknowledge the need for bridging visas while claims to asylum are being processed but argue that these should come with the same welfare and work rights as others. Urgent immigration reform is also needed through the abolishment of the "fast-track" process. Additional resources are also required to increase the Immigration Department's capacity to process asylum claims in an appropriate time frame. Last, legal funding is required to assist asylum seekers in their claims.

Limitations

This study has examined the lived experiences of a group of precarious refugees and asylum seekers and provided insight into the impact of visa and financial precarity on their lives and the impact of a pandemic on this. However, there were a number of limitations. For instance, given all refugee and asylum seeker participants were financially precarious, it was not possible to unpack how different levels of financial precarity might affect health, and the small sample size prohibited a systematic examination of the impact of different factors such as country of origin, time in Australia, and family circumstances.

As the pandemic draws on, exploring longer-term impacts on employment and financial outcomes, including their relationship to longer-term health and well-being trajectories, will be important to track. This includes whether increased eligibility for more recent financial relief payments helps to ameliorate the impacts of COVID-related public health measures on financial precarity or whether visa precarity continues to be the major issue. Future research should also examine whether transitioning to more permanent visas—should that eventually happen for SHEV holders—improves health and well-being.

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CONCLUSION

In summary, current immigration and welfare policies place refugees and asylum seekers on temporary visas at financial risk and expose them to long periods of uncertainty. These stressors have been compounded by COVID-19 and the measures to reduce its effects, as well as the governments' refusal to provide protective health and well-being safety nets to temporary visa holders. The health impacts of this can be significant and long lasting and warrant urgent reform.

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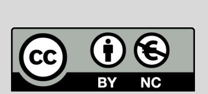

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Solidarity in the Time of COVID-19: Refugee Experiences in Brazil

Patrícia Nabuco Martuscelli

ABSTRACT

Refugees have adopted solidarity actions during the COVID-19 pandemic, even after being left behind during health emergencies. This article contributes to the literature on solidarity and asylum by discussing refugees' solidarity narratives towards vulnerable Brazilian groups, the refugee community, and the Brazilian population in general. The author conducted 29 in-depth semi-structured interviews with refugees living in Brazil between March 27 and April 6, 2020. Refugees' past suffering experiences make them more empathic to other people's suffering due to the pandemic, which creates an inclusive victim consciousness that seems to explain their solidarity narratives towards different groups.

KEYWORDS

refugees; Brazil; solidarity; COVID-19

RESUMÉ

Les réfugiés adoptent des actions de solidarité pendant la pandémie de COVID-19, même en étant laissés derrière en situation d'urgence sanitaire. Cet article contribue à la littérature sur la solidarité et l'asile en abordant les récits de solidarité des réfugiés envers les groupes vulnérables du Brésil, la communauté des réfugiés et la population brésilienne en général. J'ai mené 29 entrevues approfondies semi-structurées avec des réfugiés vivant au Brésil entre le 27 mars et le 6 avril 2020. Les expériences de souffrance passées des réfugiés les rendent plus empathiques envers la souffrance vécue par d'autres en raison de la pandémie, ce qui crée une conscience de victime inclusive (Vollhardt, 2015) qui semble expliquer leurs récits de solidarité envers différents groupes.

HISTORY Published 28 April 2022

INTRODUCTION

In April 2020, Brazilian newspapers shared the story of Talal, a Syrian refugee distributing food during the lockdown in the city of São Paulo. Talal came to Brazil with his family fleeing the war in Syria in 2013. After arriving in São Paulo, where he had his refugee status declared by the Brazilian government according to national and international law, he could not continue working as an engineer. Then, Talal's family started to sell Syrian food, and the money they made from this became their only source of income. With

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the outbreak of COVID-19 in Brazil, Talal's family's business was deeply affected by cancelled fairs, events, and parties they would have catered. The city of São Paulo initially adopted the World Health Organization (WHO)–recommended measures of closing all non-essential businesses and enforcing social distancing. However, instead of just staying at home, since his business was closed, Talal started to deliver one thousand meals to elderly people and homeless people in São Paulo. Talal and his family decided to "give back" to Brazil. He explained,

> I stayed in Syria during the war, and I know what happens when a person needs to stay at home because of the war, the bombs. It is very difficult. During the quarantine in Brazil, I thought about doing something for the elderly.
>
> *(Cavicchioli, 2020, para. 3)*

This article focuses on such narratives of solidarity by refugees, an excluded group, during the COVID-19 pandemic (Martuscelli, 2021), considering refugees' motivations and interpretations of their own actions. **Refugees** are understood here as people forcibly displaced from their countries due to a fear of persecution because of their race, nationality, religion, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group, or because of a situation of a grave and generalized violation of human rights. The WHO formally declared the pandemic on March 11, 2020, given the severity and extent of the new coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) caused by the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). Practically all human beings on the globe were directly or indirectly affected by this disease or the measures to fight it, including more than 239 million people infected and 4,871,841 people killed as of October 15, 2021 (WHO, 2021).

Refugees tend to be among those excluded during health emergencies (Raju & Ayeb-Karlsson, 2020; Ventura, 2015), and many experts have reflected on the negative consequences of this pandemic towards this population (especially for those in camps and detention centres) (Hargreaves et al., 2020; Keller & Wagner, 2020; Kluge et al., 2020; Riggirozzi et al., 2020; Vince, 2020). At the same time, refugees on practically every continent have responded to the pandemic with solidarity (ACNUR, 2020; Bentley et al., 2020; UN Women, 2020; United Nations Regional Information Centre [UNRIC], 2020). This article focuses on Brazil, which registered the third-highest number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in the world on October 15, 2021 (21,590,097) and the second-highest number of deaths (601,398) (WHO, 2021). I reflect on the solidarity narratives of 29 refugees living through the first two weeks of the pandemic in Brazil in the states of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro,[1] where the governors adopted WHO-recommended measures to avoid the spread of the virus (Martuscelli, 2021).

Like Talal's story, refugees' experiences of suffering in their origin countries allowed them to relate to other people's suffering during the pandemic, which motivates different solidarity narratives towards Brazilians in general and other vulnerable populations, such as the elderly, homeless people, the poor, and refugees living in occupations. The analytical framework employed to investigate refugees' solidarity narratives is inclusive victim consciousness (Vollhardt, 2015). This article also draws on the typology developed by Bauder and Juffs (2020) to analyze

[1] In the pandemic outbreak, São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro were initially the two states in Brazil with the most infected people and deaths in consequence of COVID-19. However, other states also adopted the WHO-recommended measures to deal with COVID-19. For a detailed analysis, see Jubilut et al. (2020).

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the different types of solidarity in refugee studies.

This inclusive victim consciousness approach (Vollhardt, 2015) helps us to understand the logics that motivate the solidarity of refugees during the COVID-19 crisis in different parts of the world. The Brazilian case illustrates this mechanism considering the living experiences of refugees in Brazil and how they faced the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in the country (narratives of refugees). The next section discusses the solidarity experiences of refugees since the beginning of the pandemic. Following, the "Theoretical Framework" section explains the inclusive victim consciousness approach (Vollhardt, 2015) and the different types of solidarity (Bauder & Juffs, 2020) in the narratives of refugees. A brief contextual section presents information on the situation of refugees living in Brazil during the COVID-19 outbreak. The "Methodology" section describes the choices of data collection and analysis. It is followed by the "Results" section, which presents indications of inclusive victim consciousness in refugees' narratives and the different types of solidarity of refugees towards vulnerable groups, other refugees, and the Brazilian population in general. Finally, the conclusion highlights how the Brazilian case could be useful to understand other solidarity expressions of refugees in times of the pandemic in the world.

Solidary Experiences of Refugees During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Refugees have contributed to the fight against COVID-19 in their host countries (Mcdonald-Gibson, 2020). They have volunteered for social activities, such as disinfecting public places, providing meals for essential workers, and sewing masks, as a way of giving back to their host communities (Lindsay, 2020). Somali refugees provided masks, alcohol gel, and food baskets to people living in informal camps in South Africa. They aimed to support people excluded from the government's emergency aid, such as asylum seekers, refugees with expired documents, undocumented migrants, and homeless people. Somali refugees explained that their decision to support this community was because they knew how it is to be hungry (ACNUR, 2020). In the United Kingdom, refugees delivered emergency food packages to vulnerable asylum seekers. One of these volunteers explained, "I think it is my responsibility to stand in solidarity and help the people in my community who are in need in this challenging time. Being an asylum seeker myself, it is vital we don't forget society's most vulnerable" (UNRIC, 2020, para. 7). In the Netherlands, asylum seekers were taking part in different activities to protect the locals from the coronavirus, for example, cleaning train stations, shopping trolleys, and baskets. When asked why they were doing this, one asylum seeker said, "We have a roof over our heads and food here. I think it's time for us to get involved to fight the coronavirus. We want to give something back" (UNRIC, 2020, para. 8). The United Nations reflected:

> Refugees and asylum seekers are among some of the most vulnerable members of our societies, exposed to many of the huge risks presented by the virus. In light of this, the significant contribution of refugees and asylum seekers, either as medical staff in hospitals or as generous citizens in our communities, is all the more meaningful and must be acknowledged.
>
> *(UNRIC, 2020, para. 9)*

Refugees have also been making a difference in their own communities in the fight against COVID-19. Hakiza et al. (2020) recognize their importance in the responses to

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the pandemic. Refugees distribute food and non-food items, provide information, serve the community as health workers, participate in contagion monitoring and screening initiatives, and influence behavioural norms. Refugee women have offered solutions to protect their communities from the virus in Bangladesh, Ukraine, Jordan, and Kenya (UN Women, 2020). Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Qasmiyeh (2020) reflect on the "long-standing traditions of mutual aid and solidarity" of refugees in Lebanon "to protect themselves and others from the pandemic" (p. 351). The authors explain that these initiatives existed even before the COVID-19 outbreak, and the refugees would provide support to different nationalities within and outside refugee camps. Bentley et al. (2020) show that Somali communities in the United States mobilized and prioritized support for elders, individuals with chronic health conditions, and people with low socio-economic backgrounds (including providing them with food) during the pandemic. According to one Somali refugee, "What gives me strength or meaning at this time is giving back to my community" (Bentley et al., 2020, p. S262).

In Brazil, refugees and other migrants started sewing masks to donate to public shelters and low-income populations in a project in partnership with the Public Ministry of Labour (MPT) and the University of Campinas (Unicamp) and supported by the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The collective movement Deslocamento Criativo was coordinating this action with refugees and other migrants. A Syrian refugee involved in the project reflected: "I think it is important to contribute at this moment to ensure the well-being of refugees and migrants living in public shelters, without having the possibility of getting a job" (Pachioni, 2020, para 8).

Delfim (2020a) highlights that since mid-March 2020, at least 50 actions—especially in the state of São Paulo—were carried out by or had the active participation of migrants. The migrant-led organization África do Coração distributed hundreds of food packages to refugees and other migrants in different states of Brazil (Delfim, 2020b). Refugee led-organizations provide answers in five areas in the context of COVID-19: (a) ensuring public information, (b) acting as community health workers, (c) assisting in the screening and monitoring of contagions, (d) filling gaps in the provision of services and policies, and (e) influencing social norms (Alio et al., 2020; Betts et al., 2020).

All cases presented in this section show diverse solidarity acts performed by refugees in different contexts and parts of the globe, even if they tend to be a group left behind during sanitary emergencies. However, it is not clear what motivates refugees to be solidary during the pandemic. By analyzing the case of Brazil, this paper shows that refugees, despite their exclusion during the COVID-19 pandemic, feel empathy towards vulnerable groups' suffering in their host countries and adopt solidarity narratives regarding them.

Theoretical Framework

Wilde (2013, p. 1) defines **solidarity** as "a feeling of sympathy shared by subjects within and between groups, impelling supportive action and pursuing social inclusion." Solidarity among people is essential in the fight against COVID-19 through the adoption of measures that prevent the spread of the virus, such as staying at home, maintaining social distance, and wearing a mask to protect oneself and others (Libal & Kashwan, 2020).

There were many experiences of solidarity acts during the COVID-19 pandemic out-

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break (beyond adopting the recommended protection measures), including communities going shopping for the elderly, individuals volunteering, and other manifestations of love and empathy being shown towards neighbours. A shared sense of vulnerability during a crisis can spur solidarity. Elcheroth and Drury (2020) explain that "the feeling of all being 'in the same boat' gives rise to a sense of common identity, which motivates and makes possible mutual support during the crisis" (p. 707). However, it is not expected that solidarity will automatically develop during a moment of crisis (Prainsack, 2020), mainly because, following their survival instincts, people may adopt selfish actions.

Refugees' solidarity towards other groups can be explained by "perceived similarities between the ingroup's and other groups' experiences of group-based victimization" (Vollhardt et al., 2016, p. 354). Vollhardt et al. (2016) argue that two types of consciousness can happen between two groups. The first happens when a group perceives another group as a symbolic threat when there is conflict over resources. In this case, the first group will perceive its victimization as unique and distinct, forming an exclusive victim consciousness towards the second group. This group will not be solidary (or adopt positive attitudes) towards the group perceived as competing for the same resources (Vollhardt, 2015).

On the other hand, "shared experiences of disadvantage, group-based oppression or violence can provide the basis for a common ingroup between victimized groups" (Vollhardt et al., 2016, p. 355), creating an inclusive victim consciousness. Vollhardt (2015) explains that having contact with other groups' narratives of suffering may motivate this inclusive victim consciousness in the first group. However, there is no direct expectation of solidarity a priori because "this mutual acknowledgement of suffering and collective victimization," as the essence of inclusive victim consciousness, must be "thorough and genuine"(Vollhardt, 2015, p. 115).

Vollhardt et al. (2016) show that this inclusive victim consciousness can extend beyond a specific context when a mutual acknowledgement is present and the other group is not perceived as a competitor. The authors conclude that "general inclusive victim consciousness (i.e., believing that other groups in the world have suffered in similar ways as the ingroup) predicted support for refugees and immigrants among disadvantaged and victimized minority groups" (p. 365). This article considers refugees in Brazil as having an in-group identity as people who suffered victimizing events that forced them to apply for asylum in Brazil. In this context, the term **victims** denotes that refugees suffered events that forced them to flee their countries. However, being victims does not mean that refugees are helpless people who cannot act. On the contrary, victimizing experiences motivate groups to act towards other groups. I employ the victim terminology of Vollhardt (2015), but I recognize the importance of critical discussions on victimhood. In this article, I understand **victim** "not as a passive synonym of victimization but as a political status and potential site of agency and power" (Krystalli, 2021, p. 126).

The inclusive victim consciousness makes the concept of solidarity more complex than Wilde's (2013) definition, highlighted at the beginning of this section. Prainsack (2020) defines **solidarity** as "the practice that expresses the willingness to support others with whom we recognize similarity in a relevant respect" (p. 127). Bauder & Juffs (2020) define six types of solidarity that

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are useful for this analysis of the Brazilian case: solidarity as loyalty, Indigenous solidarity, self-centred solidarity, emotional reflexive solidarity, rational reflexive solidarity, and recognitive solidarity.[2] In my interviews, I could not identify Indigenous solidarity because refugees in Brazil did not refer to their solidarity acts as connected to their ancestors and/or land. I could not perceive that their solidarity narratives and acts were calculated with pragmatical interests to improve their well-being. On the contrary, refugees were sharing food and time with other populations. Therefore, I did not identify self-centred solidarity in the refugees' narratives.

Refugees' acts of solidarity can represent solidarity as loyalty when refugees are solidary with other refugees from their own community. Solidarity acts can also highlight emotional reflexive solidarity when they are "based on sympathy, compassion, friendship […] and identification with the victim" (Bauder & Juffs, 2020, p. 48). In this sense, emotional reflexive solidarity dialogues with the concept of inclusive victim consciousness (Vollhardt, 2015). Refugees' solidarity discourses can also show rational reflexive solidarity when they express an idea of "community of us all." Finally, it is possible to recognize the solidarity of refugees as an expression of reciprocity towards host communities, reflecting recognitive solidarity.

Refugees faced suffering experiences in their origin countries, allowing them to create an inclusive victim consciousness (Vollhardt, 2015) towards other groups in the host countries also suffering because of the pandemic. This inclusive victim consciousness (Vollhardt, 2015) helps to explain why refugees (even though they are a left-behind group in sanitary crises) adopt different types of solidarity narratives (solidarity as loyalty, emotional reflexive solidarity, rational reflexive solidarity, and recognitive solidarity; Bauder & Juffs, 2020) towards different groups affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Refugees In Brazil During the Outbreak of the Pandemic

Brazil is the largest country in Latin America (considering population, territory, and economy). The country adopted a progressive asylum law with its own refugee status determination mechanism based on an expanded definition of asylum, including people fleeing a situation of severe and generalized violations of human rights (Jatobá & Martuscelli, 2018). Since 2019, Brazil has been recognizing Venezuelans as refugees based on this clause (CONARE & Obmigra, 2020). According to Brazilian law and the Constitution, asylum seekers and refugees have the same rights as Brazilians, including the right to education and work and the right to access health care and social assistance.[3] At the end of 2019, 31,996 refugees were living in Brazil, coming from Venezuela (20,935), Syria (7,768), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) (1,209), and 80 other nations. Between 2011 and 2019, 239,706 asylum seekers arrived in the country (CONARE & Obmigra, 2020). In 2019, Brazil received the sixth highest number of asylum seekers globally (UNHCR, 2020).

[2] According to Bauder & Juffs (2020), solidarity as loyalty can "be summarised as 'helping your "own" people"' (p. 49); Indigenous solidarity "can relate to the spiritual connection between people, their ancestors, and to the land" (p. 49); self-centred solidarity "is based on practical motivations and calculated interest in improving or preserving one's own situation" (p. 50); emotional reflexive solidarity is "centered on mutual understanding, sympathy, and empathy" (Kapeller & Wolkenstein, 2013, p. 482, quoted in Bauder & Juffs, 2020, p. 50); rational reflexive solidarity "is part of an expression of a singular 'community of us all'" (Bauder & Juffs, 2020, p. 51); and recognitive solidarity "is framed in terms of reciprocity" (p. 52). For further discussion, see Figure 1 in Bauder & Juffs (2020, p. 48).

[3] Lei No. 9.474, de 22 de Julho de 1997, Col. Leis Rep. Fed. Brasil, 189 (7, t.1): 4227, Julho 1997.

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A report from the UNHCR and Cátedra Sérgio Vieira de Mello (2019) concluded that refugees in Brazil face a higher risk of discrimination and xenophobia when accessing public services (including health). Besides that, even if refugees were, on average, more educated than Brazilians, they had higher unemployment rates and lower salaries than nationals. This situation put refugees in a more vulnerable situation than Brazilians when the pandemic started, as shown by Martuscelli (2021). Many refugees had small businesses producing and selling food. They had to close due to the initial lockdowns in many Brazilian states. Other refugees were working in essential services, including supermarkets and cleaning companies. Finally, unemployed refugees could not continue job hunting due to the lockdowns (Martuscelli, 2021).

There was much uncertainty about the disease during the first two weeks of the pandemic outbreak in Brazil (when this study was conducted). The Brazilian federal government did not adopt the WHO-recommended measures (Jubilut et al., 2020). Refugees and immigrants were a left-behind population (Martuscelli, 2021). In fact, refugees faced the same challenges as Brazilians considering their socio-economic profile and access to protection connected to work, challenges aggravated by the pandemic (i.e., the lack of information and fear of xenophobia when accessing health care), and new challenges created by the pandemic, including the closures of borders and essential services such as companies that send money abroad (Martuscelli, 2021).

METHODOLOGY

Refugees are experts of their own experiences (Hynes, 2003). Therefore, the best way to understand how refugees have displayed solidarity during the COVID-19 pandemic involves considering their lived experiences and how they reflect on them. I conducted 29 semi-structured phenomenological interviews (Høffding & Martiny, 2016)[4] with refugees living in the states of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro between March 27, 2020, and April 6, 2020. São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro are states where many refugees live and where their governors adopted WHO-recommended measures to close non-essential businesses and schools and implement social distancing measures.

The solidarity narratives of refugees cannot be explained by the poor Brazilian management of the pandemic since the interviews were conducted in the first two weeks when nobody knew how the Brazilian government would perform. There were no differences in the solidarity narratives of interviewees considering their nationality, age, or gender. All interviewees were declared as refugees according to Article 1 of the Brazilian Asylum Law (Law 9474/1997).[5] I employed a snowballing strategy to recruit the participants (Noy, 2008), contacting two community leaders who gave me the contact information of other refugees until the point of saturation, when no new information was being provided.

Most participants in this research project were male (86.20%) and young (34.5 years; range: 20–48 years), coming from the DRC,

[4] According to Høffding & Martiny (2016, p. 545), "the phenomenological interview consists of two intricately linked tiers. The first is the interview itself as the second person perspective described above, while the second is a phenomenological analysis of the first tier. In the first tier, we generate descriptions of experiential content and gain intimate first-hand knowledge of the interviewee's lived experience. In the second tier, relying on the phenomenological method (Gallagher and Zahavi 2008, chap. 2), we analyze these descriptions, in such a way that they might be generalized to say something about experiential structures and hence subjectivity as such."

[5] Lei No. 9.474, de 22 de Julho de 1997, Col. Leis Rep. Fed. Brasil, 189 (7, t.1): 4227, Julho 1997.

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Syria, Venezuela, Mali, Cameroon, Guinea-Conakry, and Guyana. Table 1 in the online Appendix shows the main characteristics of the participants. The interviewees lived in Brazil for at least three years (mean = 6.82 years; median = 7 years; max. = 12 years). Almost 50% of refugees were employed (14/29, including 3 in essential services and 3 working from a home office), 8 of 29 were self-employed or freelancers (4 in the food business), and 7 were unemployed.

This research followed the ethical recommendations of the code of ethics of the International Association for the Study of Forced Migration (IASFM, 2019), considering the principles of doing no harm, respecting refugees' confidentiality and privacy, and guaranteeing voluntary informed participation based on participants' oral informed consent (as an extra measure to avoid privacy and confidentiality breaches). I conducted all the interviews using WhatsApp's audio call function to respect social distancing measures.[6] The interviews were conducted in Portuguese, English, or French, following each interviewee's preference. I transcribed and analyzed the content of the interviews using ATLAS.ti 8 (ATLAS.ti Scientific Software Development GmbH, Berlin, Germany).

This article is part of a larger research project aiming to understand how refugees in Brazil were affected by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. I translated all the project documents and the refugees' quotations from Portuguese to English. The questionnaire (available in the online Appendix) had no specific questions involving solidarity or past suffering experiences of refugees in their origin countries. However, solidarity emerged as an essential topic to understanding the living experiences of refugees in Brazil during the pandemic outbreak in the country. Of 29 refugees, 23 expressed solidarity narratives, especially when answering the following questions: "How do you think that the Brazilian government could help refugees during this time of COVID-19?" and "How do you think that this pandemic affects the life of refugees in general?" One limitation of this study is that the solidarity narratives appeared in the interviews of refugees during the first two weeks of the pandemic in Brazil. Therefore, it cannot infer the long-term effects of these narratives.

RESULTS

Inclusive Victim Consciousness of Refugees in Brazil

The inclusive victim consciousness approach presupposes that a group that has suffered before it recognizes suffering in another group (Vollhardt, 2015). During the interviews, refugees from Syria, Venezuela, and the DRC reflected on how their previous experiences during armed conflicts and humanitarian crises prepared them for the pandemic. One refugee from DRC explained that staying at home was not difficult for him:

> When I lived in Africa, like when there was a war there, I had to stay at home. Because we lived this life. I was born in 1992; I started to see the war. I lived this for 22 years. When I arrived in Brazil, I left the war. I lived a life like that before: today you are walking on the street, playing ball. Tomorrow they warn everyone on the television about going home. They warn everyone that there is going to be war. For me, [staying at home] is normal.
>
> *(28-year-old interviewee, March 27, 2020)*

A Congolese refugee also explained that he knew how to behave in crisis situations, and because of that, he decided to stock food at home: "I will tell you something, I already

[6] Tools and discussions on primary data collection during the COVID-19 pandemic are available from Samuels (2020).

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participated in the war, I have been through this when a big thing comes, I can speak, I am the first person to be more afraid" (35-year-old interviewee, March 28, 2020). A Syrian refugee also explained he did not panic because he already faced a similar situation in his home country:

> Actually, to be honest, I am not so much in panic. I don't know. Like last time I was talking to friends, like Syrian friends and maybe because we faced something similar like this before. It was not a virus; it was a war. So it was like we had to stay at home and we could not go out for some time. We know what it means to have your food, save some food, manage to survive with the minimum, and not have work and things like this. So I am not very much in shock now.
>
> *(30-year-old interviewee, March 31, 2020)*

This reflection of being prepared to face a situation of crisis also appeared in the interview of a Venezuelan woman:

> We have been through situations in our country where, like, not being able to leave home, rationing [resources], not having food [to buy] ... so, at least this makes me a little more mature. In other words, [it helped me] accept the situation of not being able to leave the house, of having to ration the food, of being cautious with the expenses. [...] As I said, we already have this issue of coming from many needs, so we always have [this mentality,] "I'll buy something and save one here if anything [happens]." Having food is the biggest worry always. So I said, "It's okay, there is food, we are getting ready, I'm doing it. For now, there is food, so everything is fine."
>
> *(37-year-old interviewee, April 6, 2020)*

Another Congolese refugee explained that he feared COVID-19 because he had already experienced living through the Ebola epidemic in his home country:

> I am also afraid because [...] I have already experienced this in Africa. It was not with coronavirus; it was other viruses that passed there in Africa. [...] There was Ebola in Africa. Ebola was born in my country, right? We already had all this exposure to take care of ourselves physically. We already know.
>
> *(28-year-old interviewee, March 27, 2020)*

The preceding quotes indicate refugees' experiences of suffering in their home countries (due to war, food shortages, and other epidemics). Alam's (2020) study with refugees from Afghanistan, Syria, and Iraq living through the COVID-19 pandemic in Frankfurt also found that "refugees showed in conversations that they were used to daily curfews due to armed conflicts in their native countries" (p. 119). Refugees faced suffering experiences that marked them significantly and emerged during their reflections about living the pandemic outbreak in Brazil. Therefore, refugees' own suffering seems to make them more sensitive in facing the COVID-19 responses in Brazil. This has allowed them to develop inclusive victim consciousness (Vollhardt, 2015) towards other groups suffering because of COVID-19.

Solidarity in Refugees' Narratives

The interviews with refugees indicate that they suffered in their home countries, making them more empathic to other people's suffering due to the pandemic. This inclusive victim consciousness (Vollhardt, 2015) seems to explain participants' different solidarity narratives directed towards Brazilian groups in situations of vulnerability, the refugee community, and the Brazilian population in general. These narratives show respectively (a) emotional reflexive solidarity, (b) solidarity as loyalty combined with emotional reflexive solidarity, and (c) rational reflexive solidarity mixed with emotional reflexive solidarity and recognitive solidarity (Bauder & Juffs, 2020).

Emotional Reflexive Solidarity Towards Vulnerable Brazilian Groups

When the COVID-19 pandemic started in Brazil, many refugees were facing a difficult

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situation since they were unemployed or prevented from working as informal workers or self-employed. They were not sure how to pay their bills. Even employed refugees were worried about a future economic crisis and losing their jobs. However, they found space in their reflections to think about people who were in a worse situation than them, as explained by this Syrian refugee: "With our money from our work we help others sometimes, those in a situation worse than us, you know?" (33-year-old interviewee, March 30, 2020). Refugees who suffered identify the suffering of vulnerable people, including homeless people. One Congolese refugee was homeless when he first arrived in Brazil, and now he was sharing information as a way to help homeless people during the pandemic:

> When I got here, I lived on the street. I lived on the street with homeless people. At that time, there was no such thing [as COVID-19]. Today, there is this thing. I think it will be difficult for people who are living on the street. But we are trying to share information, addresses of hostels that help, that can help them to live, to eat. I have an address, and I'm sending it to people because I don't know. [...] I'm also sharing with people who have no place to see where they can sleep and take care of themselves.
>
> *(28-year-old interviewee, March 27, 2020)*

Other refugees also reflected that homeless people were in a worse situation than refugees:

> But I imagine other people. For example, these people who are on the street, or the people who live in a shelter, I don't know how things are there.
>
> *(37-year-old Venezuelan refugee interviewee, April 6, 2020)*

> We are protecting ourselves, but imagine the homeless people who depend on the government, the city hall, other people for help, because they don't want to be sick.
>
> *(39-year-old Congolese refugee interviewee, April 4, 2020)*

Refugees also reflected on poor Brazilians and self-employed Brazilians who could not stay at home since they needed to work to feed their families:

> I don't know, I was thinking, now there are a lot of poor people who have no money to support themselves ... I think these people will not be able to stay at home.
>
> *(28-year-old Syrian refugee interviewee, April 4, 2020)*

> There is a problem in Brazil that not only refugees need [help], but many people need it here.
>
> *(27-year-old Syrian refugee interviewee, April 3, 2020)*

Refugees were also sharing food with people in need. This was the case of this Congolese woman who was unemployed:

> I'm getting help from other migrants. I'm also passing it on to those who need it who are closer to me so that I will help them. But we have to stay at home. [...] To tell you the truth, everything that I'm receiving ... food package, I'm also sharing it with anyone who needs it.
>
> *(36-years-old interviewee, April 3, 2020)*

A self-employed Venezuelan woman was also helping people in need, including Brazilians:

> We help here too. When we know that a person needs food, or they need something, we say, "Ah, I have such a thing, I have rice." So when I can, I do it ... I receive a food package. Then I saw a friend, "I need money for food." Then I said, "Okay." So I also share it with Brazilian friends who are facing difficulties. I make a bag with rice, beans and such things and give it to them. So I always try to help people.
>
> *(37-year-old interviewee, April 6, 2020)*

These illustrative quotes of solidarity towards vulnerable groups (the homeless and people in need) can be interpreted as examples of emotional reflexive solidarity (Bauder & Juffs, 2020). Because refugees recognize the suffering of other groups, they have empathy and compassion towards them. This also indicates the inclusive victim consciousness towards these other groups

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that are suffering during the pandemic (Vollhardt, 2015). Refugees do not perceive homeless people and those in need as competing for the same resources. They recognize them as victims of a challenging situation (i.e., the COVID-19 pandemic) that need help.

Solidarity as Loyalty Combined with Emotional Reflexive Solidarity Towards Refugees in Need

The second type of solidarity expressed by the refugees was directed to other communities of refugees living in vulnerable conditions. While these narratives and actions can be classified as solidarity as loyalty, that is, refugees supporting people from the same group (forced displaced non-nationals), they also reflect a logic of emotional reflexive solidarity, since refugees are helping other refugees (from the same nationality or not) who are in a more difficult situation aggravated by the pandemic (Bauder & Juffs, 2020). This solidarity is based not only on nationality or being a foreigner but also on the recognition that people are suffering.

One Congolese refugee was a doctor in the DRC, but he could not practise medicine in Brazil. While he was facing individual challenges during the pandemic, he was also supporting other refugees living in abandoned buildings (called occupations—ocupações in Portuguese). In one of these places, two hundred families were living in challenging conditions: "There is no water, no electricity, no hygiene conditions. Many people are asking for help there. Because there is no help. You don't know where to go. There's nothing there" (40-year-old interviewee, March 31, 2020). He reflected how he could not be at peace knowing that people were suffering and how he was supporting them:

> I'm fine, but my brother, my sister[7] lives badly right now, very badly. They have no better place to live, no food to eat, no money to do anything. [...] That is why Congolese refugees who live in São Paulo will help them. [...] We give them food packages and complementary money to buy typical products of our country, pay for transportation to go to the hospital, or buy other things they need. It allows people to eat the way they want. We organize ourselves to help our brothers that are suffering, that have nothing.

Another Congolese refugee who was unemployed reflected that he also supported refugee families in occupations when he worked. However, he could not do it anymore:

> Sometimes, when I worked, I would gather some friends, and say, "Let's go there." ... I would buy some cookies and go there to give them to the children. [...] I remember that I had a friend from the company that bought toys and gave them to children at the end of the year.
>
> *(25-year-old interviewee, April 1, 2020)*

A 32-year-old Syrian refugee was also trying to help his self-employed Syrian friends who could no longer work by sharing information that could help them as well as sharing contact information of organizations providing material support (April 4, 2020). This Congolese refugee leader of a migrant-led organization organized a solidarity campaign to support migrants and refugees who were suffering due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic:

> We try to do a solidarity campaign. When a person in need enters in contact, we try to ask who has more [to share] so we can support who doesn't. Yesterday we went to visit a woman who has two daughters. She is pregnant, her husband is in Angola, and she has no food at home. Her fridge is empty. So instead

[7] In this case, "brother" and "sister" refer to people from the same community and not people that are children of the same father and/or mother.

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> of telling her, "Come and get it [the food]," we went there.
>
> *(40-year-old interviewee, April 3, 2020)*

Rational Reflexive Solidarity Mixed with Emotional Reflexive Solidarity and Recognitive Solidarity Towards the Brazilian Population in General

The last type of solidarity shown by refugees during the pandemic mainly appeared as an answer to the following question: "How do you think that the Brazilian government could help refugees during this time of COVID-19?" After previous questions, where refugees responded by reflecting on how the pandemic had affected their lives and the lives of other refugees, I expected that refugees (who recognized they were left behind and the authorities did not consider their needs and particularities during the pandemic) would focus only on their own experiences of suffering during the pandemic. Additionally, the phrasing of the question also directed refugees towards a more in-group reflection, that is, how the government should help refugees, which is a specific group, affected by the pandemic.

However, most of the interviewees (11/23) expressing solidarity narratives answered this question by saying that the government should not think only of the refugees, since all Brazilians were suffering:

> Ah, I can't say, "Just the refugee," you have to help everyone, right? Because, in addition to being a refugee, we are also human beings, do you understand?
>
> *(25-year-old Congolese refugee interviewee, April 1, 2020)*

> It is everyone, not only the refugee, the Brazilian, the foreigner, it is affecting everyone in various sectors.
>
> *(34-year-old Guinean refugee interviewee, March 30, 2020)*

> I cannot be too selfish. In the same way that refugees are going to be helped, you have to help Brazilian families, who are also going through this situation, regardless of being rich or poor.
>
> *(39-year-old- Congolese refugee interviewee, April 4, 2020)*

> [Provide help] not only to refugees. Everybody is people, everybody is the same.
>
> *(40-year-old Congolese refugee interviewee, March 21, 2020)*

> I think that not only refugees have to be helped. Refugees are a percentage of the Brazilian people, right? [The government] should help us the same way they are doing with Brazilians. But they have to help Brazilians too.
>
> *(21-year-old Syrian refugee interviewee, April 4, 2020)*

The refugees reflected that the pandemic affected everybody and that it was not the time to be selfish. One refugee from Guyana explained that the government should help everybody and that refugees should help other people as well:

> Everybody is passing through the same situation; whether you are Brazilian or you are a refugee, or you are a "foreigner" … we are all passing through the same thing. […] As refugees, we should not be thinking only about ourselves. However, we should be thinking about how we can maybe help those around ourselves. […] The government has to help everybody with no discrimination. Everybody, refugees, migrants, Brazilians, should be treated the same way.
>
> *(48-year-old interviewee, April 2, 2020)*

This logic of "we are all in the same boat" reflects a recognition of shared suffering, that is, an explicit understanding that we all are victims of this pandemic. In this sense, these reflections that the Brazilian government should help everybody and not only refugees indicate rational reflexive solidarity (Bauder & Juffs, 2020), where refugees recognize a community of all of us. At the same time, there are also elements of emotional reflexive solidarity (Bauder & Juffs, 2020) when refugees

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who suffered are empathic towards the suffering of all Brazilians facing the COVID-19 pandemic. This compassion is also connected with refugees' inclusive victim consciousness (Vollhardt, 2015). A Congolese refugee who already suffered the war in his country (see the previous section) wanted the government to help wealthy Brazilians who could be harmed because of the pandemic:

> I would ask [the Brazilian government] that this help can be for everyone, because a rich person can also sometimes lack food in her house, and she cannot be left behind too. If this help is only for a category of people, the other categories will not have access [to it]. I think this is not the best. I want a solution for everyone.
>
> *(35-year-old interviewee, March 28, 2020)*

While this solidarity towards the general population is based on recognizing that all are victims in this pandemic, it also has a component of reciprocity: refugees helping people who helped them before. Refugees perceived that Brazil welcomed them, and many received help from Brazilian people. Hence, being in solidarity with them would be a way to return the solidarity that they received before. Therefore, these narratives bring elements of recognitive solidarity (Bauder & Juffs, 2020). This was the case for a self-employed Syrian refugee who argued that the government should help everybody because he was worried that he could not pay his rent, which could harm his landlady, who was nice to him: "[Help] not only for refugees but for everyone because I am suffering from this [pandemic] and my landlady is waiting for the rent. If I do not pay it, her bills will be delayed too" (40-year-old interviewee, March 27, 2020).

