Refuge

Refuge

Canada's Periodical on Refugees
La revue canadienne sur les réfugiés

Vol. 29 No. 1

Founded in 1981, Refuge is an interdisciplinary journal published by the Centre for Refugee Studies, York University. The journal aims to provide a forum for discussion and critical reflection on refugee and forced migration issues.

Refuge invites contributions from researchers, practitioners, and policy makers with national, international, or comparative perspectives. Special, thematic issues address the broad scope of the journal's mandate, featuring articles and reports, shorter commentaries, and book reviews. With the exception of formally solicited work, all submissions to Refuge are subject to double-blinded peer review. Articles are accepted in either English or French.

Refuge is a non-profit, independent periodical funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and supported by the membership of the Canadian Association for Refugee Studies (CARFMS). The views expressed in Refuge do not necessarily reflect those of its funders or editors.

Refuge is indexed and abstracted in the *Index to Canadian Legal Literature*, *Pais International*, *Sociological Abstracts*, the *International Bibliography of the Social Sciences*, and *Canadian Business and Current Affairs*. The full text of articles published in *Refuge* is also available on-line through the Gale Group databases, accessible in many university libraries. *Refuge* is also available online through Lexis-Nexis's Quicklaw service.

Contents

Guest Editor: Linda Leung

Report

Introduction

Linda Leung

The Special Focus section of this issue of *Refuge* is being edited by an "outsider" to Refugee Studies. By that I mean that my professional life has not focused on investigating refugee issues per se, but instead has been concerned with how technology is accessed and deployed by groups and communities. Therefore, what this Special Focus section offers are some different perspectives on technology's role in the refugee experience through the lenses of various disciplines that actually study technology adoption and uses. In doing this, I am hoping to begin an interdisciplinary dialogue between Refugee Studies and Technology Studies scholars about policies, models, and politics of technology provision, access and use with specific reference to refugee service provision in situations of displacement. To this end, I have also included contributions from other "outsiders" to encourage the sharing of data and knowledge across sectors.

In my own examinations of refugees' technology use in displacement settings[1] and during settlement,[2] it seems that the importance of technological tools and services to refugees has had little attention until recently. As can be expected, much of the literature within Refugee Studies is concerned with matters such as factors influencing forced migration, the provision of services in crisis situations, and systems of refugee administration. Yet there has been minimal examination of the role of technology in, for example, sustaining connections between displaced family members where contact is tenuous and at risk of being lost. Nor has there been much deliberation on the question of technology as a fundamental human right and therefore a basic necessity to which refugees should have access. In following this line of argument, other questions arise: which technologies are the most appropriate for refugees in camps and displacement settings? What are the practicalities of deploying such technologies on the ground? What inequalities emerge surrounding access to these technological tools and services? What are the repercussions of having limited or no access to such technologies for refugees who are displaced and those who have resettled?

Some of these questions have already begun to be addressed. A recent issue of *Forced Migration Review* (issue no. 38) presented a collection of short case studies of projects in the field, which largely focused on how new technologies were being used by aid organizations in providing services to refugees. The issue is very useful in highlighting the diversity and innovation of projects being undertaken on the ground.

I hope to augment these in this Special Focus section of *Refuge,* with more detailed examples and critical analysis by way of a comprehensive introduction to Technology Studies. The study of technology is not merely concerned with just the tools and devices that are commonly referred to as technologies. Rather, Technology Studies also investigates the systems of knowledge and meaning that are associated with technologies: for example, there is often an unquestioned causal relationship given to technology and socio-economic progress whereby everyone must "keep up" with the IT revolution by having a computer and having computer skills or be "left behind."[3] Technology Studies interrogates these ideas, examining how they make their way into policies such as establishing national high-speed broadband networks and ensuring every child has a laptop. Moreover, Technology Studies looks at how technologies and these ideas about technology are socially constructed and shaped.

The critical dimension offered by Technology Studies approaches is necessary to balance out a popular tendency to "evangelize" new technologies. Indeed, these positions represent the two main perspectives used to study technology: one is that of *social determinism,* whereby technological innovation and change is regarded as socially, politically, culturally, and economically situated; the other is *technological determinism,* which considers technology to be the catalyst for social change. The former perspective regards technology as shaped by humans. Actor-Network Theory[4] takes this a step further in arguing that the shaping of technology by humans has resulted in human reliance on technology, such that technology also shapes us. Technologies that we have created become a vital part of our lives and so

are important actors in the operation of our networks. In providing humans with agency, technology also has its own agency.

Social determinist or constructivist views are skeptical of utopian celebrations as well as pessimistic generalizations about new technology. Technological determinism tends to create those positive and negative assertions, such as "Facebook means that refugees will not lose contact with loved ones anymore" or "The use of Skype means that refugees no longer require access to telephones." Therefore, I encourage you to read the themed articles with these concepts in mind: does the availability of a particular technology inevitably lead to better social outcomes? Does access to technology necessarily mean that refugees' needs can be better represented?

Houssein Charmarkeh's article describes what can be achieved when refugees have access to tools of information, communication, and representation themselves. These opportunities to increase technical literacies while sustaining precarious connections with displaced family members often happen only once refugees are in countries of settlement. However, the Somalian participants in this study have already acquired reasonably high levels of technology literacy in their country of origin, enough to mobilize using social media whilst displaced and in transit.

In contrast, Linda Briskman's article examines the ways in which technologies can be used to oppress refugees in some of the most inhumane ways possible. Not only are they subject to state-sanctioned deprivation of communication technologies as part of mandatory immigration detention, they are also policed by technologies of control and surveillance. We see that low technologies—such as letter writing—can effectively allow refugees to subvert the technologies used against them in mandatory detention.

While Briskman contends that access to technology should be considered a part of communication as a human right as expressed in Article 19 of the UN Declaration of Human Rights, which includes "freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers," Australia's system of mandatory detention apparently contradicts this non-binding provision. On the other hand, Jessica Anderson's article examines in detail how Article 19 is being implemented on the ground through the UNHCR's provision of technology as a basic need and service. The argument underpinning both of these articles is that very little communication, education, and everyday life can be conducted without technological mediation. This is also at the crux of Actor-Network Theory, which suggests that technology is an intrinsic part of our human agency: technologies are not neutral tools or objects, but have important roles in the operation of all networks. Furthermore, there are unexpected uses and consequences in that while the primary objective might be to use technology to deliver education, the technology combined with the acquired skills was used for more pressing needs such as keeping in touch with displaced family and friends.

The comprehensive evaluation of the Community Technology Access initiative demonstrates the investment and effort required in establishing and maintaining an adequate technical infrastructure. Moreover, there needs to be assessment of whether such technologies are the most appropriate for the local community and whether less resource-intensive alternatives might be more suitable.

Issues of access and affordability do not pertain only to computers and the Internet, but to any technologies that might be seen as "solutions." In other words, simply making technologies available is not sufficient. There are access biases to be overcome such as the literacies—both language and technical—necessary for technology use. There are also gendered ways in which technology is accessed. Finance, too, often constitutes one of the greatest impediments to access.

Both Anderson's and Nora Danielson's papers discuss the UNHCR's policy of encouraging locally led initiatives and building the capacity of the communities in which their projects are located. This approach has the best potential for understanding the intricacies of technology availability, access, and affordability at a local level. This localized knowledge is crucial for practising what is known in technology disciplines as "user-centred design": socially determined technology solutions which emerge from the needs of the people who will ultimately use them. User-centred design is the opposite of "one-size fits all," off-the-shelf, top-down, or designer-led approaches. Rather, it advocates solutions that are tailored and have been developed with the input of the users themselves. Users can even be involved in co-creation, also known as participatory design.

Danielson's paper illustrates the particularities of Cairo, and the difficulties of implementing a standardized technology and communication strategy between service providers and refugees in such a densely populated but geographically sprawling city. The paper shows that while there is greater availability of technologies in urban environments—unlike in remote settings—issues of access and affordability remain. In this case, users are both service providers and refugees. The user research demonstrates that service providers are often gatekeepers to technology and have access to newer technologies such as the Internet and social media. Refugees, on the other hand, tend to utilize more traditional or lower technologies such as print and telephony. What kinds of solutions can be designed for two groups of users

who need to communicate and interact but utilize different types of technologies?

It is important to remember that while refugee communities and contexts differ, it is also necessary to look comparatively and at the "big picture" of technology use, access, and provision in order to develop appropriate standards and policies that ensure at least a minimum level of availability and service. Currently, refugee experiences of technology are not only diverse and disparate, but also largely interpreted through service providers. That is, there is a dearth of data that is primarily sourced from refugees themselves about their technology use. As a way of addressing this, I am making anonymized data, which I have collected from over one hundred surveys and interviews with refugees about their experiences of technology, publicly available for re/interpretation and analysis at http://trr.digimatter.com.

This online database is possibly the most comprehensive collection of primary data on refugees' technology use across various contexts of displacement, detention, and settlement. In sharing this data, I am encouraging interdisciplinary collaboration between students, scholars, and the fields of Refugee Studies and Technology Studies.

I appreciate the opportunity, as an "outsider" to Refugee Studies, to present in this Special Focus section of *Refuge* some key theories and ideas from Technology Studies. I hope that these can be used as conceptual lenses for examining the research findings in the themed papers, the raw data in my online database, and in future discussions about refugees and technology (such as in an upcoming special issue of the *Journal of Refugee Studies*).

Notes

1. L. Leung, C. Finney Lamb, and Emrys, *Technology's Refuge: the use of technology by asylum seekers and refugees* (Sydney: UTS ePress, 2009), http://epress.lib.uts.edu.au/research/bitstream/handle/2100/928/TechnologysRefuge.pdf?sequence=1.

2. L. Leung, "Mind the Gap: Refugee and Communication Technology Literacy," Australian Communications Consumer Action Network, Sydney, 2011, http://accan.org.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=364:mind-the-gap-refugees-and-communications-technology-literacy&catid=103:general-communications&Itemid=170

3. F. Henwood et al., "Critical Perspectives on Technologies, In/equalities and the Information Society," in *Technology and In/equality,* ed. S. Wyatt, et al. (London: Routledge, 2000), 2.

4. J. Law and J. Hassard, eds., *Actor Network Theory and After* (Oxford and Keele: Blackwell and the Sociological Review, 1999).

Dr. Linda Leung is associate professor in the Institute for Interactive Media and Learning, University of Technology, Sydney, Australia.

Technology, Control, and Surveillance in Australia's Immigration Detention Centres

Linda Briskman

Abstract

Although mandatory immigration detention for "unauthorized" arrivals in Australia receives considerable attention, the use and abuse by government of technologies within sites of detention is less publicized. Control and surveillance are exercised in a number of ways. Immigration detainees have been denied adequate access to technologies that would enable them to fully communicate with family and friends and are deprived of the capacity to acquire information that can ensure their human rights are realized. At the same time that asylum seekers experience restrictions, devices are in place to control detainees through technological surveillance. Despite the prohibitions and impositions, detainees have adopted alternative means of communication in defiance of the limits foisted upon them.

Résumé

Bien que la détention obligatoire des immigrants dans le cas d'arrivées « non autorisées » en Australie retiene beaucoup l'attention, l'utilisation et l'abus des technologies par le gouvernement au sein des sites de détentions sont moins médiatisés. Le contrôle et la surveillance sont mis en pratique de différentes manières. Les immigrants détenus se sont vus refuser un accès adéquat aux technologies qui leur permettraient de communiquer pleinement avec leur famille et leurs amis, et d'avoir accès à l'information nécessaire pour s'assurer du respect de leurs droits humains. Tout en expérimentant ces restrictions, les demandeurs d'asile détenus sont contrôlés par les technologies de surveillances. Malgré les interdictions et les abus, les détenus ont trouvé d'autres façons de communiquer pour franchir les limites qui leur sont imposées.