CONCLUSION

The Brazilian case helps us to understand that refugees who suffered in their home countries can empathize with the suffering of other groups, such as populations in a situation of vulnerability (e.g., homeless and Brazilians in need), other refugees in a worse situation (e.g., people living in abandoned buildings), and the Brazilian population in general, which has been impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak. This solidarity seems to be based on an inclusive victim consciousness (Vollhardt, 2015) of refugees in Brazil. The participants' narratives also indicate different types of solidarity as discussed by Bauder & Juffs (2020): emotional reflective solidarity towards suffering groups; solidarity as loyalty together with emotional reflective solidarity towards other refugees; and rational reflective solidarity mixed with emotional reflective solidarity and recognitive solidarity towards the Brazilian population as a whole.

This analysis can contribute to understanding refugee solidarity in other contexts discussed previously in this article. The use of the inclusive victim consciousness approach (Vollhardt, 2015) and different types of solidarity (Bauder & Juffs, 2020) may explain other situations of refugee solidarity during this pandemic. For example, during the first lockdown in Italy, UNHCR Italy lent its Instagram account to refugees to send messages to Italians using #Iorestoacasa [I stay at home] (ANSA, 2020). In their posts, refugees reflected on the suffering they experienced in their home countries (and their experiences when they had to stay at home because of war or humanitarian crisis) to justify that they understood the situation that Italy was facing. They sent messages of strength to the Italian population and solidarity in these difficult times. These messages of solidarity from refugees in Italy also seem to indicate an inclusive victim consciousness (Vollhardt, 2015) towards Italians facing the first lockdown in the country. It

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also shows emotional reflexive solidarity—that is, refugees had compassion and empathy towards and identified with the Italians suffering during this pandemic (Bauder & Juffs, 2020).

Finally, this article contributes to the literature on solidarity and refugee studies, considering the living experiences of refugees, a left-behind population, during the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in Brazil. Refugees reflected on their own solidarity narratives in a moment of uncertainty and suffering. Solidarity was so strong in the refugees' experience of the COVID-19 pandemic that this emerged even in a questionnaire that was not focused on this topic. Solidarity within refugee populations should be further studied since it helps to explain an essential angle of refugees' contribution to host countries.

Further studies should adopt an age and gender lens to approach asylum and solidarity during COVID-19. Other studies should consider the long-term impact of the pandemic on refugee lives, including in their solidarity towards other groups. Prainsack (2020) argues that after an initial surge, solidarity may fade away when people start to "blame" groups that are different, especially with the lack of institutions providing economic and mental stability for people to support others.

This study represents a unique picture of refugees during the first two weeks of the pandemic in Brazil. Considering that refugees' solidarity narratives seem to be based on their inclusive victim consciousness, it is probable that it will persist during the pandemic, even considering the lack of institutional support and responses to fight the pandemic in Brazil. Nevertheless, further studies should continue to investigate refugees' solidarity and COVID-19 in Global South countries.

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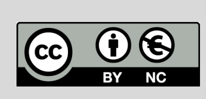

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Experiences of Tibetan Refugees in India During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Lhamo Tso[a] and Meenakshi Shukla[b]

ABSTRACT
This study explores the experiences of 70 Tibetan refugees in India (28 male, 42 female; mean age = 30.90 years; *SD* = 8.11) during the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of their stress, financial anxiety, perceived discrimination, dark future expectations, and resilience. Older, married, and working refugees experienced more problems but higher resilience. Female refugees reported more nervousness and stress than male refugees. Financial anxiety and dark future expectations predicted higher stress. Overall, the findings show low to moderate levels of mental health issues and high resilience among Tibetan refugees during the pandemic and highlight the importance of cultural beliefs and practices in maintaining good mental health and resilience.

KEYWORDS
refugee; perceived stress; resilience; COVID-19; Tibetan

RESUMÉ
Cette étude explore les expériences de 70 réfugié.es tibétain.es en Inde (28 hommes, 42 femmes; âge moyen = 30.90 ans; *écart-type* = 8.11) pendant la pandémie de COVID-19 en ce qui concerne leur stress, leur anxiété financière, leur discrimination perçue, leurs attentes sombres par rapport à l'avenir et leur résilience. Les réfugié.es plus âgé.es, marié.es et occupant un emploi ont rencontré davantage de problèmes mais une plus grande résilience. Les femmes réfugiées ont signalé plus de nervosité et de stress que les hommes réfugiés. L'anxiété financière et les attentes sombres par rapport à l'avenir prédisaient un niveau de stress plus élevé. Dans l'ensemble, les résultats montrent des niveaux faibles à modérés de problèmes de santé mentale et une grande résilience chez les réfugié.es tibétain.es pendant la pandémie et soulignent l'importance des croyances et pratiques culturelles dans le maintien d'une bonne santé mentale et de la résilience.

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INTRODUCTION

The novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) was declared a public health emergency by the World Health Organization (WHO) on January 30, 2020 (WHO, 2020). Following this, different countries across the world started implementing immediate and strin-

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gent measures to curb the spread of the infection, such as a countrywide lockdown. India has not remained untouched by the pandemic and its myriad consequences; at the time of writing, India stands second only to the United States in terms of the total number of infected people (Worldometers, 2020). India experienced a nationwide lockdown of 21 days, which was then further extended to May 3, 2020, to prevent community transmission of the pandemic. The consistently increasing number of positive cases in India made it necessary to renew consecutive lockdown phases, lasting until May 31, 2020 (Tribune News Service, 2020). Though the lockdown intended to curb the spread of the coronavirus infection, the COVID-19 pandemic has seen global increases in several mental health problems, such as stress, depression, and anxiety, as well as negative emotions such as denial, grief, and anger (Ji et al., 2017; Mohindra et al., 2020; Torales et al., 2020; Xiao et al., 2020), leading to an increase in the risk of suicide worldwide (Cullen et al., 2020; The Tribune India, 2020). Individuals with pre-existing mental health issues have been among the most affected (Chatterjee et al., 2020), and one community that has likely been hit harder by the pandemic is that of Tibetan refugees, the largest refugee community in India, with a population of about 120,000 (Bearak, 2016).

The invasion of Tibet by China in 1949 and the escape of Tenzin Gyatso (His Holiness the Dalai Lama) to India a decade later (March 1959) was followed by the destruction of Tibetan temples and monasteries, persecution of monks and nuns in Tibet, and banning of religious practices (Bernstorff & von Welck, 2003; De Jong, 2006; Evans et al., 2008; Ketzer & Crescenzi, 2002). With the introduction of Communist administration of China in Tibet, China gained administrative, political, and economic hold of Tibet. Starvation resulted from the export of harvests to China. Several land reforms were imposed that adversely affected farmers and landowners. Tibetan monasteries were banned as Chinese state schooling was introduced. All forms of Tibetan customs and worships were prohibited (De Jong, 2006). Tibetans faced arbitrary arrests, physical injuries and torture, and execution (Bernstorff & von Welck, 2003; De Jong, 2006; Ketzer & Crescenzi, 2002). However, over the years, Chinese repression methods have shifted from physical to psychological torture. When the Dalai Lama arrived in India, the then prime minister of India, Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru, helped the refugees by providing several refugee settlements in different parts of the country (Norbu, 2001). Since then, the Tibetan refugees have set up a government in exile called the Central Tibetan Administration. The Indian government also gave Tibetan refugees a Registration Certificate, which is a legal document permitting the refugees to enjoy all the privileges of an Indian citizen except voting rights and ability to work in government offices (Artiles, 2011). However, the continuing unrest in Tibet is forcing numerous Tibetans to seek refuge in India, risking their lives in undertaking a dangerous and arduous journey across the Himalayas and leaving their homeland and family behind.

While COVID-19 has led to an unprecedented increase in mental health problems across the world, with increased cases of depression, anxiety, and stress (J. Gao et al., 2020; Pieh et al., 2020; Qiu et al., 2020; C. Wang et al., 2020; Xiao et al., 2020), Tibetan refugees are likely to be more greatly impacted by mental health issues, since refugees have already been reported to experience higher levels of mental health problems (Bean et al., 2007; Marshall et al.,

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2005). For instance, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) has been reported in around 11%–23% of Tibetan refugees, while the prevalence of anxiety and major depression in this population has been 25%–77% and 11.5%–57%, respectively (Mills et al., 2005). High levels of mental health problems in Tibetan refugees have been reported in other studies too (Crescenzi et al., 2002; Evans et al., 2008; Terheggen et al., 2001; van de Weem-de Jong, 2004). The likely reasons cited for the prevalence of mental health problems in this group include poverty (as refugees are forced to flee, leaving their belongings and property), lack of education, unemployment, low levels of self-esteem, and deteriorating physical health (Hermansson et al., 2002; Hsu et al., 2004; Weine et al., 2000). On the contrary, some studies report rather low prevalence of mental health issues among Tibetan refugees compared with other refugee groups, which has been attributed to their subjective appraisal of the experienced trauma (Sachs et al., 2008), as well as their religious coping practices (Ketzer & Crescenzi, 2002; Lhewa et al., 2007; Ruwanpura et al., 2006; Sachs et al., 2008). Though skepticism has been raised towards these findings of higher resilience among Tibetan refugees (Sachs et al., 2008), since studies show that Tibetans often are not very expressive of their physical and emotional pain (Servan-Schreiber et al., 1998), the findings of resilience among Tibetans (emanating from their religious beliefs) are quite robust (Hussain & Bhushan, 2011; Ruwanpura et al., 2006; Sachs et al., 2008; Terheggen et al., 2001).

Despite the mixed nature of findings on Tibetans' psychological well-being, it has been reported that compared to other migrants, refugees are four to five times more prone to developing anxiety, depression, and/or PTSD (Silove, 2004), and therefore, the pandemic is more likely to affect this vulnerable population's mental health, deteriorating or precipitating poor mental health issues. In addition, Tibetan refugees in India are likely to have experienced discrimination at the hands of native citizens during the pandemic: there have been increasing reports of violence and discrimination against Tibetans and others with Mongoloid-looking features (Mukherjee, 2020). Due to a rapid escalation in the cases of Sinophobia (racist sentiments against the Chinese people) across the world due to COVID-19, which spread from Wuhan, China, to the rest of the world (Dixit, 2020), it is likely that racial discrimination may have been experienced by the Tibetan refugees. Similarity of facial features among Tibetans, Chinese, and people hailing from North Indian states had led Indians to label them all as Chinese, and recent reports of increased hatred and prejudice against people from North India, such as being called "coronavirus" (Singh, 2021), suggest the possibility of similar treatment being meted out to Tibetans. This may be associated with Tibetan refugees' poor mental health during the pandemic.

Since previous studies have reported high prevalence of mental health issues among Tibetan refugees (Crescenzi et al., 2002; Mills et al., 2005; Terheggen et al., 2001), the pandemic is likely to have worsened or exacerbated their mental health issues as well as financial problems. However, these have not yet been explored, and the present study was an attempt to investigate Tibetan refugees' psychological, cultural, and financial well-being, as well as perceived stress, resilience, financial anxiety, perceived discrimination, and expectation of a dark future. The study also aimed to explore how these different types of well-being varied per their demographic characteristics (age, gender, number of years in exile, etc.). It was hypothesized

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that Tibetan refugees would report high levels of perceived stress, financial anxiety, perceived discrimination, and dark future expectations, alongside low resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic's testing times.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Participants

Convenience sampling was used to recruit participants, whereby a link to the online survey was sent to some Tibetan refugees known to one of the authors via social media (Facebook and WhatsApp) and email. These Tibetan refugees were also asked to send the link to the survey to other Tibetan refugees they knew. Major Tibetan refugee settlements in North India (Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh—the administrative capital of Tibetan refugees in India) and South India (Bylakuppe, Karnataka), along with other states throughout India, were targeted for participant recruitment. However, the response rate from South India was only about 7%; the remaining participants were from the North Indian states of Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, New Delhi, and Gujarat. Thus, 70 participants in the age range of 19–57 years (*M* = 30.90 years; *SD* = 8.11) were recruited in the study; 28 were male (*M* = 33.54 years; *SD* = 7.45) and 42 were female (*M* = 29.21 years; *SD* = 8.15) after excluding a female participant who provided incomplete data. All participants held a Green Book (a document issued by the Central Tibetan Administration [2021] to Tibetans in exile that will later become a basis for claiming Tibetan citizenship). More than two-fifths of the participants reported their highest educational qualification[1] as university graduation, that is, a bachelor's degree (*n* = 29), followed by 19 having completed post-graduate education and 4 who had obtained a PhD degree. Seven participants had attained formal education up to twelfth standard, two participants had studied to sixth standard, while one had only studied until third standard. The remaining participants reported never having attained formal education (*n* = 6). Participants were recruited between November 29 and December 26, 2020.

Of the 70 participants, 7 (3 female, 4 male) reported spending between 1 and 10 years in exile, 24 (15 female, 9 male) reported having been in exile for 11–20 years, 26 (16 female, 10 male) reported having been in exile for 21–30 years, 7 (4 female, 3 male) reported 31–40 years of exile, and 6 participants (4 female, 2 male) reported having lived in exile for 41–50 years or more. The mean number of years spent in exile was 21.77 (*SD* = 10.93) years. Thirty-three participants (18 female, 15 male) were working, while 37 (24 female, 13 male) were non-working. Sixteen participants were married (9 female, 7 male), and 54 (33 female, 21 male) were not married (currently unmarried/nuns/divorced). The sample comprised 19 professionals, 9 white-collar (office-work) employees, 2 skilled workers (carpenter, technician, etc.), and 2 unskilled workers (farm laborer, house cleaner, etc.); 38 were unemployed (students, home-makers, etc.). About 59% of the participants reported having no dependents, while 20.33% had two dependents, 6.78% had three dependents, and 5.08% had one dependent.

The Ethics Committee of the university where the study was conducted provided

[1] Primary education in India includes grades 1 through 8 and is usually completed between the ages of 6 and 14 years. This is followed by secondary school (grades 9–12; 14–18 years of age), which includes senior secondary schooling (grades 11–12). Thereafter begins university education with bachelor's degree (usually grades 13–15, but grades 13–16 for engineering and technology degrees), master's degree (grades 16–17 for traditional courses, grades 17–18 for engineering and technology degrees), and doctoral degree (PhD).

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approval to the protocol and conduct of this study. All participants provided written informed consent before participating in the study.

Measures

Demographics

Participants provided information on their age, gender, duration of their refuge in India, and work. The following are the options participants could provide about their work: unskilled (e.g., farm labor, food service, house cleaner), skilled (e.g., technician, carpenter, hairdresser, seamstress), white collar (office) (e.g., clerk, salesperson, secretary, small business), professional (e.g., doctor, lawyer, teacher, business executive), not currently working (unemployed/retired/homemaker/student), other (please specify), and don't know. They also mentioned whether they were currently or previously married. Participants also indicated how many dependents they had and were asked to specify the number of elderly and children (under 18 years) they were required to care for.

Psychological, Cultural, and Financial Well-Being

Participants were asked three open-ended questions about how they had been taking care of their mental health during the pandemic; what they had been doing to maintain their cultural integrity during the pandemic; and whether they had faced any financial hardship during the pandemic, and if so, how they coped with it.

The Perceived Stress Scale

The 10-item Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10) developed by Cohen and Williamson (1988) was used to assess how stressful the participants appraised their lives in the past few months. More specifically, this scale assessed how uncontrollable, overloaded, and unpredictable the respondents considered their lives to be using items such as "In the last month, how often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?" In the present study, participants were asked to indicate their thoughts and feelings during the past few (1–5) months using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (never) to 4 (very often). Four positively worded items (e.g., "In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?"), that is, items 4, 5, 7 and 8, are reverse-scored. The higher the scores obtained, the higher the level of perceived stress. The Cronbach's alpha reliability (0–1) of the PSS-10 has been found adequate (Barbosa-Leiker et al., 2013; Cohen & Williamson, 1988; Siqueira Reis et al., 2010), meaning that the test results would be reliable, and it also has adequate concurrent and convergent validities (Cohen & Williamson, 1988; Wu & Amtmann, 2013), implying that the test measures what it purports to measure and therefore that the results obtained would be valid. In the present study, the scale showed an internal consistency reliability of 0.84.

The Resilience Scale

Resilience refers to the capacity to withstand adversity (Wagnild, 2009). It is defined as "the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or even significant sources of stress" (American Psychological Association, 2012, para. 4). The Resilience Scale developed by Wagnild and Young (1993) was used to assess participants' ability to make a "psycho-social comeback in adversity" (Kadner, 1989, p. 20). It consists of 25 items, which are categorized under two factors: "Personal Competence" and "Accep-

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tance of Self and Life." Respondents rate items on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), with a response of 4 indicating neutral. In the present study, participants were instructed to express their degree of agreement with how well each statement applied to them in the last few (1–5) months. The scale contains no negatively worded items, and obtainable scores on this scale range from 25 to 175, with higher scores indicating higher resilience. This scale has been reported to have high reliability (Cronbach's alpha = .91) and concurrent validity (Wagnild & Young, 1993); its reliability on the current sample was .91. Thus, the scale is a psychometrically sound instrument, and the results obtained can be considered both reliable and valid.

The Financial Anxiety Scale

Adapting the diagnostic criteria for generalized anxiety disorder as given in the text revision of the fourth edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (American Psychiatric Association, 2000) to financial situations, the seven-item Financial Anxiety Scale developed by Archuleta et al. (2013) assesses financial distress. Using a seven-point Likert scale from 1 (never) to 7 (always), participants responded to items based on their experiences in the last few (1–5) months. The scores on the seven items are summed to obtain a total financial anxiety score, which can range from 7 to 49. The internal consistency reliability of the scale (Cronbach's alpha = .94) and construct validity have been reported to be high (Archuleta et al., 2013). The reliability of the scale in the present sample was .90.

The Perceived Discrimination Scale

The Perceived Discrimination Scale (containing five items) was taken from the Mutual Intercultural Relations in Plural Societies questionnaire (Annis et al., 2010) and was slightly modified to suit the needs of the present study by replacing **ethnic/national** terminology with **Tibetan(s)** or **Indian(s)**, as appropriate—for instance, "I have been teased or insulted because of my [ethnic/-national] background" became "I have been teased or insulted because of my Tibetan background"; and "I don't feel accepted by [ethnic/national] group" became "I don't feel accepted by Indians." Participants were asked to rate experiences of discrimination in the last few (1–5) months using a five-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) (Annis et al., 2010; Schmitz & Schmitz, 2012). The Perceived Discrimination Scale has been found to have good reliability in different ethnic populations (Ben-Kane, 2015), and its Cronbach's alpha reliability on the Tibetan sample in the present study was .70.

The Dark Future Scale

The Dark Future Scale (DFS), comprising five items, was developed by Zaleski et al. (2019) and is the shorter version of the Future Anxiety Scale (Zaleski, 1996). It measures expectations of a dark future, or adverse outcomes in the future, which involves greater negative cognitions and emotions instead of more positive ones towards the future—that is, more fear about than hope for the future (Zaleski et al., 2019). The DFS was used to assess participants' present attitudes towards the future using a seven-point Likert scale (ranging from 0 =decidedly false to 6 = decidedly true). The scale has been reported to have good test–retest reliability and validity (Zaleski et al., 2019) and showed an internal consistency reliability of .76 in the present sample.

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Procedure

The participants either answered the questionnaires online (via a Google Forms link to the questionnaires) or were given hard copies to fill out, depending on their preference. A few older participants (n = 4) chose the latter option; they expressed their wish to participate in the study but found it easier to respond using paper-and-pencil versions of the questionnaires. Regardless of the medium of questionnaire administration, all participants were required to read an information sheet detailing the objectives and inclusion and exclusion criteria, as well as containing assurance of strict confidentiality and anonymity. Following this, participants were required to fill a consent form to indicate their voluntary participation after having considered the information about the study and being satisfied with the responses to any queries they had. Then, the participants were presented the questionnaires, which had no time limit to be completed but had to be completed in a single sitting. The time taken to fill all the questionnaires ranged from 15 to 40 minutes. This varied according to participants' age and education level but not gender or mode of filling the questionnaires (online/offline). If the participants preferred to complete hard copies of the questionnaires, they were administered one-on-one by the researchers, with facemask-wearing and social distancing measures strictly followed. When the participants gave their completed questionnaires back to the researchers, the researchers ensured that none of the questions remained unanswered. In the online questionnaire, this was taken care of, as each response was marked as "required" in order to submit. Finally, the participants were thanked for their time and co-operation, and the questionnaires were scored. Responses provided in the Tibetan language were transcribed by the first author, who is well-versed in both Tibetan and English languages.

Statistical Analyses

The demographic characteristics of the sample were described, followed by analysis of age differences across gender, work status, and marital status using independent sample *t*-tests (which are used to compare two groups with data on the interval/ratio scale). A Chi-square test (enabling examination of differences among categorical variables) was used to explore gender differences across work status, marital status, and years spent in exile. Since a sufficient number of participants were not available from each state to compare regional differences, such differences were not explored. Percentages and Chi-squares were used to explore participants' open-ended responses relating to the practices they undertook to maintain their mental health and cultural integrity during the pandemic, as well as their financial hardships and coping with these. Bivariate correlations and *t*-tests or one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) / analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) (as appropriate) followed by post-hoc tests were used to explore the association of perceived stress, resilience, financial anxiety, perceived discrimination, and dark futures with one another, as well as with demographic variables. In addition, multiple regression analysis was conducted to predict perceived stress from resilience, financial anxiety, perceived discrimination, and dark future expectations.

Results

Demographic Information

An independent samples *t*-test revealed significant differences in age across male (M = 33.54 years; SD = 7.45) and female

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(M = 29.21 years; SD = 8.15) participants ($t[68] = -2.25$, p = .028). However, no gender difference was observed across work status (working, non-working) ($\chi^2[1, n = 70] = .77$, $p = .47$), marital status (married, unmarried) (χ^2 [1, n = 70] = .12, p = .78), or years spent in exile ($\chi^2[4, n = 70] = 1.08$, $p = .90$). An independent samples t-test revealed significant differences in age across working (M = 36.00 years; SD = 6.89) and non-working participants (M = 26.43 years; SD = 6.29) ($t[68] = 6.07$, $p < .001$), which is expected since a majority of the non-working participants (74.28 %) were students. Similar findings were noted for married (M age = 38.75 years; SD = 6.56) and unmarried participants (M age = 28.63 years; SD = 7.04) (t[68] = 5.12, $p < .001$).

Psychological, Cultural, and Financial Well-Being

Nine participants (12.86%) said they maintained their cultural integrity during the pandemic by practising religious values, such as kindness, compassion, and positive thinking, as well as being a "true Tibetan" (by following traditional Tibetan customs and rituals), while 31.43% of participants said they practised religious rituals and traditions, such as praying and reciting mantras, making rounds at stupas (dome-shaped Buddhist shrines), making smoke offerings, and listening to spiritual talks. Twenty participants (28.57%) reported practising or preaching the language, listening to music, dressing, making and using medicines, and reading literature related to the Tibetan culture—for instance, teaching children the Tibetan language, speaking "pure Tibetan," performing cultural dance, wearing cultural dress, and reading books by great Tibetan thinkers. Eleven participants (15.71%) reported practising other things, such as meditation, studying, and so on, while 11.43% participants recalled doing nothing specific to maintain their cultural integrity during the pandemic. A Chi-square test revealed that the number of participants practising different ways to maintain their cultural integrity differed by gender (χ^2 [4, n = 70] = 13.41, p = .009). A significantly higher number of female (n = 18) than male (n = 4) participants practised religious rituals and traditions ($p < .05$). On the other hand, more male participants (n = 9) practised other things, such as meditation and studying, to maintain their cultural integrity, compared with female participants (n=2). Practices to maintain cultural integrity did not vary by number of years in exile, marital status, or work status.

Participants reported engaging in different activities to maintain good mental health during the pandemic. A quarter of the participants (25.71%) engaged in entertainment, such as watching television, listening to music, gaming, playing instruments, and so forth, to keep themselves in good mental health, while 22.86% of the participants engaged in activities such as journaling, reading, and writing. The same number of participants (22.86%) spent time in such activities as loving oneself and trying to "go with the flow." Some participants also focused on keeping themselves fit and healthy via diet and exercising (21.43%), praying (18.57%), or meditating and listening to the Dalai Lama's speeches (18.57%), and some kept themselves busy with household work or spending time talking with family members and friends (14.28%).

While a majority of the participants reported experiencing no financial hardships in the past one to five months (68.57%), approximately a quarter of the participants (24.28%) did report having financial difficulties during this time. A mere 0.07% of participants reported that this issue was not applicable to them. Experiencing financial

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hardship did not show significant differences across gender, number of years in exile, work status, or marital status. Approximately three quarters of the participants (74.28%) reported no coping strategies, either since they did not face financial hardships, they were students and were taken care of by their parents/guardians, or they were paid regular salaries during the lockdown. Some participants reported no coping strategies (10.0%), while 7.14% reported borrowing money from friends or family, 5.71% reported using money saved from previous years, and 2.86% said they used the money they received from the bank or the Central Tibetan Administration for their business. Some participants (7.14%) reported being paid salaries from their jobs for working from home, and therefore they did not experience financial hardships or anxiety. None of the participants reported receiving financial aid from the Indian or the Tibetan government in exile; however, a participant from South India reported experiencing no financial anxiety because she was staying in a Tibetan refugee school community where her daily needs were met.

Perceived Stress

Participants overall reported low to moderate levels of perceived stress (M = 17.68, SD = 6.42). The bivariate correlation of age with overall perceived stress was not significant (r = .098, p = .419), but the correlation of age with not being able to cope with all the things that the participants had to do was significant and positive (r = .242, p = .044). Number of dependents was negatively correlated with the ability to control irritations in life (r = $-$.428, p = .001) in the last few months. Findings from the one-way ANOVA showed that female participants (M = 1.98, SD = 1.14) reported significantly more nervousness and stress than male participants (M = 1.36, SD = 1.22) (F [1, 68] = 4.687, p = .034, η^2 = .28). One-way ANCOVA (controlling for age) revealed a significant effect of the number of years in exile on the participants' overall perceived stress (F [4, 64] = 2.534, p = .049, η^2 = .65). Post-hoc analysis (Fisher's least significant difference [LSD]) revealed that participants with 11–20 years of exile as well as those with 41 or more years of exile reported higher levels of perceived stress than those with 31–40 years of exile. Work or marital status of the participants did not have a significant effect on their perceived stress (F [1, 68] = .043, p = .835, η^2 = .00; F [1, 68] = .282; p = .597, η^2 = .00, respectively).

Perceived stress was significantly positively correlated with financial anxiety (r = .605, $p < .001$), perceived discrimination (r = .333, $p < .01$), and dark future expectations (r = .427, $p < .001$) but had a non-significant negative correlation with resilience (r = $-$.134, p = .270). Results of the multiple regression analysis indicated that financial anxiety, perceived discrimination, dark future expectations, and resilience significantly predicted (F [4, 65] = 12.32, $p < .001$) and accounted for 43.1% of the variance in perceived stress (R^2 = .431). Increase in financial anxiety and dark future expectations predicted higher levels of perceived stress (B = .504, B = .220, respectively).

Resilience

Overall, the participants showed moderate to high levels of resilience (M = 128.44, SD = 19.66). Significant positive correlations were obtained between the age of the participants and their resilience reflected in their feelings of pride in having accomplished things in life (r = .259, p = .031), their determination (r = .260, p = .030), the belief that they could get through difficult

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times because they had experienced difficulty before (r = .407, p < .001), and their belief that their life had meaning (r = .310, p = .009). Significant positive correlations were also obtained between the total number of dependents that the participants had and their resilience in terms of their ability to follow through with the plans that they made (r = .317, p = .015), their belief that their life had meaning (r = .366, p = .004), and their being okay if there were people who did not like them (r = .277, p = .034).

Findings from the one-way ANOVA showed no significant difference between male and female participants in their levels of resilience. However, the one-way ANCOVA (controlling for age) revealed a significant effect of the number of years in exile on the overall resilience of the participants (F [4, 64] = 3.862, p = .007, η^2 = .12), as well as its subdomain: acceptance of self and life (F [4, 65] = 2.664, p = .040, η^2 = .080). Post hoc analysis (LSD) revealed that participants who had been refugees in India for 31–40 years reported higher overall resilience than those who had been in exile for 1–10 years (p = .041) or 41–50 years (p = .002). Participants in exile for 11–20 years also reported higher overall resilience than those in exile in India for 1–10 years. Interestingly, participants who had been refugees for 41 years or more showed significantly lower resilience than those with exile experience of 11–20 years (p = .005), 21–30 years (p = .025), or 31–40 years (p = .002). These findings suggest that participants who have been in exile for 11–40 years show higher resilience than those having lesser or a greater number of years of exile experience.

Higher levels of personal competence (F [1, 68] = 11.055, p = .001, η^2 = .14), acceptance of self and life (F [1, 68] = 4.213, p = .044, η^2 = .058), and overall resilience (F [1, 68] = 9.646, p = .003, η^2 = .124) were also reported more by working participants (M = 93.91, SD = 12.27; M = 41.82, SD = 5.48; M = 135.73, SD = 16.60, respectively) than non-working participants (M = 83.00, SD = 14.86; M = 38.94, SD = 6.15; M = 121.94, SD = 20.09, respectively). Specifically, compared with non-working participants, working participants reported feeling significantly more likely to be able to handle many things at a time (F [1, 68] = 8.109, p = .006, η^2 = .107), more determined (F [1, 68] = 5.685, p = .020, η^2 = .077), more able to get through difficult times because of having experienced difficulties before (F [1, 68] = 5.701, p = .020, η^2 = .08, η^2 = .077), more that their belief in themselves gets them through hard times (F [1, 68] = 5.578, p = .021, η^2 = .076), more that they can be relied upon in an emergency (F [1, 68] = 14.098, p = 000, η^2 = .172), that their life has meaning (F [1, 68] = 7.834, p = .007, η^2 = .103), able to find their way out in a difficult situation (F [1, 68] = 5.947, p = .017, η^2 = .080), and having enough energy to do what they have to do (F [1, 68] = 5.924, p = .018, η^2 = .080). Participants' marital status (i.e., being married) also influenced their overall resilience (F [1, 68] = 11.100, p = .001, η^2 = .140), personal competence (F [1, 68] = 9.899, p = .002, η^2 = .127), and acceptance of self and life (F [1, 68] = 9.918, p = .002, η^2 = .127).

Overall resilience was significantly negatively correlated with perceived discrimination (r = −.237, p = .049) and dark future expectations (r = −.266, p = .026). Similarly, personal competence correlated significantly and negatively with perceived discrimination (r = −.254, p = .034) and dark future expectations (r = −.281, p = .019).

Financial Anxiety

Overall, the participants showed rather low levels of financial anxiety (M = 15.51,

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SD = 8.82). Significant positive bivariate correlation was obtained between age and financial anxiety reflected in feelings of fatigue due to worries about one's financial situation ($r = .249$, $p = .038$). Male and female participants did not differ significantly in terms of their financial anxiety (F [1, 68] = .085, $p = .772$, η^2= .001). Number of years in exile did not have a significant impact on overall financial anxiety (F [4, 64] = .859, $p = .494$, $\eta^2 = .007$). Work status significantly affected anxiety due to financial situation (F [1, 68] = 4.070, $p = .048$, $\eta^2 = .056$), such that non-working participants reported higher anxiety (*M* = 4.08, *SD* = 1.77) than working participants (*M* = 3.18, *SD* = 1.96). Marital status also significantly affected participants' financial anxiety in terms of their muscles feeling tense (F [1, 68] = 4.074, $p = .048$, $\eta^2 = .057$) and feeling fatigued (F [1, 68] = 7.664, $p = .007$, $\eta^2 = .101$) because of worry about their financial situation. Married participants reported more muscle tension (*M* = 2.56, *SD* = 2.31) and more fatigue (*M* = 2.63, *SD* = 2.25) because of their financial situation compared with unmarried participants (*M* = 1.65, *SD* = 1.32; *M* = 1.57, *SD* = .92, respectively).

Financial anxiety was significantly and positively correlated with perceived discrimination ($r = .362$, $p < .01$) and dark future expectations ($r = .337$, $p < .01$) but showed a non-significant correlation with resilience ($r = .003$, $p = .983$).

Perceived Discrimination

Participants reported overall low to moderate levels of perceived discrimination (*M* = 11.11, *SD* = 3.85), which was not significantly correlated with age ($r = -.061$, $p = .619$), total number of dependents (r = -.092, $p = .489$), or gender (F [1, 68] = .133, $p = .716$, $\eta^2 = .002$). Number of years of exile did not have a significant impact on overall perceived discrimination (F [4, 64] = 1.65, $p = .172$, $\eta^2 = .033$); nor did marital status (F [1, 68] = 1.374, $p = .245$, $\eta^2 = .020$). Perceived discrimination showed significant negative correlations with expectations of a dark future ($r = -.237$, $p = .049$).

Dark Future

Overall, participants reported low expectations of having a dark future (*M* = 11.76, *SD* = 5.11). Age correlated significantly and positively with the fear that life would change for the worse in the future ($r = .303$, $p = .011$). Gender did not affect expectations of having a dark future (F [1, 68] = 1.460, $p = .231$, $\eta^2 = .002$). Number of years in exile did not have a significant impact on overall perceived discrimination (F [1, 68] = .521, $p = .721$, $\eta^2 = .033$); nor did marital status (F [1, 68] = .000, $p = .995$, $\eta^2 = .020$).

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to explore the perceived stress, resilience, financial anxiety, perceived ethnic discrimination, financial anxiety, and expectations of a dark future, as well as the activities undertaken to maintain good mental health and cultural integrity, in a sample of Tibetan refugees in North India during the COVID-19 pandemic. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first such investigation into the mental health, financial issues, and related adversities experienced by Tibetan refugees during the COVID-19 pandemic. Findings revealed low to moderate levels of perceived stress among the Tibetan refugees, which is consistent with the findings reported in earlier studies that Tibetans report a very low level of psychological distress (Sachs et al., 2008) and are therefore considered models of successful coping in refugee life (Mahmoudi, 1992). Older

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refugees reported more difficulties in coping with all they had to do compared with younger refugees. During the pandemic, participants with a higher number of dependents experienced more difficulties with controlling irritations in their life, which is to be expected, due to the financial crisis occurring from the global economic downturn during the pandemic (X. Gao et al., 2021). Female participants experienced more nervousness and stress than male participants, possibly because of women's greater concern around their family members' physical health than men's concern (Afridi et al., 2021).

An interesting finding from the present study was that participants who had been in exile for 41 years or more perceived higher levels of stress than those who spent 31–40 years in exile. Similarly, participants who had spent 11–20 years in exile were also more stressed than those who had been in exile for 31–40 years. While reduced resilience has been reported in older participants (Siriwardhana & Stewart, 2013), which can be proposed as a likely reason for the higher levels of perceived stress among those who have been in exile for 41 years or more, this contrasts with the findings of non-significant correlations of perceived stress with age. This partially indicates that the association between years spent in exile and perceived stress has more to do with the refugee experience and less with age. However, on the other hand, age was positively associated with inability to cope with all the things that the participants had to do, which may partially explain higher stress among older refugees. Participants who had been in exile for 11–20 years (being younger in age) may have experienced more stress for a number of reasons, such as concerns around education, disruption of regular schooling, having to engage in online classes, worries around the safety of self and other family members, and so on—a finding that is supported by a study that explored Indian adolescents' and young peoples' worries and concerns during the pandemic (Shukla et al., 2021).

Participants with higher financial anxiety, perceived discrimination, and expectations of a dark future reported higher perceived stress. Perceived discrimination during the testing times of the COVID-19 pandemic can lead to heightened watchfulness, leading to heightened stress among the Tibetan refugees. It may also make it difficult for them to obtain help and support from the local residents. Financial anxiety and dark future expectations also significantly predicted perceived stress. While unemployment has been reported as one of the emerging challenges for Tibetan refugees in India, even prior to the pandemic (Choedon, 2018), this situation would have worsened during the pandemic. Moreover, refugees are quite unlikely to own an internet-enabled smartphone compared with the general population, which may make it difficult for them to access financial services digitally (Vos et al., 2020) amid lockdown. Digital transactions for some may also not be possible if they lack documents of identity proof (Vos et al., 2020). Thus, any existing financial crisis for Tibetan refugees in India may have been exacerbated during the pandemic, causing increased stress. Dark future expectations are likely to increase stress because of the uncertainty surrounding a post-COVID future. Anticipatory anxiety about the future during the COVID-19 pandemic may be considered normal (Smith, 2021) and may serve an adaptive function if it is proportionate to the likelihood of future negative events (Grupe & Nitschke, 2013). However, negative future expectations or fear may become maladaptive in excess and take the form of pathological anxiety (Rosen & Schulkin, 1998). Physically, it may lead to

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elevated stress for prolonged periods of time, which may compromise the body's natural defences (American Psychiatric Association, 2006). Such compromise of the immune system may increase susceptibility to the coronavirus and other infectious diseases.

Tibetan refugee participants reported an overall moderate to high level of resilience, which explains their overall low to moderate levels of stress. Older participants had higher levels of pride in their life accomplishments, more determination, as well as the beliefs that they could get through difficult times and that their life had meaning. These findings corroborate earlier findings that older adults show higher resilience than younger adults (Gooding et al., 2012; Jeste et al., 2013). However, this finding is in contrast with studies that show reduced resilience in older migrants (Siriwardhana & Stewart, 2013). Overall high resilience and acceptance of self and life were also associated with number of years spent in exile. Besides showing lower stress, refugees in exile for 31–40 years also reported higher resilience than those who had been in exile for 41 years or more. Similarly, those who had been in exile for 11–20 years reported higher resilience than those in exile for less time. Overall, resilience was also associated with lower perceived discrimination and dark future expectations. Married participants were more resilient and reported higher personal competence and acceptance of self and life than unmarried ones. This finding is supported by earlier literature showing that unmarried individuals had higher levels of psychological distress than married people during the pandemic (H. Wang et al., 2020; Yu et al., 2020), with possible reasons being that married people receive social support from their partners and other members of the family (Walen & Lachman, 2000) and have larger help networks (Cairney et al., 2003) than unmarried people. Working participants had higher overall resilience, acceptance of self and life, and personal competence than non-working participants. Previous studies provide similar findings where unemployed individuals have been reported to have higher psychological distress (Jackson et al., 1983; Kokko & Pulkkinen, 1998) and therefore lower resilience.

Overall, low levels of financial anxiety were noted in the participants: more than two-thirds reported no financial problems during the pandemic. A prominent reason for this in the current sample may have been that nearly three-fifths of the participants had no dependents to take care of. Although earlier studies provide evidence for greater life satisfaction in Tibetan refugees in India compared to the native citizens, even after economic hardships (Fazel & Young, 1988), slightly less than a quarter of participants reported experiencing financial issues during the pandemic. As expected, non-working participants experienced more financial anxiety than those who had work. Married participants felt more tense and experienced more fatigue because of their financial anxiety than those who were not married. Similarly, older participants experienced more fatigue due to financial worries. This manifestation of financial anxiety in terms of bodily complaints may be explained by the findings of previous studies, which have shown that compared with westerners, Asians display their distress more in terms of somatic symptoms (Kinzie et al., 1990; Mollica et al., 1987). Somatic complaints due to psychological distress are common among Tibetan refugees (Ruwanpura et al., 2006). Financial anxiety was also associated with expectations of a dark future and perceived discrimination, which is understandable since worries about financial crisis or instability would create worries about the future being grim. Sim-

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ilarly, perceived discrimination may make it difficult for Tibetan refugees to obtain financial or other help during the pandemic for their survival.

In general, participants experienced low to moderate levels of perceived discrimination and low expectations of a dark future. However, older participants felt that in the future, their lives would change for the worse. This resonates with the higher stress and financial anxiety reported by these participants. Interestingly, however, older participants also reported higher resilience in terms of having accomplished things in life, beliefs that they could get through difficult times, that life has meaning, and so on, which is in striking contrast with their perceived stress, financial anxiety, and dark future expectations. This finding can be explained by accounting for the fact that older refugees who spent their childhood in Tibet and witnessed the destruction of their culture and home would describe themselves as having higher resilience and having seen more tough times than younger refugees (Hussain & Bhushan, 2011). However, being uprooted from their homeland and having to assimilate in the new country and culture, trying desperately to ensure the survival of themselves and their families in the early years of Tibetan exile in India (Hussain & Bhushan, 2011), likely makes them concerned and worried about the struggles brought on by the pandemic. Younger Tibetan refugees, who are second- or third-generation refugees, experience lesser stress and financial anxiety than older refugees.

Participants maintained their cultural integrity during the pandemic by practising religious rituals and traditions, and they also practised different things associated with their culture (e.g., music, dress, medicines, literature). As described by the participants, during the lockdown, they attempted to be "true Tibetans" or speak "pure Tibetan," which highlights their persistent attempts at protecting their culture and traditions in a multicultural country. Participants considered following traditional customs and practices, worship rituals, wearing traditional Tibetan clothes, and speaking the pure Tibetan language (which is only possible within their families who understand the language and not outside where they need to largely speak Hindi, and sometimes English or local languages, to communicate with the native people) as indicators of being "true" Tibetans. Tibetans' strong association with their religion accords them a distinct status among refugees and is also a factor enabling their successful thriving (Hussain & Bhushan, 2011). Tibetan refugees' understanding of mental distress is intricately linked with cultural and religious factors, and they also view family support as an important coping strategy during tough times (Ruwanpura et al., 2006). Rituals are an inseparable part of Tibetan refugees' lives, and engaging in them brings them peace of mind and strength (Hussain & Bhushan, 2011). Significantly more female participants practised religious rituals and traditions, while male participants more often involved themselves in meditation and studying (both religious and non-religious scriptures). This finding perfectly corroborates earlier findings of such a sex difference among Tibetan refugees in India, where Buddhist rituals were noted to be practised more among women than men, while meditation and Buddhist world views were reportedly more prevalent among men than women (Hussain & Bhushan, 2011). Apart from religious practices, participants also actively took part in other activities to maintain their mental health, with the highest number of participants keeping themselves busy with entertainment—for example, watching tele-

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vision, playing games, listening to music—while others resorted to journaling, reading, writing, and taking care of their health through diet and exercise. These are the activities that people in general engaged in during the lockdowns (Finnerty et al., 2021).

This study's findings show that overall, the COVID-19 pandemic only mildly affected the cultural integrity and mental health of Tibetan refugees. This is in contrast with the trend noted among Indians during the COVID-19 pandemic (Rehman et al., 2021). However, it is important to note that demographical variations were present in the amount of stress perceived, resilience, financial anxiety, and expectations of a dark future, and should be given due consideration by authorities and non-governmental organizations aiming to develop plans to help Tibetan refugees in India. Though overall low levels of financial anxiety and expectations of a dark future were noted in the present sample, these variables significantly predicted higher levels of perceived stress among participants. Another noteworthy finding was the moderate to high levels of resilience in Tibetan refugees, which was significantly linked with lower levels of perceived discrimination and expectations of dark future.

Participants' reports of practising Tibetan religious practices and rituals and meditation, listening to the Dalai Lama's speeches, and so on may also help explain the high resilience reported during the pandemic. Community beliefs and values enhance adaptive functioning in day-to-day life, even in extreme conditions (Baker & Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 1999). Tibetans' strong cultural belief in the concepts of **karma**—suffering as part of life—and reincarnation helps them to humbly accept their sufferings and is also the crucial factor behind their high resilience in adversity (Hussain & Bhushan, 2011). Tibetans are also known to "let go" of distress, rather than holding on to it, in accordance with their cultural and religious views (Lewis, 2013). However, another possibility behind the present findings of mild to moderate impact of the pandemic on the cultural integrity and mental health of the Tibetan refugees may be that they underestimated the pandemic's impact on various aspects of their life, as they are known to hide their feelings and tend not to be very expressive of their physical or emotional pains (Servan-Schreiber et al., 1998).

The limitations of this study merit consideration. First, a convenience sampling method was used for choosing participants, and the participant sample was small. Therefore, the findings may not represent the experiences of the greater Tibetan refugee community residing in India. Second, most data were collected online in view of the prevailing pandemic situation, and therefore it was not possible to further probe the participants' responses to qualitative questions. Third, there were more younger participants in the sample since they are technically more skilled and have working knowledge of the English language, and therefore could complete the questionnaires online. Fourth, since the study did not include data on Tibetan refugees from before the pandemic, it is not possible to ascertain whether the present findings indicate a deviation from before the pandemic. Future studies should seek to address these limitations and validate the current findings on a larger, more representative sample of Tibetan refugees.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study highlight that Tibetan refugees in India have not experienced much stress, financial anxiety, or ethnic discrimination, nor did they expect

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a dark future, during the COVID-19 pandemic. Tibetan refugees also reported moderate to high levels of resilience. Tibetan cultural beliefs and practices, such as ardent faith in the Dalai Lama, worship of Buddha, and beliefs in karma, reincarnation, life being full of suffering, and so on, help Tibetan refugees maintain high resilience, which is associated with lower stress and anxiety. Although the findings suggest that cultural rituals and practices appear to provide protection against stress and anxiety, demographic variations in the levels of reported stress, resilience, financial anxiety, and expectations of a dark future need were noted and need to be focused on and addressed by authorities and non-governmental organizations working for the betterment of Tibetan refugees.

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Refugee-Led Organizations' Crisis Response During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

Scholarship on disaster response and recovery has focused on local communities as crucial in developing and implementing timely, effective, and sustainable supports. Drawing from interviews with refugee leaders conducted during the spring and summer of 2020 at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, this study examines crisis response activities of refugee-led grassroots groups, specifically within Bhutanese and Congolese refugee communities in a midwestern metropolitan area in the US resettlement context. Empirical findings illustrate how refugee-led groups provided case management, outreach, programming, and advocacy efforts to respond to the pandemic. These findings align with literature about community-based and strengths-based approaches to addressing challenges stemming from the pandemic. They also point to local embeddedness and flexibility as organizational characteristics that may have helped facilitate crisis response, thereby warranting reconsideration and re-envisioning of the role of refugee-led grassroots groups in crisis response.

KEYWORDS

pandemic; crisis response; practice with refugees; COVID-19

RESUMÉ

La recherche sur l'intervention et le rétablissement en cas de catastrophe s'est concentrée sur les communautés locales comme ayant un rôle crucial dans le développement et la mise en œuvre de soutiens opportuns, efficaces et durables. S'appuyant sur des entretiens avec des leaders réfugiés effectués au printemps et à l'été 2020 au début de la pandémie, cette étude examine les activités d'intervention en situation de crise menées par des groupes de base dirigés par des réfugiés, particulièrement au sein des communautés de réfugiés bhoutanais et congolais d'une région métropolitaine du Midwest dans le contexte de réinstallation des États-Unis. Les résultats empiriques illustrent comment les groupes dirigés par des réfugiés ont assuré la gestion de cas, les activités de

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rayonnement, la programmation ainsi que les efforts de plaidoyer en réponse à la pandémie. Ces résultats convergent avec la littérature sur une démarche de proximité et une approche axée sur les forces comme réponse aux défis issus de la pandémie. Ils soulignent également que l'intégration locale et la flexibilité sont des caractéristiques organisationnelles qui ont pu faciliter la réponse à la crise, cautionnant ainsi de reconsidérer et de ré-envisager le rôle des groupes de base dirigés par des réfugiés dans l'intervention en situation de crise.

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INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 has been one of the greatest transboundary mega-crises to impact contemporary societies in the last two centuries. As a continuously unfolding event, the pandemic has presented fundamental challenges for crisis management capacities at state and local levels (Boin et al., 2020). Local government entities, as well as civil society organizations and social service providers, were not prepared for such a crisis and therefore have lacked the resources to respond in comprehensive ways. Meanwhile, scholarship on crisis response and recovery has examined how sustainable responses emerge from the ground up, drawing from the strengths of and ties within communities (Misra et al., 2017; Ogie & Pradhan, 2019). The challenges that stem from crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic, are unique in their magnitude, dynamism, and urgency. Crisis response thus necessitates a diverse set of actors—not only state and institutionalized actors but also grassroots actors (Cheng et al., 2020; Kitching et al., 2016; Lawrence, 2020), including those in refugee communities (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR] Staff, 2020).

A recent turn in refugee studies shifts the focus onto refugee-led efforts to provide support for refugee communities. In the context of international humanitarian and protection work, scholars examine how refugees' organizational capacities interact with structural factors in refugee camps to create different modalities of assistance and outcomes for refugees (Pincock et al., 2020). Meanwhile, within national contexts of resettlement, studies have similarly interrogated the complex links between the state and refugee-run organizations (Gonzalez Benson, 2020a). Studies focus on grassroots groups formed by refugees for refugees or refugee-led organizations (RLOs) (Clarke, 2014; Gonzalez Benson, 2020a; Gonzalez Benson, 2020b), illustrating how RLOs expand the scope of assistance and diversify types of services to accommodate the limited resources and supports provided by state-funded institutions and agencies (Gonzalez Benson, 2020a; Gonzalez Benson, 2020b).

The COVID-19 pandemic presents as a moment for deepening understanding of refugee-led efforts to provide care and social services. As the pandemic spread across the world, refugee communities were among the hardest hit in the United States (Clarke et al., 2020) and in other national (Dempster et al., 2020) and international contexts (Hakiza et al., 2020; Kluge et al., 2020). In the United States, specific vulnerabilities arose for refugee communities due to precarious working and living conditions, health inequalities, and limited access to care (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2020). Refugee communities had less access to information and public

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health assistance than did the general population (Brickhill-Atkinson & Hauck, 2021). Professional workers have long been found to struggle to reach refugee and immigrant communities in providing services (Langlois et al., 2016). As localities around the world mobilized at the grassroots level to respond to the pandemic crisis, refugee communities did too.

Our research team was conducting fieldwork on the ground about the activities, processes, resources, and institutional linkages of RLOs in March 2020 when the pandemic reached the United States.[1] As the pandemic impacted refugee communities, RLOs pivoted to focus on crisis response, and so our study also pivoted accordingly. In this study, we examine data from interviews and participant observations in RLOs for Bhutanese and Congolese refugees in a US midwestern city in summer 2020. Applying a theoretical framework from previous research, we provide a descriptive examination of case management, outreach, programming, and advocacy conducted by RLOs as a method of crisis response to COVID-19. Drawing upon primary empirical data, our findings align with the crisis response literature, which promotes community-based and strengths-based approaches. Empirical findings then point to local embeddedness and flexibility as two conceptual insights about RLOs' organizational attributes that may be relevant for crisis response, thus raising questions and opening lines for future research.

BACKGROUND

Community-Based and Strengths-Based Approaches to Crisis Response and Recovery

The literature on crisis response and recovery has increasingly emphasized community-based and strengths-based approaches (Rowlands, 2013). As an unfolding process, crisis response involves co-constructed interactions between people—with their culturally contingent values, political systems, technologies, and practices—and their material environments (Faas & Barrios, 2015). During a crisis, the dynamics of grassroots micro-level practices have consequences that affect and restructure the dynamics of mezzo- and macro-level institutions, such as large non-profit organizations and publicly funded social service institutions (Shove et al., 2012).

From a strengths-based perspective, crises can be characterized not only by negative effects, such as conflict, but also by positive effects, such as mobilization, solidarity, co-operation, and improved adaptation to the environment (Lalonde, 2004). Conventionally, ethnic and refugee communities are viewed as marginalized or disempowered; however, a strengths-based perspective recognizes the unique communal strengths they bring to address the impacts of a crisis (Ogie & Pradhan, 2019).

Organizational Embeddedness in Crisis Response

The valuing of communal capacity and knowledge is activated when joined with a relational approach to managing and responding to crisis. Several studies on service delivery and crisis response have focused on the importance of embeddedness within or relationships with local communities during times of crisis or disaster (Bell, 2008; Seelos et al., 2011). This embeddedness or relationality is not only the extent to which organizations are linked with communities but the quality of those linkages (Seelos et al., 2011). The underlying perspective is that communities are important collective

[1] 1 See Pimentel Walker et al. (2021) for details about this previous work.

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social units, or networks, and assistance and care are thus facilitated when they are embedded within these interlocking social relationships. The effectiveness of these interlocking relationships influences the communities' abilities to cope with disaster events (Misra et al., 2017). The capacity for community-based organizations to navigate crisis situations, where there may be a lack of organized structure, illustrates how valuable it is for these organizations to be connected to individuals affected by a crisis (Pipa, 2006). The COVID-19 pandemic created a dramatic shift in perspectives and programs similar to federal disaster emergency programs, such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Whole Community, which was focused on community resilience in disaster preparedness (Koch et al., 2017). In particular, conditions of quarantine in response to the pandemic led to a new understanding for both academics and practitioners of local capacity and community strengths (Truell, 2021).

Organizational Flexibility in Crisis Response

Organizational flexibility refers to behaviour and decision-making (Mendonça et al., 2001) within social networks (Lind et al., 2008) characterized by agility, improvisation, and spontaneous planning (McEntire et al., 2013). Flexibility in different phases of a crisis, and in a constantly changing service delivery environment, is critical to coordinating responses that are timely and effective (Maglajlic, 2018; Webb & Chevreau, 2006). Many non-governmental service providers are often unable to successfully employ already limited resources in times of crisis due to bureaucratic processes and lack of pre-existing relationships (Lein et al., 2009). Therefore, outside or professionalized aid often starts to arrive later in the process and in varying degrees, which can be particularly problematic during times of crisis.

Refugee Communities and Refugee-Led Organizations

In this section, we provide background on RLOs emerging out of resettled refugee communities. RLOs in places of resettlement, sometimes termed **mutual aid associations**, are generally small grassroots collectives, groups, or nonprofit organizations formed by refugees themselves to assist their own co-ethnic or refugee communities. Immigrants and asylum seekers may also form similar groups, but this study focuses solely on refugee communities' groups. Some RLOs are formalized as an official, registered organization, while others are more loosely and informally organized. RLO leaders are typically those who speak English well and those with work and higher education experience. As small entities, RLOs are often volunteer-run, lack office space, and have limited or no operational structure, paid staff, and/or funding. As a result, RLOs generally rely on personal resources, including RLO leaders' time and expertise, and spatial resources such as living rooms and public spaces, for example, libraries and apartments (Gonzalez Benson, 2020a). RLOs provide cultural and social activities, providing space for community building and celebrating histories and identities (Gonzalez Benson, 2020a). RLOs also provide case management and crisis assistance, advocacy, outreach services (such as social media), and programming (e.g., ESL and citizenship classes, seminars on parenting, wellness programming for older adults) (Gonzalez Benson, 2020a). RLOs are often overlooked in research and practice, as attention is placed on more established nonprofit organizations, especially those that are state funded (Gleeson & Bloemraad, 2013).

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Responding to empirical and theoretical gaps in the literature, emerging research conceptually reframes RLOs as complex organizational entities within the social welfare domain, providing resources and potential institutional links for the provision of and access to needed social services (Clarke, 2014; Gonzalez Benson, 2020a; Pincock et al., 2020). Possessing relational capacity and connection to the local community, RLOs are recognized as providing assistance and responding with comprehension to community needs (Gonzalez Benson, 2020a). One conceptual framework forwards five types of welfare support activities provided by RLOs: case management, outreach activities, programming, cultural and social activities, and advocacy. Through case management and outreach, leaders seek and advocate for social services on behalf of community members and work to ensure that services reach those most vulnerable and hard to reach. Additionally, through program development, RLOs develop various group-based, time-specific interventions to achieve organizational objectives. Rather than viewing RLOs as peripheral to large government-sponsored service providers or well-established nonprofit organizations, grassroots refugee-led organizations can be seen as vital actors in the provision of welfare support activities (Gonzalez Benson, 2020a; Pincock et al., 2020).

For refugee and migrant communities and in the context of COVID-19, supports—in the form of both community-based responses and social welfare assistance—have been particularly important as these communities have been highly impacted. Not only are refugee and migrant communities at greater risk of comorbidity due to interwoven risks in their working and living conditions, but they may also lack access to health care and mainline welfare services (Hooper et al., 2020). Across the world, RLOs have caught the attention of the media and institutional and governmental actors as they have mobilized during the pandemic (Amnesty International, 2020; Global Compact on Refugees, 2020; Hakiza et al., 2020). Drawing from an existing framework on RLO activities, this study presents its own account to test some of the patterns seen in previous accounts, providing empirically based analysis of RLOs' crisis response during the COVID-19 pandemic.

METHODS

This study focuses on RLOs' activities in Bhutanese and Congolese refugee communities in a midwestern metropolitan area in the United States. Bhutanese and Congolese refugees are two of the three largest refugee groups in the area (the third group is Burmese refugees), having arrived there approximately 10 years ago. Bhutanese and Congolese RLOs were secular entities active in the local area, while Burmese groups were connected and functioned mostly through a community church. Our research team has been working with these RLOs and communities since 2018 in a larger participatory action research project. Data for the study focuses on interviews with leaders of RLOs conducted from March to August 2020, during the earlier phases of the pandemic. The study was initially about RLOs' work in general, but the pandemic created a situation whereby RLOs shifted their focus to crisis response, and the research focus shifted accordingly. We obtained institutional approval for our research, and interviewees gave written consent to be interviewed. Each organization received a stipend of $1,500 as partial compensation for its time and effort. In addition to data from individual interviews that this study analyzed, RLO leaders participated

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in other intensive research activities: surveys, focus groups, organizational capacity-building activities, and collaborations on programming for research. While there may be questions of possible respondent bias due to the financial compensation, from an equity perspective, our team believed compensation was necessary (Bromley et al., 2015).

The one Bhutanese organization (termed BRLO) and two Congolese organizations (termed CRLO1 and CRLO2) that were present in the local area were approached, and all three participated. Because all in-person research was curtailed due to the pandemic, all interviews were conducted via Zoom and were then transcribed for analysis. Research team members, trained in data collection and research processes, conducted semi-structured interviews in English, which lasted one hour on average. They covered many domains, such as range and modality of activities, connection with institutions, organizational structure, and barriers. Fourteen leaders were interviewed: eight from BRLO and three each from CRLO1 and CRLO2. Each RLO leader was interviewed at least twice; a total of 38 interviews were conducted. Study limitations include sole reliance on leaders' accounts and lack of perspectives from community members and other institutional actors with whom the RLOs engaged. Such perspectives would enrich and triangulate data, allowing deeper examination.

For analysis, we directly utilized five concepts from an existing conceptual framework (Gilgun, 2013) on types of RLO welfare support activities: case management, outreach activities, programming, social and cultural activities, and advocacy. Using these five activities as a priori concepts for framing our descriptive analysis, we specifically inquired whether RLOs conducted the five activities as part of crisis response to the COVID-19 pandemic and, if so, how. First, one analyst created a subset of interview data with content related to the pandemic. Second, the analyst coded transcripts using the five types of RLO activities as parent codes. Next, a second analyst joined to analyze data and generate smaller subthemes within each type of activity. Analysis also included examining divergent themes and consistency of themes across the full set of interviews. In other words, as subthemes emerged, we also analyzed data for conflicting or contrary evidence to those subthemes, as well as for relevance of the subthemes across the three RLOs. The final step entailed selecting quotes to illustrate diversity and commonality within the data. Analysis did not entail a comparative approach that paralleled or differentiated between the Bhutanese and Congolese RLOs; instead, analysis focused on generating themes across the three RLOs. We use pseudonyms in presenting our findings.

FINDINGS

Case Management

Case management involves direct or one-on-one assistance for individuals, families, or small groups and can entail a range of activities such as appointment scheduling, systems navigation, and initial assessment of health issues. While case management is typically considered a practice conducted as part of social welfare assistance or by helping professionals, civil society organizations, including RLOs, also provide such necessary direct assistance, albeit through more informal and personal processes.

At the height of the pandemic, the Bhutanese and Congolese RLOs received hundreds of calls from community members asking for information and expressing

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fear. During this time, Marie of CRLO2, a Congolese leader, described the "most busy day of [her] life" after answering phone calls from early morning through the night with questions related to the novel coronavirus. Bhutanese leaders reported that their team received "approximately 4,000 calls" at the onset of the pandemic. Bhutanese and Congolese leaders assisted with specific challenges, shared information about COVID safety on a one-one-one basis, and helped allay fear and anxiety. Case management activities involved a range of issues stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic, including health concerns, children's virtual education, and access to online services, food, and unemployment benefits, as described below.

Case Management Related to Health

Refugee leaders explained what to do when people got sick and emphasized why it was important to wear masks, wash hands, and practise social distancing while at home. This was of special concern, as many in the refugee community were essential workers and could not work from home, as mentioned by Dawa of BRLO. In the local area of the study, many refugees worked in meat-processing plants and other factories that became hotspots at the peak of COVID-19 infections in summer 2020 (Dyal et al., 2020).

Jean of CRLO2 encouraged a fearful community member to seek medical treatment, explaining what going to the hospital was like and assuring him that "the hospital is not bad. They help people if [they have] COVID." Assistance often also entailed some level of assessment so that support was tailored to specific needs and information shared was appropriate. Sonam of BRLO reported the following:

> They said, "What do I do next?" Then I said, "Okay. What do you need? Well, what does your house look like? How many [are] positive in your house?" We try to understand what they are doing. A few people said, "Someone in my family is positive, but I'm not sure I am." So, we just gave them addresses where they can go get tested.

Helping Parents with Children's At-Home Virtual Education

Jitu of BRLO described a call from a woman who was distressed about having to work while her children were attending virtual school. She was anxious about getting sick at work but had also heard from her children's teacher that her children were not completing assignments. Jitu talked with the woman about her options and encouraged her to talk with her employer's human resources (HR) department about taking a leave from work. Jitu said the following:

> She wanted to get a couple weeks off from work so that she could stay home and then teach her kids the school materials because they were missing out a lot in school. And she was complaining about that. I told her, "You need to go talk to people in your company and if you're not able to, then let us know." And then she said that "today I'm going to go and ask. I'm going to ask my HR about that."

Meanwhile, to help with navigating virtual education, Clement of CRLO1 mentioned that Congolese leaders referred families to other organizations serving refugees in matters related to education. He explained that for assistance they cannot provide themselves, they connect community members to appropriate resources.

Helping Families Access Online Services

Marie of CRLO2 said that many families were challenged when various services went online as the pandemic shut down in-person services. Marie said, "It was really hard for

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them because they don't have access to internet." For instance, many Congolese refugee families were not sure how to pay bills online or did not have access to a computer and/or the internet. Before the pandemic, Marie said she would have been working side by side with the person needing assistance to pay bills online. But assisting remotely required new strategies: Marie took photos for documentation and had three-way phone calls. It soon became the norm for Congolese leaders to have people send photos of their documents in text messages so that the leader could file for them remotely. Marie said,

> They don't know how to [pay bills] online. So that's where we came in. Mostly they don't have computers, [but] I have mine. If somebody called me, I need to make a payment of the bill. I will take a picture of the bill. So I have access of the account number and then must be on the phone and call for them.

Assisting with Food and Basic Needs

Marie of CRLO2 said that access to food was also a concern. The RLO assisted by driving families to the grocery store or food pantries at local churches, which the leader was notified about via emails from the churches. Despite the buses running, Marie said she still helped with transportation because "families who have a lot of kids really need help. …They have to take two, three buses to get there. And then they had stuff to carry. So that's why we provide rides for them at least."

Assisting with Unemployment Benefits

As the pandemic shut down businesses, many workers with refugee backgrounds were at high risk of losing their jobs. A large and pressing need for members of both Bhutanese and Congolese communities involved learning how to apply for unemployment benefits and managing being out of work. Refugee leaders worked one on one with people to help them file for unemployment benefits and provided other job-related assistance in a socially distanced manner.

Hari of BRLO, who worked in IT, helped a community member file for unemployment by using screenshare technology, Chrome Remote Desktop,[2] which allowed him to see the community member's computer screen. Sonam, another leader in BRLO, helped a woman establish eligibility for unemployment benefits and then continued to help her file claims every two weeks until she learned how to do it on her own. At one point, there were so many unemployed community members seeking help that Bhutanese RLO leaders created a document with step-by-step instructions showing how to apply for unemployment benefits, with an accompanying video of a person describing the instructions in Nepali. Congolese leaders saw issues similar to those in the Bhutanese community, with people having trouble navigating the intricacies of the unemployment application. Clement of CRLO1 said they helped community members create accounts and troubleshoot issues on the unemployment benefits program website. Marie of CRLO2 recalled that these issues with unemployment were "pretty much the most common" difficulties encountered by community members in April and May 2020.

In sum, RLOs provided immediate case management, especially during lockdowns. RLO leaders supplied online texting apps and phone contact lists that connected members to each other and to the RLO leadership. Furthermore, in their native language, RLOs managed social media platforms with infor-

[2] Google, Mountain View, CA: https://remotedesktop.google.com/.

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mation about community vulnerabilities and strengths.

Outreach

Outreach in the community is conceptualized as the methods used to help community members, especially the most vulnerable, gain access to information and support. Communication strategies are a main component of outreach. Refugee leaders worked to ensure that accurate information was available to their communities in accessible languages. Leaders from all three communities reported that they believed misinformation about COVID-19 was spread due to lack of translated resources provided by formal actors. Hari of BRLO explained:

> With [the] language barrier and whatnot, they're relying more on the information that was available in social media, and they were very misinformed by their posts. I can give examples of posts that they were going through, where it says, eat this, eat that, or do this to avoid getting the virus or, if you ever have the virus, eat a whole lot of hot peppers or ginger. … So we had to clear that out and make sure that people are not getting sick from trying all these things that were not approved or not recommended by doctors.

Using various social media, RLO leaders shared information rapidly to combat misinformation and stigma, as described below.

Sharing Accurate, Timely Information on WhatsApp

Clement of CRLO1 reported that he regularly translated information obtained from the local resettlement agency and state agencies and shared it in a community WhatsApp group. WhatsApp was used to share up-to-date information directly in Congolese languages and to explain COVID-19 precautions to the community, as the WhatsApp group had "almost over 200" members and allowed for question-and-answer-type responses, explained Benoit of CRLO1. When information was posted, group members could respond with questions, and leaders would do their best to respond, usually within five minutes, Benoit added.

A considerable amount of misinformation, stigma, and fear emerged and then intensified among community members, and sharing accurate, up-to-date information was especially important to RLO leaders. Jean of CRLO2 described assisting someone who was afraid to go to the hospital because he believed that if he tested positive for COVID-19, the hospital would keep him there and not let him leave. Jean thought the lack of available translated information contributed to this type of fear. Further, Benoit of CRLO1 expressed frustration that people were not taking COVID-19 seriously enough because they "have not seen anyone pass away because of COVID." Benoit explained the situation this way: "There are a lot of people in our community, over 2,000 or 3,000, I think. But the [number of] people who test positive are like 10 or 15 but no one has passed away. That's why they say [COVID-19] is not bad or strong." RLOs were in a position to share accurate information that was not readily available with community members in their native languages so that the gravity of the pandemic could be understood.

Combatting Misinformation and Stigma via Facebook Live Events

To combat misinformation, BRLO leaders hosted two Facebook Live events. In the first event in April 2020, BRLO leaders interviewed people who had tested positive for COVID-19. Sonam of BRLO explained this outreach activity:

> [We aimed to] educate people about what happens when you are positive. … A lot of people had [tested]

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> positive and they were kind of scared to tell people because of their own reasons. But our goal was, if you're positive, you've got nothing to worry about. Just quarantine yourself and be safe. Let others know that you are positive, so nobody comes visit your place for a week or two weeks.

The event was successful in addressing stigma, Sonam said, adding,

> After that interview [at the live event], a lot of people contacted us, saying, "Okay. My family has this many positive [cases], we need masks." Then we got a much better response from the community. And people are not really worried about hiding it anymore.

In partnership with the county health department, Bhutanese leaders hosted a second Facebook Live event, during which they interviewed a medical doctor and encouraged people to submit questions. An interpreter provided translation during the event. This was important because mainstream public health information events were often only in English or other languages inaccessible to Bhutanese and Congolese refugees (e.g., Spanish, American Sign Language). The Facebook Live event was an effort to explain "what's myth and what is fact" by connecting the community with someone who had a "more credible voice to explain all the different misconceptions," said Hari of BRLO. Bhutanese and Congolese RLOs were able to employ unique and community-specific outreach methods, such as communication through social media such as WhatsApp and Facebook.

Programming

Programming entails assistance targeted towards specific groups of people and is conducted over time in a repeated or scheduled manner (e.g., weekly, monthly, or for a pre-planned number of days). Compared with case management and outreach as forms of assistance that can be done by individual RLO leaders on a one-time, case-by-case basis, programming entails more time, funding, coordination, and planning by leaders. During COVID-19, new forms of programming emerged, specifically in the Bhutanese RLO. BRLO leaders planned and implemented programs to distribute personal protective equipment (PPE) and food, as described below.

Collecting Community Information and Determining Needs

BRLO leaders identified community members in need of PPE and resources by posting on the community Facebook page and calling people listed on sign-in sheets from past events. Hari reported the following:

> To begin with, what we did was we communicated. So we have our Facebook page … that most of our members kind of visit regularly for updates and information. And then also, as a community organization, we had a list of people from the past, from past events that we've conducted. We had sign-in sheets that had the name and address and phone number.

BRLO leaders also reached out to religious leaders, specifically those in the largest Nepali church in the area and a Buddhist community leader, for information about community members, said Sangay. Once families were identified, BRLO leaders contacted each family to arrange for distribution of PPE. Sangay explained:

> And then it kind of flowed for the community, you know. We talked to one family and that family talked to other families, and it was basically good communication that started and went very well. We were able to identify as many vulnerable or the elderly people that we had in our community. Once we had their address, we started delivering those kits.

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Organizing PPE Distribution Days: Door-to-Door Deliveries

On what BRLO called its distribution days, leaders drove around for hours and gave out PPE packets in a contact-free manner. In the first two days, BRLO delivered PPE to hundreds of houses. Sonam described what was in the PPE kits: "So, it had a hand sanitizer and masks, and sometimes gloves. One, two, three, four, five—we put up to five masks, and one or two hand sanitizers, depending on the family size." Hari further explained distribution days:

> We were able to do the first round of distribution very well. So we did our contactless distribution, where we packaged everything in a Ziploc bag and then we left them at the door or we just, you know, told them where they could come to safely pick those up.

Distribution days lasted for weeks during the early phase of the pandemic in April, May, and June 2020, when public health information was lacking. As BRLO started distributing supplies, more and more people called; at one point, Jitu said he was managing over 200 calls a day from people who were asking for deliveries and supplies. Dawa shared a Google spreadsheet to document callers and track distributions. BRLO coverage spanned the entire metropolitan area and extended to another nearby city.

For the distributions, Hari explained that BRLO contacted community members to identify those with higher risks and greater challenges, such as adults with pre-existing medical conditions, adults aged 65 years and over, and families with only one working adult or a sick member. Hari said, "We tried to give priority to those people to make sure that … we do not want [things] to escalate to a mental and emotional issue."

Creating a PPE Pick-Up Centre in a Community Leader's Garage

In June 2020, the spread of COVID-19 had worsened, with more and more cases of COVID-19 being contracted within the local Bhutanese community. Thus, BRLO members revised their approach, as Hari said:

> And then on the second round, once we realized that most of our families, most of our community members had tested positive, we had to be more cautious. So, we actually designated a place where they can come in and pick up their kits. So that was what we did on the second round, when we had challenges finding volunteers. … We had to designate a place, find a place where we can securely store those resources and they would come and pick up their kits. And then, we had a kind of set-up where only one person can come in and they had to maintain social distance when they come in and only 10 people were allowed to pick up each day.

The designated pick-up place was the garage of one BRLO leader, ideal for its central location. The donated PPE was stored in the garage, and BRLO scheduled windows for pick-up when people could get supplies. The protocol for pick-up was based on CDC guidelines for social distancing.

Organizing Food Distribution Days

In the summer of 2020, when the number of positive cases fell, BRLO turned its focus to food security. By this time, most businesses had been shut down for months, and many workers in the refugee community had lost their jobs or had their work hours reduced, thus limiting financial resources for food and other basic needs. BRLO helped families with reduced budgets for food. BRLO partnered with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and local organizations and conducted food distribution days. Food distribution occurred once a week on Saturdays in its first month, and it increased to twice a

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week over the summer, said Dawa. Sonam said,

> So then, we let people know … if you are in need, contact us. We dropped [the food] off for them. One particular family was a single mom with two kids. She reached out to me and we dropped it off to that particular family. And there's another family of seven.

BRLO collected donations of 150 boxes of fruit and vegetables from the USDA and about 50 bags of rice and other groceries from three Nepali stores and a Burmese store. Food distribution was run solely by BRLO volunteers, and about 100 families were each provided with a 25-pound box of fruit, vegetables, and groceries, said Jitu.

Advocacy

To ensure equity in emergency response, community-based organizations must be engaged in changing practices, procedures, and policies, joining grounded advocacy efforts, which are especially important in the fields of health and human services (Miranda et al., 2020). RLO leaders sought to give voice to community issues not being addressed and called for responses from those who could help and from those in power, including businesses, employers, and non-governmental and governmental organizations. RLOs advocated on behalf of community members on a wide range of issues and with many different actors.

Case Advocacy and Liaison with Employers for COVID-19 Safety in the Workplace and Unemployment

Refugee leaders advocated for refugees' right to services in conjunction with case management activities. In one example, issues with unemployment applications required a Congolese leader to contact an unemployment agent directly on the phone to "make sure that [they are] fixing that case for them," reported Clement of CRLO1. Advocating for refugees' right to language services meant convincing the unemployment applications agent to do a three-way call, so that the leader could interpret, he explained: "I call them, I say that I'm not the person, but I have my friend who doesn't speak English. And sometimes they agree to do a triangle call."

Case advocacy entailed encouraging or empowering refugees to advocate for themselves. In an earlier example, where Jitu was working with a woman who was struggling to balance employment and assisting with her children's virtual education during the pandemic, Jitu encouraged her to communicate with her employer about the situation: "I told her, 'you should go back and tell [HR] what's going on and explain it to them and maybe they'll be able to figure something out for you."'