Introduction

On August 28, 2012, Australia watched as participants in the SBS television series *Go Back to Where You Came From*[1] were stripped of their wallets and mobile phones. They were told that they would not be permitted to have contact with friends and families. This simulated asylum-seeker experience involving Australian citizens mirrored the everyday experience of asylum seekers in immigration detention who have consistently been denied means of communication, resulting in minimal contact with families and friends and creating other serious consequences.

Mandatory immigration detention in Australia has been condemned by international and domestic human rights organizations for breaches of human rights norms that are the entitlements of those designated as citizens. The critiques centre on the restriction of rights to liberty, limited access to services in the spheres of law, health, and education, and inhumane treatment in detention facilities. Less explored is the right to communication, which is expressed in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR): "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers."

Although this 1948 declaration was crafted before the technological communications revolution, the spirit of Article 19 resonates today. The way it fails to be applied in immigration detention compounds the denial of liberty. Former Australian Human Rights Commissioner

Catherine Branson states, "Liberty is a fundamental human right. Depriving someone of their liberty carries with it a serious responsibility to ensure that the conditions of detention do not undermine the fundamental human dignity of the person who is detained."[2]

This paper examines how control of communication has been exercised in immigration detention facilities for more than a decade, the impact of the communication limits on detainees, and ways in which asylum seekers have taken steps to overcome the bans, including through organized protest. In order to locate the discussion within the context of immigration detention in Australia, technology is defined to include the Internet, telephones, cameras, and facsimile.

Control of the means of communication silences the voices of those whose liberty has been denied and privileges dominant constructions of "refugee," as portrayed by the immigration authorities. Globally, access to technological means of communication has enabled oppressed groups to have their voices heard. But as technologies spread worldwide, their availability in closed environments becomes constricted and adds to other forms of control that are imposed on those who are incarcerated.

Sources of information for this paper include published literature, the author's reflective journal from 2003 to 2005, ethnographic reflections of detention, narratives incorporated in the People's Inquiry into Detention,[3] informal conversations with former detainees, and recent research at the Curtin and Christmas Island immigration detention centres. Where possible, priority is given to asylum-seeker perspectives.

Literature on immigration detention broadly interrogates two broad periods of time—the era of Prime Minister John Howard's conservative government from 1996 to 2007 and the Labor government from November 2007 to September 2013. Many of the critiques about the harsh immigration detention regime focus on the Howard period, particularly after Temporary Protection Visas were introduced in 1999 and when offshore processing of asylum claims initially took hold from 2001. Although over time there have been some positive changes to communication availability under both governments, there are continuities about provision of facilities and constant changes to rules. For example there was a time when the ban on mobile phones was relaxed, only to be later reinstated. Although the emphasis of this paper is on pre-2007, reference is made to more recent policies and technology aspects to demonstrate that surveillance and control of information continue to characterize immigration detention in Australia.

The Framework and Implementation of Control

The policy of mandatory immigration detention of men, women, and children was enshrined in legislation in 1992 and receives bipartisan support. Those subject to asylum-seeker detention are generally those known as Irregular Maritime Arrivals (IMAs), people who arrive by boat without prior authorization. It is lawful to seek asylum in this way, as determined by the 1951 Refugee Convention, to which Australia is a signatory. However, the hyperbole about this group has been unrelenting, enabling control to be increasingly ramped up through the propaganda of official sources that results in a benign acceptance by the general community of harsh measures. Detention facilities have continually expanded in mainland Australia, often in remote sites, on the Indian Ocean Territory of Christmas Island, and offshore in Nauru and Papua New Guinea. The centrality of mandatory detention was incorporated most recently in the first plank of the 2008 Key Immigration Detention Values, which specifies that mandatory detention is a key component of border control.

Despite evidence before them of the harms and human rights violations of the practice of immigration detention,[4] successive governments have remained intransigent. Australia claims absolute sovereignty of its borders through mandatory detention policies and the location of detention centres in remote and hostile sites.[5] A manufactured crisis has made border protection a defining concept invoking fears of foreign invasion, which narrates a view that "illegal" entry threatens the integrity of the official refugee program as well as posing risks to national security.[6] Border security trumps human security. These factors contribute to the mistreatment of asylum seekers in detention, including impeding access to communication. By adopting a criminalizing discourse that portrays IMA's as "illegals" and "queue jumpers" and exposes their actions uncritically in times of protest, sections of the media also contribute to community perceptions that reinforce a tough and rights-restricted detention environment.

The Immigration Department[7] keeps tight control on information flow. Through well-resourced public relations machinery, it determines which information is deemed appropriate to release to the general public and to aspiring refugees. The privatization of the operations of detention facilities and even further contracting of specific services to the private sector, including provision of health services, combine with the rhetoric of "client privacy" to obfuscate information flow and reduce transparency. The fact that detention facilities are placed in remote sites or in places offshore locates asylum seekers out of sight and out of mind. The spatial separation of detainees from community means that the human person is not seen; the lack of access

to technological communications means that they are not heard.

Detention environments are highly securitized and control of information flow is intrinsic to these settings. Although some monitoring does occur in immigration detention facilities through bodies such as the Australian Human Rights Commission, Amnesty International, the Commonwealth Ombudsman, and the Red Cross, this is limited to occasional visits. Furthermore, at times of "crisis," such as during protests in detention and deaths at sea or in detention, the only information readily available is the view of the immigration authorities. What the general public receives is partial and characterized by an information lock-up by governments and their agents.[8] For McCulloch, state repression of debate occurs through a variety of means including repressive legislation, monitoring, censorship, intimidation, vilification, slander, and denial of information, creating the ground for treating asylum seekers as dangerous others.[9]

By contrast with denial of the right of asylum seekers to meaningful communication systems, the immigration authorities and contracted private detention operators (currently Serco) employ high-tech and low-tech resources for the purposes of containment, securitization, and surveillance. These include extensive closed-circuit television (CCTV) systems, secure gating that requires tightly controlled communication for them to be opened, monitoring rooms whereby the gaze of detention staff can move between compounds in which asylum seekers are located, and security screening devices in order to regulate what and who enters sites of detention. For everyday surveillance, the "old" technology of the "walkie-talkie," hand-held radio transceivers, is adopted to enable detention operational staff to communicate with each other on what is happening throughout detention facilities in a more secretive way than a public address system would allow.

Michel Foucault's construction of the Panopticon outlined in his landmark *Discipline and Punish*[10] is germane. He applied Jeremy Bentham's late eighteenth-century model of the Panopticon to contemporary prisons. Bentham's model of the Panopticon referred to a tower placed in a central position within the prison from which the guards could observe every cell and the prisoners within them, but with the design ensuring that prisoners would not know whether or not they were being observed.[11] Rather than isolating prisoners in dungeons or by transportation, the Panopticon worked on the principle that the best way to manage prisoners was to make them potential targets of authoritative gaze at every moment of the day, with the gaze resting with the system and not with a specific person,[12] creating uncertainty as to when and who will be under surveillance.

Available narratives from asylum seekers who experienced detention, particularly pre-2007, illustrate the themes both of controls of technological and other means of communication and of surveillance through technology. Surveillance was particularly evident when mentally ill detainees were placed in "management units" or separation compounds. In June 2004, then Immigration Minister, Amanda Vanstone, admitted that detainees placed in the "management unit" at Baxter detention centre in remote South Australia for up to twenty hours per day were under constant video surveillance.[13]

Conversely, while the Australian government is incrementally rolling out its National Broadband Network, in recognition of the importance of Internet communications, those inside detention have restricted rights. Electronic communication devices of all types are, however, a necessity for detained asylum seekers in a number of ways including contact with family members, communicating with the Australian public, and accessing a range of information.

Contact with Family Members

Often the biggest source of grief for detained asylum seekers is inability to communicate with the families they have left behind, including spouses, children, parents, and siblings. Although not all of their families have full access to the Internet, anecdotal information reveals that many increasingly have access, including through public facilities or friends and neighbours. Whereas telephone contact is the most readily accessible form of communication, limited availability within detention has inhibited regular contact. Mail can be slow and unreliable and raises concerns about surveillance. Even if these concerns are not justified in reality, the fear that permeates detention facilities results in lack of trust. The inability to contact family members arguably adds to the suffering of detained asylum seekers and combines with other facets of the detention experience to compound anxiety and depression that are common to the immigration detention experience.

A previous entity when the Howard government was in power was known as "closed" detention, which was one of the most severe sources of anxiety for asylum seekers by causing them to lose contact with their families. In closed detention where claims were first processed, there was no communication allowed at all with the outside world.[14] Those "screened out" of the process of applying for a protection visa were kept in separate areas of detention centres and denied access to legal advice, telephones, newspapers, television, and mail.[15] This separation could be for many months. Being screened out referred to whether the immigration officer believed they met the provisions of the Refugee Convention. The only communication allowed was

a standard fax, despite the fact that many families did not have receiving facilities.[16] The wording of the fax was as follows:

> This is to let you know that (I) have arrived safely in Australia and am being detained in immigration detention. I am currently unable to telephone or write a letter to you but as soon as I can I will be in touch. I am in good health and being looked after. Return faxes will not be accepted.[17]

Even this limited form of communication was not universal. A former detainee, kept in closed detention in 2000, explained that he was not even given the opportunity to send a fax. "We didn't have TV, we didn't have radio, we couldn't phone or fax. Nothing."[18] Many of those who had been screened out lost contact with their families, who had moved by the time they were able to telephone them.[19] One told the People's Inquiry into Detention:

> When I was in Woomera Detention Centre for eight months they did not let us to contact our family. I lost contact with my wife and my children and after two years my wife contact me through one of the priest to Woomera Detention Centre, which is the happiest day for me to know that they are still alive.[20]

Even when people were eventually moved to the open camp, they found that communication remained limited as phones were inadequate and queues lengthy. Leung, Finney Lamb, and Emrys describe the problems detainees confronted in relation to paying for calls and having to work for communication privileges, through the purchase of phone cards.[21] Pay was a pittance and it was hard to raise the money needed for calls. The limited choice of phone cards that were available meant that overseas calls could only be brief. Also, they note, the lack of public telephones in detention resulted in long queues, fights over telephones, and difficulties receiving incoming calls. There was also fear of surveillance with an assumption that phone calls were monitored and there was also a belief that incoming faxes were withheld and that obstructions occurred with outgoing faxes.[22]

Although the obligation to work was discontinued, during a visit in 2012 to the newly opened Yongah Hill detention centre in Northam, Western Australia, an advocate was told that men could receive twenty-five points to buy items from the canteen and could only receive an additional twenty-five points by going to prescribed activities. At that centre men could make calls out, but no one could call in to them, creating increased communication barriers.[23]

The Pacific Solution in its first stage from 2001 to 2007 was particularly problematic. People taken to Manus Island during this period were unable to contact their families. Hawraa Alsaai told a magazine that it was only after she was transferred to Australia for medical treatment that her mother could telephone her three brothers in Iraq. The family members said they had believed they were dead and had given funerals.[24]

On Nauru in the early stages of the Pacific Solution from 2001 there was no capacity for asylum seekers to make phone calls. After a few months phones became available but access remained limited.[25] A detainee on Nauru told one of his supporters, "I cannot telephone my family…So I take medicine…its name is Xanax."[26] Even such basic means of communication as cameras were denied or restricted. One asylum seeker detained in Nauru said in a letter to supporters, "We do not have any contact with our families. Today my friends and I walked around the camp to take some photos, but they didn't let us take photos in front of the main gate of the camp."[27] These restrictions also applied to mainland detention centres where photos have rarely been permitted, resulting in detainees having no way of showing their families at home their newborn children or the progress of older ones.