As community members expressed frustration and anxiety that they were not receiving PPE at their workplaces, BRLO leaders took action. Hari described how his organization directly engaged with employers:

> BRLO reached out to three employers in the area where they had the majority of our people working, food and meat factories. We reached out to their HR, their managers on what exactly is happening, why are they not providing us this list of basic protection for the employees? And some of them responded very well. They said, "We're a small industry. We do not have the resources, we're still struggling." And then we understand that part. And then also, some of them were simply ignoring us.

Further, Dawa explained how one employer was interested in collaborating with BRLO after seeing that many employees were getting sick. They worked together to have BRLO translate a document with

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questions and answers about COVID-19 that was shared with employees.

Advocacy and Liaison with Elected Officials, Public Officials, and Other Actors/Institutions

In broader advocacy efforts towards health equity for refugee communities, RLOs expressed their concerns to elected officials and called for attention and response. During a quarterly meeting of local community stakeholders and service providers, BRLO and CRLO leaders spoke out to state representatives about their communities' needs and about employers not providing PPE for refugee workers. Hari of BRLO said he sent emails to the state representative and state senator regarding this issue. In another example, Sonam said that BRLO leaders raised this issue during one of their weekly meetings with the director of the state health department, asking her that refugees' employers follow health protocols. The health department gave assurance that it would follow up on the issue, but concrete outcomes were not communicated back to BRLO.

DISCUSSION

Through explication of the activities engaged in by RLOs during the early weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic, our findings point to organizational embeddedness and flexibility as two organizational characteristics that may be crucial for enabling or facilitating a community-based, strengths-based crisis response, specifically in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and refugee communities. Embeddedness and flexibility are crucial in crisis response (Brown, 2002; Evans & Bahrami, 2020), and our findings point to these concepts as relevant also for future research into the specific context of refugee communities and the COVID-19 pandemic and into refugee- and immigrant-led organizations more broadly. This study presents contextual illustrations of how RLOs' case management, outreach, programming, and advocacy efforts specific to crisis response may have emerged from organizational embeddedness and flexibility. It is important to note that though our analysis used the five types of RLO activities as a framework, interview data did not illustrate one type: cultural activities. Perhaps due to the urgency of the pandemic and to consolidate already limited resources towards the most crucial needs only, cultural activities took a backseat. It is also important to note that assessments of efficacy or impact are beyond the scope of this study; we do not present our discussion of RLOs' activities in terms of their success or their impact upon individuals and families. Future studies could examine RLOs' impact using evaluation studies or voices of community members served by them. Our findings encompass organizational processes and activities described by refugee leaders as research participants.

First, based on our interpretation, the local embeddedness of RLOs facilitated timely processes in crisis response. Common language and shared experiences are perhaps key here; our findings suggest that refugees turned to RLO leaders because they could translate important public health messages and they were able to understand community members' specific concerns related to jobs, family, and other socio-cultural aspects of life. Our findings suggest that further research is warranted on the significance of informal, personal, and pre-existing relationships (Smith, 2012), particularly in crisis response within hard-to-reach communities such as those of resettled refugees. For vulnerable communities during a crisis, trust is essential (Hasel,

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2013), and RLOs' local embeddedness can perhaps be seen as grounded in trust. In future research on refugees' disaster and crisis response, refugee leaders can perhaps be considered and examined "as primarily acting on the basis of their pre-disaster group affiliations" and "involved in emergency activities because of their group's formal or informal participation" (Quarantelli & Dynes, 1977, p. 9).

Second, our findings point to the flexibility of RLOs' organizational structure as another characteristic that may have helped facilitate RLOs' just-in-time response to the pandemic. By definition, RLOs are typically small and do not have rigid organizational leadership structures or bureaucratic procedures, as discussed above, which may slow down responses. Further research is needed to examine the ways by which RLOs may easily and quickly reconfigure themselves to respond to community need. Our findings raise questions about valuing the "smallness" of organizations and argue for highlighting organizational flexibility as an important consideration in future research. Specifically, it is crucial to further examine not only the conditions under which flexibility and embeddedness are most effective but also those conditions when those two organizational characteristics may present as limitations.

This study also illuminates the context in which RLOs operate. As discussed, RLOs are often small organizational entities that operate with limited or no funding and without a central location or office building, relying on refugee leaders' volunteerism and material resources. This study illustrates how, during times of crisis, RLO leaders were able to operate within one such resource-deprived context, cultivating and accessing a range of resources to serve community members. RLO leaders used their own cellphones, computers, and vehicles, for instance. The RLOs utilized existing social media channels for outreach and locally accessible resources and infrastructure, such as one leader's garage and an existing list of community members for distributing COVID-19 kits. As human resources themselves, RLO leaders donated personal time during this period of urgent community need; one RLO leader said she worked from early morning until late at night during the height of the first wave of the pandemic. Another type of non-material resource that served RLO leaders well in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic was a set of skills and knowledge previously acquired (e.g., those related to IT, computers, and public benefits). RLO leaders used material and human resources available prior to the pandemic, and such resources were quickly mobilized and accessed to a greater extent during the pandemic. Moreover, our findings point to social media and technology as vital resources, especially crucial given the unique demand for social isolation and virtual connectivity during the pandemic. Our empirical descriptive findings point to future research on social media and technology as resources for RLOs and refugee communities.

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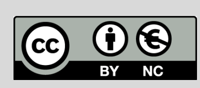

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Balancing Resettlement, Protection, and Rapport on the Front Line: Delivering the Resettlement Assistance Program During COVID-19

Saba Abbas

ABSTRACT

Drawing on my experience as a general counsellor in the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP), I explore the impact COVID-19 has had on the initial resettlement services provided for government-assisted refugees (GARs) and on frontline workers in the field. Balancing the requirement to enforce protection measures and the need to establish rapport was one of the major challenges the pandemic posed to GAR support practices. To unpack the particularities of this challenge, I give the example of two resettlement services GARs receive upon arrival: namely, resettlement orientations and children's education. I argue that using an intersectional lens demonstrates the pandemic's unequal effects and how they exacerbate the vulnerabilities of GARs embarking on their resettlement journey. I hold that developing COVID-19 responses informed by intersectionality opens a space for services and policies that mitigate these effects.

KEYWORDS

Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP); resettlement; COVID-19; intersectionality; remote services; government assisted refugees (GARs)

RESUMÉ

Puisant dans mon expérience comme conseillère générale au sein du Programme d'aide à la réinstallation (PAR), j'explore l'impact qu'a eu la COVID-19 sur les services de réinstallation initiaux offerts aux réfugiés parrainés par le gouvernement (RPG) et sur les travailleurs de première ligne dans ce domaine. La recherche d'un équilibre entre l'exigence d'appliquer les mesures de protection et le besoin d'établir un rapport était l'un des défis importants posés par la pandémie aux pratiques de soutien du PAR. Afin d'éclaircir les particularités de ce défi, je donne l'exemple de deux services de réinstallation que les RPGs reçoivent à leur arrivée, soit les services d'orientation à la réinstallation et l'éducation des enfants. Je soutiens que l'emploi d'une approche intersectionnelle démontre les effets inégaux de la pandémie et la manière dont ils exacerbent les vulnérabilités des RPGs qui débutent leur parcours de réinstallation. Je considère que le développement de réponses à la COVID-19 fondées sur l'intersectionnalité ouvre la voie à des services et des politiques qui atténuent ces effets.

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INTRODUCTION

By restricting movement and frontline services, the pandemic significantly impacted refugees. In this paper, I draw on my experience as a general counsellor (GC) in the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP), at the time of writing, to explore the impact the first wave of COVID-19 had on the resettlement of government-assisted refugees (GARs). Balancing the requirement to enforce protection and establish rapport remotely was one of the major challenges the pandemic posed to the RAP. To unpack this challenge, I give the example of two resettlement services GARs receive upon arrival: namely, resettlement orientations for adults and children's education. By reading the changes these services underwent intersectionally, I demonstrate how the pandemic's unequal effects exacerbated GARs' vulnerabilities. I argue that service providers and policy-makers can mitigate these effects by developing COVID-19 responses informed by intersectionality.

I begin by introducing the RAP and the intersectional framework of the analysis. I then discuss COVID-19's impact on RAP orientations, highlighting the challenges of establishing rapport remotely. Next, I examine the changes GAR children's education underwent and the intersectional oversight of the COVID-19 e-learning policy. I conclude by discussing practical implications and policy recommendations that could improve responses to future waves.

METHODOLOGY

This paper explores the resettlement of the GARs that arrived at COSTI's Ralph Chiodo Family Immigrant Reception Centre (hereafter CRCFIRC), the Toronto-based RAP service provider organization where I worked as a GC at the time of writing, during the first three months of the pandemic. CRCFIRC provides initial settlement services to GARs through a staff composed of intake counsellors, GCs, housing counsellors, and life skills workers. In 2020–2021, the centre served 2,331 GAR cases (COSTI, 2021).

Conducting interviews with CRCFIRC GARs during this period was unfortunately unfeasible. The perspectives I share draw on a desk review of academic and non-academic literature, policies, and open-data resources, and they are grounded in my experience providing frontline support during this time. My standpoint necessarily delineates the knowledge I produce; while I am an immigrant and I shared clients' risks on the front line, unlike them, I was sheltered by the privilege of being an established citizen and a service provider. My analysis is informed by, and accountable to, this positionality.

THE RESETTLEMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Through the RAP, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) provides GARs, outside of Quebec,[1] with initial resettlement services through designated service provider organizations (RAP SPOs). These are nonprofit organizations that offer settlement services enabled by government funding (Rose and Charrette, 2020, p. 199). There are 36 communities, each with a RAP SPO, across Canada (Government of Canada, 2017). RAP services include financial support, accommodation, orientations, links to federal/provincial programs, and housing searches (IRCC, 2019, pp. 6, 9, 37).

The particularity of GARs stems from their profiles. They are selected in accordance

[1] Quebec's program is called Programme Réussir L'Intégration and is administered by the Ministère de L'Immigration, de la Francisation et de l'Intégration (2020, pp. 19–23).

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with the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act based on protection needed (Esses et al., 2021, p. 60; IRCC, 2019, p. 8). Most have high needs pertaining to health, literacy, and traumas and receive nonclinical supportive counselling and trauma-informed services upon arrival (IRCC, 2019, pp. 14–16).

APPROACHING COVID-19 INTERSECTIONALLY

Identities and social relationships are shaped through a multitude of overlapping dimensions of difference (Crenshaw, 1991). Building on a long history of Black feminist work, Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term **intersectionality** to name the theoretical and political limitations of single-axis analytical frameworks that ignore this complexity of lived experience (Collins, 1990; Combahee River Collective, 1983; Crenshaw, 1989; Lorde, 1984). Intersectionality draws attention to the formation of structural inequalities at the convergence of multiple axes of power (Fraser, 2003, p. 75; May, 2014, p. 98). Rather than taking a linear cumulative approach to identity, it illustrates how individuals are placed differently within systems of power and how the convergence of their locations shapes experiences of oppression (Collins, 2015, p. 14; Crenshaw, 1991).

Using intersectionality as a framework for analysis can engender anti-oppressive policies that expose layered forms of marginalization otherwise invisible (Hankivsky and Mussell, 2018, p. 304; Lee and Brotman, 2013, p. 171). Refugees' identities and experiences, for example, are shaped by a number of overlapping systems. Conceptually, however, they do not seem to be codified intersectionally. The 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees, for one, defines refugees as individuals who are compelled to leave their countries of origin for fear of persecution (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], 1951). This definition seems to primarily conceptualize refugees' experiences through a single-axis outlook on displacement (Hayes, 2018, p. 69). In practice, the latter is often multi-layered, however, and is lived differently according to a refugee's class, dis/ability, age, gender, and sexual orientation, among other social positions, and according to the salient points at which these positions converge (Taha, 2019).

The advent of COVID-19 made the impact of these intersecting positions on refugees' experiences of displacement all the more salient, especially as they navigated the Canadian health and education systems. The GARs who arrived at CRCFIRC shortly before and during the pandemic, for example, varied in age, abilities, literacy levels, and trauma levels, among other social positions, and this heavily informed their responses to the new COVID-19 service delivery measures that CRCFIRC implemented. In the following analysis, I illustrate how COVID-19 quarantine and education policies often failed to consider the intersectionality of GARs' experiences, and I discuss the challenges this posed to SPOs such as CRCFIRC. By reading RAP responses and COVID-19 related policies intersectionally, I aim to contribute to the growing literature on COVID-19's impact on refugees (Christie and Ballot, 2020; Dempster et al., 2020; Esses et al., 2021; Flood et al., 2020; Hoagland and Randrianarisoa, 2021; Lang, 2020; Selmeczki and Ghaly, 2020; Shields and Abu Alrob, 2020). I also seek to add to the policy lessons that could improve responses to future waves.

COVID-19'S IMPACT ON RAP: MAPPING OUT MAJOR CHANGES

Most resettlement travel was suspended by mid-March 2020 (United Nations, 2020a).

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Seven GARs who were en route to Canada when the borders closed on March 16 were admitted, however, and CRCFIRC hosted them in its hotel-based location (CRCFIRC, 2020, p. 2). CRCFIRC was among few RAP SPOs that continued to receive GAR arrivals between April and May 2020. In fact, only RAP SPOs in Ontario did. Arrivals resumed in June in Alberta and British Colombia and in July in Manitoba, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Saskatchewan (Government of Canada, 2021). To put the impact in perspective, RAP SPOs in Ontario welcomed 15 new GARs between April and May 2020, compared with 745 for the same period in 2019 (Government of Canada, 2021). The drop in numbers in other provinces was equally significant. Arrivals in Alberta, Manitoba, Nova Scotia, and Saskatchewan, for example, dropped from 290, 95, 65, and 100, respectively, to 0 in this period (Government of Canada, 2021).

When the pandemic hit, each RAP SPO developed its safety protocol. By late March 2020, IRCC and leaders in the sector formed a RAP COVID-19 task team to streamline best practices (National Settlement and Integration Council, 2020a, 2020b). CRCFIRC's protocol used the guidelines of the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) and the Toronto Shelter, Support and Housing Administration. Similar to other RAP SPOs' protocols, it stipulated personal protective equipment (PPE) use for workers, providing arrivals with PPE and translated PHAC guidelines, quarantining them and delivering necessities to their rooms, using plexiglass barriers, rotating work schedules, and completing regular disinfection (Al-Astrabadi, 2021; CRCFIRC, 2020; Helou, 2021; Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia [ISS of BC], 2020b; Multicultural Association of Fredericton Inc, 2021).

To accommodate GARs' intersecting differences to the extent possible, CRCFIRC maintained an individualized response to COVID-19 by customizing quarantine and RAP services to meet clients' needs. For example, a female GAR who had complex medical needs was quarantined on site, not at the hotel like other GARs, to keep her close to medical services. While staff delivered services remotely and over the phone to other GARs in quarantine, they delivered her services in person while wearing PPE and maintaining distance. In the case of another family with high levels of trauma that were exacerbated by age and health, CRCFIRC staff revised the timeline of RAP services to be delivered during quarantine to meet their needs.

ESTABLISHING RAPPORT REMOTELY: THE EXAMPLE OF RAP ORIENTATIONS

RAP orientations introduce GARs to the terms of RAP and Canadian systems, among other topics (IRCC, 2019, pp. 40–70). They also prepare GARs for an IRCC interview, after which they receive their first income support cheque.

Establishing rapport is a prerequisite to successful orientations. A first step towards fostering connection and trust (Bronstein et al., 2012; Reinharz, 1992), the process is complex in the case of refugees as past traumas often affect their ability to establish trust (Kyriakides et al., 2019). In my experience, in-person connection gradually eases GARs' mistrust, but with COVID-19, this was increasingly difficult to establish. Nonverbal communication is in fact as important as verbal communication in enhancing rapport (Tickle-Degnen & Rosenthal, 1990, p. 288). Moreover, it is often through face-to-face encounters that individuals develop a sense of each other as un/trustworthy (Ahmed,

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2000). Smiling, shaking a client's hand, noticing their body language, and helping them identify documents goes a long way in building a connection. Such simple practices were often lost with remote service delivery.

While delivering services remotely constituted an important layer of protection, it simultaneously reified a layer of separation that complicated rapport building. On the one hand, remote services were a welcome alternative for skilled and equipped individuals, as many stakeholders in Canada, Sweden, and the United Kingdom reported (Esses et al., 2021, p. 63; Hoagland & Randrianarisoa, 2021, pp. 20, 32). Moreover, virtual counselling helped ease pandemic-related anxieties in many cases (International Organization for Migration [IOM], 2020). However, some of the limitations of virtual counselling only become clear when read intersectionally. For example, the needs of one GAR who had high trauma levels, complex medical needs, and little digital literacy and who arrived in Canada as part of a large family impacted how she managed remote disclosures. Her virtual counselling experience was determined by her layered identity and how each aspect of the later intersected with the isolating, mobility-restricting, and triggering effects of quarantine. For example, while some SPOs provided clients with tablets or cellphones to enhance remote rapport building with video communication in similar cases (Al-Astrabadi, 2021; Helou, 2021), this solution left intact limitations such as having no space to process one's feelings after sessions during lockdown and quarantine (Campana, M. (Host), 2020b), especially when one has a big family in close proximity.

Prioritizing trainings on the intricacies and limitations of remote service delivery (Esses et al., 2021, pp. 64–65) may mitigate such intersectional oversights. I suggest that envisioning alternative quarantine formats is equally important, as some RAP SPOs have been unable to secure video-enabled devices to enhance remote connections (Shields & Abu Alrob, 2020, p. 24). CRCFIRC clients, for example, used landlines to communicate with staff. In this context, I had to depend on verbal cues exclusively to establish rapport. I prioritized gauging how self-isolation was affecting clients' traumas by contacting them regularly, asking about their well-being, and following their lead regarding the pace of our connection. Through the budding rapport, I then determined their triggers and proceeded to orientations.

The particularities involved varied according to clients' needs. For example, one family I oriented remotely had a history of war-induced trauma, and the more we spoke, the more I realized they would not benefit from orientations immediately. The couple's confinement-related trauma resulted in heightened anxiety that was compounded by the requirement to quarantine for 14 days with multiple children. The quarantine policy in place hardly considered the nuances that resulted from the intersectionality of the clients' histories of trauma, gender roles, and health needs. Self-isolation often exacerbates GARs' traumas and triggers feelings of being back in prison (Geisler, 2020). Additionally, in the case of this family, gender dynamics further complicated the experience of quarantine as the wife had to manage childcare while dealing with confinement-induced triggers and the intensifying symptoms of a war injury. To mitigate this oversight, I tailored a service plan that addressed these layers not as mutually exclusive but as intersectional reciprocally constitutive points (Collins, 2015, p. 2) that made up the client's experience. I prioritized supportive counselling over orientations and relied on active listening to enable the couple to make sensitive disclosures remotely. I then helped them

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develop coping strategies that addressed their overlapping needs. I placed all emphasis on their immediate mental and medical health and coordinated to have their medication delivered. Only then could we tentatively consider starting orientations.

MANAGING PROXIMITY SAFELY: FACILITATING GARS' EDUCATION

As COVID-19 took hold, GARs residing at CRCFIRC were advised not to step out of CRCFIRC except for necessities. By late March 2020, community partners had cancelled children's programs (CRCFIRC, 2020, p. 4), and access to playgrounds was restricted (Declerq, 2020). After one refugee was fined for using a closed park (Johnstone, 2020), staff had to be doubly vigilant to preempt risks.

Reading these measures intersectionally underscores their disproportionate impact on younger GARs and their parents. Closed parks primarily affected lower-income residents whose accommodations lacked backyards (Dewis, 2020; González, 2020). Similarly, community programs' cancellations especially affected underprivileged children with no recreational alternatives. To mitigate some of this oversight, my colleagues and I distributed age-appropriate colouring and educational sheets daily to keep the children entertained and their days structured.

When schools in Toronto closed after the 2020 March break, the Toronto District School Board provided students in need with loaned laptops to facilitate e-learning (Teotonio & Rushowy, 2020). While seemingly inclusive, the underlying policy overlooked how socio-economic disadvantages intersected. For example, in addition to not having devices, the GAR children I worked with had no knowledge of English. Their mother had a cellphone but did not understand English and was not familiar with emails. In this context, teachers emailed me all worksheets to print out, explain, collect when finished, and send back. When the laptops arrived, bridging the gap between the children's digital illiteracy and the requirement to use Google Classroom was equally challenging. Having grown up in a refugee camp, the children had never used computers, let alone managed to use software in a foreign language.

In addition to providing access, policies should target digital illiteracy and the socioeconomic factors exacerbating it (Esses et al., 2021, p. 62; IOM, 2020, pp. 5, 10; Settlement Council of Australia, 2020, pp. 7, 13). More importantly, they should approach such factors as mutually constitutive categories that shape context-specific inequalities (Collins, 2015, p. 14). One step towards this is funding targeted e-learning initiatives (Esses et al., 2021, pp. 35, 62). IOM Brazil, for example, addressed the intersectionality of linguistic and digital illiteracy by complementing e-learning with in-language books (IOM, 2020, p. 11). IOM Indonesia in turn provided trainings to enable educators to support e-learning (IOM, 2020, p. 3). In Canada, one RAP SPO developed a digital literacy curriculum tailored for newcomers (ISS of BC, n.d., p. 3, 2020a), while another developed video tutorials about computer functions (Al-Astrabadi, 2021).

Learning about such initiatives at the height of the pandemic would have spared RAP workers like myself duplicating efforts. There is in fact a need for more sector-wide knowledge sharing (Campana, 2020a) and, I would argue, for enabling systematic learning about international initiatives. Compiling, and regularly updating, a database of inter/national initiatives may pave the way to developing more informed e-learning policies and practices.

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DISCUSSION

The above analysis underscores the intersectional way through which GARs experienced the policies that were introduced to manage COVID-19, for example, the way their health needs, gender, literacy, and family composition, among other factors, converged to shape the impact that policies had on them. The question that follows is: How can we lay the ground for future responses that are more informed by GARs' intersectional needs?

Teasing out the material aspect of remote services may provide a starting point. Managing virtual contexts often draws the attention away from the body (Penny, 1993, p. 20); however, in practice, experiences remain necessarily anchored in it (Csordas, 1990, 1994; Stone, 1992). Policies that recognize this nuance may go beyond funding virtual venues in their response to COVID-19. When RAP switched to remote service delivery, the connections GARs and I established became virtual, but our relationships continued to revolve around our embodied experiences. GARs' medical needs and physical discomfort intersected with inhabiting an unfamiliar restricting space and, for GARs who arrived in winter, managing gloomy weather. All of this informed our phone-based interactions. Our interactions were similarly shaped by the physical and mental discomfort that came with my being unable to read their bodily signs and assess the material traces of my interventions. Taking such material effects into account may produce policies that do not envision quarantine as a one-size-fits-all mandate. Alternative options such as quarantining GARs in detached rental units (Helou, 2021) may only work in cities that have no housing crises. I suggest that alternative quarantine formats instead systematically enable in-person services and outdoor breaks through a more stringent use of PPE and disinfection protocols. Quarantine policies should also address quarantined GARs' sense of estrangement. Virtual connections often draw on cultural repositories to manage missing details and approximate suitable in-person reactions (Walter, 2020, pp. 137, 139). Helping GARs grasp new frames of reference through cultural interpretation may ease the material effects that come with deciphering a new culture virtually. This is especially important in e-learning as many GAR children's experiences were complicated by their estrangement from the process and the devices.

CONCLUSION

I would like to conclude by highlighting additional policy recommendations that could improve responses to future waves. As discussed, introducing trauma-informed quarantine policies that are conscious of the process's material implications is important. In the meantime, it is equally important to identify and update digital literacy baselines (United Nations, 2020b, p. 7). In practice, SPOs can do that by revising needs assessment tools and developing intersectional capacity-building plans. This could include developing tools and plans that identify the particularity of each GARs' digital literacy needs, for example, and how these are shaped by educational histories, health needs, and so on, and build GARs' skills accordingly. Policies, in turn, should ensure sustained funding (Campana, 2020a; Christie & Ballot, 2020, p. 22; Esses et al., 2021, pp. 59, 62) and collaboration between SPOs.

Last but not least, e-learning policies should address the social exclusion that came with school closures. Just as a multi-level

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plan is needed to remedy digital exclusion (Esses et al., 2021, p. 62), addressing social isolation requires targeted funding that enables schools to provide intersectionally informed alternatives. For example, this could include programs that account for the way e-learning-induced social isolation's effects are amplified by the social isolation that some GARs children experience because of their limited past schooling experiences, limited literacy, and layered traumas and that impacts their experiences of schooling in Canada.

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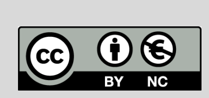

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From Ethics to Refusal: Protecting Migrant and Refugee Students from the Researcher's Gaze

Vianney Gavilanes

ABSTRACT

This piece makes a methodological contribution to refugee studies in the context of the "ethical turn" in the field by arguing for a **spectre orientation** to the student voice that resituates participant knowledge as diffused rather than explicit. This orientation, as a methodological stance, goes beyond reflexivity and practices a refusal to engage in **damage-centred research**. Drawing from a broad theoretical and conceptual literature within the contexts of forced migration, this short essay expands the current literature focusing on procedural ethics by offering a more humanizing methodology for conducting research with migrant and refugee youth during the COVID-19 pandemic.

KEYWORDS

humanizing methodology; testimonio; migrant and refugee youth; politics of protection

RESUMÉ

Cet article apporte une contribution méthodologique aux études sur les réfugiés dans le contexte du «tournant éthique» dans le champ en plaidant en faveur d'une *orientation spectrale* envers la voix étudiante qui resitue les connaissances des participants comme diffuses plutôt qu'explicites. Cette orientation, comme posture méthodologique, va au-delà de la réflexivité et pratique un refus de s'engager dans une **recherche centrée sur les dommages**. S'appuyant sur une large littérature théorique et conceptuelle dans les contextes de migration forcée, ce court essai élargit la littérature actuelle axée sur l'éthique procédurale en proposant une méthodologie plus humanisante pour mener des recherches auprès des jeunes migrants et réfugiés pendant la pandémie de COVID-19.

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It is 11:30 a.m. on Friday, March 13, 2020, a chilly Northern California Spring morning, and I'm introducing the photovoice project in Ms. Gonzales's sophomore bilingual world history class. As I finish the slide on the principles of photography, an unexpected message is announced over the intercom. Madison High School's secretary is announcing the school will be closed for the next two weeks due to the shelter-in-place order issued by Governor Gavin Newsom. As I'm answering Victor's two-part question about the use of selfies and whether we would still conduct the project given the shelter-in-place order, I notice Ms. Gonzales's perplexed look. I finish the presentation amidst the growing uncer-

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> tainty and confusion from the students regarding the announcement. The ones that understand more English are translating for their neighboring peers and the chatter of the students grows in crescendo as more and more are learning about the closure of the school due to COVID-19.

Little did we all know that chilly spring morning that our lives would drastically and quickly change as we continue to face the effects of the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic. As teachers, staff, administrators, and, above all, students were scrambling to transition to remote instruction for the remainder of the 2019–2020 school year, none of us imagined what was in store for us. I was observing two focal classrooms weekly as part of my dissertation study, Ms. Gonzales's Spanish bilingual world history and Mr. Martinez's Spanish bilingual algebra support. These classrooms were part of the Global House[1] program at Madison High School designed to support newcomer (migrant and refugee) students to learn English and integrate into the American educational system, culture, and society. As the whole nation and world were creating virtual classrooms and frantically learning best practices for remote instruction, the Central American forced migrant and refugee students I had been working with that school year were among the many that were lost in the hectic transition. In response to this call's invitation to pause and reflect on the impact the pandemic has had on the protection of migrant and refugee populations and in our ability to conduct research, I offer my testimonio on the dynamics and intricacies that I witnessed as a researcher studying freedom and refuge within educational settings.

My use of testimonio is informed by a theoretical and methodological mujerista/feminista tradition of bearing witness to injustices and taking action whereby "testimonio is both a product and a process" (Delgado-Bernal et al., 2012, p. 365). As such, the process of "**testimoniar** (to give testimony) is the act of recovering—previous experiences otherwise silenced or untold—and unfolding them into a narrative that conveys personal, political, and social realities" (Delgado-Bernal et al., 2012, p. 364). Thus, I use "the emotional force and intellectual depth of testimonio [as] a springboard for theorizing" about the ethics of conducting research with migrant and refugee youth during pandemic time (Latina Feminist Group, 2001, p. 2). In what follows, I examine thoughts and feelings kept in my research notes while I conducted participant observations that I now return to review and analyze as I theorize the politics of protection for migrant and refugee youth. In particular, I question the gaze of well-meaning researchers who engage in **damage-centred research**—"research that intends to document peoples' pain and brokenness to hold those in power accountable for their oppression" (Tuck, 2009, p. 409). Through my testimonio, I render perceptible and legible this imperceptible researcher gaze with the goal of disrupting its perpetuation within my work and hopefully the work of others. I invite those that work with and for migrant and refugee communities to join me in (re)imagining a politics of protection by implementing a **spectre orientation** as a methodological stance that preserves the dignity of these communities.

In April 2020, I participated in a talk at the University of California Berkeley, "Researching in Troubled Times," where I shared my hesitation to continue conducting research in a business-as-usual manner, hinged, among other concerns, on the inequities my research

[1] Pseudonyms have been assigned to the city, school, program, and actors.

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participants were experiencing in their daily lives and how I could conduct ethical research in the midst of these disparities. Since then, I have been pondering the role of the researcher and of research during a pandemic in relation to Ruth Behar's (1996) notion of the vulnerable observer[2] and Eve Tuck's (2009) call for a moratorium on damage-centred research. Behar (1996, p. 2) offers us provoking questions and scenarios in which observers "stay behind the lens of a camera, switch on the tape recorder, [or] keep pen in hand" in the face of tragedy. She then asks if these actions constitute transgressions of unsaid limits of "respect, piety, [and] pathos—that should not be crossed, even to leave a record?" (p. 2). Tuck's (2009, p. 413) call for a moratorium on "research that operates, even benevolently, from a theory of change that establishes harm or injury in order to achieve reparation" poignantly answers Behar's question. Damage-centred research in the form of border-crossing stories and pain narratives has been a central premise for many research projects and media stories that have worked, unfortunately, to sustain a dominant narrative of illegality and loss surrounding migrant and refugee communities. Thus, although I recognize the deep psychological impact border-crossing experiences have on migrant and refugee youth, I refuse (Simpson, 2007; Tuck & Yang, 2014) to perpetuate that narrative through my research. Consequently, I find myself asking: What is our moral obligation to our participants as researchers during pandemic time? Do we risk observing too coldly or detachedly in our attempt to record the evolving dynamics and intricacies that our participants are experiencing? Ultimately, how can we conduct ethnographic work in the midst of a pandemic without objectifying refugees and forced migrants as passive objects of study? Through the act of reflection, albeit one laced with the privilege of the researcher role, one can embark on a mindful process of understanding what it means to conduct research during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. An ongoing mindful practice of reflection not only helps us to be versatile and flexible as our research plans become upended; it also allows us to be attentive to our surroundings including our relationships with our participants. However, my contribution extends beyond reflexivity to a committed approach to research that enacts relations between my research, my participants, and the communities I seek to help and protect.

During the initial transition to remote instruction when everyone was hurriedly gathering food and other essential items to hunker in our homes before the shelter-in-place order took effect, the last thing on my mind was observing the remote classrooms. Just as Behar (1996) asks about the limits that should not be crossed when observing, in this case, a pandemic, I could not continue to observe and record the quotidian everydayness when people around me were dying of COVID-19. A sense of selfishness and callousness engulfed me when I thought of approaching the overwhelmed, stressed, and overworked teachers about continuing my observations now in their virtual classrooms. It was May 2020—two months after the turn to remote instruction—and the district was still working on providing Chromebooks and internet hotspots to all of its students. Many of the students in Ms. Gonzales's and Mr. Martinez's classrooms did not have access to a computer, have a reliable internet connec-

[2] Behar conceptualizes the vulnerable observer as one who acknowledges what goes on within them during observation and utilizes such subjectivity to continue to explore both the topic being studied and their own imbrication with the actors, field of observation, and extended context.

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tion, and/or did not know how to navigate the email platform—the default mode of communication. Consequently, these teachers, along with others at Madison High, were cut off from some of their students during that transition time.

After the district informed teachers and families that remote instruction would continue until the end of the school year due to public health guidelines, I reached out to the focal teachers and offered my time and support to help them and their students finish the school year. Ms. Gonzales thanked me for my offer but said she would not be holding synchronous virtual classes; instead, she was finishing the school year asynchronously because she did not have the emotional bandwidth to do otherwise. I joined Mr. Martinez's class sessions once a week and observed the drastic drop in student attendance: out of 25 students, on average, 4 or 5 would show up, and many days, it was just two students besides the teacher and myself in the virtual classroom. According to Mr. Martinez, this was a growing trend across the school, accompanied by decreased student work and disrupted communication with students and their families. Per his request, I made myself available to all students after class but in particular to those flagged by him as in need of someone to talk with.

Maciel, a carefree and warm-smiled student described by his teachers as un periquito or a little chatterbox, was one of the flagged students. As an outspoken and social person who can strike up a conversation with just about anyone, he would get lonely being the only one in his apartment during the day when his mother went out to work cleaning houses. One day, I spent an entire after-class session teaching Maciel how to compose, open, and reply to emails since he had never used email before and was very confused. During this session, Maciel's family's pre-existing income disparities, now exacerbated by the pandemic, became apparent when his mother asked him to ask me for resources to help her pay the rent. I was struck by the crude contrast between my current lesson on email literacy and this mother's concern for keeping a roof over her family. After I shared the resources I had at my disposal and offered to connect her with others, I realized I had reached a threshold I was not willing to cross for the sake of research. I refrained from taking notes on the conversations I had with Maciel that centred on pain and brokenness because it went against my refusal to conduct damage-centred research. During those painful conversations, I felt unable to continue my research because the haunting image in Behar's (1996) opening pages of a girl being swallowed by the earth during a mudslide while the photographer observed and recorded the tragedy reminded me of what I could become. However, at other moments, I thought that my documentation of these stories might help to obtain political or material gains for marginalized and asylum-seeking communities such as Maciel's family.

In a back-and-forth dance between my refusal to conduct damage-centred research and my desire to continue to show up in ethical ways for the students, I vacillated at the liminal intersection between self-sabotage and a damage framework. It was during the moments when I believed, for a split second, that documenting the need I was witnessing and the pain that was being shared with me could make a difference that I realized how enticing damage-centred research is. But I quickly recognized that the seduction of this framework capitalizes on the desires for social change and the well meaning of researchers. However, it is precisely this seduction that Tuck (2009) warns against and

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that urges communities to **suspend damage** by instituting a moratorium on this research strategy. When entertaining the notion of protection, particularly, who is being protected during pandemic time, I think about the forced migrant and refugee students in Ms. Gonzales's and Mr. Martinez's classes. I wonder if the forced migrant and refugee students at Madison High and in other parts of the world might be in need of protection from COVID-19 alongside the gaze of well-meaning researchers engaging in a damage-centred framework (including myself).

Sometimes, there are instances wherein we as researchers participate, (un)wittingly, via an empiricist methodology in the dismembering of our participants into undignified fragments of human beings (Anzaldúa & Keating, 2015; Dillard, 2012). This tends to happen when the impetus for a student voice becomes a commodity sought after to advance a research agenda resulting in the disregard of ethical considerations in a series of decisions that seek said voice by any means necessary. Some of these highly extractive means include placing students in a position of power imbalance between them and the researcher seeking their voice. Consequently, in the search for this commodity, the students cease to be multi-faceted, complex human beings and instead become objectified as student voices dismembered from their socio-politically inflected corporeality. This type of dismembering is most pernicious within the research on vulnerable populations of migrant and refugee youth. Consequently, in the absence of a sustaining mutual relationship between the students and researcher, the act of securing the student voice for the sake of the research morphs the researcher into a consumer of bodies. In this sense, void of the relationship between, in my case, student and classroom aide, the act of seeking a voice without a body reduces the participant into a fragmented self. These fragments are subsequently pieced together through ink on paper or pixels on a screen for the consumption of others. As such, ending with the act of reflection is insufficient; **we** as researchers and advocates of vulnerable populations need to take action. However, these actions are not the mainstream kind that lead to writing award-winning accounts of precarity and brokenness that warrant a collection of accolades. Instead, these actions dwell in the interstitial spaces (Anzaldúa, 1987) where we as researchers acknowledge both our complicity with empiricist objectifying methods and our commitments to disrupting these harmful practices in our work. Thus, the choice to refuse damage-centred research during these moments of reflexivity and pivot towards more critical and humanizing methods is a part of (re)imagining a politics of protection.

As I manoeuvre my way through the complexity of being an educational researcher and critic of normative educational practices while being an ally to educators seeking a more just and equitable society, I find myself asking, how can we (re)imagine a politics of protection for migrant and refugee youth in relation to COVID-19 and damage-centred research? Pandemic time teaches us more than what perhaps we are ready to or want to hear. When individuals and/or communities feel compelled to share their stories, those stories will find a way to be told. If we listen with our whole selves, we can hear the silences that speak volumes. In this spirit, at the core of my work is a **spectre orientation** to the student voice as a methodological stance. Rather than being a prescriptive method, the spectre orientation allows one to recognize that the student voice is not missing but is diffused throughout our data.

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In my dissertation, as a result of multiple disruptions due to COVID-19, I was not able to capture the direct student voice through interviews. To refrain from exploiting the students for research's sake, I analyzed the student voice through a spectre orientation wherein students are not situated as ghostly apparitions; rather, they are centred as a diffused presence throughout the dissertation. In this manner, the students' voices are excavated from the interactions between them and me during the months[3] of in-class participant observation highlighting our interactions. By revisiting my field notes, now with the spectre orientation in mind, I was able to engage in the analytical process of excavating the voices of students from the documented short dialogues and interactions with them.

Furthermore, this methodological stance is a position informed by predispositions to criticality and humanizing research methods (Paris & Winn, 2014) along with a commitment to social justice. Thus, taking a stance is as much of a political act as not taking one since the latter upholds the unmarked norm (objectifying empiricist research). Consequently, adopting a spectre orientation is part of how I (re)imagine a politics of protection for migrant and refugee populations that does not dismember them into undignified fragments of human beings. As such, this methodological stance aligns with my ongoing commitment to disrupt empiricist approaches to data collection and analysis that objectify refugees and forced migrants as passive objects of study. In centring the moments of interaction captured in my field notes, I am able to portray my participants in more humanizing ways and refrain from unethically "tracking" them down for an interview. Again, given the extenuating circumstances due to COVID-19, I could not ethically conduct those student interviews at that particular moment in time, and these are the difficult decisions one is faced with as our research develops. However, just like with any other method within any methodological stance, there are always new sets of ethical considerations that arise. The spectre orientation is not a perfect solution, but it is the most suitable one for my study given my circumstances and external limitations. Although this orientation might centre the researcher more than the direct student voice, this is not in and of itself a limitation given that in ethnographic work, we **are** the instruments of our data collection.

I close by inviting others to introduce a practice of mindfulness within their research endeavours through whichever forms work best for them—for example, reflections, refusals, reflexivity. Especially for those of us doing work with vulnerable populations such as migrant and refugee youth, it is imperative to foster and sustain our research relationships in respectful and ethical ways to at least "do no harm." By engaging in ethical practices of doing no harm that centre humanizing methods, we can begin to co-create a collective practice of (re)imagining a politics of protection for migrant and refugee populations that foregoes damage-centred research in favor of more humanizing approaches such as a spectre orientation.

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Vianney A. Gavilanes is a PhD candidate at the University of California Berkeley in the Graduate School of Educa-

[3] I collected ethnographic data for over 12 months at Madison High and its newcomer program. Within the more than one hundred pages of fieldnotes from my in-class participant observations, as well as informal interactions during school hours, I was able to document short moments of dialogue between the students and myself, between teacher and student, and between student and student.

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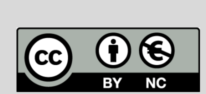

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State-Based Policy Supports for Refugee, Asylee, and TPS-Background Students in US Higher Education

Lisa Unangst[a], Ishara Casellas Connors[b] and Nicole Barone[c]

ABSTRACT
Higher education for displaced students is rarely the focus of academic literature in the context of the United States, despite 79.5 million people displaced worldwide as of December 2019 and 3 million refugees resettled in the United States since the 1970s (UNHCR, 2020). An estimated 95,000 Afghans will be resettled in the US by September 2022, and the executive branch has requested $6.4 billion in funds from Congress to support this resettlement process (Young, 2021). This represents the most concentrated resettlement in the US since the end of the Vietnam War. It is therefore clear that policy supports for displaced students represent a pressing educational equity issue. This paper applies critical policy analysis to state-level policies supporting displaced students and argues that both data gaps and policy silence characterize the current state of play.

KEYWORDS
critical policy analysis; migration; displacement; tuition; college access; post-secondary education

RESUMÉ
L'éducation supérieure pour les étudiants déplacés est rarement au centre de la littérature académique aux États-Unis, malgré le fait qu'il y ait 79,5 millions de personnes déplacées à travers le monde en date de décembre 2019 et que 3 millions de réfugiés se soient réinstallés aux États-Unis depuis les années 1970 (UNHCR, 2020). Un nombre estimé de 95 000 Afghans seront réinstallés aux États-Unis en septembre 2022 et le pouvoir exécutif a demandé 6,4 milliards de dollars de fonds au Congrès afin de soutenir ce processus de réinstallation (Young, 2021). Cela représente la réinstallation la plus concentrée aux États-Unis depuis la fin de la Guerre du Vietnam. Il est donc clair que les politiques de soutien aux étudiants déplacés représentent un enjeu urgent d'équité en matière d'éducation. Cet article applique une analyse critique des politiques publiques aux politiques au niveau de l'État soutenant les étudiants déplacés et soutient que les lacunes au niveau des données et le silence politique caractérisent l'état actuel de la situation.

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Higher education for displaced students is rarely the focus of academic literature in the context of the United States, despite 79.5 million people displaced worldwide as of December 2019 and 3 million refugees resettled in the US since the 1970s (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], 2020). Between 2010 and 2018, 231,253 claimants were granted asylum either affirmatively or defensively (US Department of Homeland Security, 2020a), and an additional 740,000 asylum cases were pending as of 2017 (Meissner et al., 2018). About 45% of all principal applicants for asylum in 2018 were under age 29 (US Department of Homeland Security, 2020b). Further, between 300,000 and 400,000 individuals had been granted temporary protected status (TPS) in 2019 (Catholic Legal Immigration Network, 2019). There is, therefore, a significant grouping of pending and approved asylees, refugees, and TPS holders who might seek to access higher education in the US, yet this population has been the focal point of limited scholarship. Indeed, the small body of work on educational provision for students of displaced background obscures a gap in coordination of relevant policy and services. While this gap is not exclusive to the US, it is notable given the relative wealth and gross enrolment ratio of that higher education system (Khajarian, 2020; Kruczek, 2018; Luu & Blanco, 2019). Here, we define displaced students as encompassing resettled refugees, asylees, and those with a pending claim or holding TPS.

In this article, we address how US state policy centres support for prospective and enrolled displaced students at the higher education level. We do not, however, discuss undocumented migrants who may well have or have had a strong case for asylum or refugee status given appropriate legal representation. While there may be significant overlap in the experiences of students across these backgrounds, given the relative scarcity of attention paid to education policy and legislation supporting refugees, asylees, and TPS holders, this article seeks to address that gap.

How can US education policy on displaced students be seen in comparison with other more economically developed contexts, which host a minority of the world's displaced people (Ergin, 2020)? The US case is similar to other transnational examples in that, as described by Baker et al. (2018), "despite … specificities of experience, [displaced students] are not recognised as a distinct equity group" (p. 2) served by a cohesive suite of support initiatives. Rather, they may be incidentally served by various federal and state programs supporting first-generation students, racially minoritized students, English language learners, and so on (Cerney, 2019; Wolfgram et al., 2018).

What sorts of student numbers are we talking about across the states? No comprehensive, reliable data exist on the number of degree-seeking displaced students, a circumstance paralleled in other countries that has been widely discussed and problematized (Ferede, 2010; Woldegiyorgis, 2020). This is due, among other factors, to a combination of variable citizenship statuses, gaps in student tracking between the secondary and tertiary sectors, and (at the tertiary level) voluntary self-reporting of displacement background that has been shown to be unreliable given past experiences of discrimination based on religion, race, ethnicity, and other factors (Kiang, 2000). Numbers of displaced students by state must therefore be triangulated, using as a frame the average global tertiary enrolment among refugees of 3% (UNHCR, 2019). This can be done by combining data sets to look at the number of refugees admitted to the US, the number of asylum cases granted, the number of

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asylum cases pending, the number of TPS cases approved and pending, and numbers of resident alien and English-language-learning students in high school and higher education in conjunction with state-level college enrolment among the relevant age cohort. Again, each of these categories is itself fluid, indicating the "flexibility" of data in this area.

In the absence of federal higher education policy, funding, and data centring displaced students, this article considers the extent to which states have filled this particular gap in equitable educational provision. We use as a sample 16 states, culled from the lists of top 10 receiving states on a per capita basis and in absolute numbers, based on data from the Pew Research Center and the US Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (Radford & Connor, 2016; US Census Bureau Population Division, 2018). Further, we focus particularly on tuition policy to demonstrate how displaced students are the main beneficiary or subject of higher education policy levers in only a handful of cases. In the US context, we argue that displaced students experience erasure at the policy level.

BACKGROUND

There are four main lines of argumentation employed in the area of higher education for displaced groups. These include, first, the student equity argument, which applies various critical lenses to underscore the need for education policy, stakeholders, and institutions to acknowledge a debt of provision (Tuck & Yang, 2014) and to intentionally transform educational processes that have historically excluded minoritized groups on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, class, and other (essentialist) identity markers (Brett, 2014; Korntheuer et al., 2018).

The humanitarian argument, in turn, draws from elements of the United Nations human rights architecture including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in emphasizing obligations to uphold agreed-upon protections among member states and specifically signatories to the relevant agreements (Bhabha, 2002; Inter-Agency, 2001; Willems & Vernimmen, 2018). Further, there is the diplomatic (sometimes elucidated as the security) sub-argument: that educating displaced groups supports the future reconstruction of current conflict states and thereby the prevention of future conflict.

Third, the internationalization at home argument—situated within the larger internationalization literature—calls for attention to international and intercultural populations in any given domestic context. This thread posits that as higher education institutions (HEIs) internationalize in service of quality, income generation, higher rankings, or prestige, students of displaced background in the local community should be understood (variously) as a constituency or client base, as an asset, and as frequently overlooked (Hendrey & McClure, 2017; Hudzik, 2011; Leask, 2015).

A fourth line of reasoning emphasizes the short- and long-term advantages to the host or receiving country accrued by moderately or highly skilled displaced groups; this is the economic argument (Bahar, 2018). At times, authors extend potential impact to the global economic community, arguing that well-educated displaced persons, through their work and remittances, lift standards of living more broadly (Lenette et al., 2019; World Bank, 2019; Wright & Plasterer, 2012).

The limited engagement with questions of displaced student experiences in US higher education requires a consideration of this

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scholarship with a global perspective. Further, as higher education institutions (HEIs) and education ministries alike are institutions rooted in histories of racialized exclusion, policy around displacement demands a consideration of the racialized nature of migration. As such, we situate this study within comparative contexts and broader challenges of data and interwoven histories of race in US higher education.

Higher Education Pathways: Comparative Contexts

Comparative national cases offer a variety of more and less supportive policy approaches. In the European setting, the recent Eurydice report found that 22 national systems reflect "top-level steering documents covering higher education [that] mention asylum seekers and refugees, while an almost equal number (19 systems) say nothing" (European Commission et al., 2019, p. 13). In the German case, identified as the most comprehensive policy approach, "there are a number of actions addressing recognition of qualifications and prior learning, bridging programmes, guidance and counselling services and financial support" that have a "clear budget allocation" (European Commission et al., 2019, p. 13).

More supportive still in terms of raw student enrolment is the Turkish higher education system, which through federal-level policy innovation has initiated new Arabic-language degree programs on the Syrian border and offered both tuition-free status and scholarships to refugee students (a policy so generous that there has been backlash from domestic students) (Ergin et al., 2019). There is a frequent gap between policy supports for approved refugees and asylees and those with pending status; in the Australian context, asylum seekers "are treated as international students and are ineligible for Federal Government financial assistance programs (Hartley et al., 2018; Webb et al., 2019)," leaving 23 of 43 Australian HEIs to offer stopgap institutional scholarships to "refugees and asylum-seeking students" (Dunwoodie et al., 2020, p. 248). By placing the current research in conversation with global scholarship, the critical exploration of US policy-making is supported.

Imperfect Data: How Many Displaced Students Are There at US HEIs?

Individuals with histories of displacement enter the US at every life stage. This means that a newly arrived refugee or asylee of traditional college-going age may seek to access higher education shortly after resettlement, or that a childhood arrival may participate in the full K–12 curriculum before pursuing college or university. Further, adults frequently seek additional education and training either to qualify for their current profession in the U.S. context, or to change fields, or to improve their English language skills. Displaced students may have changed their legal status by the time of (or during) higher education enrolment, given that they "may apply for naturalization 5 years after the date of their admission to lawful permanent residence" (US Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2019, p. 7). Additionally, displaced persons will frequently have moved between school districts and states between resettlement and the pursuit of higher education, meaning that the relevant refugee resettlement data cannot be directly correlated to education enrolment (McBrien, 2005; McWilliams & Bonet, 2016).

Despite these complexities, it is useful to offer a few framing statistics. In recent years, the number of annual refugee arrivals has declined precipitously. Nonetheless, between fiscal years 2017 and 2019, of the 91,015 refugees admitted to the US,

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26.5% were from the Democratic Republic of Congo; they represented 46.6% of total admissions in the 2019 fiscal year (Blizzard & Batalova, 2019). Between 2016 and 2018, 44% of refugee arrivals were under 17 years of age, and an additional 13.3% were between 18 and 23 years of age (US Department of Homeland Security, 2019). The vast majority of refugees are initially resettled in metropolitan areas—95% based on calculations by the Migration Policy Institute (Singer & Wilson, 2007). Additionally, refugees of the same national background have tended to cluster in particular cities—for example, Cuban refugees in Miami and Iranian refugees in southern California (Singer & Wilson, 2007).

Patterns of Racism and Racialization in Refugee and Asylee Protection

Policy supporting the resettlement of displaced groups has an entrenched history of racialization specific to the US context, though not exclusive to it (Ficarra, 2017; Gans, 2017). Various processes of racialization have intersected in temporally specific ways with politically expedient religious hierarchies, patriarchy, and other systems of exclusion in the granting of legal protection (Hua, 2010). As such, consideration of higher education policy for displaced learners must be situated both in racialized histories of migration as well as the racialized nature of immigrant identity development.

Histories of immigration inform this conversation. In the period between 1945 and 1965, "there was no legal distinction between a refugee and an immigrant; any refugee who was admitted into the United States entered under the quota for his or her country of origin" (Brown & Scribner, 2014, p. 104). The Chinese Exclusion Acts still applied to individuals seeking protection, with limited admissions approved for political asylees from China following Communist takeover in 1949 (Lau, 2006, p. 18). Hampton (2017) has discussed the racialization and sexualization of the Cuban women granted asylum following the Mariel boatlift of 1980, noting that this racialization process was largely undifferentiated from that applied to other Latina immigrants (p. 1087). This point echoes the argument made by cross-disciplinary scholars that legal status ("documented" immigrant, "undocumented" immigrant, refugee, asylee, etc.) is itself a construct, but with real consequences for lived experience (Oliveira & Kentor, 2020; Vigil & Abidi, 2019). In recent years, Syrian refugees have encountered new racialization following their arrival that has directly threatened their "approved" refugee status (Gowayed, 2020).

The extent of immigrants' racialized experience has been explored by immigration scholars as well as race scholars. While historically, narratives of immigration considered pathways to assimilation (Feagin & Cobas, 2008), the aspiration of assimilation has been questioned, highlighting the ways that assimilation hinders mobility (Rumbaut et al., 2006). Nonetheless, it is evident that different groups face differing pathways. Scholars of race contend that race places a central role in the assimilation of non-white immigrants (Bonilla-Silva, 2017). While racial and ethnic identity among immigrants may be fluid, data considering immigrant identity have also illustrated how being white is seen as necessary with perceptions of being American (Sorrell et al., 2019). As such, processes of racialization are by no means exclusive to the US, though they are distinct given the specificities of American colonialism and policy structures. Additionally, regionally specific processes of racialization impact the resettlement experience of displaced persons across

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the US (Guerrero, 2016), thus maintaining a salience for their everyday lives.

Conceptual Framework

We approached this article with critical policy analysis (CPA) as our operative conceptual framework (Bhopal & Pitkin, 2020; Chase et al., 2014). CPA seeks to move beyond a value-neutral linear consideration of policy to address the messiness of policy-making. Put alternatively, "policy analyses are constructed as discursive practices that create, share, and produce truth claims that can be questioned" (Hernández, 2013, p. 51). Through this application, CPA disrupts traditional policy analysis tools in favor of illuminating the policy problems and solutions that a policy constructs. As a result, this framework helps explore policy as the practice of power to centre "attention to hidden assumptions or policy silences and unintended consequences of policy practices" (Allan, 2009, p. 24) In doing so, it has the power to uncover or illuminate how policies serve to (re)produce inequity. As such, CPA is an ideal tool for considering both a policy-rich and policy-thin environment as we encountered in our data collection. As we outline below, the findings elucidated here largely reflect an absence of state-based education policy centring displaced students. The policy that does exist provides for their higher education incidentally. Given this paucity of relevant policy, we engaged CPA to frame the landscape of state-based education policy serving displaced students with a focus on the meaning that can be made from these loud policy silences.

METHODS

Sample

Given the decentralized nature of US higher education, which includes a high level of state policy control, we focused on policy discourse at the state level. The sample for this study merges states that were ranked top 10 in either per capita or absolute numbers in terms of refugee resettlement in 2016 and 2018 (Radford & Connor, 2016; US Census Bureau Population Division, 2018). This grouping of 16 states represents a purposive sample, one that we hypothesized would represent the most "policy-rich" environments of all state cases.

Data Collection

Given the focus of this study on public higher education within each state context, our data collection utilized a multipronged approach to support a nuanced understanding of the discourse surrounding displaced students. For each state, we identified the relevant state agency or coordinating board. For several, this included multiple agencies with authority over different segments of the public higher education system. For example, in California, we reviewed the state board of higher education, the California Community College Board, the California State University System, and the University of California System. These reflect the spectrum of public HEIs across the state.

To complement the data collected from state higher education agencies, we also gathered data from key institutional contexts, for example, we evaluated whether the University of Minnesota's admissions website indicated institutional aid serving displaced students as an addendum to other state and federal funding pools. Finally, we sought to further triangulate the data by reviewing information collated by the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association and the

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uLead Network associated with the University of Michigan National Forum on Higher Education for the Public Good (Carlson, 2013; uLead Network, 2020).

Research team members each researched specific state contexts and utilized online searches to gather relevant data. The search terms **refugees**, **asylee**, **asylum**, **temporary protected status (TPS)**, **immigrant**, and **displaced** were used. The research team discussed preliminary findings to identify similarities and dissimilarities, followed by a secondary review with an explicit focus on tuition policies. In addition to documenting what was included, it is important to note what was excluded: news or stories that discussed displaced students without mention of policy or program. Further research might well probe the content of, for example, community-based admissions initiatives tailored for displaced students or university publications featuring institutional alumni from displaced backgrounds who chart their course through higher education in narrative form (Hartley et al., 2018; Sontag & Harder, 2018; Unangst, 2020).

FINDINGS

As previously observed, a single comprehensive data set regarding the enrolment patterns of displaced students does not exist. Understanding the context of public tuition and financial aid, linked to the largest site of enrolment for students in US higher education, provides a lens through which post-secondary access can be understood. The methods outlined above sought to uncover the ways in which displaced students are considered within tuition policy. Vitally, we note the modes in which other historically oppressed and excluded student populations are conflated to produce an omnibus category of students with differing immigration status. While undocumented students are often referenced as interchangeable "policy subjects" with refugee/asylee/TPS students, their experiences and access to in-state tuition and financial aid should not be presented as identical. To that end, the findings outlined below focus explicitly on the ways that refugee, asylee, and TPS students are addressed. Building on prior CPA scholarship, we centre the importance of policy silence. The findings begin by drawing attention to these silences, which we argue manifest in the relative erasure of these students from state policies. Second, to illustrate the fragmented approach to state-based policy, and to probe the few standout state contexts where supportive policy mechanisms are in place, we chose to focus on a narrow subset: tuition policy.

Characterizations of Displaced Students Within Public Policy

Overwhelmingly, sample states do not highlight specific policies, programs, or structures that support displaced students. Instead, policy documents are most likely to discuss how these learners should be enumerated within state-level reports, specifying how quantitative data position refugee, asylee, and TPS students. Many states instruct public institutions to categorize these learners using non-resident alien (NRA) status, which obscures the legal, linguistic, and racialized identities of these individuals and has a number of implications. The NRA category captures "a person who is not a U.S. citizen or national, is in this country on a visa or temporary basis, and does not have the right to remain indefinitely" (National Student Clearinghouse, 2021, p. 43). As such, students with a wide range of backgrounds, including international students, refugees, and those with pending status, are captured in this broad categorization. Further, NRA "iden-

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tity" serves as an alternative to race, thereby erasing all racial identification, a factor that scholarship (Harper et al., 2009) has identified as salient in pursing US higher education.

Several notable exceptions to this policy vacuum can be identified. In 2020, the California Community College System launched a $5 million fund supporting additional institutional efforts to engage refugee students (Weber, 2020). Further, it is clear that while in some cases, individual HEIs or systems have supplemented an absence of supportive policy in this area—the City University of New York is a good example (2020)—others have developed policy that reinforces the racialization of displaced groups (North Dakota State University, 2020).

Centring Displaced Students in Tuition Policy

Tuition Policy for Approved Asylees/Refugees

Overwhelmingly, these 16 states provide approved refugee and asylee students access to in-state tuition (outlined in **Table 1**). However, the time when students are able to access to these in-state rates represents both an important distinction and potential barrier to access. While almost all states have a 12-month residency requirement to access in-state rates—Arizona (for approved refugees) and Minnesota being the exceptions—the literature demonstrates that time-to-access following secondary school completion is a barrier to higher education attainment (Perna & Smith, 2020). Further, some states require that following 12 months of residency, students produce documentation to demonstrate their eligibility for in-state tuition. Similar bureaucratic hurdles have been shown in the transnational literature to inhibit student success (Lambrechts, 2020; Subasi et al., 2018).

Tuition Policy for In-Process Asylees/Refugees

The asylum process can be protracted; thus, a requirement for a student to have approved asylee/refugee status embeds the hidden consequence of exclusion. A few states provide a mechanism for pursuing in-state tuition regardless of approved or in-progress status. Examples of policy that advance inclusion for this population exist within the SUNY system and the Illinois State system. However, these systems are the exception rather than the rule, indicating that most learners will have to wait until their claim is adjudicated by the courts—often a years-long process (Kanstroom, 2019; National Immigration Forum, 2018)—until they can begin the process of being approved for in-state tuition.

Access to In-State Tuition

These data speak to decentralized policies around in-state financial aid and, from the perspective of the student, the often-ambiguous nature of higher education costs. Which states might be "best" for a refugee or asylee to settle in if they were interested in pursuing a college degree? At present, no centralized information frames this key question. Further, while we have focused on in-state tuition policies, we note that by no means is the availability of in-state tuition a guarantee of college affordability. Indeed, our findings expand and build upon a well-established body of literature in this area (De Angelo et al., 2016; Yasuike, 2019).

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Table 1

Tuition policies for displaced groups among top 16 US states in refugee resettlement on per capita and absolute basis

State	Absolute/ per capita top 10?	In-state tuition for approved refugees/asylees?	To "pending" refugees/asylees/TPS holders?	Are there clear forms of state aid for displaced students?
Arizona	Both	Yes	No	No
California	Absolute	Yes	Yes	For undocumented students
Idaho	Per capita	Yes	Yes; conditional asylee status is accepted per one institution's website	No
Illinois	Absolute	Yes	Yes; they must submit documentation that they will apply for permanent residency but then they are eligible for in-state	Yes
Kentucky	Both	Yes	No	-
Maine	Per capita	Yes	Unclear	No
Michigan	Absolute	Yes	Not clear, but impression is that not holding approved status would mean requirements couldn't be fulfilled	No
Minnesota	Both	Yes	Yes for pending asylees if residency requirement met	Yes
Nebraska	Per capita	Yes	Unclear, but perhaps could use same process as undocumented students if they had been resident in-state for 3+ years	No
New York	Absolute	Yes	Yes (includes TPS and "application pending" status)	Yes

Continued on next page

Table 1 continued

State	Absolute/ per capita top 10?	In-state tuition for approved refugees/asylees?	To "pending" refugees/asylees/TPS holders?	Are there clear forms of state aid for displaced students?
North Dakota	Per capita	Yes, for refugees who meet residency requirement; no information on asylees	No clear information, so no?	No
Ohio	Absolute	Yes	Yes, if most recent immigration status prior to entering pending status was an eligible status	No
Pennsylvania	Absolute	Yes	No	No
South Dakota	Per capita	Unclear	Unclear	Unclear
Vermont	Per capita	No	No	No
Washington	Both	Waivers and reductions available	Yes, with an approved residency immigration status and have met residency requirement	Yes, for undocumented students who qualify under HB 1079

Note. TPS = temporary protected status; FAME = Financing Authority of Maine; INS = Immigration and Naturalization Service; SUNY = State University of New York;UW = University of Washington; HB = House Bill.

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Whereas the US higher education literature has long identified the challenges facing students from lower socio-economic strata, a small minority of those whom may receive something approaching full aid, for most learners who pursue public higher education, tuition policies are what continue to make or break their pursuit of a degree. Further, as we argue here, for a subset of these students, existing financial aid resources cannot be utilized: displaced students are erased from relevant state policy. Inability to access data, which may be complicated by various structural barriers, has likely contributed to a "data vacuum" experienced by state policy-makers who might otherwise act on this pressing equity issue. This vacuum impacts most often learners who, in the US setting, will be racialized, could be eligible for a Pell grant under different circumstances, and use English as their second, third, or fourth language.

DISCUSSION AND INDICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Implications for Policy and Practice

CPA highlights the importance of centring written policy, as well as what is missing: policy silences, which were notable among these 16 state contexts. We have argued previously that the lack of accurate data on both how many displaced students might be attempting to access higher education and how many are actually enrolled inhibits the development of policy and practice centring these students and supporting their attainment and success. One state context that illustrates this is Maine, where the largest city, Portland, estimated in 2016 that 30.7% of all immigrants in that city and surrounding communities were refugees and that their median household income was $21,400, lower than the federal poverty level for a family of four (Portland Regional Chamber, 2016). This signals that displaced student success might be well captured by statistics on attainment of lower socio-economic status student groups; "economically disadvantaged Maine students are much less likely to go to college than their higher-income peers … from 2008 to 2013, the gap rose from 21 to 24 percentage points" (Plimpton et al., 2014, p. 3). It is also notable that 60.9% of "likely refugees" in Portland were categorized as naturalized citizens, meaning that they would not be captured by the NRA category (Portland Regional Chamber, 2016). In both Portland and Lewiston, upwards of 60% of students enrolled in K–12 education have been identified as students of colour, with many students likely from immigrant or displaced backgrounds (Findlen Leblanc, 2017). In 2019, Lewiston, whose population is 10% Somali, saw its K–12 schools enrol "about 1,400 English language learner students out of a total school population of around 5,600. The primary languages for those students [were] Somali followed by Portuguese and French" (Ohm, 2019). This data snapshot highlights the large body of learners who may be excluded by the lack of policy and data collection practices that distinguish refugee, asylee, and TPS status.

While capturing self-identified citizenship data presents significant implementation challenges in ensuring that these data are not used to punitively target students in certain socio-political contexts, the ability to enumerate or better characterize displaced populations must be a priority of policy-makers. Without this data, policy-makers will continue to obscure their existence within higher education, thus avoiding the need for policy supports. Successful support of the spectrum of displaced students in the US context might also inform the scaffolding of students in other post-colonial settings,

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where (nationally specific) amalgamations of racism, xenophobia, and other oppressors distinctly impact learners and may affect their engagement with democratic processes in both the host and sending counties.

Implications for Future Research

The gap in scholarship around displacement, despite the reality that individuals 24 years or younger make up the majority of refugee and asylee seekers each year, marks a significant omission in higher education's broader equity agenda. Further, with the majority of refugees over the last several years immigrating from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, implications for the intersection of immigration status and racial identity serve to further complicate how scholarship and practice situate displaced students. Within the limited data available, state and institutional research is necessary to enhance an understanding of how policies are in fact supporting these populations. Future research may take on questions of how institutions address the limited state and federal policy landscape in order to cultivate institutional policies and practices that are supportive of displaced students. Further, by engaging with community colleges that serve large proportions of displaced students, further research may begin to quantitatively unpack the composition of these learners who have enrolled in higher education. While refugees have long been a site of inquiry within other national contexts, their erasure and overall essentialization within US higher education highlights the need for continued empirical scholarship that centres refugee students.

We would be remiss not to mention that several HEIs are using more and less resource-intensive support programs and policies for prospective and enrolled students alike. The University of Buffalo (2019) shares fact sheets for family and friends in 16 languages, including those of local refugee populations. Pima County Community College (Arizona) maintains the Pima Immigrant and Refugee Student Resource Center, which has partnered with an area nonprofit to offer a Syrian & Somali Pop-Up Souq, described as "a great opportunity for Tucson's communities to meet each other and share culture & connection" (Pima Immigrant and Refugee Student Resource Center, 2019, para. 4). The Middle Eastern Studies Department at the University of Texas at Austin operates a mentorship program in partnership with the local public school district: "What started as a small program in just one school quickly grew into a volunteer program with over 50 UT students working with Arabic, Persian and Pashto speaking students at 16 AISD schools, from kindergarten through twelfth grade" (University of Texas at Austin, 2020, para. 1). These emerging good practices point the way forwards for peer institutions.

CONCLUSION

Wasem (2020) has written of the near-contemporary US that "what distinguishes Donald Trump's anti-immigrant stance today from the past is that no successful or aspiring president has ever made opposition to the admission of refugees and asylees a centerpiece of their platform" (p. 246). The present higher education landscape, then, confronts not only a global health crisis reshaping the delivery of education but also continued disinvestment, a politically antagonistic environment, and the largest global displacement crisis since 1945. There is broad consensus that already-marginalized student groups are being particularly impacted by the events of 2020 through the present. This includes displaced groups, which, as we have demonstrated here, are ill-served by current

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policy in the states in which refugees have concentrated.

One key distinction between the US approach and comparative policy frameworks is that tailored admissions processes serving at least some displaced groups and higher education on a tuition-free basis are present in countries with primarily public higher education systems including Germany, Sweden, and the Netherlands, among others. These supportive approaches are not exclusive to more economically developed contexts: Brazilian federal-level initiatives indicate the right of asylum seekers and refugees to access higher education (de Wit et al., 2020). Such measures are absent in the US, where most students attend public HEIs that charge substantial fees even at the in-state tuition rate. In practical terms, displaced students, whether prospective or enrolled, encounter myriad institutionalized barriers even in "policy-rich" contexts and indeed find support through various cross-sector initiatives and actors. However, the point remains that the US is distinct among more economically developed countries in its absence of active policy in this area.

As elaborated by Williams et al. (2014), "a retelling of American higher education history can be accomplished only by simultaneously retelling the nation's history" (p. 417)—the national landscape of refugee and asylee settlement is inextricably linked to contemporary and historical higher education policy initiatives that have been explicitly and implicitly guided by racist and exclusionary goals, which has directly affected student access and experience. Rightly, much attention has been paid to the need for policy and institutions to pay heed to equity, including a revisioning of equity beyond racial diversity. Not included among the "equity groups" typically considered are displaced students; they are served incidentally, if at all. We draw attention here to the corrugated landscape of higher education policy serving displaced students and call for both urgent action on the part of policy actors as well as increased research in the field. Where is the lobby for this group, a lobby similar to those coalitions that have emerged to support the targets of recent federal policies such as the "travel ban" or the proposed directive to block international students from US HEIs? Displaced students are perhaps in a liminal state—racialized and yet excluded from mainstream equity narratives (McWilliams & Bonet, 2016; Unangst, 2020; Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2003). We call for change.

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The Politics of Allyship with Indigenous Peoples in the Canadian Refugee-Serving Sector

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ABSTRACT

What does it mean for the refugee-serving sector to be an ally to Indigenous Peoples? This is the entry point to our reflexive journey on Indigenous–refugee relations. In this conceptually orientated article, the authors seek to consider decolonizing praxis in the refugee-serving sector in the context of settler colonial Canada. The article examines the politics of the refugee-serving sector and argue that for it to meaningfully establish allyship with Indigenous people, we must continue to decentre the whiteness that has constructed and organized our sector. The authors highlight the tensions that exist in allyship between Indigenous and refugee communities and discuss ways to work with those tensions. Three concrete approaches are suggested that may lead to decolonizing praxis in the refugee-serving sector: critical reflexivity, settler responsibility, and renewing relationships with local Indigenous communities and lands.

KEYWORDS

Indigenous-refugee relations; allyship; settler colonial Canada; refugee-serving sector

RESUMÉ

Que signifie pour le secteur des services aux réfugiés d'être un allié des peuples autochtones? C'est le point de départ de notre parcours réflexif sur les relations entre autochtones et réfugiés. Dans cet article d'orientation conceptuelle, les auteures cherchent à examiner la praxis de décolonisation dans le secteur des services aux réfugiés dans le contexte du colonialisme canadien. L'article examine la politique du secteur des services aux réfugiés et soutient que pour qu'il établisse une alliance significative avec les peuples autochtones, nous devons continuer à décentrer la blanchité qui a construit et organisé notre secteur. Les auteures soulignent les tensions qui existent dans l'alliance entre les communautés autochtones et réfugiées et discutent de manières de gérer ces tensions. Trois approches concrètes pouvant mener à une praxis de décolonisation dans le secteur des services aux réfugiés sont suggérées: la réflexivité critique, la responsabilité des colonisateurs et le renouvellement des relations avec les communautés et les terres autochtones locales.

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INTRODUCTION

Canadian flags, faces painted red and white, and community events are a quintessential scene on July 1, also known as Canada Day, a national holiday. This day marks the anniversary of Confederation in 1867, when the British North America Act came into effect and Canada became a self-governing dominion of Great Britain with four provinces: Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Ontario, and Quebec. For many Canadians, Canada Day is an occasion for celebration, with many festivities organized across the country. Refugee-serving organizations also typically celebrate Canada Day as part of their integration programming as well as an opportunity to celebrate clients who have recently attained Canadian citizenship. However, in the context of truth and reconciliation with Indigenous communities,[1] Canada Day celebrations raise some critical questions: Should Canada's "birthday" be an occasion for celebration considering that Canada is founded on stolen land? What histories are we reproducing and erasing by celebrating Canada Day? What does it mean to reframe Canada as "stolen land" for a refugee-serving sector that is primarily funded by the government?

We begin this article with the imagery of Canada Day celebrations because it reveals the very tension that is often unrecognized within refugee-serving organizations—the humanitarian work we do, welcoming and helping refugees, operates on the land that was and is violently taken away from Indigenous Peoples. The purpose of this article is to critically engage with this tension by unpacking the politics and colonial practices embedded in the refugee-serving sector and consider decolonizing praxis that may lead to respectful allyship between Indigenous and refugee communities. The paper is grounded in critical scholarship as well as the co-authors' experiences as migrants to Canada and as refugee-serving professionals. First, we present a brief overview of the refugee-serving sector in Canada in order to contextualize the way in which mundane nationalism—what we call **Canadianizing**—operates in the everyday practices of refugee organizations. We follow with a discussion on the politics embedded in the contemporary refugee-serving sector, drawing on critical race and settler colonial scholarship. Next, we draw on existing critical scholarship on Indigenous–refugee relations to highlight the tensions within and possibilities of allyship. Finally, we conclude with suggestions on decolonizing praxis for the refugee-serving sector to consider what may lead to more meaningful allyship with Indigenous Peoples.

CONTEXTUALIZING THE CANADIAN REFUGEE-SERVING SECTOR

The refugee-serving sector includes service provision by organizations that aim to support refugee populations and their integration into Canadian society.[2] Many are community-based organizations, primarily funded by different levels of government (i.e., federal, provincial, and municipal). Refugee-serving organizations offer services such as employment support, housing, English as a second language support, mental health counselling, and host pro-

[1] Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was established in 2008 to inform all Canadians about what happened in Indian residential schools. In June 2015, the TRC released an executive summary of its findings along with 94 "calls to action" regarding reconciliation between Canadians and Indigenous Peoples (TRC, 2015).

[2] To be clear, this paper does not deal with grassroots organizations that primarily work on refugee advocacy issues. Though grassroots organizations do important work with regard to refugee rights, they have a different relationship to the Canadian nation-state.

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grams where individuals are paired with volunteers. Some organizations offer a Resettlement Assistance Program that is specifically designed for government-assisted refugees, while the majority of the organizations provide services to refugees as part of broader settlement provisions for all newcomers. Though small in number, some organizations work with refugee claimants to gain their legal status in Canada. Due to the diverse nature of the refugee-serving sector, its scale is unknown; however, the Canadian Council for Refugees (2020) reports that it currently has over 180 members across the country.

While differences exist in focus and type of organization, the primary goal of the sector has historically been to set refugees on a path towards full integration and citizenship. Put another way, a key function of the refugee-serving sector, as we argue, is to "Canadianize" refugees, a role that can be traced back to the postwar period. Iacovetta's (2006) analysis of European immigrants in postwar Canada, many of whom came as refugees, shows how settlement workers and social workers, among other professionals, played a key role in transforming European newcomers into productive and democratic citizens. In the context of Cold War politics, the superiority of Western capitalist countries was emphasized through the discourses of individualism, freedom, opportunities, and consumerism that were often used in settlement work. The challenges that European newcomers faced—wartime trauma, the migration process, unemployment and underemployment, language difficulties, family separation, gender inequality, and so on—were believed to be solvable through education and access to Canada's expanded social welfare service provisions. However, the incorporation of newcomers into the Canadian welfare state was not simply about providing basic needs or supporting their integration into Canadian society. Rather, it functioned to foster a sense of social conformity, loyalty, and obedience on the part of newcomers (Iacovetta, 2006).