Communicating with the Australian Community

The lack of direct contact between detained asylum seekers and the Australian community contributes to the lack of opportunity for their voices to be heard above the throng of negative portrayals, which results in the perpetuation of widespread antagonistic views about asylum seekers.

Nonetheless, a small but active asylum seeker/refugee support network has developed in Australia. This includes a number of refugee and human rights NGOs, professionals, church groups, and activist groups, which oppose Australia's asylum-seeker policy.[28] As Gosden notes, in addition to social action many offer social, emotional, practical, welfare, medical, and legal support.[29] A number of advocates maintain email lists to convey the plight of people detained, when they are unable to do so themselves. Information on children in detention was and continues to be circulated regularly through a group known as ChilOut.

With closed detention, detainees reported that they were often told that Australians disliked them and they had no means of verification or otherwise.[30] When advocacy groups managed to get access to names and "numbers," the main means of identification, letter writing projects began and those in detention realized not only that some people cared but that many were opposed to the policies and practices of detention. Although letter writing is not within the scope of "technology" the brief discussion below about this communication genre illustrates the importance of contact

and the ways in which problems of email and phone access could be partially overcome.

In her research, Browning draws on some of the thousands of letters sent by asylum seekers detained on Nauru in its first detention formation, as part of a letter-writing campaign by a small group of concerned Australians. Between 2001 and 2003 phone and email access to the camp known as Topside was virtually non-existent. She says that the asylum seekers detained there "had been cast adrift from Australia and had limited presence in the public imagination."[31] Letter writing was the initial channel through which people in Australia could know about the existence of the detainees.

The importance of communication with the wider Australian public is also apparent in the groundbreaking *From Nothing to Zero* project,[32] which collected letters from refugees in Australia's detention centres. Through this project, published in 2003, detained asylum seekers were able to convey their concerns and hopes. The importance of connection featured.

> Thank you for your letter, your human sympathy, your good hope and your good wishes. Thank you very much for your letter and Phone Card. I am happy because I have a lovely mum in Australia who thinks and cares about me. Be sure, with your support I will never lose my hope and will stand strong. You cannot imagine my excitement. It is just great to receive a letter from you. I understand that you are one of these good hearted Australians who have some kind of compassion for the so-called boat people.[33]

Through the Australian branch of human rights organization PEN International, a Writers in Detention Committee was formed and an anthology of writing titled *Another Country* followed in 2007. The aim was to make these writers' voices heard, for their self-respect and affirmation as writers and because "we wanted Australian readers to find out first-hand what was really happening."[34] This was done by sending emails to women refugee advocates and these networks got in touch with writers in immigration centres to collect their work and make it ready for publication. The stories of "heroism, grief, despair, love and barbarism, humor, courage and cruelty" were told.[35] Although establishing contacts was through the medium of emails from outside detention, the stories were those of the detainees themselves and served a humanizing and educating function as well as lifting the spirits of those who wrote them.

Although some people lent a hand through direct visits to detention centres, such visits were difficult in remote locations. Those who did visit gained some insight into the controls operating as they too were subjected to technology control. Cameras, telephones, and electronic devices were not permitted,[36] and visitors were exposed to electronic searches of property and body before entering. This continues. For example, in the newly opened Yongah Hill detention facility in Western Australia there are five cameras in the visiting area.[37]

For those not able to visit, communication options have been limited. For example in the rural Baxter Immigration Detention Facility up to its closure in 2007, although calls in were permitted, phone lines were constantly busy. More recent practices in detention centres such as the remote Curtin facility and Yongah Hill forbid inward calls.

Detainees find ways of recounting their experiences through advocates. In 2005 when email was totally banned, those in the Port Augusta Baxter facility told their advocates by phone or during visits about the mistreatment of Cornelia Rau, a wrongly detained and mentally ill Australian, and their concern for her well-being. As intermediaries, advocates were able to use advocacy email lists to tell the general public about these concerns. Furthermore, once it was revealed that Rau was in fact an Australian resident and subsequently released, Baxter asylum seekers used the same means to promote their own despair.

> God sent Cornelia here to send our cry to all Australian people. We are all happy that she be free from such a terrible place. We all pray that she will get well. She remains in our minds and hearts as a heroine for ever and ever.[38]

Access to Information

In research conducted by Leung, Finney Lamb, and Emrys, former detainees stated that they believed communication technologies were deliberately obstructed by detainee officers, as a form of control and victimization.[39] One consequence of the restrictions and obstructions was the inability to access both lawyers and legal material. For those with lawyers, communication restrictions made it difficult to contact them. The situation was particularly severe for detainees in closed detention who were not provided with legal advice until they had been interviewed by the Immigration Department. A lawyer told the People's Inquiry:

> They had new boat arrivals put separately to any other detainees so that there would be no people able to tell them what they needed to do to access legal advice, what they needed to say for an asylum claim to be officially noted and therefore the process to begin.[40]

A former detainee told the Inquiry:

> After the first interview the manager of the camp came and said that we can't have a visa and we have to go back to our country. He

said we could have a lawyer at our own expense, but nobody had any money or access to telephone, fax or mail.[41]

In May 2005, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission found that separately detaining asylum seekers breached international human rights law.[42]

One detainee who had experienced detention in Sydney's Villawood centre in the time of Prime Minister Howard told of how he had requested access to the Internet and a law library so that he could prepare for his court case. The response from the Immigration Department did not provide him with hope:

> The department is currently expanding the reading resources available at immigration detention centres to include reading material of a legal nature, such as the Migration Act 1958. Consideration is also being given to the feasibility of providing detainees with electronic copies of core legislation and important High Court decisions. However, this may not happen in the near future because of the scale of the project.[43]

Another Villawood detainee expressed similar concerns about that period:

> They don't help you legally, you have to scrimp if you don't have money, borrow phone cards. When they put a case against you, they have access to everything. If you want to fight it, you don't even have access to the Internet to get the information you need.[44]

Another concern was the difficulty in keeping up with outside news including in countries of origin. There was competition inside detention facilities over which television programs to watch. One detainee told me that, when there was no Internet access, he was so hungry for knowledge about Australia that he avidly read any newspapers or magazines that were scattered around. He said his major source of information was from women's magazines.[45] Some, whose English ability was less, were disadvantaged in gaining access to news and stories. One detainee advocated access to the Internet to obtain educational material and access to current affairs in the languages of the detainees. He found television and radio alone did not keep him informed, as he could not always understand English language reports.[46]

Obstructions in speaking with the media presented another communication barrier. Theoretically detainees could use fixed line telephones for this purpose, but the small number of phones and the queues for their use limited such prospects. Fears also existed of telephone surveillance and repercussions that might flow.

A power imbalance exists that defies Article 19 of the UDHR, which states that everyone has the right to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media. This provision is denied to the rights-less but readily available to the immigration authorities. The way the power imbalance is imposed is evident from a letter published in *From Nothing to Zero.* One detained asylum seeker wrote:

> I have been in detention a long time and reading the newspaper and watching the TV. I realize that the Australian public is getting one side of the story from the government. I want the Australian public to know why and which circumstances we came here to ask for protection. Politicians are using us for their own political gain because we are the government soft touch.[47]

Not only does the Immigration Department have a well-developed website and the technical means to issue regular press releases, it utilizes other technologies to inform would-be asylum seekers that they are not welcome. For example, in 2012, the federal government developed a campaign titled "Australia by boat? No advantage," with videos distributed on YouTube and as DVDs, as well as brochures and posters. Narrations are in the main languages of asylum seekers. The then Minister for Immigration, Chris Bowen, stated: "This multimedia and communications campaign reinforces the message that asylum seekers should think twice before getting on a boat to Australia, because they will be risking their lives at sea for no advantage—absolutely no advantage."[48]

This technique of video usage is not new. In June 2000, the then federal Minister for Immigration, Philip Ruddock, released a triple video set for distribution to consulates and embassies in countries from which asylum seekers might be expected to arrive. Stratton[49] explains that the purpose of the videos was to portray the difficulties of the journey and to show Australia in an undesirable way, in effect an anti-tourism campaign. One video even included imagery of the dangerous fauna of Australia—sharks, crocodiles, and snakes.

Overcoming Barriers

The dire consequences of excessive control and stringent restrictions resulted in immigration detainees developing creative means both to communicate with people close to them and to have their voices heard. This occurred in a variety of ways. Many advocates provided telephone cards directly to detainees and some found ways to smuggle mobile phones into the centres.

> Mobile phones did not officially exist although it was possible to call those who had one late at night when they were unlikely to be discovered using them. Full marks to those who smuggled

them in (usually women) and to the detainees who successfully hid them."[50]

Those detainees who did possess mobile phones had to go to great lengths to hide them as, if discovered, they would be confiscated.[51]

A former detainee from Curtin who was subject to closed detention told of a child who was permitted to go from the closed camp to the more open camp for schooling, concealing letters in clothing to pass on to those in the open setting and, in the afternoon, took back letters from them. He also told me that in the middle of the night detainees were able to pass notes through the fence without the gaze of guards.[52] To overcome the restrictions that detainees experienced in being able to obtain legal advice, those in closed compounds talked to people in the main compound who were behind two layers of fences fifteen metres away.

> We had to talk quietly because guards were everywhere. People on the other side who had access to phone told us they knew a migration agent. They tied his number on a stone and throwed [sic] it to us. Most of us talked to the Department of Immigration about getting a lawyer. The manager came to us angry that how could we get the phone number.[53]

Ways were found to overcome media restrictions. With the assistance of detainees, media outlets have also been able to secretly record or film inside detention. One of the best known of these films occurred in 2001 when the ABC television program *Four Corners* secretly recorded in the Villawood detention centre the plight of seriously ill six-year-old Shayan Badraie. The parents took the video that showed distressing images and explained how Shayan would not eat or drink and became mute after witnessing acts of violence and self-harm.[54] The effect of this program did not merely highlight Shayan's plight but communicated to viewers the atrocity of detaining children.

Detainees knew the importance of communications for staff within the detention centres and in response to their own lack of access decided to subvert this. In the Baxter centre, a group of detainees managed to obtain a staff walkie-talkie and began giving orders to staff via this means, thrusting the detention regime into momentary panic.[55]

But opportunities to subvert and create were not always present and the failure to convey despair resulted in detainees engaging in a range of protests in order to gain media attention that would be conveyed to the general public. Although this goal was frequently achieved, the way in which the protests were generally received by the public was not sympathetic. This was particularly evident from talk-back radio and letters to newspapers with comments related

to queue jumpers, wasters of taxpayer money, terrorists, and Muslim fanatics. The collateral damage of the protests was increased criminalization of asylum seekers.

Disturbances

Conditions of detention, including communication prohibition, merge with indeterminate mandatory detention to create a climate of unrest. In a submission to the Joint Select Committee on Australia's Immigration Detention Network, the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) documented incidents that occurred across the detention network that included self-harm, hunger strikes (renamed by DIAC as "voluntary starvations"), peaceful protests, damage, and physical altercations resulting in injuries.[56] In 2011 alone there were eight incidents documented but this is under-reported as it excluded the detail of riots that occurred in Christmas Island and Villawood detention centre in that year, as the government had commissioned an independent review into the circumstances of the events.