The historical function of Canadianizing refugees is carried forwards in the everyday practices of the contemporary refugee-serving sector. Ambivalent meanings of **integration** remain unchallenged, and service provisions are designed to produce citizens who "fulfill the image of a good settler" (Cahuas, 2020, p. 210). As former and current professionals with decades of combined experience in the sector, we have become painfully aware of the ways in which our work reproduces racial and settler colonial scripts of Canadian citizenship. So much of what we do in our sector—for example, the way we design and carry out our services, the way we understand successful integration, and how funding deliverables are conceptualized—is shaped by racial and settler colonial scripts of Canadian citizenship as we elaborate in the following section.

We are also aware, as first-generation racialized immigrants to Canada, how deeply our own immigrant subjectivities are shaped by the white supremacy embodied in Canadian citizenship. Even before migrating to Canada, like many of our clients, coming to Canada was one of our "dreams." We knew little about its colonial history, Indigenous presence, or racism. It has been a challenging journey to realize how our own integration process completely dismissed the Indigenous Peoples of this land. In the words of Potawatomi-Lenapé scholar Susan Dion (2007), we had become "perfect stranger[s]" (p. 330), in that we were trained to distance ourselves from Indigenous issues through our own settlement and integration processes. Through our work in the refugee-serving sector, we have spent our energy on Canadianizing other newcomers, making

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them "perfect strangers" to Indigenous Peoples and settler colonialism in Canada.

We are committed to disrupting this pattern in the sector. We are committed to challenging the taken-for-granted idea of "refugee integration" by asking the following questions: What does refugee integration mean in the context of settler colonial Canada? What does it mean to welcome refugees on stolen land? We contend that such questions have not received enough attention within the refugee-serving sector. This article seeks to deepen the critical conversations about Indigenous–refugee relations within the refugee-serving sector.

CANADIAN CITIZENSHIP AS A SOCIAL GOOD, CANADIAN HUMANITARIANISM, AND TRANSNATIONAL WHITENESS

As the first step in disrupting the racial and settler colonialist scripts within the Canadian refugee-serving sector, we interrogate three key discourses at play: Canadian citizenship as a social good, the contemporary operation of Canadian humanitarianism, and transnational whiteness.

Canadian Citizenship as a Social Good

It is common practice for refugee-serving organizations to organize small celebrations when our clients receive Canadian citizenship. Understandably, gaining Canadian citizenship is a positive experience for many refugees, a milestone in their migration journey. Attaining Canadian citizenship is often viewed as the promise of a better life, safety, and prosperity. The risk of deportation, in most cases, is diminished. The notion that attaining Canadian citizenship is fundamentally a positive outcome is deeply ingrained in the refugee-serving sector, even though we know that our clients will continue to face many challenges as they make their home in Canada. Poverty, racism, under- and unemployment, mental health issues, family separation, and trauma do not disappear with the attainment of Canadian citizenship. Yet we continue to believe in Canadian citizenship as a social good. Bosniak (2006) calls this a "habit of citizenship romanticism" (p. 1), the tendency to perceive citizenship as the most desired of conditions, as an ideal state of democratic belonging and inclusion. Bosniak (2006) argues that the habit of citizenship romanticism obscures the deeper challenges that the concept of citizenship poses: "Citizenship as an ideal is understood to embody a commitment against subordination, but citizenship can also represent an axis of subordination itself" (p. 1). This contradiction can be easily observed through many forms of marginalization and oppression, but for the purpose of this paper, we focus on the subordination of Indigenous Peoples via our investment in Canadian citizenship as a social good.

It has long been argued that Canadian citizenship is founded on the ongoing colonization of Indigenous land, history, and people (Alfred & Tomkins, 2010, as cited in Anderson, 2014; Battell Lowman and Barker, 2015; Mackey, 2002; Sharma, 2006; Simpson, 2014; Thobani, 2007; Walia, 2010). Citizenship in Canada therefore originated through the dispossession of Indigenous Peoples, transforming Indigenous insiders into foreigners on their own territories while at same time turning settler outsiders into Canadian citizens (Thobani, 2007). While the violent colonization project has been under way since the first contact between settlers and Indigenous Peoples (e.g., intentional transmission of smallpox disease; Lawrence, 2002), an aggressive settler colonial project took shape in concert with the emergence of the Canadian nation-state. Through a

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wide range of policies and legislation—the Act for the Gradual Civilization of Indian Tribes (1857), the Civilization and Enfranchisement Act (1859), the Dominion Lands Act (1872), the Indian Act (1876), the Peasant Farming Policy (1889), and the Numbered Treaties (1871–1921)—Indigenous lands and resources were systemically appropriated (Battell Lowman & Barker, 2015; Coleman, 2006; Furniss, 1999). The Indian residential school system was further designed to erase Indigenous languages, cultures, and spiritual practices. The violence authorized through these policies and institutional practices was aimed at eliminating Indigenous Peoples' land-based relationships to assert the sovereignty of the Canadian nation-state on Turtle Island. It is in this context that Alfred and Tomkins (2010, p. 3, as cited in Anderson, 2014) articulated the colonial nature of Canada as follows: "The invasion, seizing control and exploitation of Indigenous land and populations by successive generations of non-Indigenous Peoples, and the institutionalizing of this situation into a form of government and law define what is called 'colonialism' in Canada."

Essential to the settler colonial project was the discourse of civility, in which Indigenous Peoples were constructed as uncivilized vis-à-vis civilized European settlers (Coleman, 2006). Thobani (2007) asserts that Indigenous Peoples have come to be constituted as the "other" in relation to white Canadians, or what she called "exalted subjects." Historically, the Europeans perceived Indigenous Peoples as "uncivilized," "not fully human" non-Christians with no recognizable legal system and thus lawless. In this way, Europeans were able to strip away the humanity of Indigenous Peoples and erase them from the landscape. She contends that "the sovereign institutionalized the subjugation of Aboriginal Peoples, and the nation's subjects, exalted in law, were the beneficiaries of this process as members of a superior race" (Thobani, 2007, p. 61). Such presumed racial superiority, Thobani argues, was then extended to immigration policies that continued to produce a racialized structure of citizenship. She succinctly summarizes the nature of Canadian citizenship:

> Canadian citizenship emerged with the clear intention to produce racial divisions among the populations within the territorial bounds of the nation-state, divisions which remain significant to this day and which continue the project of all racial states to produce national/racial homogeneity in the face of actual heterogeneity.
>
> *(Thobani, 2007, p. 102)*

Razack (2002) similarly argues that Canada, as a white settler society, was established on and continues to be structured by a racial hierarchy. In the national mythologies of Canada, Indigenous Peoples were presumed to be mostly dead or assimilated, and Canada was believed to be "developed by hardy and enterprising Europeans settlers" (p. 3). People of colour were imagined as late arrivals who came to Canada long after much of the development had occurred. These mythologies justified the positioning of European settlers as the original inhabitants who were entitled to the rights and entitlements of citizenship. Razack (2002) further contends that such national mythologies were deeply embedded in contemporary laws and social practices and thus continue to reproduce racial hierarchies in Canada.

Bannerji (2000) also argues that a racial hierarchy continues to structure policy changes around multiculturalism in Canada and to organize the identity of white Canada. She states that the federal government's policy on multiculturalism was introduced as a way of managing diverse immigrant

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demographics. It was a "coping mechanism for dealing with an actually conflicting heterogeneity, seeking to incorporate it into an ideological binary which is predicated upon the existence of a homogeneous national, that is, a Canadian cultural self with its multiple and different others" (Bannerji, 2000, p. 37). Multicultural policy has therefore functioned to "reduce immigrant communities to the position of ethnic others marked only by "symbols of religions [or] so-called tradition" that must be tolerated by white Canada (p. 45). Bannerji (2000) further argues that such an emphasis on symbolic identities allowed the state to dismiss larger questions of social justice issues such as unemployment, and racism.

These scholars point to how Canadian citizenship is founded on whiteness and the continuation of the settler colonial project. Through the lens of Indigenous, critical race, and settler colonial scholarship, Canadian citizenship does not represent the conditions for universal equality, democratic inclusion, or social justice claims but rather functions to erase and reproduce settler colonial histories and practices. These bodies of scholarship disrupt Canadian citizenship as a social good and elucidate how the dynamics of invisibilized settler colonialism and racial hierarchy mark the organization and institution of Canadian citizenship.

Operation of Canadian Humanitarianism

In addition to Canadian citizenship as a social good, the discourse of Canadian humanitarianism is a key discourse at play in the refugee-serving sector. As McGrath and McGrath (2013) argue, "Canada's provision of settlement support for refugees has been a part of what is viewed as its humanitarian tradition" (p. 2). Canada has prided itself as a humanitarian leader of refugee resettlement since the Indochinese refugee migration of the 1970s (Nobe-Ghelani & Ngo, 2020). Canada's humanitarian response through private and public partnerships led to the resettlement of over 120,000 people by the end of the late 1980s (Canadian Council for Refugees, n.d.). More recent examples can be found in Canada's resettlement initiatives for Syrian refugees. The Canadian public eagerly responded to this crisis when the body of three-year-old Alan Kurdi was discovered on a Mediterranean beach in September 2015 (Nobe-Ghelani & Ngo, 2020). A total of 44,610 individuals were resettled between November 2015 and November 2019 under Canada's Syrian refugee resettlement commitment; of these, 18,920 were resettled through the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2020).

The attention given to the plight of refugees among Canadian policy-makers and the general public was indeed positive in both cases; however, critical scholars have raised important questions about the implications of these seemingly humanitarian responses. Refugee resettlement has been an important element in the construction of Canada's identity as a humanitarian nation. For example, Ngo's (2019) work on Vietnamese communities in Canada traces how the discourse of humanitarianism in the Indochinese refugee rescue mission was fundamental to the production of subject positions of the "model" refugee, one who remains grateful to the Canadian state. Ngo (2019) argues that when the discourse of humanitarianism dominates the way that Indochinese refugee migration is represented, it minimizes the complex Cold War politics behind this refugee movement and instead privileges a storyline of Vietnamese victims and Canadian saviours. The discourse of humanitarianism functions similarly in representations of the Syrian refugee

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"crisis." Although the Canadian government and public were minimally interested in the plight of Syrians at the beginning of the conflict, a sudden surge of interest took place after the death of Kurdi. Molnar (2016) suggests that the recirculation of "emotionally charged stories" such as that of Alan Kurdi can lead to "disastrous misapprehensions and dangerous conflations" when they are repeatedly done (p. 72). Canada's Syrian refugee resettlement efforts addressed neither the complexity of conflicts that produce refugee migration nor its complicity in the conflict; instead, they simply reaffirmed Canada as a humanitarian nation (Nobe-Ghelani & Ngo, 2020).

As current and former refugee-serving professionals, we cannot deny the material benefits of refugee resettlement and the refugee-serving sector. Canada's refugee resettlement efforts do provide safety for many who are fleeing persecution, and the border must remain open for refugees.[3] However, refugee resettlement is a matter of justice, obligation, and responsibility and should not be framed as a humanitarian response. The legal scholar Catherine Dauvergne (2005) makes an important point when she argues that "humanitarianism is not a standard of obligation, as justice would be, but rather of charity. Humanitarianism defines us as good when we are able to meet the standard, and justifiable when we are not" (p. 72). Dauvergne (2005) further argues that the performance of humanitarianism requires reinforcing the difference between "us" and "them." This relationship is not founded on the values of equality or mutuality but rather is a product of the othering process. This othering process contributes to defining the identity of the Canadian nation. Thus,

> part of our humanitarianism is about … applauding ourselves. When humanitarianism is used in immigration laws and discourses, it tells us something about ourselves as a nation—that is, the extent of our aspirations to goodness—and something implicit about our national identity.
>
> *(Dauvergne, 2005, p. 73)*

Drawing on Dauvergne (2005), we suggest that the discourse of Canadian humanitarianism positions Canada as a saviour that brings civility to people's lives vis-à-vis refugee-producing countries that are uncivilized, making it unlikely to address Canada's role in inducing migration from the Global South (e.g., through military interventions in the Middle East and Africa, mining company operations in Latin America and Africa, etc.). As Canada's status as a humanitarian nation-state is reconfirmed, it makes historical and contemporary racism, imperialism, and settler colonialism less visible (Nobe-Ghelani, 2019). The refugee-serving sector reproduces this humanitarian discourse—for example, when we (as professionals) plead for Canada's generosity and its humanitarian reputation in our advocacy letters to grant a refugee client immigration status, or when our refugee clients repeat their gratitude and indebtedness with phrases such as "Canada saved me and my family" and "I thank Canada for welcoming me." When we enact this Canadian humanitarianism discourse in everyday practices and construct Canada as a saviour, it becomes difficult to imagine Indigenous Peoples and their lands to be the host. In other words, we cannot have relationships built upon respect with Indigenous Peoples and their lands when

[3] Other precarious migrants also deserve protection. We recognize that the distinction between formerly recognized refugees and other precarious migrants is not straightforward; however, a deeper discussion on migration status and how precarious migrants relate to Indigenous Peoples is beyond the scope of this paper.

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they are excluded from the imaginary of humanitarian Canada.

Transnational Whiteness

Another key discourse at play in the refugee-serving sector is what Arat-Koç (2012) has called "transnational whiteness." In the context of the refugee-serving sector, transnational whiteness is manifested in the ways in which migrants, us included, often hold a particular image of Canada—beautiful, peaceful, democratic, and prosperous—prior to arriving in the country. For those who come as refugees, additional conceptions of safety and protection are also attached to Canada's image. Where do these mystical images of Canada come from? Drawing on critical whiteness studies, Arat-Koç (2012) argues that the current context of neoliberal globalized capitalism made it possible to enact a new form of "whiteness" outside Europe and European settler colonies. This whiteness, Arat-Koç (2012) argues, is linked to a transnational bourgeois identity, one in which new consumption patterns, aesthetic choices, and lifestyle patterns in non-European countries are modelled after Western values and norms. Whiteness has been transported and reconfigured via historical and local relations of power and has become part of the social identity that informs the world view and politics in non-European and non-white contexts. For some potential migrants, refugees included, such whiteness becomes the aspiration and standard of goodness. Drawing on the work of Arat-Koç (2012), Jafri (2012) suggests that the national identity of Western states, Canada included, is re-whitened in accordance with an imagined set of common civilizational markers, such as democracy, modernity, and liberalism, particularly after 9/11. These markers have become synonymous with Western/Canadian values, which are generated transnationally and ingrained in us even before we set foot on this land.

What is more, these images of Canada are reproduced through migrants' everyday stories. Nobe-Ghelani's (2019) doctoral dissertation on social workers who work with noncitizen migrants found that while many social workers with a migration background might critique the Canadian immigration system, they rarely critique the life they or their family have attained once in Canada. The narratives of social workers with migration histories are filled with their own or their families' stories of hard work and subsequent achievements. It is not uncommon for migrants to unintentionally reproduce the uncivilized image of their countries of origin (e.g., "hard life back home," "repressive government") in comparison to life in Canada ("better opportunities here," "more freedom"). These stories are not simply about their or their family's migration but also about how they construct a migrant settler identity: they represent how migrants are recognized and how they belong in the Canadian nation-state. Transnational whiteness is enacted prior to, during, and after migrants settle, informing the way we conceptualize our integration and sense of belonging on this land. Indigenous Peoples are excluded from migrants' stories of integration or belonging to Canada. Transnational whiteness affirms settler Canada as the generous host, displacing the original inhabitants outside the imagined civilized land.

CONTESTED ALLYSHIP

The previous section addressed three key discourses within the refugee-serving sector: Canadian citizenship as a social good, Canadian humanitarianism, and transnational whiteness. The discussion above is

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intended to disrupt the racial and colonial script of Canadian citizenship within refugee-serving organizations in order to move towards respectful allyship between Indigenous and refugee communities. But what does allyship really mean in the context of Indigenous–refugee relations? While the literature on Indigenous–refugee allyship/relations remains scarce, in this section, we draw from scholars who engage with Indigenous–people of colour/racialized migrant relations.

Fifteen years ago, Bonita Lawrence and Enakshi Dua (2005) made an important intervention in their essay "Decolonizing Antiracism" with regard to relationships between Indigenous Peoples and people of colour. They argue that Indigenous Peoples and their perspectives are excluded within anti-racist theories and practices, and accordingly, it is difficult for Indigenous Peoples to see people of colour as allies. Sharma and Wright (2008-09) responded to their intervention, raising concerns about conflating all migrants into the category of settlers since some migrants come to Canada due to the impacts of colonization elsewhere. They also question the implication of "naturalizing an ethnicized, racialized and nationalized relationship between people and with land" (p. 121) in the discourse of decolonization.

Phung (2011) takes up both arguments and grapples with the question: Are people of colour settlers too? She understands that not all migrants are economic migrants who come to Canada to seek better jobs or business opportunities, and not every migrant or refugee would be privileged and fortunate enough to choose or be allowed to enter Canada. Further, some refugees are Indigenous themselves on the land they came from, and this heritage may even be the reason for their migration to Canada. Amadahy and Lawrence (2009) make an important point about the unique relationship of Black communities with Indigenous Peoples because the presence of Black people in Canada is intimately related to the history and legacy of the enslavement of African people. However, Phung (2011) finds it useful to use the term **settler** in talking about Indigenous–people of colour relations because it acknowledges people of colour's role and complicity in the building of a nation that is founded on the ongoing displacement and dispossession of Indigenous Peoples, regardless of the lack or presence of colonial intent or military and legal participation in obstructing Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination. Similarly, Jafri (2012) contends that although most people of colour do not enjoy settler privilege (considering systemic inequities, underemployment, and the racialization of poverty), as settlers on this land, they are still complicit in an ongoing colonizing process. As Battell Lowman & Barker (2015) argue,

> It is entirely possible—and in fact quite common—for communities of marginalized Peoples to buy in to the structures of invasion, to identify strongly with settler Canadian myths and narratives, and to participate in systemic dispossession of Indigenous Peoples, all the while struggling against their own marginalization or oppression (p. 72).

Tuck and Yang (2012, citing Fellows & Razack, 1998) have warned that as non-white settlers, we can move ourselves to the assumption of innocence in settler colonial dynamics via colonial equivocation, the claim that we are all from oppressed communities that are affected by Western imperialism and colonization.

We build on these arguments and contend that the refugee-serving sector, made up of mainly racialized professionals and client base, has been mostly silent on Indigenous struggles and unaware of its complicity in settler colonialism. While some organizations

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have voiced their concerns for Indigenous struggles, meaningful change that addresses settler colonial dynamics at the sectoral level are yet to be seen. We have unintentionally moved ourselves to the site of assumed innocence as we address refugee struggles.

How, then, is it possible for the refugee-serving sector to meaningfully engage in allyship with Indigenous communities? In her discussion of Indigenous–non-white settler relations, Lee (2016) offers a potentially transformative conceptual space. She critiques the centrality of white settlers' perspectives and experiences in contemporary social movements and argues that social justice efforts may be transformed if the foundations of political engagement are built on Indigenous and non-white settler world views and realities instead of those of white settlers. Lee (2016) argues,

> There is no space to tell different stories of relations with indigenous peoples. When all conversations center on white settlers' experiences, non-white settlers' realities in the colonizing process—equally important for critical unpacking—are pushed to the margins. There is a pressing need for social justice organizations wishing to decolonize through alliances to center the voices of marginalized and indigenous groups who have been pushed aside to advance white centrality and ascendancy (p. 16).

Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg scholar Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (2011) articulates that intentionally turning away from whiteness as a universal reference point constitutes a deliberate act of decolonization. Indeed, this is no easy task. Yet the refugee-serving sector is perfectly positioned to bring together diverse stories of colonization, displacement, resistance, and world views to create a space of meaningful engagement with Indigenous Peoples because our sector is made up of populations who come from different parts of the world. When we let go of our investment in whiteness, the refugee-serving sector might find a potentially transformative site for Indigenous–refugee allyship.

DECOLONIZING PRAXIS IN THE REFUGEE-SERVING SECTOR

Cahuas (2020, p. 212) asks, "If implicated or complicit, how can racialized migrants enact an alternative kind of politics or citizenship practice that refuses white settler citizenship in Canada? And in what ways can racialized migrants work towards decolonization?" How do we move away from normalized whiteness that has constructed and organized the refugee-serving sector, and how can we consider decolonizing praxis for meaningful allyship with Indigenous Peoples? Tuck & Yang (2012) remind us that decolonialization must move out of the metaphorical realm, which requires concrete action that leads to repatriation of land and Indigenous sovereignty. We have no definitive guidance or answers as to how the refugee-serving sector can move towards decolonization. However, some positive initiatives are taking place within the sector: the Canadian Council for Refugees has increasingly engaged the topic of Indigenous–refugee relations in its resources and annual consultations, and the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants has been vocal about advancing Indigenous sovereignty and rights. Individual refugee-serving organizations are also engaging in educational programs such as Kairos blanket exercises to deepen their knowledge about Indigenous histories. To expand on these positive initiatives and inform more systemic, everyday changes in the refugee-serving sector, we suggest three approaches that we believe are foundational to achieving concrete action: critical reflexiv-

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ity, settler responsibility, and renewal of relationships with local lands.

Critical Reflexivity

First, we suggest critical reflexivity as an approach to decolonizing praxis. Critical reflexivity is about examining how power relations operate in a given context and how we become complicit in the process of marginalization and oppression as we conform to pre-existing discourses (Nobe-Ghelani, 2018). In the context of Indigenous–refugee relations, critical reflexivity may lead to greater awareness of how the refugee-serving sector has become attached to racial and settler colonial scripts of Canadian citizenship (e.g., through language curricula) and, in turn, has been complicit in the erasure of Indigenous Peoples. We suggest that this reflexive practice must take place at both the sectoral and the individual level. Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) has stated that decolonization is a process that engages imperialism and colonialism at multiple levels, not simply at a structural level. Similarly, Bradfield (2019) argues that decolonization cannot remain as an institutionalized project or academic discipline: "Decolonization is not merely an undoing of the colonial and political apparatuses that maintain its authority, but rather a reflexive engagement with one's participation in colonization's continuing existence" (p. 7). For Asher (2009), decolonizing

> entails not only our self-reflexive efforts to get past binaries of self and other, colonizer and colonized but also the commitment to transformation in social and educational contexts. In other words, the work of decolonization needs to occur in both the inner/individual and outer/systemic realms (p. 10).

Those who work in and with the sector must engage with difficult questions about how we as individuals are complicit in settler colonialism as we migrate to, live on, and work on this land. The idea of being a settler is indeed uncomfortable, uneasy, or even unfitting, particularly for those who had to flee from persecution (such as refugee populations). Yet, we cannot embody assumed innocence (Fellows & Razack, 1998) in the settler colonial dynamics in Canada. We cannot equate the struggles and oppression of refugee communities with that of Indigenous Peoples of this land (Tuck & Yang, 2012). Here it may be helpful to learn from Jafri's (2012) suggestion that we "think about settlerhood not as an object that we possess, but as a field of operation into which we become socially positioned and implicated" (para. 10). This means that critical reflexivity of our settlerhood is not merely about examination of privilege, complicity, or oppression (or the question of whether you are settler or not) but also about attending to broader processes through which we are socially positioned. Wong (2008) offers a conceptual shift in unpacking our settler subjectivity:

> What happens if we position Indigenous people's struggles instead of normalized whiteness as the reference point through which we come to articulate our subjectivities? How would such a move radically transform our perceptions of the land on which we live? (p. 158).

Building on Wong (2008), we suggest that the refugee-serving sector engage in critical reflexivity that centres the settler colonial violence **and** colonial dynamics that produced refugee migration. This is not to equate the struggles of Indigenous Peoples and refugee communities; their struggles are different and should not be conflated. But it is important to understand that the operations of colonialism in different places and contexts are interrelated and interwoven, producing a particular settler subjectiv-

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ity. Practically, it is about posing the question: How do we relate to the land we come **to** and how do we relate to the land we come **from**? This line of questioning in critical reflexivity may allow us to see how our settlerhood is constructed via multiple colonial dynamics and open up a space for productive dialogues. In practice, such questioning can be incorporated in staff orientation and training at the organizational level.

Settler Responsibility

Critical reflexive practices must be accompanied with the consideration for settler responsibility. Settler responsibility, simply put, is a responsibility that comes with being a settler on this land. Walia (2013) discusses four concrete steps required in the undertaking of settler responsibility:

- understanding ourselves as complicit within settler colonialism;
- taking up the responsibility to educate our communities about Indigenous histories on the lands we reside on;
- prioritizing active support for Indigenous self-determination; and
- steering away from seeking greater recognition from a colonial system and go beyond demanding citizenship rights from a settler state.

We suggest that refugee-serving organizations engage in conversations about what concrete steps can be taken in their own contexts.

Mohawk scholar Ruth Koleszar-Green (2018) makes a useful conceptual distinction between **settler** and **guest** and offers her perspective from the point of Onkwehonweh people. According to Koleszar-Green (2018),

> a settler is an individual who states that they are on stolen land. They might know whose "traditional territory" they are on, and they might wish to be a good ally, but usually a settler's intentions stop there! A Guest, on the other hand, understands through a reflexive process that as a Guest they have responsibilities to learn about rematriation of the land (including for example, stewardship and possession are foundational to environmental revitalization). The Guest learns the history and current story of the land that they are Guests on! They politicize that understanding. Finally, they listen to and learn protocols which do not appropriate but unsettle the privilege of ignorance. The Guest is an active and respectful individual who recognizes their privilege and uses that privilege in a way that does not centre them self but centres the community (p. 174).

Koleszar-Green's (2018) articulation of settler and guest subjectivities offers helpful direction to the refugee-serving sector about how it may take up responsibility to and on this land. In practice, this may mean more inclusion of topics on settler responsibilities as well as truth and reconciliation at the organizational and sectoral professional developments and training.

Renewing Relationship with Local Lands

The final approach we propose centres the importance of land in Indigenous–refugee relations. Since the 2015 TRC recommended ways forwards to reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, land acknowledgements have become common practice in Canadian society, including in the refugee-serving sector. But the practice of acknowledging the land in itself does not lead to decolonizing praxis. Métis scholar Chelsea Vowel (2016) argues that in some spaces, land acknowledgements have lost their disruptive power through repetition. Vowel (2016) suggests settlers go beyond just making a land acknowledgement to learn about what expectations local Indigenous nations have for guests and hosts. It is not simply about knowing whose territories we are on but engaging more deeply with local Indigenous communities and lands.

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We suggest that in order to have deeper relationships with local Indigenous communities and lands, we need to reconceptualize the meaning of **land** through Indigenous epistemology and ontology. From an Indigenous perspective, the land is understood not as a source of resources or as private property but as "a system of reciprocal social relations and ethical practices" (Wildcat et al., 2014, p. ii). Settler colonialism has attempted to destroy this Indigenous understanding of and relationship with the land through various colonial policies and practices (Battell Lowman & Barker, 2015). It is critical to renew this relationship with the land that has been dismissed via settler colonialism. Several scholars have argued that land-based education that is grounded in Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies can be a direct contestation of settler colonialism (see, e.g., Haig-Brown and Dannenmann, 2002; Leduc, 2018; Simpson (2014), 2014; Tuck et al., 2014; Twance, 2019; Wildcat et al., 2014). Land-based education is a pedagogical approach that centres the importance of land and place, where learnings and knowledge are produced through the interaction with and observation of the natural world (Twance, 2019). We contend that the refugee-serving sector could implement this pedagogical approach—learning about and from land—in reconceptualizing the meanings of settlement, integration, and citizenship that decentre whiteness. In practice, this could mean implementing land-based education in professional development as well as settlement programming and newcomer education that centres local Indigenous histories and land relations. If appropriate, organizations could consult or hire Indigenous knowledge holders to facilitate the learning.[4]

When we deepen our appreciation towards the lands that have welcomed us, we may develop a clearer understanding of how to be a good guest and ally to Indigenous Peoples.

CONCLUSION

In this article, we have considered decolonizing praxis within the refugee-serving sector in the context of settler colonial Canada. We argue that for the refugee-serving sector to meaningfully establish allyship with Indigenous people, we must continue to decentre the whiteness that has constructed and organized our sector. We highlight the tensions that exist in allyship between Indigenous and (racialized) refugee communities and discuss ways to work with those tensions. We argue that pathways to decolonizing praxis require three concrete approaches—critical reflexivity, settler responsivities, and renewed relationships with local Indigenous communities and lands.

We would like to emphasize that this paper does not offer definitive pathways to Indigenous–refugee allyship. Our journey is ongoing, and we are committed to continuously reflecting on our relationships with Indigenous Peoples and lands that are meaningful to both Indigenous and refugee communities. Further, we argue that the decolonial praxis we have suggested must be accompanied by structural changes and

[4] Indeed, we (the authors) are currently conducting a land-based education project with a Toronto-based refugee serving organization, the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT). The CCVT has been serving refugee communities, particularly survivors of torture and war, since 1977. While the CCVT's key mandate is to support the well-being of survivors of torture and war, it has identified the immediate need to consider Indigenous histories and presence in their service delivery in order to respond to the TRC calls to action. The project honours Indigenous epistemology and ontology of the land and engages Indigenous knowledge holders and decolonizing scholars. Through land-based education and circle sharing, CCVT staff members and clients are learning about local Indigenous histories, presence, and knowledge systems and reflecting on their role in truth and reconciliation with Indigenous communities. For more information about this project, please contact the authors.

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supports given that the sector is already stretched thin. While the recent revision to the Canadian citizenship oath that recognizes Indigenous rights is a positive step, more changes are needed, including but not limited to an overhaul of the citizenship test guide to acknowledge and centre diverse Indigenous histories, presence, and knowledge system across Canada and more funding for the refugee-serving sector, specifically for initiatives that support reconciliation efforts.

In conclusion, we would like to come back to the discussion of Canada Day celebrations we shared at the beginning of this article. If we were to centre Indigenous struggles as reference instead of normalized racial and settler colonialist scripts of Canadian citizenship, how could we rethink Canada Day celebrations so that they remain meaningful to refugee clients? Could Canada Day be a day to reflect on our migration stories and our responsibilities as settler/guest on this land? Could we have a dialogue with local Indigenous communities to share our relationship to the land (where we come from and where we came to)? Would it not be liberating to imagine what refugee integration might look like if we centre Indigenous histories, presence, and knowledge systems? Such imagining might have a transformative effect on Indigenous–refugee relations.

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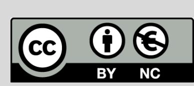

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Return and Retreat in a Transnational World: Insights from the Eritrean Case

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ABSTRACT

When refugees' access to economic, political, and social rights cannot be guaranteed in one locale, individuals make pragmatic choices about what relationships to sustain with authorities elsewhere, even with those that caused their flight in the first place. This process of return is rarely akin to conventional repatriation, understood as the full re-establishment of the rights and responsibilities associated with citizenship (Bradley, 2013). In this paper, the authors instead propose the concept of retreat to capture the process initiated by those who are seeking to escape protracted displacement through a partial return to their country of origin, and through which individuals hope that they can assemble multiple sources of rights across several locations. Drawing from recent ethnographic research in Eritrea, the authors analyze the stories of individuals, mostly refugees, who have decided to retreat despite the lack of political change. Neither exclusively citizens nor refugees in countries of origin or asylum, research participants' "dually absent" socio-legal position is analyzed in this article. The authors show that this rests on stratified forms of citizenship and the relational nature of different rights and statuses and argue that this position should be recognized as an additional dynamic in the literature on flight, return, and transnational citizenship.

KEYWORDS

return; repatriation; Eritrea; refugees; diaspora; citizenship; transnational livelihoods

RESUMÉ

Lorsque l'accès des réfugiés aux droits économiques, politiques et sociaux ne peut être garanti dans une localité, les individus font des choix pragmatiques concernant les relations à entretenir avec les autorités ailleurs, même avec celles qui ont causé leur fuite en premier lieu. Ce processus de retour est rarement comparable à un rapatriement conventionnel, compris comme le rétablissement complet des droits et responsabilités associés à la citoyenneté (Bradley, 2013). Dans cet article, les auteures proposent plutôt le concept de retraite (*retreat*) pour rendre compte du processus initié par ceux qui cherchent à échapper à un déplacement prolongé par un retour partiel à leur pays d'origine et par lequel les individus espèrent pouvoir rassembler de multiples sources de droits à travers plusieurs lieux. S'appuyant sur de la recherche ethnographique récente en Érythrée, les auteures analysent les histoires d'individus, pour la plupart réfugiés, qui ont décidé de se retirer malgré l'absence de changement politique. Ni exclusivement citoyens ni réfugiés dans le pays d'origine ou d'asile, la position socio-juridique « doublement absente » des participants est analysée dans cet article. Les auteures montrent qu'elle repose sur des formes de citoyenneté stratifiées ainsi que sur la nature relationnelle des divers droits et statuts et soutiennent que cette position doit être reconnue comme une dynamique supplémentaire dans la littérature sur la fuite, le retour et la citoyenneté transnationale.

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INTRODUCTION

Even amid the long list of words that scholars of migration and forced migration studies have picked up, pulled apart, and thoroughly problematized, **return** still appears to be a particular favourite. One of the earliest waves of critique challenged the widespread belief, strongly reflected in policies on repatriation, that return marked the "end" of any cycle or experience of displacement. Using rich empirical data, scholars in this wave drew attention to the ways in which physical return can instead initiate new processes of improvisation, construction, and negotiation, and further onwards, migration (Black & Koser, 1999; Hammond, 1999; Warner, 1994). After this came literature that challenged the exceptionalism that surrounds how return is conceptualized in refugee situations (cf. Fresia, 2014). Bakewell (2002), for example, suggests that the vocabulary of repatriation is loaded with assumptions about return and home that are premised on refugees approaching movement in much more definitive and unidirectional ways than other populations. More recently, incidences of return have been interpreted as one strand of refugees' broader efforts to build transnational networks, which involve attempts to establish social, economic, and political nodes across multiple sites (e.g., Kivisto & Faist, 2007). No longer is the movement of people back to their country of origin seen as the end of mobility. It is here that this article seeks to enter and expand the debate.

Among the cases of those we draw upon here to illustrate the shortcomings of conventional understandings of return and repatriation are Eritreans who possess **diaspora citizenship**. These are citizens who possess a legal right to reside in a country other than Eritrea, hence their official status as diaspora citizens, and whose legal status when they return to Eritrea slightly differs from other long-term resident citizens. Most notably, they are exempt from having to serve in the country's indefinite national service program (Amnesty International, 2015), which almost all Eritreans must join upon completion of their secondary schooling or upon turning 18 years of age, and their freedom of movement into and out of the country is relatively unconstrained. This is not the case for Eritreans who have always lived in the country under a one-party system presided over by President Isaias Afewerki and his People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ) since the country gained independence in the early 1990s. Alongside experiencing restrictions on fundamental political, social, and economic rights, including the right to vote or the right to free speech (for further information, see United Nations General Assembly, 2015), these citizens must also be granted an exit visa to leave the country, which is only granted in an extremely narrow range of circumstances. One result of these restrictions within Eritrea is that large numbers of Eritreans escape the country each month to seek asylum, work, and other basic opportunities, including family reunification. In 2020, over 520,000 Eritreans were therefore living as refugees under United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' (UNHCR) mandate.[1]

Within this category of diaspora citizens are thus also individuals who left Eritrea "ille-

[1] The data are obtained from UNHCR's (n.d.) Refugee Data Finder website.

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gally" and who, after a few years in exile, are given the choice to sign a letter of apology for their departure, which forms a necessary precursor to regaining a connection with the government. Although these individuals can only formally return to Eritrea on a temporary basis, as a permanent return would nullify their diaspora status, many diaspora citizens live long-term in Eritrea in what we document below as a condition of "double absence" (Sayad, 1999): they are neither formally full residents in Eritrea nor physically present or politically accepted in their supposed country of asylum or diaspora.

Through the cases of this specific category of diaspora citizens, this article shows how the language of return and repatriation is challenged by such interdependent legal statuses and forms of citizenship that are not territorialized in one place. These dynamics of return reflect the ongoing recalibration of the citizen–state–territory nexus as individuals and governments recognize the multiple advantages of decoupling citizenship from strict residency requirements (Bauböck, 2009). While some individuals may be empowered by these transnational mechanisms of governance, which enable them to participate in more than one political system, others, like the refugee diaspora citizens we discuss here, end up being partially excluded by all parties. Their best, or only, choice is to navigate the interstices of different political and protection systems to get by.

From a more practice-based perspective, this work aims to provide clarity to refugee-hosting governments that are clearly struggling to reconcile these non-linear "return" dynamics with established orthodoxy on refugee protection. Numerous examples exist of states assuming that when individuals re-enter their country of origin, this automatically equates to the re-availment or re-establishment of that state's protection. Physical return to the country of origin, however temporary, has thus been used by these host states to negate their responsibility to conduct a separate assessment of whether the persecutory risk has abated and whether the protective function of the state has been re-established. In the act of ceasing refugee status, we see the power of these states' assumptions around what contact between displaced persons and their governments means in terms of rights and protection. This article thus challenges any simplistic assessment of what state protection consists of when refugees "retreat" to their country of origin.

The article thus proceeds as follows. It begins with a brief discussion on the data that were used to inform this article and how they were collected, reflecting in particular on the limited opportunities for conducting research in Eritrea. After briefly reviewing the literature that has shown that refugee return does not automatically equate to the full re-establishment of these individual's rights, we add that in some circumstances, it is explicitly intended not to from the perspectives of governments in countries of origin and citizens themselves. We propose the concept of retreat as a useful heuristic for drawing attention to these different dynamics of return in the Eritrean context and beyond. We draw upon ethnographic data from Eritrea and elsewhere to illustrate the types of experiences that have informed this concept of retreat before concluding with a discussion on how the modalities of retreat present further challenges to the normative and legal assumptions about return within the refugee regime.

Notes on Method and Analysis

This article is based on both authors' research in and about Eritrea over the last decade (Bel-

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loni, 2019; Cole, 2019a), though the material we present here is mainly drawn from more recent ethnographic fieldwork in Eritrea (September–December 2018, Belloni; December 2017, January 2019, Cole), and Uganda (January–February 2020, Cole), and ongoing transnational connections with our informants in different countries in Africa and Europe. These research trips formed parts of various longer-term projects, including a study aimed at understanding how migration influences the material living environment, including remittance houses and the perception of home of those family members who stay back in the country of origin (Belloni, 2021), and research exploring how Eritreans perceive onwards migration and the various, albeit constrained, options available to them (Cole, 2018, 2020). The trips during which the data used here were collected were all assessed and approved by the required ethical approval boards at the authors' respective institutions, and both researchers have secured the authorization of the PFDJ Research Office to conduct research in Asmara. Despite having this approval, however, both authors are aware of the risks of conducting certain conversations within Eritrea, particularly for those they are speaking with, and the challenges of establishing any definitive account of laws, policies, and histories in such a politicized, sensitive, and opaque context (Belloni, 2019; Cole, 2016).

Both authors thus used an ethnographic approach to collect and analyze their data (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2019). In Asmara and other towns, this involved neighbourhood walks with key informants (Kusenbach, 2003; Walks, 2018) and informal conversations with individuals while participating in locally organized events—festivals, religious ceremonies, diplomatic occasions, and so on—and everyday life—visiting friends and families in their houses, hanging out in cafés, taking public transportation, and so forth.[2] Because migration is such an omnipresent reality in Eritrea (Belloni, 2019; Cole, 2019a), all these occasions yielded stories of people who had left Eritrea and could not return, who had managed to return after signing an apology letter, who had returned and ended up in prison, and so on. Given the logical connection between local houses financed with migrant remittances (Belloni, 2021) and the possibility of returning to Eritrea, and between how plans to leave are conditioned by the opportunities to return, our conversations during these periods would often touch on who among Eritreans abroad would actually come back and who instead decided to stay away for whatever reasons Cole (2019b).

These observations, and a smaller number of scheduled and structured interviews with key informants and government officials working in various government ministries, were recorded and transcribed. The rich data within these records were then searched, including by searching for certain key words (including **return**, **apology letter**, and **exit**), reread, and analyzed to inform this paper. Similar experiences and stories were grouped together, with illustrative examples included below. Our methodological approaches mean that we do not claim that the findings presented below can provide a complete picture of return dynamics in the country, as limitations on the type of data collection that is possible in Eritrea preclude any systematic approach to research. However, based on the multiple angles and sources from which we observed "retreat," we argue that it is a notable and important

[2] All research participants have been anonymized, and details about places and people have been changed to guarantee their privacy and safety.

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phenomenon to engage with and account for. While neither author thus set out to conduct research on resident diaspora citizenship, the issue became unavoidable in daily encounters and inquiries around migration and return with government officials, migrant families in Eritrea, and refugees abroad. These life stories and conversations have oriented our theoretical discussion to a neglected but omnipresent reality of people who negotiate return in the interstices between state systems.

RETURN, REPATRIATION, AND RETREAT IN THE ERA OF STRATIFIED CITIZENSHIP

While return and repatriation are often used interchangeably to describe refugees' journeys back to their country of origin, scholars have sought to draw a clear distinction between the two in an attempt to unlock durable or enduring solutions for displaced populations (Van Hear, 2003). This has involved distinguishing between **return** as a **physical experience** of going back to the place of origin and **repatriation** as a **political process** whereby the severed bond between citizen and state—which initially caused the former to seek international protection—has been re-established (Long, 2013). Authors such as Long (2013), Bradley (2013), and Van Hear (2003) argue that disaggregating these phenomena makes it easier to identify two main flaws in dominant institutional approaches to facilitating and managing refugee return. The first is that repatriation does not necessarily have to follow from or entail a process of physical return if the main focus is on ensuring political **empatriation** of displaced persons. Citizens can regain rights in their country of origin, and the protective capacity of the state there, without having to physically return (Long, 2013).

The second concerns the opposite phenomenon, whereby physical return to the country of origin must not be understood to automatically equate to the re-establishment of a citizen's rights there. As many commentators have documented in the last two decades, institutions have supported repatriation despite ongoing concerns about the human rights conditions in the country of origin (Black, 2002; Hathaway, 2007; Takahashi, 1997), and returning refugees have struggled to reintegrate in fragile political and environmental contexts with minimal, if any, governmental support (Hammond, 2018). The upshot of both these observations is that institutions should consider designing and supporting empatriation efforts without premising these on refugees' immediate desire to return, and instead promote return as part of a flexible pattern of mobility whereby refugees are enabled "to move **between** places, building their own solutions" (Long, 2016, p. 479). Return can then constitute a tentative step in the direction of building transnational lives and livelihoods, which replace displacement with sustainable forms of mobility.

Understood from this perspective, the act, duration, and permanency of **returning** become a process over which individuals can exercise meaningful choice, which numerous academics have argued is central to a "just" return (Bradley, 2013, p. 2). Hammond (1999) similarly points out that moving away from a prescriptive approach to return is critical for both supporting the transnational lives of most refugees and respecting that their conceptions of home and return may have changed over the years they have been displaced. This may diminish their appetite for any unidirectional or complete "return" home. As Long (2016) states,

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> Migration and mobility may not only enhance existing solutions: they offer a means of connecting them, allowing refugees to build their own composite solutions that reflect complex identities, particularly for those refugees who have spent considerable time in exile and may have family or other social ties to their host community, speak the language, own a business, or attend school there. (p. 482)

When, or if, refugees do then decide to return home, much evidence points to the value of this being deliberative and incremental (Steputat, 2004). To minimize both the risk of returning to a country that has likely been negatively affected by conflict and economic devastation and the risk of losing one's foothold in the country of asylum, families may split, with certain members returning to the country of origin to re-establish political, personal, or professional ties for part or all of the year while other family members remain in exile (Al-Ali et al., 2001; Fresia, 2014; Muggeridge & Doná, 2006). "Revolving" return (Hansen, 2007) among these populations, whereby individuals continue to cycle between sites in exile and in the country of origin, can constitute a step towards "sustainable return" within a general pattern of continuing transnational movement (Steputat, 2004, p. 2). Families may (re)acquire political and economic rights in the country of origin alongside retaining them in the country of asylum. This constitutes the same tactical or "strategic switching" between destinations with different opportunities and constraints that is seen among populations who have not been displaced (Ley and Kobayashi, 2005, p. 112). In these cases, return is firmly divorced from repatriation, and displaced populations also remain oriented towards legally establishing lives outside the country.

The theoretical elaboration and empirical evidence for this difference between return and repatriation has nonetheless failed to silence legal debate as to how these return movements relate to the end of refugee status, especially when they are conducted outside of institutionalized repatriation pathways. Part of this debate rests on the fact that while international refugee lawyers have argued that there is no "causal connection between the end of a danger of persecution and the re-availability of protection against persecution" (Banks, 2015, p. 231), states have continued to waiver on this point. As detailed in the introduction, there is a widespread assumption that when individuals make contact with the state of origin (not only by physically returning but also in the case of contacting their own embassies), this automatically equates to the re-establishment of that state's protection.

Beyond resting on a misreading of what refugees' engagement with the country of origin might consist of and result in, this simplistic formula also fails to account for **stratified** forms of citizenship (Woldemikael, 2018) as well as the **relational** nature of different rights and statuses. First, it can no longer be assumed that citizenship is binary: that citizens have access to either full rights or none at all (Faist, 2000; Vertovec, 2009). As Stokke (2017) discusses, citizenship is instead inherently stratified, that is, it is divided up into different "tiers" of rights and responsibilities based on social status, wealth, residency, educational levels, ethnicity, gender, and so on, and consists of various integrated dimensions: membership, legal status, rights, and participation. Citizens can construct forms of citizenship that draw on these elements to differing degrees (Janoski & Gran, 2002), but so can states, which construct tiers of citizenship between and within resident and non-resident nationals who govern their access to rights and protection (Choo, 2006; Woldemikael, 2018).

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Riggan (2013b) refers to this stratification in the Eritrean context as **graduated citizenship**, whereby the social contract between citizens and the state varies for different segments of the Eritrean population, with implications for the rights that each group can access. She describes how the rights and responsibilities that cohere to Eritrean citizenship are far from uniformly experienced as "graduated policies have created different categories of citizens: external citizens, whose loyalties are cultivated so they will continue to make financial contributions to the nation, and territorially bound citizens, required to engage in national military service" (Riggan, 2013a, p. 102). Woldemikael (2018) and other scholars (e.g., Belloni, 2021; Mohammad, 2021) have further nuanced this picture of graduated citizenships by considering the ethnic, generational, and political divides within the diaspora, as well as the divides between local elite and other locals who are not connected to the power structure. This means that, depending on their background, different refugees may access different rights and duties upon their return as diaspora citizens, as we show in the next section. Moreover, their status in one country—that is, diaspora citizenship in Eritrea—may depend on their having another status elsewhere.

Second, then, the situation of Eritreans highlights a broader need to better understand people's rights and legal statuses in a relational sense, including how the different statuses that individuals hold in countries of origin and asylum interact during the process of refugee settlement and return (Bauböck, 2010; Fox, 2005). How, for example, do the rights and responsibilities of individuals in one state result from, or rest on, their legal status in another? In what ways might one set of rights be affected by change in the other? And how can this approach help us understand the functions or experiences of retreat and continuing transnational mobility? For the Eritreans we met, as shown below, their rights as returning nationals have indeed come to depend on their actual or potential membership to another system of legal rights and protections.

Further to this, and though the circumstances we examine are exceptional in some ways, we propose that the literature on return may be enhanced by considering particular movements through the lens of **retreat**. The idea of retreat is inspired by the militaristic vocabulary used by De Certeau et al. (1980) in their philosophical attempts to understand the common practices of resistance. These authors distinguish between **strategy** and **tactic**. The first is defined as "the calculus of relations of force which become possible whenever a subject of will and power […]" holds a "place," that is to say, a base from which to capitalize and prepare for future projects and control the surrounding space. Tactic, on the other hand, is a "calculated action which is determined by the absence of a proper place." De Certeau et al. (1980) write that tactics are the art of the weak or marginalized. It is the art to "vigilantly utilise the gaps which the particular combination of circumstances open in the control of the proprietary power" (p. 6). Drawing from De Certeau et al.'s philosophy "On the Oppositional Practices of the Everyday Life" (1980), we thus define **retreat** as a tactic—an art of the marginalized—used by those who need to make use of the interstices between the laws and regulatory regimes imposed on them.

Going back to our discussion on return, retreat can thus be better understood as a tactic of those who do not fully belong from a legal and political point of view in any singular place and must use the gaps in between legal and protection systems and,

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in general, between nation-states to survive. The refugees that we speak about are those who have not managed to make a place for themselves in exile and have to retreat to a place that accepts them only as non-residents. Their condition is thus one of "double absence," to use the words of Sayad (1999). Their survival is based on their non-presence in the context of exile, where they should have gained protection but where this is currently nominal in practice, thus leading to their retreat, and in the context of origin, where they could not or chose not to avail themselves of full citizenship rights and are now treated as "temporary visitors."

We suggest that conceptualizing certain incidences of return in this way pushes scholars to consider the forces that individuals come up against during movement and also to question both why these individuals felt unable or unwilling to overcome them in the country of asylum and then what they secured, or hoped to secure or gain, from moving back to their country of origin. The concept of retreat, therefore, is intended to draw attention to different causal mechanisms and goals of movement, as well as to the different forms of protection and rights that retreating refugees might acquire in the context of graduated citizenships and relational legal statuses. It pushes us to ask questions around the decision-making, planning, and operationalization of any process of retreat, as well as to question its (im)permanence as a next step (Ajibade et al., 2020). As Ajibade et al. (2020) importantly point out, however, retreat or even "withdrawal" need not necessarily coincide with defeat or loss; it can constitute a reasoned tactic for saving lives, which, in the Eritrean case, has a particularly strong historical precedent—and even veneration—in the country's history of liberation struggles (Riggan, 2013b).

The heuristic of retreat nonetheless also has conceptual and empirical overlaps with Klekowski von Koppenfels's (2019) elaboration of the phenomenon of "reactive transnationalism," which she suggests "can emerge as a result of discrimination or [the] negative context of reception in the host country" (p. 598). The transnational behaviour she observes, therefore, is not an attempt to capitalize on the opportunities that exist in different spaces but rather the only way for individuals to secure social, economic, and political rights through a tapestry of different citizenships and residencies.

Here, we propose that certain refugees undertake a similar or related tactic of "reactive retreat." Cut off from full citizenship rights in the country where they sought formal or de facto refuge from the political and economic situation "at home" (Kibreab, 2003), retreated refugees feel compelled to return to their country of origin, at least temporarily. In the case of Eritreans, as discussed below, they contemplate retreat due to both a lack of substantive opportunities in exile and the possibility of upholding certain professional or familial expectations upon re-entering Eritrea. They nonetheless only feel safe to do so provided they can establish or maintain a foothold outside of Eritrea in the form of citizenship, refugee status, or another immigration status.

Retreat thus highlights a different motive for movement than is usually referenced in the literature on return, which has come to be associated with a geographical step "backwards" but a political or personal step "forwards" (Harild et al., 2015). Movement—when conceptualized as return—tends to be seen as part of a new process, even if not a linear one, that initiates a new chronology of rebuilding or re-establishment. Retreat as a heuristic is, in contrast, intended to be shorn of these connotations, in the hope of

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distancing these movements from any false conflation with the discourses, processes, and expectations of full repatriation.

STRATIFIED CITIZENSHIP AND THE HISTORY OF RETURN IN ERITREA

Although we mostly focus in this article on the retreat of those who went back to Eritrea without having secured a permanent legal status in exile, it is important to situate their return within a longer history of migratory movements back to the country. Beyond its specific characteristics, Eritrea represents an archetypal example of how and why states extend citizenship beyond their national borders in order to benefit from the economic and political resources of a significant diaspora (Barry, 2006; Collyer & King, 2015; Glasius, 2018). This history of movement to and from Eritrea furthermore provides the context to the development of the country's stratified citizenship regime. Different generations of Eritreans abroad have enacted different kinds of return depending on the legal status they have been able to secure there and the nature of their relationship with the PFDJ, which has ruled Eritrea as a one-party state for the 30 years since independence in 1991 and arguably during the liberation struggle that preceded this.

Even before the country gained formal independence in 1993, Eritrea's ruling liberation front cultivated strong political and economic links with Eritreans abroad. The diaspora was at the time estimated to be one million—that is, one quarter of the total population of Eritrea. By the late 1990s, the government's strategy of courting this group had been further refined, however, with Eritrea's state-run national newspaper publicizing that

> because it is unrealistic to expect the return of all people in the diaspora it is deemed necessary to redefine the meaning of reintegration so as to mean participation in the economic, social and cultural renaissance of Eritrea wherever they are.
>
> *(Tesfagiorgis, 1998)*

The same newspaper, as well as national rhetoric in general, continues to praise the diaspora's contributions explicitly **without** encouraging their return; nation-building is presented as an activity that citizens can, and should, contribute to extraterritorially (Cole, 2016; Hirt & Saleh Mohammad, 2018).

Those who left Eritrea during the liberation struggle and secured a stable, permanent status in Europe, the United States, or Canada have thus generally managed to since find ways and space to return to Eritrea (Hepner, 2009). The site of their new permanent residency, as well as the ability to be a dual national of these countries and Eritrea, has contributed to their ability to enjoy transnational citizenship. Having naturalized in their country of asylum, and having fled a very different set of circumstances in pre-1991 Eritrea (i.e., the liberation conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia as opposed to repression by the country's current ruling party), return does not threaten their residency or citizenship rights in their country of asylum. As such, these earlier generations of refugees and migrants visit Eritrea periodically, often to coincide with the country's patriotic holidays, to check in on businesses, or during their children's school holidays (Arnone, 2011). Among residents conscripted into the country's indefinite national service program, who are generally granted extremely limited personal liberties in all spheres of life, external citizens come to be seen as privileged citizens, a view that is only reinforced by national propaganda that praises them for their economic and political support to the nation Riggan (2013b).

As mentioned earlier, it is this population that the Eritrean government sought

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to cultivate early links with, both to promote their political loyalty and to capitalize on their economic situation for the country's future development (Bereketeab, 2007). This is exemplified by the tax, established since independence, by which all diaspora members who want to retain Eritrean citizenship contribute to national development with 2% of their income (Poole, 2013). This contingent of the diaspora has generally been welcomed to reintegrate from their countries of residence and to uphold their duties as diaspora citizens (even if some exceptions exist when it comes to political opponents). Our interactions with individuals from this cohort who are based in Eritrea suggests their widespread desire to retain their second citizenships. Through these, they are granted passports that almost always enable greater, visa-free movement than their Eritrean ones and a host of rights—such as the freedom to choose your livelihood and place of residence—that are not attached to Eritrean nationality.

Since the early 1990s, numbers of Eritreans in exile have nonetheless increased due to individuals leaving to escape political and religious persecution and the indeterminate nature of national service. Some of these individuals have managed to achieve a significant degree of protection once arriving in Europe, the United States, or Canada; others, however, remain stuck in surrounding countries, where their refugee status, if recognized, has rarely given them access to significant prospects of socio-economic and legal inclusion (Belloni, 2019; Cole, 2018). The return of this group, who left Eritrea after it became a one-party state in the early 1990s, and whom we are mostly concerned with here, has proven much less smooth for several reasons. First, governments in the countries where these individuals have sought asylum—such as the Swiss government—have interpreted Eritreans' returns to Eritrea as evidence of them re-availing themselves of that country's protection. Return is seen as evidence that this population is no longer escaping crippling restrictions on their fundamental rights in Eritrea and are thus no longer in need of refugee protection.

Second, this population's relationship with the government in Eritrea is highly complex and conditional. Most of this group of refugees fled the country irregularly to escape national service and were thus initially viewed as illegal absconders by the regime in Eritrea's capital, Asmara. This resulted in some families being punished for their relatives' illegal exit and would have made it unsafe for those who left in this way to return. In recent years, however, the government has initiated a formal system of forgiveness that enables this population, which as for a long time disqualified from ever returning, to re-enter Eritrea (Riggan, 2016). To qualify for this amnesty, individuals must have resided for two to three years outside Eritrea, signed a formal letter of apology at the Eritrean embassy to show their regret for having left illegally, and pledged to contribute 2% of their income to the Eritrean government for as long as they hold that status. Only then are they allowed to return as "diaspora citizens." Within this group, a small number return without having established a solid legal status for themselves outside the country, be it as a refugee, a foreign resident, or a national, as exemplified in the case of diaspora citizens from Saudi Arabia below.

This article thus aims to refute the assumption by governments that host Eritrean refugees that this form of return constitutes voluntary and successful re-availment of the protection of the country of origin. It also aims to nuance the widespread belief we and other scholars have encountered within

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Eritrea that it is **always** preferable to be a diaspora citizen because of the increased freedom and respect accorded to individuals who return with this status. As the cases below illustrate, both beliefs rest on erroneous assumptions about how and why these individuals return, the rights they have in the diaspora, and their subsequent positions within Eritrea's economy and society. More fundamentally, the nature of the return movements detailed below highlight that return and repatriation may not be the most appropriate terms to analyze these displaced populations' movements. We thus analyze the following empirical examples using the concept of **retreat**.

RETREAT TO ERITREA

The situation for those fleeing Eritrea to neighbouring countries or further afield has become harder in recent years as political playing fields have shifted and animosity towards migrants and refugees has increased. Within countries in the East and Horn of Africa, Eritrean refugees have seen a deterioration in the access and quality of asylum, affecting their decision-making around the necessity or desirability of returning. This has been most notable in Ethiopia, where the re-establishment of amicable relations between Eritrea's President Isaias Afeworki and Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed in 2018 resulted in the Ethiopian government changing the eligibility criteria for Eritrean refugees from prima facie recognition to an individualized process that no longer recognizes national service as sufficient grounds for asylum (Lucht & Mengiste, 2020). More recently, the outbreak of violent conflict in the Tigray region of Ethiopia has dramatically affected Eritrean refugees, with credible reports of Eritrean troops blocking humanitarian aid to and destroying refugee camps in Tigray, as well as rounding up the camps' inhabitants and forcing them back across the border into Eritrea.[3] Widespread violence in the region has also forced thousands of Eritreans into eastern Sudan, which presents its own threats of insecurity and violence for Eritrean refugees (UNHCR, 2020, 2021a, 2021b; United Nations, 2021).

The situation of Eritreans in Uganda has similarly worsened in recent years. When Eritreans first began arriving in the country in larger numbers in the late 2000s, recognition rates were high as reports of religious persecution in Eritrea, particularly of Pentecostals and Jehovah's witnesses, were accepted by the Ugandan authorities in charge of refugee status determination procedures. Increasing arrivals of Eritreans during the 2010s, however, including Eritreans who were ending up in Uganda having been deported from Israel via Rwanda, were met with less sympathy by the Ugandan government. Unsure how to adjudicate Eritreans' claims for asylum, recognition rates within the country plummeted. The de facto policy for this population within Uganda is now passive acceptance: they can live in the country, but there is little by way of support offered to them (Cole, 2018). With very few opportunities to find employment within Uganda or to regularize their immigration status through legal channels, people's personal and financial security has deteriorated within Kampala. For some, this has left them and their families with few options other than to temporarily go back to Eritrea.

Interviews with Eritreans in Uganda thus suggested a desire and necessity to "retreat" to Eritrea. One of author G.C.'s Eritrean

[3] Our fieldwork in Eritrea and surrounding countries does not cover the period since the current war in Tigray began in November 2020, and thus, this article does not capture the experiences of Eritreans displaced by the conflict.

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research assistants, Beilul, recounted stories in 2016 of friends who wanted to return to Eritrea but who lacked the resources to finance the journey. One such friend, who was waiting to hear the outcome of her asylum application, was clear: "If I don't get a sponsor [for resettlement], it is better to go back to Eritrea." Beilul also questioned: "How can I stay without a job in Uganda? It is better to stay in my country like that [without a job]. Why suffer in someone else's country?" There were no legal options for Beilul to stay in Uganda or to move on, though she did not at the time have the money to go back to her family in Eritrea, and she remained worried about how the government would receive her upon her return. Her and her friends nonetheless faced a Hobson's choice, whereby remaining in Uganda as refugees was impossible without any reliable source of income, leading them to contemplate return to Eritrea so that they could secure the necessary resources to support their families. In Eritrea, they could at least live with families rent-free and they hoped they could access some government rations to reduce the cost of food. It would also be easier for them to call on relatives to send money to Eritrea than to Uganda, where the expectation was that they would be contributing to the pool. Without activating the protections of a diaspora citizenship somewhere else, however, they knew they risked being enrolled in national service if they returned to Eritrea.

In Uganda, G.C. also met Eritreans who had come to Kampala having been required to leave Saudi Arabia over the preceding years. Before arriving in Uganda, however, and upon losing their legal right to reside in Saudi Arabia, they had been forced to first enter Eritrea as it was the only country that would legally admit them (Cole, 2020). Almost all these individuals did so as diaspora citizens, having retained their Eritrean passports in Saudi Arabia. They have done so because the authorities in Saudi Arabia required them to in order to access work permits, but also because Eritreans in the Gulf wish both to send their children to embassy-operated Eritrean schools and to maintain the ability to travel to and from Eritrea. As diaspora citizens who paid their 2% diaspora tax, they were therefore entitled to re-enter Eritrea on a government white paper that allowed them a short-term stay in Eritrea. If they exceeded this period, which for most was 6 to 12 months, they would nonetheless lose their right to leave Eritrea freely and their exemptions from national service.

In this situation, neither Eritreans nor the Eritrean government saw their arrivals as instances of "return" as no protective functions were re-established. These populations, displaced once again from the Gulf, were furthermore anxious to quickly find opportunities to move on from Eritrea so that their diaspora status would not expire (Cole, 2020). For individuals in this situation, return was therefore for the most part a process of temporary "retreat," providing an opportunity mainly to regroup and re-strategize. It was not so much the voluntary choice of individuals with alternative opportunities but rather the tactical withdrawal of a people who felt unsure about how to move forwards or were unable to remain at their current location.

CONDITIONS UPON RETREAT

In some ways, however, while respondents in Uganda spoke of moving back to Eritrea as a form of retreat, their vision of what life would be like upon arrival did not capture the realities that they may face as diaspora citizens. Though it can hardly be said that the rights of any citizens in Eritrea are

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clear, the vagaries of this group's position have their own particular dynamics. Even those who return to Eritrea as diaspora citizens, and who are aware that this status gives them some freedom from the national service system, speak of existing in a climate of fear, attempting to avoid the gaze of the authorities as much as possible. The Eritrean government may have accepted their formal letter of apology, but this does not fully reverse the fact that these same authorities once saw their actions as criminal. One interviewee spoke of being prevented from having a licence to open a business upon their return, despite friends having been granted that opportunity. Seemingly their only duty was to pay 2% of their annual income to the government, but our respondents claimed that the rights they received in return were nowhere formally clarified and that the government's treatment of different diaspora citizens was extremely inconsistent. The unpredictability of the Eritrean government has indeed long been noted as an effective tool of governance, engendering self-discipline and self-censorship within the population (Bozzini, 2013; Riggan, 2016). Moreover, to keep their status, diaspora citizens are required to periodically leave the country. Depending on their economic status, some respondents stated that this movement provided an opportunity to expand their businesses; for others, it was an unaffordable expense, and so they remained in Eritrea, hoping that nobody would notice that they had not fulfilled that part of the status requirement.

The case of Ismael[4] exemplifies many of these dynamics. Author M.B. met him after Ismael had returned to Eritrea from Sudan and assumed a position lecturing at one of the country's colleges for tertiary education. Ismael was teaching biology there and seemed happy about this position. His salary was better than that of many others in Eritrea, and his job enabled him to live close to his family. Many of these perks derived from the fact that he had returned as a "diaspora citizen," which had exonerated him from national service and its low levels of remuneration.

Before this, Ismael had lived for over eight years in Sudan with refugee status. His story follows that of thousands of others who entered Sudan or Ethiopia, mainly to avoid being conscripted into Eritrea's indefinite national service, but who have subsequently remained stuck there, with few prospects for local integration or resettlement even if they are granted asylum.[5] Everyday survival in Sudan had been a struggle for Ismael, who had never managed to raise enough resources to move onwards to other destinations in the Gulf or in Europe. His experience is thus like that of many other refugees returning to Eritrea from Sudan, Libya, the Gulf, South Sudan, Ethiopia, and Europe who experienced limited protection in these destinations alongside worsening restrictions on their rights to move, work, and study freely. Faced with these constraints, Ismael therefore began the process that would enable him to join the ranks of the refugee returnees who have come back to Eritrea in the last five years. Not unlike what Kibreab (2003) has written about, Ismael's movement back to Eritrea was largely driven by his inability to access citizenship and other rights elsewhere.

This process of return began with Ismael signing an apology letter for escaping the country irregularly and promising to contribute to Eritrea's development by paying 2% of his annual income to the government. As Ismael did not have an individualized case

[4]Names and personal details have been modified to protect the anonymity of the research participants.
[5]According to UNHCR (2018), there were 486,200 registered Eritrean refugees in 2017, mostly hosted in Ethiopia and Sudan.

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against the Eritrean government, and thus did not worry about being personally targeted by its regime, he was prepared to do this. Despite wanting Eritrea to be his primary base and permanent address, he recognized the protection that returning as a "diaspora citizen"—as opposed to a permanent resident—afforded him. In particular, Ismael did not have to participate in military training or be mobilized again in the army. To keep this diaspora status and the rights associated with it valid into the future, he claimed to have to leave and re-enter Eritrea roughly twice a year.

Instances like that of Ismael thus further complicate the picture of graduated or stratified citizenship by showing the difference in rights and duties accorded to citizens who left under different circumstances. Resident diaspora citizens like Ismael are exonerated from national service but can still hold government posts. Their position is, however, far from being one of privilege. As another informant told M.B.: "As a returnee you feel under constant threat. By signing the apology letter, you declare that you have committed a criminal act and maybe one day they will decide to punish you." In the eyes of the state, the status of these group members is therefore a reminder that they have previously committed a criminal act: that of leaving the country irregularly. "The apology letter states that you committed a felony … but it is not true," one of M.B.'s informants, John, told her in 2018 while she was visiting the family of a returnee from Sudan. John had fled Eritrea in 2011 but after five years in Sudan had decided to come back. His decision to return was not easy, driven largely by the political and economic insecurity that plagued the life of Eritreans in Sudan. As John bemoaned,

> Eritrea is better than Sudan for me at this moment. In Sudan the police are corrupted [referring to the common harassment that refugees experience at the hands of authorities in Sudan] and I had no ways to move onwards from there.

However, John was worried for himself and his family, who had been targets of the government for some time due to their faith as Jehovah's Witnesses. Several of his relatives had disappeared for years into prisons, and nobody knew whether they were alive or not. He had thus decided to move back in order to stay close to his family and to try to establish a form of economic and physical security that had proven unattainable in exile, even if it was intrinsically precarious within Eritrea.[6]

Official statistics on how many Eritreans reside in the country with this status are not available, though representatives of the PFDJ, interviewed by M.B. in December 2018, state that thousands of Eritreans have returned in this way since the mid-2010s. Verifying this is almost impossible given the lack of transparency around statistics within the country, but during our various stints of fieldwork in Eritrea, we encountered many cases like those of Ismael and John. Mostly, these were refugees or labour migrants with protection concerns from countries that had offered limited prospects for local integration, such as Sudan, Saudi Arabia, and Uganda. Like Ismael, these individuals also normally lacked the necessary economic and social resources needed to move onwards to destinations with more inclusive protection systems. Their retreat was a move towards a networked system of residency, citizenships,

[6]This seems to constitute a partial inversion of the trend around return observed in Eritrea in the aftermath of the country's Independence. Bascom's (2005) 1998 survey of returnees to Eritrea suggests that "reasons why returnees thought life would improve upon return to Eritrea were primarily psychological and political rather than material. Sixty-four per cent cited the joys of peace, security, freedom, and home as the main reason why they anticipated life would improve, while only 34 per cent cited material advantages (e.g., land, jobs). (p. 176)"

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and statuses that offered Eritreans as individuals and families a fragile route to economic, social, and physical security.

Importantly within a context in which nothing happens without government support and authorization, it also has a clear value to the Eritrean state (Hepner, 2015; Hirt & Saleh Mohammad, 2018). Economically, it can boost citizens' opportunities by allowing them to work and trade across borders. Given the country's deteriorating public finances, the 2% diaspora tax itself represents a lifeline for the government. This diaspora citizen status also takes the pressure off the Eritrean government to provide individuals with secure and sustainable employment by constituting a "safety valve" that allows disenfranchised people to temporarily leave. However, it also politically reinforces authoritarian rule by legitimizing the government's long-standing claim that there are no refugees from Eritrea, only economic migrants looking for a better life.

In a way, individuals such as Ismael and John can then exercise their citizenship only through a "**double absence**" (Sayad, 1999): formal absence from the country where they in fact live, and absence from a second country in which they also formally reside. Contrary to the common claim in transnational studies that migrants can develop significant political practices "here" and "there," the above stories demonstrate instead the condition of those who manage their rights, responsibilities, and opportunities by being dually absent. Their citizenship is thus an "interstitial citizenship" (Brighenti, 2016) that emerges from the in-betweenness of their statuses in different territories, leaving these diaspora citizens in a precarious position vis-à-vis the governments in Eritrea and their countries of exile. Their return is thus far from fulfilling the terms of full repatriation and does not guarantee a viable transnational mobile livelihood. It is rather a **retreat**, that is to say, a compromise by those with limited alternatives to both the tribulations that they have faced outside of Eritrea, and the lack of liberties they experience within their country.

CONCLUDING REMARKS: RETREAT AS A CHALLENGE TO THE NORMATIVE ASSUMPTIONS OF THE REFUGEE REGIME

Drawing from the case of Eritrean refugees who "retreated" back to Eritrea, this article has aimed to contribute to studies challenging the discourses that surround return and repatriation. The modalities of retreat that we describe above challenge dominant legal and normative expectations of repatriation, not least through troubling the straightforward legal operationalization of the term. If individuals can return to Eritrea without any immediate problems and no significant or durable change in the country's political situation, it could be—and indeed has been (SwissInfo, 2018)—argued that their initial claim for asylum was either fraudulent in the first place or, at the least, should now be cancelled. What this reasoning ignores, however, is masterfully captured by Riggan (2016), who describes the process of political transformation that Eritreans undergo upon leaving the country. Individuals cross the borders as "draft evaders" and "traitors," but if they, after a few years abroad, apologize for their departure and begin paying the diaspora tax to the Eritrean government, they are transformed, as Riggan describes, into valued "diaspora citizens." This recalibration in the relationship between individuals and the Eritrean government cannot, however, be undertaken in situ.

Exiting, and the risks of persecution and violence that doing so illegally entails, is thus

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a necessary precursor to this model of citizenship and return becoming available to Eritreans, a fact that Eritreans are known to weigh up in their considerations on whether or not to leave the country (Riggan, 2016). Had the individuals discussed above never left the country illegally, they would not have been able to return with a status that at least temporarily exempted them from national service. In this sense, the protection offered by their current citizenship within Eritrea is **relationally contingent**: it rests on them maintaining or acquiring particular legal rights outside of the country, which can ironically derive from them having been awarded a refugee or migrant status—even if a precarious one—elsewhere.

The process of retreat, which we defined here as a tactic used by those who, having no singular, stable place for themselves, need to utilize the interstices between laws and regulatory regimes imposed on them, is therefore in no way a synonym of repatriation, intended as a full recovery of one's rights. Certain Eritreans are physically returning, and yet that "contract" often remains incomplete. They are also not "returning" in the hope of achieving something (a)new, but are "retreating" in the face of hostility, restrictions, and alienation in the countries they previously entered. Individuals are less concerned that they will face persecution within Eritrea when they retreat in these circumstances because their ability to maintain or imminently establish a link with another country or regime of protection opens up the possibility for them to acquire diaspora status. If that link with the country of asylum or dual residency/citizenship is severed, as several European governments have proposed as part of efforts to deter or deport Eritrean asylum seekers, these returnees may find themselves exposed to persecution once again, such as through their enrolment in certain parts of the national service and/or through the denial of basic freedoms because they would return as **resident**, rather than diaspora **citizens**. At the point of these individual's "return," therefore, protection is not transferred from a surrogate state to the Eritrean government: individual security remains entirely contingent upon the continuation of the former or the possibility of some other form of legal status too.

Despite being challenged for decades, the assumptions that continue to underpin the language of return and repatriation still fail to capture models of graduated and non-territorial citizenship and the relational nature of different legal statuses. A failure to unpack the complicated relationship between a lack of persecution and the re-establishment of state protection has resulted in the dangerous assumption that the two are synonymous rather than simply interconnected. Instead, we need to determine what protection is actually being provided to returning nationals, be they refugees or other members of the diaspora, and what aspect of their legal statuses activates this. What statuses then must returning individuals possess or be granted in order for governments in countries of origin to extend protections to them? And do these statuses and protections, as in the case of the Eritreans detailed here, rest on them also having continued or planned access to rights in another host country? It is important for policy-makers to answer such questions to ensure that these interdependent, protective mechanisms are not undermined and for the language of **return** and **repatriation** not to obscure the dynamics of **retreat**.

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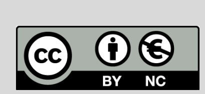

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Refuge Reimagined: Biblical Kinship in Global Politics

Emily Frazier

BOOK REVIEW
Glanville, M. R., & Glanville, L. (2021). ***Refuge Reimagined: Biblical Kinship in Global Politics***. InterVarsity Press, pp. 258. IBSN: 9780830853816

HISTORY Published 28 April 2022

Facing record-breaking displacement, how should individuals, faith communities, sovereign states, and the global community respond? Mark and Luke Glanville address this question by presenting a fresh approach to imagining refuge, anchored in a biblical ethic of kinship. **Refuge Reimagined** aims to bring biblical exegesis together with secular academic inquiry to defend a biblical "call to kinship with the displaced" (p. 22) and describe ways that individual Christians, communities, and even nations can (and should) creatively seek enact creative and radical kinship in response (p. 22).