Lip sewing was one method used by detainees to convey their plight. One detainee told researcher Lucy Fiske[57] that he had wished to reveal his sewn lips to the wider world. He stated that he revealed himself to a sympathetic visiting psychiatrist as he considered he would be able to express the actions to journalists in a way that the detainees wanted. The detainee said he wanted his actions to be understood as protest arising from pain and despair and a response to unjust policies, and not an indication of individual pathology.[58] With hunger strikes, the starving body became a critical means of communicating the fractured chaos that invaded the lives of detainees.[59]

The year of the Sydney Olympics, 2000, provided an opportunity for detainees to reveal their situation to the public. As Australia was preparing to host the Olympics and the Olympic torch was making its goodwill tour around the country, detained asylum seekers decided to present a contrasting image. With few options open to them, a plan was struck with detainees from different detention centres to stage a breakout and march near each centre before returning the next day. This was planned for June 9 to coincide with the launch of the Australian leg of the torch relay.[60] The mass breakout attracted significant media attention and nominated detainee spokespersons told the media of processing delays, isolation from the outside world, and mistreatment in detention. A man involved in the breakout from Woomera detention in rural South Australia saw it as a strategy to provide information to the general public. "The main purpose is not to go anywhere but to bring the attention of the public that there is [sic] people locked here and mistreated."[61]

Browning refers to a protest in Nauru in 2000 that included demands for access to lawyers and means of communication at a time when the detainees had been held incommunicado with no access to telephones or sending or receiving mail.[62]

The case study of fires in a number of detention centres in 2002 to 2003 are instructive in demonstrating how detainees leveraged a coordinated approach to draw attention to their plight and how the authorities responded with a lockdown of all means of communication with the outside world.

Fires

In late 2002 and early January 2003, detention centres of Woomera, Baxter, Port Hedland, Christmas Island, and Villawood were severely damaged by fire, with estimates of property damage reaching more than nine million dollars.[63] Each day there were radio reports about a spate of fires. The fires began following a statement by Immigration Minister Ruddock that immigration detention centres were like five-star hotels, as well as rejection of a United Nations report that criticized Australia's detention centres.[64]

Following the fires, detainees were refused access to phones and denied communication with anyone except their lawyers or human rights organizations—some for up to six weeks.[65] As Grewcock argues, "Punishment is the inevitable corollary of criminalization."[66] During the period of incommunicado I maintained my journal. I was concerned about detainees in Baxter who relied on me for telephone contact and particularly worried about one man with a severe disability. After the fires and before telephones were disconnected, a detainee called me from a detention centre saying he believed that the phones were controlled. He told me, "Phones are controlled, don't say my name, don't say your name. Visits have been banned. No letters are getting through."[67]

The restrictions had the effect of prohibiting contact with family and friends and ensuring that the media could not speak with detainees. To circumvent the restrictions I sent a fax to one detainee trying to make it sound importantly "legal" and I found out later that it had been received. A number of people telephoned the Commonwealth Ombudsman to complain about the cut in communication. In response to my query, I was told that the explanation from the Immigration Department was that "the phones have been cut off for operational reasons."

Another advocate was told that the ban on telephones was a "withdrawal of privileges."[68] A letter I received from an asylum seeker on January 16 advised that detainees were told that facilities would be restored if they told who lit the fires.[69] My local Member of Parliament at my request made inquiries to the Immigration Department and was told that access was only being denied to those suspected of involvement in the fires.[70]

Detainees were able to send letters and it seemed that most of these reached their destination; however, letters into detention were not received. In addition, newspapers were withdrawn.[71] When phones were restored at the Port Hedland detention centre, there were fears of surveillance and the belief that all phone calls were being taped, transcribed, and translated in the hope of catching people out.[72]

The Current Situation

On its current website the Immigration Department promotes among the services available at each detention centre access to telephones, newspapers, television, computers, and the Internet.[73] The following information describes the situation in both the Curtin and Christmas Island detention facilities. This is derived from reports submitted to the Immigration Minister following five visits to Curtin in 2011,[74] and a two-week visit to Christmas Island in April 2010.[75] Finally, some information is presented on the offshore processing centres in Nauru and Manus Island (Papua New Guinea) that were reopened in late 2012.

Curtin

The Curtin detention centre is located in remote Western Australia, more than 2,000 kilometres from the mainland city of Perth. At the time of the 2011 visits, there were eighteen computers for the more than one thousand men at the Curtin immigration detention centre. In order to try to access a computer, the men must start queuing at around 5:00 a.m. in order to try to book a computer for one hour that day. The Internet access that has been organized for Curtin is slow and sporadic. All of this makes it very difficult for the men to make email contact with family and friends, or to find information through the Internet that may be relevant for their refugee claims. Detainees were told in late 2010 that there would be one hundred computers and telephones soon available. During our May 2011 visit we were told by DIAC that more computers were soon to be coming to Curtin IDC.

Telephones are available for the men to make outgoing calls if they have purchased phone cards. All of the telephones are located in non-air conditioned areas, however, so that during the many hot days in this region it is very uncomfortable to make calls. In the evenings of many months of the year there is also the problem of mosquitoes in these areas. Public telephones are not available for incoming calls, further limiting avenues of communication between the men, their families, friends, lawyers, and migration agents.

Communication between migration agents/lawyers and their clients are particularly problematic. Several lawyers have informed us that it has taken up to two weeks for the private operative, Serco, to organize telephone meetings between detainees and their legal representatives. We are aware of at least one case where a migration agent needed to contact a detainee urgently and was unable to do so for five days.

Visitors too are subject to surveillance. Not only do they go through electronic security checking upon arrival, but their movements are scrutinized during visits and, as with the concept of the Panopticon, they have no idea how or when. During one visit I lost my way to the bathroom facilities and wandered slightly off track. This was noticed and the next day I was advised by the Compliance Manager that I would be escorted to the bathroom.

Christmas Island

Christmas Island is extremely isolated from the Australian mainland. An Indian Ocean Territory of Australia, it is 2,600 kilometres from Perth and 360 kilometres south of Jakarta in Indonesia. Communications on Christmas Island are difficult at the best of times. During my 2010 visit, it was concerning to note the inadequate ratio of computers to detainees, the time restrictions on (already slow) Internet access, and the blocking of sites which would enable detainees to correspond with people outside of detention through email or through uploading information on sites such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees or the Australian Human Rights Commission.

A detainee mentioned that at least one of the three telephones in what is known as Gold Compound did not work. We were advised that a request had been lodged for repair but that this would take some time because of the island's remoteness and the difficulty of getting spare parts and technicians to the island.

Mobile phones were previously permitted in the Christmas Island detention centre which enabled detainees to have better communication with friends, family, and lawyers who could call the detainee directly rather than having to go through the process of calling the centre. Once this access was withdrawn, difficulties arose. On numerous occasions, we witnessed Serco staff not knowing the extension number in the compound to which to transfer the call, or staff not answering the phone if he/she was out of the control office. If a staff member does pick up the phone it is necessary to search for the detainee, which is a difficult task in light of the numbers of people held at the maximum security facility, known as North West Point, at the time of our 2010 visit.

In total I visited Christmas Island four times and witnessed some disturbing behaviour. In the site where families were detained, Construction Camp, I overheard a guard yelling in front of children for people to finish their valued telephone calls. During another visit, young detainees were given the opportunity to put on a performance to celebrate the anniversary of the death of an heroic figure in their culture. They were permitted to invite friends but no photographs were allowed to record this event that was so important in their lives.

At the time of writing, very little information is reaching the public domain from Christmas Island detainees. However, in 2012, after announcements about the re-establishment of detention facilities in Nauru and Papua New Guinea, those facing the prospect of transfer from Christmas Island communicated their concerns to advocates, which were conveyed to media outlets and via advocacy network emails. In a statement "Why we don't want to go to Narue or Papa New Gini," the detainees expressed their concerns in a four-page letter.

Nauru and Papua New Guinea (Manus Island)

The Pacific Solution was an invention of the government of former Prime Minister Howard, which transported asylum seekers from Australian shores to desolate camps in both Nauru and on Manus Island. Although the Labor government closed both facilities soon after taking office, former Prime Minister Julia Gillard's Labor government reinstated both in 2012 as a means of deterrence. The reinvention of the Pacific Solution is directed at asylum seekers who arrive in Australia by boat after 13 August 2012. Facilities were hastily constructed in both countries and began operating later that year. Families and children were included in the group sent to Manus. As these facilities have not proved to be a deterrent to boat arrivals in Australian waters, arrangements have had to be made for the majority of post-August 13 entrants, creating what is in effect a lottery system of who will be sent offshore.

To date, information about technology access from Nauru and Manus is sketchy although some concerns have been expressed about limitations on access. However, those detained have been able to reveal their plight through the access they do have to the Internet, including updates on their situation through social media, telling of acts of defiance and incidents of self-harm and through presenting secretly taken photos of the facilities and drawings of children. As it is almost impossible for advocates to gain permission to visit the centres to garner first-hand information, the Internet provides some means to convey the impact of changing policies.

Conclusion

Although there have been some improvements to communications technology for those held within Australia s detention facilities, particularly Internet access, the provision has been erratic, changeable, and inadequate. In maintaining a large network of detention facilities in Australia and offshore, priority is not given to the technologies of communication that are so pivotal to the lives of asylum seekers. As the immigration authorities struggle to deal with boat arrivals, overcrowded detention facilities, and the construction of new policies and new detention centres, it is unlikely that the situation will be rectified in the short term. Unless resources can be diverted from the technologies of surveillance and border control, the policy of mandatory immigration detention will continue to fall short of the provisions of Article 19 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Notes

1. The series was televised on the multicultural Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) and involved Australians making asylum-seeker journeys including to a number of countries of origin.
2. C. Branson, "Applying Human Rights in Closed Environments: Practical Observations on Monitoring and Oversight" (speech, Implementing Human Rights in Closed Environments Conference, Monash University, Melbourne, February 21, 2012).
3. The People's Inquiry into Detention was a citizens' inquiry held between 2005 and 2008, led by the Australian Council of Heads of Schools of Social Work. The findings are presented in L. Briskman, S. Latham, and C. Goddard, *Human Rights Overboard: Seeking Asylum in Australia* (Melbourne: Scribe, 2008).
4. Evidence of harm arising from detention has been presented by mental health specialists. Broader human rights violations associated with the deprivation of liberty have received attention from such bodies such as Amnesty International and the Australian Human Rights Commission.
5. L. Weber and S. Pickering, *Globalization and Borders: Death at the Global Frontier* (Houndsmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 211.
6. M. Grewcock, *Border Crimes: Australia's War on Illicit Migrants* (Sydney: Institute of Criminology Press, 2009), 154.
7. "Immigration Department" is used as a generic term through most of the paper. The name of the department has changed from time to time and at the time of writing is the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC).
8. S. Washington, "Ruddock's Secret Report," *Business Review Weekly,* October 9–15, 2003, 18.
9. J. McCulloch, "Enemies Everywhere: (In)security Politics, Asylum Seekers and Enemies Within," in *Asylum Seekers: International Perspectives on Interdiction and Deterrence,* ed. A. Babacan and L. Briskman (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2008), 114.
10. M. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage, 1995).
11. G. Danaher, T. Schirato, and J. Webb, *Understanding Foucault* (St. Leonards: Allen and Unwin, 2000), 53.
12. Ibid., 54.
13. Briskman, Latham, and Goddard, *Human Rights Overboard.*
14. L. Leung, C. Finney Lamb, and E. Emrys, *Technology's Refuge: The Use of Technology by Asylum Seekers and Refugees,* University of Technology Sydney Shopfront Monograph Series No. 5 (Sydney: UTS, 2009), 13.
15. Briskman, Latham, and Goddard, *Human Rights Overboard.*
16. Ibid., 18.
17. M. Crock, B. Saul, and A. Dastyari, *Future Seekers 2: Refugees and Irregular Migration in Australia* (Annandale: Federation Press, 2006), 199.
18. "Ali," personal communication, 2012.
19. Briskman, Latham, and Goddard, *Human Rights Overboard.*
20. Ibid., 68–69.
21. Leung, Finney Lamb, and Emrys, *Technology's Refuge.*
22. Ibid.
23. Personal communication to C. Fleay, 2012.
24. D. Leser, "Children Overboard: Two Women, Two Stories," *Australian Women's Weekly,* August 2007, 64.
25. J. Browning, "States of Exclusion: Narratives from Australia's Immigration Detention Centres, 1999–2003" (PhD thesis, University of Technology, Sydney, 2006).
26. Ibid., v. (Xanax is medication to relieve symptoms of anxiety).
27. Cited in *From Nothing to Zero: Letters from Refugees in Australia's Detention Centres* (Melbourne: Lonely Planet Publications, 2003), 80.
28. D. Gosden, "From Humanitarianism to Human Rights and Justice: A Way to Go," *Australian Journal of Human Rights* 13 (2007): 149–176.
29. Ibid., 154.
30. "Ali," personal communication, 2004.
31. Browning, "States of Exclusion," 46.
32. *From Nothing to Zero.*
33. Cited in *From Nothing to Zero,* 151 -152.
34. R. Scott, "Another Country", in *Acting from the Heart: Australian Advocates for Asylum Seekers Tell Their Stories,* ed. S. Mares and L. Newman (Sydney: Finch Publishing, 2007), 175–176.
35. Ibid., 176.
36. Crock, Saul, and Dastyari, *Future Seekers,* 191.
37. Personal communication to C. Fleay, 2012.
38. Briskman, Latham, and Goddard, *Human Rights Overboard.*
39. Leung, Finney Lamb, and Emrys, *Technology's Refuge,* 20.
40. Briskman, Latham, and Goddard, *Human Rights Overboard,* 66.

41. Ibid.
42. Ibid., 67.
43. Ibid., 90–91.
44. Ibid., 90
45. "Hamid," personal communication, 2006.
46. Leung, Finney Lamb, and Emrys, *Technology's Refuge,* 19.
47. Cited in *From Nothing to Zero.*
48. D. Wroe, "Videos to Deter Asylum Seekers", *The Age,* September 3, 2012, accessed September 5, 2012, http://www.theage.com.au/opinion/political-news/videos-to-deter-asylum-seekers-20120902-258hu.html.
49. J. Stratton, "Dying to Come to Australia: Asylum Seekers, Tourists and Deaths," in *Our Patch: Enacting Australian Sovereignty Post-2001,* ed. S. Perera (Perth: API Network, 2007), 167.
50. Briskman, Latham, and Goddard, *Human Rights Overboard,* 277.
51. Leung, Finney Lamb, and Emrys, *Technology's Refuge,* 13.
52. "Mohammed," personal communication, 2004.
53. Briskman, Latham, and Goddard, *Human Rights Overboard,* 66.
54. Ibid., 185.
55. "Ali," personal communication.
56. DIAC (Department of Immigration and Citizenship), "Services Available at Immigration Detention Facilities," online: (nd) accessed September 9, 2012, http://www.immi.gov.au/managing-australias-borders/detention/about/services-available.htm.
57. L. Fiske, "Insider Resistance: Understanding of Refugee Protest against Immigration Detention in Australia, 1999–2005" (PhD thesis, Curtin University, Perth, 2012): 188–189.
58. Ibid., 189.
59. Browning, "States of Exclusion," 97.
60. Fiske, "Insider Resistance."
61. Briskman, Latham, and Goddard, *Human Rights Overboard,* 164.
62. Browning, "States of Exclusion," 86.
63. Briskman, Latham, and Goddard, *Human Rights Overboard.*
64. Fiske, "Insider Resistance."
65. Briskman, Latham, and Goddard, *Human Rights Overboard.*
66. Grewcock, *Border Crimes,* 196.
67. "Abbas," personal communication, December 30, 2002.
68. Journal entry, January 11, 2003.
69. "Ali," personal communication to author, January 15, 2003.
70. Journal entry, January 23, 2003.
71. Journal entry, January 11, 2003.
72. Journal entry, January 19, 2003.
73. DIAC, "Services Available".
74. C. Fleay and L. Briskman, "The Hidden Men," *Report to the Minister for Immigration on visits to the Curtin Detention Centre* (Perth: Centre for Human Rights Education, 2011).
75. L. Briskman, L. Fiske, and M. Dimasi, "Beyond Reach," adapted from *Report to the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship on a visit to Christmas Island, April 6–20, 2010* (Perth: Centre for Human Rights Education).

Linda Briskman is professor of human rights at Swinburne University of Technology in Australia.

Policy Report on UNHCR's Community Technology Access Program: Best Practices and Lessons Learned

Jessica Anderson

Abstract

This report gives an overview of UNHCR's Community Technology Access (CTA) program, which aims to improve education and livelihood opportunities for displaced populations via technology. The paper analyzes the key findings of a comprehensive external evaluation of the program conducted in 2012. According to the evaluation, the areas of greatest positive impact for people of concern were in the enjoyment of basic rights to freedom of expression and information, in building relationships with the host community, and social networking. However, access to technology alone is not sufficient to achieve the goals of quality education and self-reliance. Therefore, the evaluation recommends developing strategic, contextualized education and livelihood content and tools in order to achieve the desired goals of learning, skills, and access to employment, as well as a reassessment of CTAs' potential for operational and fiscal autonomy in different countries.

Résumé

Ce rapport donne un aperçu du programme d'Accès Communautaire aux Technologies (CTA) de l'Agence des Nations Unies pour les Réfugiés (UNHCR), qui vise, à travers la technologie, à améliorer l'éducation et les opportunités de moyens de subsistance des populations déplacées. Cet article analyse les principaux résultats d'une évaluation externe complète du programme effectuée en 2012. Selon cette évaluation, les impacts positifs les plus importants de ce programme se situaient au niveau de la jouissance des droits fondamentaux à la liberté d'expression et à l'accès à l'information, ainsi qu'au niveau de l'intégration dans la communauté d'accueil et du réseautage social. Toutefois, l'accès à la technologie n'est pas suffisant seul pour atteindre les objectifs d'éducation et d'autonomie. Cette évaluation recommande donc le développement stratégique et contextuel de contenus et d'outils en matière d'éducation et de moyens de subsistance, dans le but d'atteindre les objectifs d'apprentissage, de compétence, d'accès à l'emploi, et de réévaluer les possibilités d'autonomie opérationnelle et financière des Centre Communautaires d'Accès à la Technologie de divers pays.

Goals

As an integral part of its protection mandate, UNHCR aims to empower refugees, internally displaced persons, and others "of concern"[1] and to enhance their overall well-being, along with their education and livelihood opportunities. Indeed, two of the Global Strategic Priorities for UNHCR in 2012–2013 are promoting "human potential through education, training, livelihoods support and income generation" and durable solutions.[2] Promoting self-reliance among persons of concern can play an important role in preparing them for durable solutions, whether by facilitating employability for local integration, by developing the skills necessary to continue education upon resettlement, or by improving their ability to contribute to peace building and local development upon return to their country of

origin.[3] UNHCR understands self-reliance as the social and economic ability of an individual, household, or community to meet basic needs (including protection, food, water, shelter, personal safety, health, and education) in a sustainable manner and with dignity. Self-reliance, as a program goal, refers to developing and strengthening livelihoods of persons of concern (PoCs), and reducing their vulnerability and long-term reliance on humanitarian or external assistance. By becoming self-reliant, displaced populations lead active and productive lives and are able to weave strong social, economic, and cultural ties with their host communities. UNHCR is committed to protecting the skills and productive assets that displaced people carry with them, to building the capacities they might need in a new environment, and to broadening opportunities in this new environment.[4]

CTA Program Background

In line with these broader imperatives, UNHCR launched the Community Technology Access (CTA) program in 2009. The main goals of the CTAs were to "enhance empowerment, self-reliance and employability of refugees and other UNHCR persons of concern through access to education, vocational training and livelihoods via technology."[5] The CTA program provides centres that allow persons of concern and their host communities to have access to computer technology and the Internet for the purposes of basic information technology (IT) classes; livelihoods, vocational, and life skills training; distance learning; language courses; promoting entrepreneurship and employability; access to information; and/or social networking. This report gives an overview of the CTA program and analyzes the key findings of a comprehensive external evaluation of the program conducted in 2012.[6]

The CTA program is overseen by the Livelihoods Unit within the Operations Solutions and Transition Section within the Division of Program Support and Management (DPSM) at UNHCR headquarters, in close collaboration with the Education Unit within the Division of International Protection.[7] At the field level, individual CTAs are usually run by NGO implementing partners. Other key partners include Microsoft and Hewlett-Packard, who provide technical assistance, software, and equipment, as well as financial support. There are currently fifty-six CTAs in place, spread throughout all five of the regions where UNHCR works (Africa, the Americas, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, and the Middle East and North Africa). According to DPSM, approximately 20,000 people benefit from the global CTA program each year.[8] CTAs are located in urban, semi-urban, or rural/camp contexts and are implemented over a

five-year timeline, with the goal being that they become fiscally self-sufficient by the end of this period.[9]

Education, Livelihoods, and Technology for Refugees

In examining the results of the 2012 CTA evaluation, it is helpful to contextualize the CTA program within broader research on how to best promote livelihoods for refugee populations through education and training. Interest in promoting self-reliance for refugees has intensified since 2003, which saw UNHCR establish its Refugee Livelihoods Project[10] and the publication of Jeff Crisp's article on protracted displacement.[11] It became clear that a "hand-out" humanitarian assistance approach[12] was not promoting self-reliance for refugees, particularly in protracted situations.[13] On the other hand, focusing on self-reliance acknowledges refugees' agency and their potential to benefit host communities.[14] While barriers to livelihoods normally revolve around legal status, restricted mobility, and negative perceptions by the host community, UNHCR has recently emphasized the potential of innovation and private-sector engagement to circumvent these obstacles.[15]

As refugees assess their own prospects for self-reliance, they often use education as a future-oriented livelihoods strategy.[16] However, determining which types of education and skills development will actually improve self-reliance is difficult, given the extreme uncertainty of refugees' futures and their current precarious legal status.[17] For this reason, it is crucial to examine precisely which skills and programs will realistically improve refugees' self-reliance in their current situations and immediate future, rather than envisioning durable solutions that may be years away.[18] Technical and vocational education programs should be tailored to the demands of the local labour market or the market in the country of origin, if return is imminent.[19] Otherwise, the investment in education will be lost and the frustrated expectations of youth can lead to further instability.[20] Walker, Millar Wood, and Allemano argue that donors must be prepared to support participants through the whole process of "school to skills to work,"[21] rather than merely providing one-off programs or a training certificate.[22] Integrating all of these activities, along with life skills training, into comprehensive education programs is especially important for individuals whose education has been disrupted by conflict and displacement and who therefore require accelerated programs.[23]

The strategy of using access to technology to advance refugee education and livelihoods has received increased attention since the early 2000s.[24] For example, using technology to provide distance learning opportunities for refugees has been the focus of various projects, including

interactive radio instruction programs and mobile phone literacy games.[25] More recently, Jesuit Refugee Services and the Borderless Higher Education for Refugees project are working to provide tertiary education and teacher training in camps through online learning.[26] Access to technology can also be used to engage refugees in virtual work and data outsourcing for overseas companies, thereby bypassing labour restrictions in host countries, as has been piloted in Dadaab.[27] While these projects and others have had positive results, one common pitfall in implementing Information and Communications Technology (ICT) initiatives is the tendency to "dump hardware in schools [and] hope for magic to happen" and to "think about […] content only after you have rolled out your hardware."[28] UNHCR's experience with its CTA program has highlighted both the positive education, livelihoods, and social networking potential of ICT initiatives, and the risks associated with attributing inherently transformative qualities to technology.