Though Western Christians have tended to be "sympathetic to the plight of forcibly displaced people" in the past, "certain groups [of Christians] … now tend to be less sympathetic toward refugees than their fellow citizens" (p. 5). Faced with this paradox, the Glanvilles address "an urgent need for a biblically grounded Christian perspective" on displacement and how this ethic could be "applied faithfully and creatively" at the scales of church, nation, and world (p. 6). Expounding this argument is a weighty task; as the authors note, "Biblical arguments for compassionate welcome of strangers are often met with rebuttals: But you misunderstand politics," while "political arguments are often met with different rebuttals: But you misunderstand the Bible" (p. 6).

The expertise needed to tackle these issues is vast, and the Glanville brothers bring an insightful combination of perspectives. Mark Glanville is an Old Testament scholar and former pastor, while Luke Glanville is a scholar of international relations with years of experience theorizing the responsibility of states to care for those inside and out of its borders (p. 7). Together, they have successfully woven their respective areas of proficiency into a cohesive tapestry, bringing together insights from diverse academic lit-

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eratures into a cohesive and visionary argument with radical implications, all the while maintaining an even tone and writing style throughout the work. Despite the sophistication and wide-ranging nature of arguments employed throughout the work, **Refuge Reimagined** is eminently readable. Unlike most academic tomes, the authors have successfully distilled key insights of diverse literatures for a common audience, drawing from fields as wide-ranging as anthropology, biblical ethics and theology, political theory, refugee and migration studies, geography, and beyond.

Refuge Reimagined begins with a powerful introduction, outlining the scope of global displacement and introducing author's approach to the concept of **kinship**, defined as "the ties of commitment that structure our individual identities and our belonging to others" (p. 9). The authors argue that this anthropological concept of kinship resonates with the biblical mandate that God's people "extend kinship to those on the margins" of society (p. 13). The ten chapters are divided into four parts, beginning with three chapters that examine the books of Deuteronomy (Chapter 1); Exodus, Leviticus, Joshua and the "Canaanite destruction texts" (p. 52), Ruth, Ezra, Nehemiah, Jonah, and Job (Chapter 2); and words of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels (Chapter 3). These three chapters "retrieve" the biblical ethic of kinship from the Old and New Testaments, arguing that God's vision for human community is one that encompasses the most vulnerable, including "the stranger" (p. 49).

Part 2 starts with Chapter 4, in which the authors address the role of the church in responding to global displacement. First outlining the possibilities of corporate lament, giving, grateful living, cultivation of diverse communities, and advocacy on behalf of the displaced, the authors argue that the global Christian church plays various roles in alleviating suffering and responding to displacement, each of which can be enacted in some way at the scale of the individual and the local community of worship.

Part 3 (Chapters 5, 6, and 7) grapples with a variety of issues that arise when considering the implementation of biblical ethics at the scale of the nation, including the challenges presented by widespread fears about migration and issues of security and state sovereignty. In each instance, the authors conclude that the biblical ethic of kinship offers a more creative, life-giving, and "better way" forward (p. 168).

Part 4 brings the book's arguments to fruition. Chapter 8 argues that the church should act as a "norm entrepreneur" by setting a high standard for inclusion of the displaced; to illustrate how such work could be possible, the authors draw on the historical example of churches involved in the global abolition movement (p. 204). Chapter 9 outlines a vision for addressing global displacement, in which Western nations would increase their humanitarian aid and resettlement capacity to participate in "opportunity-sharing" as "a matter of justice, of repentance, and restitution for wrongs done to strangers, of restoration of relationship with our global kin" (p. 225).

Ultimately, the authors argue for a tenfold increase in the provision of resettlement slots by Western nations, alongside increased aid for displaced persons, until the need abates. While acknowledging that increased resettlement does not fulfill obligations of care and protection for all those in need, the Glanvilles do argue that resettlement provides Western nations with a tangible enactment of the biblical ethic of kinship as they work to enfold displaced persons into new communities.

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Some readers may be inclined to discount the relevance of biblical arguments for addressing the challenges of modern displacement. However, biblical ethics do matter a great deal to many people—religion influences responses to displacement across the globe, as seen in the work of faith communities to "welcome the stranger," as well as in the proclamations of politicians who invoke certain scriptures to support the exclusion of those seeking refuge.

Refuge Reimagined is a wide-ranging and creative piece of scholarship that will engage academic and lay audiences alike. For those grieved by the tragedy of displacement, this work offers an alternate vision of radical, expansive community beyond the confines our current system. Perhaps a biblical ethic of kinship may enable "individual Christians and communities" to invite our national and global communities to "reimagine themselves"—rejecting fear, embracing welcome, and enfolding "refugees as kin" (p. 245).

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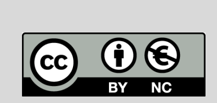

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No Refuge: Ethics and the Global Refugee Crisis

Sariful Islam

BOOK REVIEW

Parekh, S. (2020). ***No Refuge: Ethics and the Global Refugee Crisis***. Oxford University Press, pp. 247. ISBN: 9780197507995

HISTORY Published 28 April 2022

The debate on moral obligations to provide shelter and humanitarian assistance to refugees has resurfaced with the recent flow of refugees from the Global South to the Global North. Amid rising hostility towards refugees, Serena Parekh, in her book **No Refuge: Ethics and the Global Refugee Crisis**, aims to settle the debate on moral obligations to stand with refugees. The Western states and their citizens have "political responsibility" to ensure the "**minimum conditions of human dignity**" for the refugees, she argues.

The six chapters in the book are divided into two parts. The first part of the book, titled "The First Crisis—The Crisis for Western Countries," consists of three chapters. The second part, titled "The Second Crisis—Crisis for the Refugees," includes a further three chapters. While Parekh frames the overwhelming flow of refugees that the European countries faced in 2015 as the **first crisis**, she terms the precarious life for the refugees produced with the restrictive policies and measures by the Western countries as the **second crisis**.

The book opens with a preface, in which Parekh challenges the stereotypical notions regarding refugees as a security threat and economic burden as she sets the tone for the debate on moral obligations to help refugees. In the introduction, Parekh offers an overview of the refugee crisis with a statistically informed discussion and clarifies two clashing principles—national sovereignty and human rights. Her narrow definition of the concept of "minimum conditions of human dignity" (pp. 11–13) includes the basic needs—that is, food, housing, medical services, and elementary education—that any human being requires to live with dignity. She opts to keep facilities such as advanced education and sophisticated medical services outside of the minimum conditions of living

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a life.

The first chapter is dedicated to the definition of a **refugee**. The author notes the vagueness of the existing definition and its exclusivity in recognizing someone as refugees based on the source of harm. Parekh argues that due to the definitory ambiguity associated with the terminology of **refugee** and the inconsistent national practices in assigning refugee status, a genuine refugee oftentimes fails to receive status. She expands the existing definition to offer a broader, more inclusive alternative whereby refugees are all those people

> whose human rights are so severely under threat that they have been forced to flee their home and seek international protection, whether they are fleeing state persecution of their religious practices, violence by private actors the state won't protect them from, or climate change-induced drought (p. 49)

Moving forth, Parekh sets a general philosophical ground for discussing the question of having moral obligations in the following two chapters. She brings secular views, religious traditions, and human rights perspectives forward to present the rationales for moral obligations. Among the secular philosophical strands, she bases her discussion on consequentialist and Kantian views; according to Parekh, these two views have been "proven durable and intuitive" (p. 56). The consequentialist view encourages taking action that produces "the best outcome for the most people" even it might harm some people. In contrast, the Kantian view argues for treating each person as "ends in themselves" and guides them to act in ways that can be universalized (p. 58–59). By stating that religious ethics dictate many people to stand with distant strangers, Parekh interpolates the texts from the three Abrahamic religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—as they share a "tremendous consensus" (p. 66) on treating refugees. The secular philosophy, religious ethics, and legal human rights perspective are presented to complement each other. If there is reluctance to accept moral obligations on religious and secular-ethical grounds, Parekh indicates that "all people are entitled to basic human rights" (p. 54) by virtue of their birth as human beings. In these two chapters, specifically in chapter 3, she also registers the nationalist view that argues for border control and stronger moral obligation to fellow citizens over strangers.

Before introducing a new perspective, she brings the second crisis to light in chapters 4 and 5. In chapter 4, the dire living conditions of refugees in camps and urban squalid settlements are depicted with vivid descriptions of refugees' lives from Bangladesh to Turkey to Jordan. This discussion provides a conspicuous picture painted with refugee narratives about the situations that force them to escape from host countries to the West. The following chapter deals with Western countries' deterrence policies and responses. Parekh argues that deterrence measures such as increasing border control, putting up fences, and containing refugees in third countries make refugees' lives terrible or "more deadly" (p. 139).

The philosophical discussion in chapter 6 makes Parekh's contribution distinct as she presents her approach of framing the injustice to the refugees as "structural" and conceptualizing the responsibility of the Western countries towards the refugees based on the work of Iris Young (2011), **Responsibility for Justice**. In the words of Parekh, Young observes that structural injustice emerges from social and political structures, the norms and practices that privilege some over others. Following Young, Parekh terms the current refugee protection system as unjust

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as it falls short in providing the "minimum conditions of human dignity" (p. 162) to the refugees. Parekh sparsely delineates the shortage of the system throughout the book. In this chapter, she urges the Western actors—individuals and states—to shift from mere rescuers or charitable stakeholders and to take responsibility.

With an apt analysis of locating the lacunae of the current refugee protection system, Parekh categorically holds Western states and other institutions responsible for the structural injustice experienced by refugees. According to her, the Western actors are responsible as they have played "the biggest role in creating, influencing and supporting" the existing system (p. 161). In order to correct this systemic injustice, the author states that Western states should take the responses as part of "political responsibility." Following Young, Parekh contends that the concept of **political responsibility** refers to the shared responsibility that the Western countries have to bear of rectifying the injustice rather than identifying a particular policy or an actor guilty. Parekh prefers the term **responsibility** over **duty** or **obligation**, as the former is no less obligatory but allows for more discretion in determining how to rectify structural injustice, whereas **duty** and **obligation** demand specific requirements to be met (p. 171).

In her conclusion, Parekh prescribes Western countries to provide more funds for the refugees staying in the Global South, giving incentives and logistical support for temporary integration. She also prescribes political integration of refugees by providing "disaggregated citizenship," an entitlement that embodies certain social or political rights for the refugees but not all rights that a citizen enjoys (p. 187). Beside arguing for relaxing the asylum-seeking procedures, she advocates for increasing the number of refugee resettlements.

Parekh keeps the reader engaged with narratives of refugees drawn from secondary sources, carrying a story-oriented framework, a lucid writing style, and conceptual clarity, all while dealing with core concepts in each chapter. The book's intricately woven contents hold the potential to satiate audiences from diverse backgrounds in understanding the problems faced by refugees while aiding in the formulation of arguments in favor of helping refugees. However, the book does not adequately engage with the concept of **dignity**, which is an abstract, ambiguous concept and refers to much more than the mere basic needs of living. Another point that a reader might find missing is the discussion on the rationales behind poor non-Western countries, which host more than 85% of refugees, to provide shelter and share resources with refugees.

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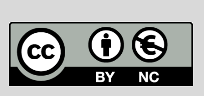

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Undocumented Nationals: Between Statelessness and Citizenship

Alexandra Mirowski Rabelo de Souza

BOOK REVIEW

Hunter, W. (2019). ***Undocumented Nationals: Between Statelessness and Citizenship***. Cambridge University Press, pp. 71. ISBN: 9781108701570

HISTORY Published 28 April 2022

Undocumented Nationals: Between Statelessness and Citizenship contributes to the interdisciplinary field of citizenship and migration studies by problematizing the binary distinction between statelessness and full citizenship. Published in Cambridge University Press's Elements in the Politics of Development series, this Cambridge "Element" takes the form of a peer-reviewed research guide that reads like a journal article in the length of a short book. It provides a nuanced examination of an in-between status less often addressed in political science research on undocumented migration. Hunter sheds light on structural issues that lead to conditions of what is equally termed "undocumented citizenship," "undocumented nationality," and "evidentiary statelessness" (p. 4) for millions of people around the world. While national discourse on issues concerning legal status or ability to provide national documentation tends to focus on the individual, **Undocumented Nationals** recentres the discussion of undocumented nationality on the role of the state. Hunter considers how policy decisions and political practices shape the production of undocumented nationality and raise possible solutions that go beyond pointing to individual responsibility. Facilitating access to birth registration and access to national documentation are key steps in this direction. Readers can appreciate this shift in focus to a much-needed state-centred conceptualization of responsibility for undocumented nationality and its consequences, many of which affect both individuals and the state. One example of such "collective costs" (pp. 2, 47) is that incomplete population data due to non-registration limit the development and

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overall scope of state-led vaccination programs. At the same time, an unregistered person is neither eligible nor counted among the number of individuals entitled to access such vaccination programs.

Undocumented Nationals is organized into five parts. In the book's introduction, Hunter highlights birth registration as a strong determinant of one's future status as a documented or undocumented national. If a child's birth is not registered within the first five years of their life, the child is predisposed to experiencing a loss of social benefits across the life course. This analysis holds true regardless of the citizenship regime and form of governance in the country of residence. Non-registration anywhere thus produces a type of "functional statelessness" (p. 3). In many nation-states, this presents challenges to enrolling in public school, registering for public health programs (e.g., vaccinations and immunizations) or social benefits programs (e.g., unemployment insurance, pension plans), accessing social assistance (e.g., welfare programs), obtaining legal employment, and participating in various aspects of civic and social daily life (e.g., voting, obtaining a public library card, opening a bank account). Indeed, in the current era of a global pandemic, the significance of recognizing and addressing the consequences of non-registration discussed in this research becomes all the more salient.

Part 2 begins with a conceptual distinction between the "legal denial" and the "administrative denial" of national status by the state (p. 5). Legal denial involves denying national status to individuals who are long-term residents of the state and/or who do not have legal membership in another state; this results in people becoming stateless (p. 14). Administrative denial involves the active or passive non-facilitation of access to national documentation, which results in people with a plausible claim to legal membership being unable to prove their nationality with documentation (p. 8). **Undocumented Nationals** focuses on the latter. Hunter argues that omission (neglecting to facilitate access) and commission (actively preventing access as a means of intentional discrimination) are two ways in which access to national documentation is restricted by the state (p. 5). Unsurprisingly, a key issue stemming from a lack of documentation is the absence of sufficient data. Drawing on UNICEF data on birth registration rates by country, Hunter notes that regional averages for unregistered births overlook cross-country variation, and country averages further mask internal variation (p. 9). Factors that affect birth registration include socio-economic status, ethnicity, gender, and time between birth and registration. Despite the proposal and implementation of several reforms discussed in Part 3, state concern over the financial and logistical barriers to birth registration is still insufficient in several Global South regions (pp. 10–11)—particularly countries in Africa and South and East Asia, as well as parts of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Part 3 focuses on the administrative denial of access to documentation through state omission. Hunter highlights the demand–supply function to birth registration (p. 27). Specifically, "birth registration is a joint function of societal incentives, on the one hand, and state interests and capabilities, on the other" (p. 24). On the demand side (which includes a large proportion of rural, low-income, and/or Indigenous populations), registration is seen as costly, inaccessible, and unlikely to bring significant benefits, and accompanied by shaming the mothers forced to register their children as "illegitimate" (p. 35). On the supply side, an absence of notary publics in remote communities and a lack of registrar fluency in

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Indigenous languages present barriers to registration. Hunter reasons that the development of neoliberal reforms and pressure towards democratization in Latin America and the Caribbean in the 1990s led to a state push for social policy that was more inclusive of all members of the population and that better addressed ongoing poverty and social inequality (pp. 29–30). Establishing a new floor of social support for the poor and reintegrating populations into the state's social and political fabric following internal conflict became key policy objectives (p. 30). Suggested administrative reforms include increasing communication, simplifying procedures, reducing costs, facilitating delayed registration and logistical access, reducing sexism and the stigma of unrecognized paternity, eliminating intergenerational barriers (such as requiring parents to be registered before their children), and training registrars to facilitate language diversity (pp. 33–35). Although there has been an increase in benefits resulting from birth registration, thus leading to increased demand, Hunter maintains that greater policy changes were and are still needed.

Part 4 examines the exclusion of Haitian descendants in the Dominican Republic and of Nubians in Kenya as two case studies that exemplify the intentional denial of access to documentation as a form of discrimination. Since the 1930s, there has been an "official [Dominican] state policy" of "**antihaitianismo**" (p. 39). First, all Dominican Constitutions from 1929 to 2010 defined a **jus solis** citizenship regime that included a clause that excluded the children of foreign residents deemed "in transit." Without a clear definition of "in transit" (p. 39), the Dominican state routinely denied citizenship to children of Haitian descent (pp. 40–41). Although a new migration law in 2014 technically provided a pathway to citizenship for all residents, "the costs, evidence, and legal assistance necessary to [apply]" (pp. 45–46) were beyond the reach of many Haitian descendants. Second, a shift in citizenship regime from **jus solis** to **jus sanguinis** in the early 2000s rendered approximately 200,000 individuals, primarily Haitian descendants, instantly stateless (p. 38). In Kenya, a **jus sanguinis** regime similarly serves to exclude Nubians, an Islamic group with a colonial history of allegiance to the British. Despite most Nubians self-identifying as Kenyan (p. 48), their exclusion by the state is evident in their inability to access social funds, national documentation, and the imposition of a "vetting" process (p. 49), which illogically depends on the provision of national documents for a successful outcome. In both cases, the denial faced by Haitian descendants in the Dominican Republic and Nubians in Kenya stems from active social and political processes that uphold open state discrimination and deliberately maintain the vulnerability of populations who are ideologically conceptualized as "other" and lesser-than. Such exclusion and marginalization are further upheld when discriminatory laws exist within loopholes of international frameworks, as seen with the 2014 Dominican migration law.

Part 5, the conclusion, brings the analyses in this Element together with the assertion that by addressing barriers to registration on both the demand and supply sides of the issue of evidentiary statelessness, productive state measures can be implemented. While modernization has facilitated an increase in birth registration, Hunter proposes political will as key to enabling and ensuring birth registration, as well as the receipt of documentary proof of registration and thus national status. It is a powerful proposition that places the onus on state actors, a well-supported position by the arguments throughout this Element.

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Overall, **Undocumented Nationals** is clear, focused in scope, and accessible, and it achieves what it sets out to do: it provides a snapshot and analysis of a more commonly overlooked facet of undocumented status, namely, evidentiary statelessness, with the aim of raising awareness, problematizing the role of the state, and offering solutions through a call for institutional measures. An informative and compelling piece, this Element makes a valuable contribution to the field of migration and border studies more broadly, with particular significance to political science research and scholarship on (non-) citizenship, legal status and documentation, nationalism and state exclusion, and statelessness. Migration scholars, students, policymakers, state actors, and community service providers—particularly those examining issues of statelessness in the Global South—are sure to find this Element a relevant read in equal measure.

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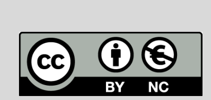

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The Big Gamble: The Migration of Eritreans to Europe

Shreya Bhat

BOOK REVIEW
Belloni, M. (2019). **The Big Gamble: The Migration of Eritreans to Europe**. University of California Press, pp. 228. ISBN: 9780520298705

HISTORY Published 28 April 2022

Milena Belloni's **The Big Gamble: The Migration of Eritreans to Europe** captivatingly leads its reader through the Eritrea–Ethiopia–Sudan–Libya–Italy corridor to shed light on the material and non-material resources invested by Eritrean refugee men and their families in their migration trajectories towards North American and Scandinavian countries. Belloni successfully aims to make visible the socio-economic choices available to her research participants at different stages in their migration. **The Big Gamble** synthesizes Belloni's informal interactions with "protagonists"—mostly Eritrean refugee men in Italy, Eritrean men from refugee camps in Addis Ababa in Ethiopia, Khartoum in Sudan, and those planning their departure from Asmara in Eritrea whom the author met during an intensive multi-sited ethnography conducted between 2008 and 2016. These protagonists, Belloni illustrates, navigate emic perceptions of risks and dangers involved in realizing their migration aspirations and constantly moving onwards from one destination to another.

The Big Gamble delivers on two main fronts: first, Belloni introduces the idea of cosmologies of destinations to indicate the hierarchical organization of destination countries as perceived by Eritrean refugee men and their families and to examine how such an organization shapes migrants' journeys. Exploring multiple cosmologies of destinations, she argues, provides an insight into (im)mobility as experienced by migrants, thereby urging the reader to examine the role of aspirations, risk perception, shared moral norms and influence of families on the decision-making process rather than merely attributing refugee movements to emergency and exceptionality. Second, Belloni borrows the concept of **entrapment** from gambling studies to further her argument and to demonstrate that high-risk

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migrants, "not unlike gamblers" (p. 126), become increasingly compelled to take risks on account of cumulative emotional and social costs as they proceed along a journey despite facing obstacles. **The Big Gamble** offers a critical perspective on high-risk migration without falling into the trap of overemphasizing vulnerability.

Between its introductory and concluding chapters, **The Big Gamble** alternates amid unfolding life stories of its protagonists and Belloni's astute ethnographic observations from different field sites. Chapter 1 shows how both positive and tragic aspects of emigration are normalized in Eritrea, where providing for one's family defines Eritrean masculinity and adulthood. Belloni's protagonists demonstrate that becoming a refugee might not always be an involuntary choice, but it might reflect the operationalization of possibilities available to an individual. Chapter 2, based on Belloni's interactions with Eritrean refugees in camps in Ethiopia and Sudan, sheds light on the social, economic, and cultural factors that influence both the desire for mobility and the choice to remain immobile among refugees. Furthermore, the chapter addresses the importance of transnational family networks and diasporas on Eritrean refugees' ability to leave the camps and move onwards.

Chapter 3 seeks to understand why Eritrean refugees, despite having arrived in Italy, persist on moving to North American or Scandinavian countries. Employing a transnational frame, Belloni observes that the decision of Eritrean refugees to move onwards results from a combination of family expectations, peer pressure, and migrants' individual aspirations, all featuring within a cosmology of destinations shared by Eritreans. With Chapter 4, Belloni takes the reader back to her time spent in Ethiopia and Sudan, interacting with both Eritrean refugees and smugglers. She examines how protagonists of the book claim their right to mobility in the face of lack of safe and legal alternatives of migration through two key means: by either forging transnational marriages or seeking the assistance of smuggling networks.

Chapter 5 sums up the analysis by bringing to the table an analytical framework that draws upon the concept of entrapment from gambling studies to enable further research into developing a nuanced understanding of motivations that drive high-risk migration. While being careful to distinguish between the behaviour of high-risk migrants and refugees and the compulsive behaviour of gamblers, Belloni demonstrates that the risk-taking of Eritrean refugees is a sequential process. Decisions at every stage of migration are influenced by psychological and social pressures that accumulate over the course of a migrant's journey. In Belloni's view, this framework might equip us "to better understand why asylum seekers repeatedly run very high risks in order to reach developed countries" (p. 136), despite tightening immigration controls.

The strength of **The Big Gamble** lies in the personalized manner in which Belloni narrates her findings, impressively condensing reflections, anxieties, and experiences gathered during a multi-sited ethnography, making it an engaging and easy read. She effectively incorporates maps and photo panels into the text, enabling the reader to travel with her along the migration corridor. The structural organization of every chapter remains consistent throughout as Belloni puts forth her claims, introduces key concepts, and goes on to draw from ethnographic research and field notes to demonstrate how the concepts aid the analysis.

As an ethnographer, Belloni acknowledges her shortcomings and reflects on her positionality as a white Western female

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researcher on more than one occasion. For instance, despite being intimately exposed to and writing about the social and financial struggles of her protagonists, Belloni spends time self-reflecting on her inability to offer them much support outside of her capacity as a researcher. However, reflections and discussions on the methodology are presented in the appendix rather than being weaved throughout the body of the book. Another crucial issue remains: **The Big Gamble** drives at showing the parallels between high-risk migration and gambling behaviour to provide a new frame through which to assess refugee movements. Yet, the comparison to gambling is addressed in detail at the very end, when this contribution would highly benefit from being unpacked more meticulously earlier on.

Overall, **The Big Gamble** holds the potential to guide young ethnographers interested in studying transnational migrations to execute a multi-sited ethnography in its truest sense—going back and forth between refugees or migrants in host countries and their families in transit or source countries to draw linkages using information collected at different points in time.

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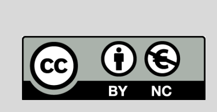

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Aider les Acadiens ? Bienfaisance et déportation 1755-1776

Matthew Hayes

BOOK REVIEW
Vasquez-Parra, A. (2018). ***Aider les Acadiens ? Bienfaisance et déportation 1755-1776***. Bruxelles : P.I.E. Lang. 201pp. ISBN: 9782807609778

HISTORY Published 28 April 2022

Cette étude sur les Acadiens, de la déportation jusqu'au début de la Révolution américaine, concerne l'accueil que leur ont réservé les communautés et les autorités civiles de la Nouvelle-Angleterre pendant et après la déportation de 1755. Tout en respectant la chronologie traditionnelle utilisée par les historiens de cet événement, l'étude se concentre sur la doctrine de bienfaisance du XVIIIe siècle, concept qui repose sur une obligation morale de compassion et d'assistance. C'est à travers ces idéaux que les réfugiés acadiens ont été perçus par une partie de la population de la Nouvelle-Angleterre, notamment par les élites politiques.

L'argument principal du livre est que l'identité acadienne s'est inspirée, en partie, de la doctrine de bienfaisance, une idée qui présentait les Acadiens sous un angle particulier dans les années 1750 et 1760. C'est en partie par le biais de ce modèle britannique de la compassion, qui a émergé en relation avec les réfugiés, qu'une identité dite « acadienne » s'est formée. Avant leur arrivée dans les ports de la Nouvelle-Angleterre à l'automne 1755, les Français de l'Acadie étaient perçus comme de dangereux ennemis. Mais ces représentations ont évolué suite à leur arrivée en grand nombre en tant que réfugiés ayant besoin d'aide. Dans un premier temps, ces « ennemis » des Britanniques se sont vus refuser le débarquement, dans de nombreuses villes et villages, et ont été logés à bord de navires au large. Mais l'arrivée de milliers de civils transportés par l'armée britannique dans des colonies qui se gouvernaient en dehors des chaînes de commandement militaire a soulevé des débats tant dans les législatures coloniales que dans les communautés locales sur la façon de les recevoir. Thomas Hutchinson et Francis Bernard, gouverneurs britanniques du Massachusetts, se sont inspirés d'une nouvelle philosophie politique de bienfaisance

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- qui contrastait avec le principe de *self-interest* de l'économie politique de l'époque - pour articuler une notion de responsabilité morale, détachée de ses liens traditionnels avec les institutions religieuses. Vasquez-Parra présente de manière convaincante la déportation des Acadiens comme un site important pour comprendre l'influence de la doctrine de bienfaisance, une perspective non sans rapport avec les débats contemporains sur les droits humains et l'accueil des réfugiés.

Vasquez-Parra situe l'accueil des Acadiens en Nouvelle-Angleterre dans le cadre de la sécularisation du concept de bienfaisance, concept qui se détache de la charité religieuse au XVIIIe siècle en redéfinissant la relation de responsabilités entre vassaux et seigneurs. S'appuyant sur des sources archivistiques de la Nouvelle-Angleterre faisant état des débats et luttes entre les communautés locales du Massachusetts et la législature de Boston, Vasquez-Parra explique comment cette transition s'est déroulée dans le contexte américain.

La doctrine de bienfaisance, nous dit-on, découle d'un sentiment d'ouverture à la souffrance des autres. En s'identifiant à la souffrance des Acadiens, les fonctionnaires et les communautés de la Nouvelle-Angleterre ont fait des efforts pour loger et trouver du travail aux Acadiens déplacés par l'armée britannique. Cet ouvrage cherche à révéler l'ambiguïté qui existe entre la conception idéalisée de la bienfaisance dans la philosophie des Lumières du XVIIIe siècle et son application concrète sous forme d'aide aux Acadiens.

L'introduction du texte situe sa contribution dans une vaste corpus historiographiquee de la déportation, et cherche à historiciser l'identité acadienne, en montrant comment cette dernière s'est développée à partir des représentations des diverses expériences vécues lors de la déportation et de la dispersion. Comme le souligne Vasquez-Parra, « L'identité acadienne est souvent synonyme du maintien, dans la durée, de la religion catholique et de la francité face aux autres cultures » (p. 22). L'auteure trouve qu'il s'agit là d'une façon plutôt restrictive de raconter l'histoire de l'identité acadienne en ce que cette interprétation met au premier plan le conflit avec les autres cultures, notamment les Anglais, alors que le recours à des accommodations ont beaucoup marqué les déportés. Vasquez-Parra prend donc ses distances par rapport aux débats sur l'acadianité fondée sur la seule lutte identitaire. Elle situe plutôt celle-ci dans le contexte intellectuel transatlantique, démarche qui pourrait conduire à devoir réinterpréter de multiples facettes de l'histoire de l'Atlantique Nord.

Si les recherches de l'auteure s'appuient sur des documents d'archives déjà bien répertoriées (surtout ceux des institutions de Boston), l'accent mis sur le contexte intellectuel transatlantique et le développement de la bienfaisance en tant que pratique institutionnelle apporte une perspective nouvelle.

L'ouvrage est composé de cinq chapitres thématiques. Tout au long de l'ouvrage, comme le souligne Martin Pâquet (professeur d'histoire à Université Laval) dans l'avant-propos, l'expérience des Acadiens préfigure les débats contemporains sur la réinstallation et l'incorporation des réfugiés. Les trois premiers chapitres situent la déportation des Acadiens dans le cadre de l'idéal de bienfaisance du XVIIIe siècle, qui en était alors à ses premiers développements. Le deuxième chapitre situe l'expérience de la déportation des Acadiens dans le contexte géopolitique de la lutte entre les projets impériaux anglais et français dans les

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Amériques. L'analyse révèle que les Acadiens étaient considérés par les Britanniques comme des ennemis étrangers et un danger potentiel pour leurs intérêts. Le troisième chapitre traite de l'arrivée des Acadiens en Nouvelle-Angleterre, et démontre comment autorités locales ont été à la fois surprises et mal préparées à l'arrivée de plusieurs milliers de réfugiés.

Les deux derniers chapitres poursuivent le récit de l'arrivée et de l'établissement des Acadiens dans les communautés du Massachusetts. Les Acadiens se sont également installés ailleurs dans les colonies anglaises, mais l'accent est mis sur le Massachusetts, où la doctrine de bienfaisance a le plus influencé l'élite politique de la colonie. L'auteur décrit notamment les instructions données aux fonctionnaires locaux pour protéger les Acadiens contre les tentatives des fermiers et des marchands d'exploiter la main-d'œuvre des Acadiens. Les Acadiens appauvris, cependant, n'apparaissent pas ici comme de simples victimes passives de la politique coloniale britannique. Vasquez-Parra attire l'attention sur les mesures prises par les Acadiens pour demander de l'aide, et ce tout au long de leur épreuve en Nouvelle-Angleterre. Elle aborde notamment les pétitions soumises à la Chambre des représentants à Boston, de même que les plaintes adressées aux autorités de la Nouvelle-Angleterre concernant les mauvaises conditions de vie et de travail des Acadiens.

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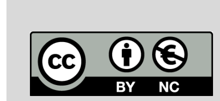

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Paris Stalingrad

Chedly Belkhodja

FILM REVIEW
Hind Meddeb (Director) Thim Naccache (Co-Director). (2019). **Paris Stalingrad** [Film]. Les Films du Sillage, Echo Films. (88 minutes)

HISTORY Published 28 April 2022

En été 2017, la journaliste et documentariste Hind Meddeb décide de filmer la situation tragique des migrants réfugiés dans le nord-est de Paris, dans le quartier Stalingrad. De plus en plus nombreux, ces migrants remontent du sud de l'Italie vers Paris en route vers l'Angleterre mais se retrouvent à vivre dans la rue. Ce sont des jeunes, des mineurs, des Afghans, des Somaliens, des Érythréens. On découvre des personnes sans attache à la France, qui se trouvent dans une situation bien différente de celle des immigrants venus des pays du Maghreb et de l'Afrique subsaharienne qui ont des liens avec l'ancienne métropole coloniale. Ce film montre le quotidien de ces migrants, une vie en suspens entre la recherche désespérée de documents administratifs pour obtenir « les papiers » et une précarité constante dans des campements de rue le long du canal Saint-Martin, à la porte de la Chapelle, lieux constamment menacés par des opérations policières menées par les troupes CRS. La présence de l'État français se limite à ces hommes hargneux casqués programmés bêtement à détruire des tentes et déplacer des matelas. Comme le soulignait le philosophe politique français Étienne Tassin en 2017 : « certains gouvernements descendent très vite en police » (p. 197). Rien n'est fait pour accueillir et protéger les migrants. On les pousse à l'épuisement et à la division entre eux, à la crainte de se trouver pris dehors l'hiver venu. Ce film présente un tableau sombre de la condition migrante en Europe. Avec le démantèlement de la « jungle de Calais » en 2016, Paris devient le lieu de rassemblement de ces migrants laissés à eux-mêmes. La réponse de l'État français sera répressive et visera à faire disparaître le sans-papier du champ visuel parisien car cette figure dérange les riverains, qui se sentent dépossédés de leur quartier. Il faut les éloigner à la périphérie. Mais, c'est aussi un film sur l'espoir d'une vie capable de

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renaître après toutes sortes d'épreuves.

La caméra suit Souleymane, 18 ans, qui a quitté le Darfour ravagé par la guerre et qui a traversé la Libye et la Méditerranée pour finalement arriver à Paris, la ville qu'il avait imaginée lumineuse et accueillante dans son long périple. Sa poésie de la condition de l'exil enrichit le propos du film. Comme la figure fuyante de l'exilé, Souleymane disparaît et apparaît à l'image. On le voit arpenter le quartier, le long des voies ferrées de la gare de l'Est, dans le métro. On le voit accroupi dans un parc où des personnes lavent leurs vêtements. Hind le retrouve lors d'une autre descente de la police et lui demande de lui livrer un poème qui contraste fortement avec la représentation d'un État policier insensible à la souffrance humaine. Un moment fort du film est la situation particulière que vivent les réfugiés mineurs repoussés au bureau de la Croix-Rouge, organisation censée protéger leur statut vulnérable. Des enfants de 14 ans se trouvent à la rue sans aucune assistance de l'État mais des citoyens engagés les aident à se loger, les réconfortent.

Ce film nous montre l'impossibilité de gérer une crise humanitaire à une époque où les frontières évoluent rapidement. Vouloir les fermer et contenir la mobilité provoque des situations insoutenables pour les populations vulnérables. Cette situation des exilés à Paris illustre le durcissement des politiques migratoires des États, celles qui briment la mobilité des personnes au nom des principes de la souveraineté et de l'identité nationale.

Ce documentaire nous fait comprendre que les migrations vont de plus en plus déplacer les frontières nationales vers l'intérieur de nos sociétés et que les mobilités doivent être reconnues comme la norme de notre monde et non comme une situation exceptionnelle à régler par une approche répressive. Il y a une invitation à inverser le regard pour remarquer la force des individus, des migrants et des citoyens interpellés par la situation migratoire. Dans les campements de rue, on remarque l'inventivité des réfugiés habitués à la vie des camps ponctuée par des gestes de solidarité. Dans cet environnement, des collectifs et des personnes bénévoles se mobilisent pour venir en aide aux migrants. C'est une autre vision du monde qui émerge, celle où l'étranger n'est plus en dehors mais dorénavant en dedans. La caméra n'est pas à l'extérieur mais bien dans et avec le quotidien des réfugiés. Elle nous met devant une mise en relation qui doit être au cœur de l'accueil et de la reconnaissance de l'exilé dans des gestes du quotidien. Selon Étienne Tassin, l'expérience fondamentale de l'hospitalité est cette relation à établir avec l'étranger, cette personne qui traverse la frontière : « En accordant l'hospitalité, on signifie qu'un avenir commun est possible avec celui ou celle avec qui nous n'avons rien de commun » (2017, p. 208).

À la fin du film Souleymane quitte Paris pour Nancy, une ville du nord de la France. Il obtient enfin une carte de séjour et trouve du travail comme apprenti dans un petit garage. Il commence à vivre une vie plus normale. Le dernier plan du film est très symbolique. La caméra suit Souleymane quittant son lieu de travail, saluant les autres travailleurs, et le laisse partir lentement, cette fois-ci de dos à l'écran. Tout au long du film, Souleymane est filmé de face comme celui qui trace un parcours et doit faire sa place dans un monde hostile. Ce dernier plan invite le spectateur à considérer sa trajectoire plus affirmée.

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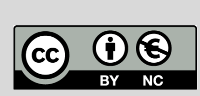

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