Evaluation Methodology

In April 2012, UNHCR decided to commission an external evaluation of the CTA program, given its rapid expansion over the course of three years. The evaluation was commissioned as an impact assessment[29] and does qualitatively analyze positive and negative outcomes,[30] although it lacks the rigorous quantitative methods necessary to study causal mechanisms, as would have been required for a formal outcome evaluation.[31] Thus, one could argue that this is a mixed evaluation, which also uses a more formative approach, in that its findings can serve to optimize CTAs' future impact on quality of education and access to livelihoods.[32]

The evaluation focused on five countries (Armenia, Georgia, Kenya, Rwanda, and Yemen) and took place over a period of three months. These sites were selected based on the following criteria: (1) program implementation had been ongoing for at least twelve months; (2) representation of both urban and camp CTAs; (3) representation of locations with both formal and informal education systems; and (4) users with different socioeconomic and education backgrounds.[33] While the evaluation's findings can be taken as general best practices and lessons learned for other CTAs, these findings will not be fully generalizable and will have to be adapted to the contexts of other CTA sites. The evaluation included desk reviews, field visits to CTA centres in four of the countries (travel to Yemen was hampered by the security situation), and interviews with CTA program "graduates," current participants, non-beneficiaries, implementing partners, course instructors, and key UNHCR staff in the field and in Geneva. When sampling participants from refugee and local host populations, efforts were made to include a balanced representation by gender, disability,

etc.[34] Standardized surveys/questionnaires, guided interview protocols, and guided focus group protocols were used in the various sites.[35] The evaluation consultants conducted fifteen focus groups, which included a total of 181 CTA beneficiaries, forty-nine interviews with IPs and UNHCR staff, and an unspecified number of semi-structured interviews with CTA participants.[36] The evaluation highlighted several positive outcomes of the CTA program, which are outlined below.[37]

Positive Outcomes of CTA Programs: Intended and Unintended

Human Rights

Firstly, CTAs have improved the ability of many persons of concern to UNHCR to enjoy key human rights as set out in international legal instruments, including the right to freedom of expression and "freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers… through any other media of his choice."[38] Indeed, CTAs allow persons of concern to access information without hindrance, both for its own sake and to improve their ability to make informed and independent decisions.[39] A focus group participant in Georgia explained,

> This access and these computers play a really big role in our lives. Our society is so remote and the community center and having a place to come to helps us not be afraid, helps us to know things. People here never believed we would ever be connected to the outside world.[40]

In addition, persons of concern can use CTAs to learn about the situation in their country of origin for the purposes of a possible repatriation. As one CTA user from Argentina stated, "I cannot expect a local TV channel here to show the crisis in my country. But with the computer I can be informed. All I have to do is type the key words and read."[41] Furthermore, CTAs have expanded the range of educational options available to refugees, particularly tertiary education, and thus promoted the progressive realization of the right to education, as foreseen in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.[42]

Self-Reliance

Although challenges have arisen in systematically improving self-reliance and employment among refugees through the use of CTAs, specific contexts and individuals have seen success in this area. For example, one female CTA participant in Georgia used her new IT skills to advertise her home on a government website as a guesthouse for tourists.[43] Other participants in Georgia were able to use the IT certificates they received upon completion of CTA courses to

obtain jobs as secretaries. A CTA participant in Argentina stated, "I use the computer to do my homework…I also send CVs to find a job. I received three answers for interviews last month."[44] Iraqi refugees in Armenia used CTAs to join online advertising sites to publicize their small businesses.[45] Another example from Uganda highlights the experience of a Congolese refugee setting up a successful multimedia business through the CTA centre.[46] While these examples demonstrate that certain individuals have experienced positive self-reliance outcomes in various CTA locations, overall results are more varied. In Kakuma camp in Kenya, approximately 90 percent of CTA graduates have been employed by NGOs and other organizations.[47] However, in Georgia, the evaluation consultants noted that most CTAs provided no programming beyond basic IT skills and did not collect data on employment outcomes of these graduates. Unfortunately, the evaluation report provides mainly anecdotal evidence about overall livelihoods outcomes for CTA graduates, and so it is difficult to objectively analyze the causes of disparities between programs.

Education

In its 2012–2016 Education Strategy, UNHCR lists as one of its strategic approaches the "innovative use of technology [to] expand education opportunities," and names collaboration with the CTA program and the use of Skype in the classroom as two ways to accomplish this.[48] Indeed, CTAs provide an ideal forum for augmenting both formal and informal education opportunities and distance learning, including specific courses for school children, adult learners, and single mothers, among others.[49] For example, primary school children in Kiziba camp in Rwanda were able to participate in Skype chat sessions with students in the United States, thus broadening horizons for both groups of children. The Kiziba CTA also provided access to a distance-learning math and science simulation program.[50] In Yemen, some CTA participants accessed English language training through software developed by the implementing partner. Finally, CTAs can also be used to develop important life skills, such as human rights awareness, reproductive health knowledge, or the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence. However, the evaluation notes that the education potential of CTAs is being severely underutilized, particularly in Georgia, Armenia, and Kenya, where the consultants were unable to find evidence of any systematic education or life skills programming beyond basic IT skills courses.[51]

Age, Gender, and Diversity Mainstreaming

UNHCR's 2011 Age, Gender and Diversity Policy calls for the mainstreaming of a programming approach ensuring that all persons of concern enjoy their rights on an equal footing and are able to participate in decisions that affect them.[52] In terms of the CTA, this means designing and implementing the program in such a way that it takes into account the unique needs of different individuals and groups, especially women and girls, youth, persons with disabilities, and other marginalized groups. CTAs in many countries have made important steps in this regard, including by providing an education opportunity that is accessible to women and viewed as culturally acceptable for them. One CTA participant in Georgia noted:

> This CTA helps us as women become more than just slaves, which we are in our homes. It helps us show men that we can learn something they haven't bothered with that is critical for our children and their education and their lives. The CTA gives us two hours of freedom a day when we are able to take classes here; freedom we would not otherwise have.[53]

Female graduates can often pursue further independent learning in various areas, such as microenterprise skills. CTAs also provide users with the opportunity to research problems that they identify within their communities and to take ownership of possible solutions. As one Kenyan CTA participant stated,

> [I use the CTA to] research specific problems affecting my immediate community in order to work on a plan to solve the problem—for example conducting research on why the rate of the girls' enrolment in schools is very low in our community.[54]

Although efforts are made to include persons with disabilities in CTA programs, including by making centres accessible, obstacles persisted, such as poor furniture setup in the centres or poor mobility conditions in the rest of the camp.[55] The most positive outcome was experienced in Yemen, where 27 percent of participants in one CTA were persons with disabilities. This success was due in part to the fact that the IP was an NGO that worked specifically with persons with disabilities.[56] It was noted that the participation of people with disabilities in this program had significantly increased the community's acceptance of them as a result of interactions at the centre.[57]

Relationships with the Host Community

The CTA program has successfully promoted UNHCR's policy to ensure that its projects assist both persons of concern and the host community. Indeed, the 2009 Policy on Refugee Protection and Solutions in Urban Areas states that UNHCR will

encourage refugees and their local hosts to interact in a positive manner. To attain this objective, UNHCR will endeavour to combat discrimination and xenophobia and will ensure that the services it provides to urban refugees bring benefits to other city-dwellers, especially the neediest sections of the population and those who live in closest proximity to refugees.[58]

This principle also applies in camp settings, although in practice, the location of camps sometimes represents an obstacle to including local communities in CTA activities. Nevertheless, the fact that generally both persons of concern and local residents have access to CTA programming facilitates interaction and exchange between these groups, thus improving intercommunal relationships, peaceful coexistence, peace building, and security. During focus groups in Georgia, AIR researchers recorded that:

> [participants] said that locals from neighboring villages and towns would be in the classes and they started making friends. Some of the locals also gave work to some of the men to tend their land. They…mentioned that CTA brought people together and gave locals and IDPs an opportunity to know each other and behave as neighbors. These kinds of activities, several said, need to continue, as it isn't "just an idea" to have locals and IDPs working and doing activities together; "it's a need."[59]

This type of interaction may promote greater openness to local integration on the part of the population and authorities, as well as ensuring that UNHCR's presence is viewed as contributing to local development.

Social Networking
Moreover, CTAs have played an important role in family communication and even reunification, in particular when persons of concern have been able to use social networking sites to track family members lost during displacement or to maintain connection with relatives who had been resettled abroad. The use of Skype, email, and Facebook allows persons of concern to communicate across borders even when telephone and postal services are unavailable.[60] This somewhat unexpected benefit of CTAs should not be underestimated in its positive impact on refugees' well-being. Indeed, previous research in Kakuma camp showed that communication with family was the top reason motivating refugees to access the Internet.[61] Furthermore, in other contexts, access to technology has enabled refugees to improve their livelihoods by connecting with family members and the diaspora community and receiving remittances from them, which in turn often allow persons of concern to pursue further education and training.[62]

Challenges, Lessons Learned, and Recommendations
While highlighting positive impacts of the CTA, the evaluation also noted several obstacles that were preventing the program from reaching its full potential.

Education and Livelihoods Impact
The main limitation revealed by the evaluation was that CTAs often experienced difficulties in providing courses beyond basic IT skills or in creating a tangible difference in the employment outcomes of graduates. For example, few CTAs in the countries evaluated had actually been able to offer distance learning courses and many of the school teachers interviewed said they had not used the CTAs for the development of lesson plans. Furthermore, in certain contexts, refugees have limited or no access to the labour market, due to legal provisions, remote location, or general economic conditions. Even in situations where persons of concern have the right to work, basic IT skills may not be enough to seek sustainable employment. Indeed, the set-up of a CTA was rarely accompanied by a labour market assessment to determine what type of livelihoods programming would be most useful.[63] For example, one NGO staff member in Georgia observed that:

> IDPs think that if they take a course to learn how to use a computer, and they receive the certificate that this will mean they get an automatic job. Then when this doesn't happen, there has been lots of disappointment and frustration. There is a value in providing free access to computers for IDPs and refugees, but there needs to be support and reflection in how to use the basic IT skills.[64]

Therefore, the evaluation recommends strategic mapping of local labour market and income-generating opportunities and the tailoring of CTA programming to offer the most relevant skills training for each particular situation. Furthermore, greater synergies could be promoted between CTAs both within and across countries, such as by creating forums for CTA teachers to share experiences and lesson plans.[65] While numerous researchers[66] have advocated for labour market mapping when designing technical and vocational education, it is clear that the CTA program has not yet fully implemented this strategy, and so repeated recommendations are necessary. In addition, one way to improve CTAs' livelihoods impact might be to build on current momentum towards innovation, in particular by implementing the Humanitarian Innovation Project's recommendation of Refugee Innovation Centres. These centres are envisioned as "a physical space within which refugees could receive access to microcredit, vocational training, mentorship, support with social innovation, business

development, and the incubation of innovative ideas"[67] and it could be fitting to incorporate this type of programming into pre-existing CTAs. Regarding education, two key strategies advocated by ICT in education experts include prioritizing the use of ICT for teacher training and professional development, as well as offering distance learning opportunities to students.[68]

Gender Equality

Despite UNHCR's efforts to ensure equal participation, in many settings, such as Kakuma refugee camp, male participants far outnumber female participants. For example, among the Somali and Sudanese refugee communities in Kakuma, women and girls have significant household responsibilities, are expected to focus on marriage rather than education as they grow older, or have not completed primary school, which is required for enrolment in a CTA course. In these contexts, UNHCR and its partners need to conduct increased outreach to include women and girls and to offer classes for women only, taught by female instructors, wherever necessary, such as is done in the centre in Jalalabad, Afghanistan.[69]

Technical Problems

Another challenge that seriously hampered the functioning of many CTAs was technical shortcomings. During the start-up phase, many field offices experienced delays in receiving necessary materials, such as computers and software. In addition, when maintenance and repairs were needed for computers, internet connectivity, complex software, or solar panels, CTA functioning could be affected for long periods because of a lack of expertise among local technology companies. For example, when solar panels required repairs, CTAs were forced to run on generator power, thus significantly increasing costs.[70]

In order to ensure consistency and the fulfillment of program commitments to persons of concern, the evaluation recommends that procurement and maintenance be decentralized. Ideally, if computers and internet service are purchased locally rather than delivered via UNHCR headquarters, there would be fewer delays caused by transportation and customs issues. In addition, IT companies in the country would be familiar with the equipment and would be able to provide timely troubleshooting and support.[71] Furthermore, this approach would allow UNHCR to support the domestic economy in the country of operation, thus promoting its policy of positively contributing to local development. However, reliance on in-kind donations from corporate partners and limited or nonexistent local alternatives restrict the feasibility of decentralized procurement and maintenance at the current time.

Operational and Fiscal Autonomy

The stated goal for CTAs is that they will become independent from UNHCR headquarters and donors' support from the second year onward (being integrated into the operational budget of the field office) and then fully fiscally sustainable, preferably five years after start-up.[72] Ideally, this means that they would be handed over to the ownership of entrepreneurs from refugee or host communities and would be able to cover their own costs. Although small user fees have been implemented in some CTA programs, such as in Yemen, many persons of concern would have difficulty paying any fee for CTA use, especially refugees in remote camps who are not employed as incentive workers.[73] Therefore, such income-generating strategies must be tailored to the specific capacities of each population of CTA users. In addition, the evaluation recommends that UNHCR focus on alternative approaches for reducing operational costs (i.e. by reducing energy input and decentralizing service provision) and promoting different income-generating options (i.e. formatting and printing documents for NGOs).

Conclusion

Overall, the evaluation concluded that while UNHCR has been largely successful in providing access to technology through CTAs, this access alone is not enough to achieve significant improvements in education quality or livelihoods opportunities. Rather, if substantial impact is to be realized in all CTA centres, expertise and strategic planning at various levels are required to ensure that the content of CTA programming fits each specific context and effectively meets the needs of persons of concern. To this end, it is crucial to have continuous "buy-in" at the field level and an experienced implementing partner that can support UNHCR staff in identifying the resources required and available to bridge gaps in targeted content preparation and program delivery, based on market and socio-economic assessments, through local or regional solutions.[74] Nevertheless, the fundamental value of basic IT literacy and access to information and social networking, which is already being provided by CTAs around the world, should not be underestimated. Rather, the concrete recommendations spelled out in this evaluation will only strengthen the ability of UNHCR to build on these accomplishments and to use both new and existing CTAs to their fullest potential in empowering persons of concern. UNHCR's Livelihoods Unit is currently developing a new CTA strategy, which is still in its early phases. Some preliminary ideas for change include: virtualizing services (making them available online); alternative approaches for running CTAs (including renting time at existing Internet cafes and/or privatizing centres); building capacity for training course creation at the local level; increasing on-site learning assistance;

and engaging with education content marketplaces.[75] This new CTA strategy, along with UNHCR's increased focus on using innovation and technology to benefit persons of concern, indicate bright prospects for CTAs.[76]

Notes

1. "Persons of concern" is the term used by UNHCR to refer to the categories of persons for whom UNHCR has responsibility under its mandate, namely refugees, asylum seekers, returnees, internally displaced persons, and stateless persons. UN High Commissioner for Refugees, *Self-Study Module 1: An Introduction to International Protection. Protecting Persons of Concern to UNHCR*, 1 August 2005, 83, http://www.refworld.org/docid/4214cb4f2.html.

2. "2012–2013 Global Strategic Priorities," Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Program, 53rd Standing Committee, 21 February 2012, EC/63/SC/CRP.7, accessed 29 August 2012, http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home/opendocPDFViewer.html?docid=4f6215e79&query=a%20guide%20to%20resettlement%20and%20integration.

3. "UNHCR and Self-Reliance," UNHCR website, accessed August 29, 2012, http://www.unhcr.org/pages/4ad2e7d26.html.

4. "Livelihood Programming in UNHCR: Operational Guidelines," 2012, http://www.refworld.org/docid/512611392.html; communication with UNHCR Livelihoods Unit staff, July 17, 2013.

5. UNHCR Division of Operational Services, "Provision of Education and Livelihoods through Technology and Connectivity, Community Technology Access (CTA)" (April 2009), 5, see American Institutes for Research (AIR), "The Current State of UNHCR's Community Technology Access Program," Annex A: References section.

6. The author of this report was not personally involved in conducting the CTA evaluation. The aim of this paper is to present the evaluation findings, lessons learned, and next steps for the CTA program.

7. American Institutes for Research (AIR), "The Current State of UNHCR's Community Technology Access Program" (July 2012), 1.

8. Ibid., 17.

9. Ibid.; Division of Operational Services, UNHCR, "Project Proposal for the Provision of Education and Livelihoods through Technology and Connectivity" (April 2009), contained in AIR, "The Current State of UNHCR's CTA Program," Annex A: References Section.

10. Cindy Horst, "Refugee Livelihoods: Continuity and Transformations," Refugee Survey Quarterly 25, no. 2 (2006), 6–22.

11. Jeff Crisp, "No Solutions in Sight: The Problem of Protracted Refugee Situations in Africa," UNHCR *New Issues in Refugee Research* 75 (2003), http://www.unhcr.org/3e2d66c34.html.

12. Horst, "Refugee Livelihoods."

13. Alexander Betts, Louise Bloom, and Naohiko Omata, "Humanitarian Innovation and Refugee Protection," Refugee Studies Centre Working Paper Series No. 85 (2012). http://www.oxhip.org/publications/humanitarian-innovation-and-refugee-protection-2/.

14. Ibid.

15. Horst, "Refugee Livelihoods"; Betts, Bloom, and Omata, "Humanitarian Innovation."

16. Sarah Dryden-Peterson, "Refugee Children Aspiring Toward the Future: Linking Education and Livelihoods," in *Educating Children in Conflict Zones*, ed. Karen Mundy and Sarah Dryden-Peterson (New York: Teacher's College Press, 2011).

17. Sarah Dryden-Peterson, "The Present Is Local, the Future Is Global? Reconciling Current and Future Livelihoods Strategies in the Education of Congolese Refugees in Uganda," Refugee Survey Quarterly 25, no. 2 (2006): 81–92.

18. Machtelt De Vriese, *Refugee Livelihoods: A Review of the Evidence* (Geneva: UNHCR, Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit, 2006).

19. Barry Sesnan, Graham Wood, Marina L. Anselme, and Ann Avery, "Skills Training for Youth," *Forced Migration Review* 20 (2004); Dominic Odwa Atari, Samer Abdelnour, Kevin McKague, and Robert Wager, *Technical Vocational and Entrepreneurial Capacities in Southern Sudan: Assessment and Opportunities* (Toronto: Centre for Refugee Studies, York University, 2010).

20. Lynn Davies, "Can Education Interrupt Fragility? Toward the Resilient Citizen and the Adaptable State," in *Educating Children in Conflict Zones: A Tribute to Jackie Kirk,* ed. Karen Mundy and Sarah Dryden-Peterson (New York: Teacher's College Press, 2011), 36; G. Walker, J. Millar Wood, and E. Allemano, *Liberia Youth Fragility Assessment* (Washington, DC: USAID, 2009), ix.

21. I.e. basic education to relevant vocational training to career counselling/apprenticeships/microcredit.

22. Walker, Millar Wood, and Allemano, *Liberia Youth*.

23. Dryden-Peterson, "Refugee Children Aspiring"; Walker, Millar Wood, and Allemano, Liberia Youth.

24. I.e. "Technology Issue," *Forced Migration Review* 38 (2011), http://www.fmreview.org/technology; Melissa Beouy, Steven Ehrenberg, and Stephen Luke, "Technology (ICT) Strategies to Support Education: A Brief Analysis Report," *Family Health International (FHI)* 360 (2012); Jacqueline Strecker, "Refugee ICT Initiatives: Improving Practices for Refugee Participation" (Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, 2010).

25. Michael Brophy, "Open Learning and Distance Education for Displaced Populations," in *The Open Classroom: Distance Learning In and Out of Schools*, ed. Jo Bradley (London: Taylor and Francis, 2004).

26. See Strecker, "Refugee ICT Initiatives," for an expanded list of refugee ICT initiatives.

27. Communication with UNHCR Livelihoods Unit staff, July 30, 2013; "Analysis: Refugees Aim for Self-Reliance, Not Hand-outs," *IRIN News*, 6 February 2013, http://www.irinnews.org/report/97418/analysis-innovating-for-refugee-self-reliance.

28. Michael Trucano, "Worst Practice in ICT Use in Education," Edutech: A World Bank Blog on ICT Use in Education (30 April 2010), http://blogs.worldbank.org/edutech/worst-practice; see also Jacqueline Strecker, "Recommendations for CTA Kakuma Programming" (Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, 2010).

29. "Impact evaluation is the systematic identification of the effects—positive or negative, intended or not—on individual households, institutions, and the environment caused by a given development activity," quoted from Daniel A. *Wagner, "Overview," in Monitoring and Evaluation of ICT in Education Projects: A Handbook for Developing Countries*, ed. Daniel A. Wagner, Bob Day, Tina James, Robert B. Kozma, Jonathan Miller, and Tim Unwin (Information for Development Program 2005), http://www.infodev.org/articles/monitoring-and-evaluation-ict-education-projects.

30. P. Duignan, "Approaches and Terminology in Programme and Policy Evaluation," in *Evaluating Policy and Practice*, ed. N. Lunt, C. Davidson, and K. McKegg (Auckland: Pearson Education, 2003).

31. Indeed, the evaluation notes that reliable statistical data on CTAs was largely unavailable, in part due to implementing partners' lack of capacity (AIR, "The Current State of UNHCR's Community Technology Access Program," 2).

32. Operational and fiscal autonomy refers to the point when the CTA program is fiscally independent and no longer requires annual funding injections; Duignan, "Approaches and Terminology in Programme and Policy Evaluation."

33. UNHCR, "Sub-Project Description," Annex A, 2012, in AIR, "The Current State of UNHCR's Community Technology Access Program."

34. AIR, "The Current State of UNHCR's Community Technology Access Program," I1.

35. Ibid., 7.

36. The evaluation report does not specify precisely how the data was analyzed.

37. AIR, "The Current State of UNHCR's Community Technology Access Program," 5–6.

38. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 19 December 1966, 999 UNTS 171, Art. 19(2).

39. This activity is only an option in countries where CTAs are connected to the Internet (i.e. not in Bangladesh).

40. "CTA Impact Evaluation Mission Field Notes," American Institutes for Research (June 2012), 39, in possession of author.

41. "Community Technology Access," UNHCR website, accessed August 29, 2012, http://www.unhcr.org/pages/4ad2e8286.html

42. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 16 December 1966, 993 UNTS 3, Art. 13.

43. AIR, "The Current State of UNHCR's Community Technology Access Program," 18.

44. Ibid., 14.

45. Ibid., 43.

46. Ibid., 75.

47. Ibid., 75.

48. UNHCR, *UNHCR Education Strategy, 2012–2016* (February 28, 2012), 38–39, http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4f4cd9812.html.

49. Division of Operational Services, "Project Proposal," 13–15.

50. AIR, "The Current State of UNHCR's Community Technology Access Program," 78.

51. Ibid., 18.

52. UNHCR, *Age, Gender and Diversity Policy* (June 8, 2011), http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4def34f6887.html.

53. "CTA Impact Evaluation Mission Field Notes," 35.

54. Daniela Ionita, "Community Technology Access Project," *Forced Migration Review* 38 (2011), accessed 29 August 2012, http://www.fmreview.org/technology/ionita.html.

55. AIR, "The Current State of UNHCR's Community Technology Access Program," 74.

56. Ibid., 91.

57. Ibid., 88.

58. UN High Commissioner for Refugees, "UNHCR Policy on Refugee Protection and Solutions in Urban Areas," (September 2009), para. 40, accessed August 29, 2012, http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4ab8e7f72.html.

59. "CTA Impact Evaluation Mission Field Notes," 30.

60. AIR, "The Current State of UNHCR's Community Technology Access Program," 44.

61. Strecker, "Refugee ICT Initiative."

62. Naohiko Omata, "Online Connection for Remittances," *Forced Migration Review* 38 (2011), accessed 29 July 2013, http://www.fmreview.org/technology/omata.html.

63. AIR, "The Current State of UNHCR's Community Technology Access Program," 86.

64. "CTA Impact Evaluation Mission Field Notes," 40.

65. AIR, "The Current State of UNHCR's Community Technology Access Program," 30–31.

66. Walker, Millar Wood, and Allemano, *Liberia Youth Fragility Assessment*; Dryden-Peterson, "Refugee Children Aspiring."

67. Betts, Bloom, and Omata, "Humanitarian Innovation," 15.

68. Beouy, Ehrenberg, and Luke, "Technology (ICT) Strategies to Support Education"; Tim Unwin, "Towards a Framework for the Use of ICT in Teacher Training in Africa," *Open Learning: The Journal of Open and Distance Education*, 20, no. 2 (2005), 113–129.

69. AIR, "The Current State of UNHCR's Ccommunity Technology Access Program," 31.

70. Ibid., 66.

71. Ibid., 28.

72. Ibid., 20.

73. Ibid., 30; Strecker, "Refugee ICT Initiatives."

74. AIR, "The Current State of UNHCR's Community Technology Access Program," 24.

75. Communication with UNHCR Livelihoods Unit staff, 30 July 2013. [NB: These ideas for the strategy have yet to be fully developed and approved.]

76. For example, the establishment of UNHCR's Innovation Unit and its partnership with the Humanitarian Innovation Project indicate that CTAs and similar programs will be the focus of continued attention and improvement. See: https://www.facebook.com/UNHCRInnovate.

Jessica Anderson has a master's degree from the Glendon School of Public and International Affairs, York University, Toronto. She completed an internship in the Division of International Protection, UNHCR HQ, Geneva, in the summer of 2012. This report summarizes the 2012 CTA evaluation report (currently unpublished) and was written in collaboration with Terra MacKinnon, Audrey Nirrengarten, and Jacqueline Strecker (Education Unit), Daniela Ionita, Troy Etulain, and Line Pedersen (Livelihoods Unit), and Jeff Crisp (Policy Development and Evaluation Service).

Channels of Protection: Communication, Technology, and Asylum in Cairo, Egypt

Nora Danielson

Abstract

Communication between service providers and refugees about services, legal processes, and rights helps shape refugees' experience of asylum but has, in Cairo, Egypt, been a source of misunderstandings and conflict. Based on qualitative pilot research, this paper explores the practices, challenges, and potentials of information technologies old and new in facilitating access to asylum in this southern city. Interviews with refugee and service providers and review of previous technology-based initiatives show that although service providers tend to rely on oral information transfer, other channels—print, phone, text messaging, websites, social media—hold significant capacity for growth. Existing practices and initiatives in Cairo demonstrate the potential for technology-based projects to overcome the geographic barriers of the urban setting and the range of literacy and languages in Cairo's refugee communities. However, service providers and refugees require further funding and institutional support if this potential is to be realized.

Résumé

La communication entre les services et les réfugiés au sujet des ressources, des processus juridiques et des droits influence l'expérience des réfugiés, mais au Caire, en Égypte, cet aspect a été une source de malentendus et de conflits. Basé sur une recherche qualitative pilote, cet article explore les pratiques, les défis et le potentiel des technologies de l'information, anciennes et nouvelles, dans la facilitation de l'accès à l'asile dans cette ville du sud. Les entretiens avec les réfugiés et les responsables des services, ainsi que l'examen de précédentes initiatives technologiques, montrent qu'alors que les services comptent toujours sur la transmission orale de l'information, d'autres moyens tels que l'imprimé, le téléphone, la messagerie texte, les sites web, et les réseaux sociaux, consistent en autant de possibilités significatives de développement. Les pratiques et les initiatives actuelles au Caire illustrent que les projets technologiques ont le potentiel de surmonter les barrières urbaines et la variété des langues et des degrés de littératie des communautés de réfugiés du Caire. Toutefois, les organisations et les réfugiés ont besoin de davantage de subventions et de soutien institutionnel pour réaliser ce potentiel.

Introduction

Most of the world's refugees live in their region of origin, and more than half live in urban centres, where their period of asylum often lasts many years. The experiences of forced migrants in cities in the global south are shaped by intersecting stressors and constraints, many of which are impervious to change. This paper examines one set which, it argues, is neither intractable nor insignificant: the channels of communication through which humanitarian and non-governmental organizations communicate with refugee communities[1] about rights, processes, and services available through refugee or asylum seeker status.

Taking as a case study one of the world's major refugee-hosting cities—Cairo, Egypt—this paper outlines the findings of a 2011–12 qualitative pilot study of the changing technologies of service provider outreach to refugee communities. First, the paper shows that communication and information about asylum in Cairo has significant

psychosocial, service provision, and protection impacts. Second, the channels and technologies that service providers use to communicate asylum-related information differ in reach, efficacy, and ease of use for both service providers and refugee communities. Third, evidence of contextual barriers, population diversity, and local use and interest in new technologies by refugees and service providers highlights considerable need and capacity for the improvement of such communication. Setting out these findings in a context of rising global interest in innovation and technology, I argue that urban refugee community outreach is due greater attention and policy development than it currently receives.

Background: Asylum in Cairo

Egypt is one of the world's major hosts of urban refugees. At the start of 2013, more than 125,000 people were registered with the Egyptian office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), originating from Sudan, Syria, Iraq, Somalia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, amongst other countries.[2] Until 2012, when UNHCR opened a camp in Saloum for people fleeing Libya, Egypt had no refugee camps.[3]

Although forced migrants in Egypt live in Alexandria and smaller towns, this paper focuses on Cairo, where the majority reside. Greater Cairo is the largest city in both the Middle East and the African continent, and host to refugee communities throughout its densely populated neighbourhoods.[4] As conflicts in the region shift and flare, new asylum seekers arrive in the city each year,[5] others return to their countries of origin, and a minority move onward. But the majority of forced migrants in Cairo experience protracted asylum, some staying for more than a decade.

During their time in the city, forced migrants negotiate survival and aspirations within a challenging, restrictive set of national and international contexts. As signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, Egypt grants refugees the right to residence, legal recourse, and freedom of religion and movement. The government also ratified the Refugee Convention's 1967 Protocol, the 1969 Organization of African Unity Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, and some human rights conventions.

Yet the national context is characterized by insecurity that particularly impinges on refugee communities. Incidents of mistreatment by police have included raids, corruption, arbitrary arrest, violence, and harassment.[6] Political upheaval since 2011 has led to increased crime, instability, and xenophobia. Violence and harassment towards women and visible minorities has also increased throughout the country.[7]

Though Egypt has long hosted refugee communities, it lacks a domestic legal framework for refugee protection. Since 1954, it has given the responsibility for asylum seeker registration and refugee status determination (RSD) processing to UNHCR.[8] Its reservations on the 1951 Convention[9] limit refugees' work opportunities, leaving most with no or little work, or risking jobs in the unregulated informal market.[10] Forced migrants in Egypt face frequent discrimination alongside the challenge of working across social, cultural, and language differences. The country's widespread poverty and unemployment, worse since the 2011 revolution, further reduce livelihood options, and most live in poverty.[11]

Egypt's Convention reservations also restrict refugee access to health care and education, both of which are further complicated by overcrowded, underfunded institutions and exclusionary procedures.[12] Such compounding restrictions and challenges make the local integration of forced migrants in Egypt "nearly always impossible."[13]

The experiences, support, and aspirations of forced migrants in Cairo are linked into wider geopolitical contexts, including international social and economic networks, diasporic migration patterns, and changing socioeconomic and political situations in home countries. Yet few options for onward movement are available even to those recognized as refugees. Tension between the hope for resettlement and its actual limits increase both uncertainty about future plans and frustration with present circumstances. Such problems have been raised at multiple demonstrations at the Cairo offices of the UNHCR over the last decade and have driven some to abandon Cairo as a place of asylum.[14]

Asylum in Cairo consists of several elements, variously provided, in what has been called "a system of diffuse responsibility."[15] First and foremost, asylum entails protection, which UNHCR holds as its core mandate.[16] Protection refers primarily to the prevention of *refoulement*—the forcible return of refugees to their country of origin—but extends to other elements of safety, security, basic human rights, and access to legal recourse which UNHCR seeks to ensure. In rare instances, special protection needs can result in individual resettlement to a third country, which may be negotiated between UNHCR, the embassies of countries that directly resettle refugees from Cairo, and agencies such as the International Organization for Migration.

Additionally, refugees and asylum seekers in Cairo may access limited education, financial, material, legal, and health assistance. A range of state-run, community-based, religious, and international and local non-governmental organizations offer support services for refugee communities in Cairo. Eligibility requirements for programs on offer differ: some may be accessed only by individuals recognized

by UNHCR, some by those who fit an organization's own definition of asylum seeker, and some by all members of a refugee national group.

The legal positions of forced migrants in Egypt depend on their recognition by UNHCR, which carries out all asylum seeker registration and RSD procedures. People who register with UNHCR and await the outcome of their case receive yellow cards that identify them as asylum seekers. Recognized refugees hold blue UNHCR-issued identity cards, and a small number of stateless people also register with the office.[17] Some forced migrants do not register with UNHCR, and others continue to live in Cairo after their applications for status with UNHCR have been denied.

The way that service providers communicate and share information about these complex elements of asylum in Cairo is only one of many factors impacting their well-being and access to support. Yet for multiple reasons it is both salient and promising, as following sections will unfold.

Communication Technologies in Urban Asylum: Current Research

Increasing policy and academic attention has been paid to refugees in urban centres in countries both of first asylum and of resettlement, and to the ties they maintain across geographically dispersed social networks. New technologies are critical channels in transnational communication, and research has begun to examine their role in refugees' lives. Corporate and philanthropic interest in information and communication technology (ICT) initiatives aimed at social problems is high. The intersection of these strands is due greater attention, especially as refugee communities "increasingly live in cities rather than in camps, and are harder to reach."[18]

Growing recognition of the importance of refugees' input into effective urban policy has led to research into the channels of their participation.[19] Yet there has been limited study of outward communication between service providers and populations of concern, although the topic arises repeatedly in reviews of UNHCR's urban refugee policy.[20] UNHCR's urban policy names interaction with refugees and community orientation as key principles,[21] but the content, approaches, and impacts of such interaction beyond face-to-face meetings remain largely unexamined.[22] The community outreach efforts of single programs or organizations have been profiled, drawing attention to good practices.[23] But in complex urban settings, information about asylum moves through multiple media and institutions. This paper offers an initial view into the role of information in urban asylum.

Research on technology and refugees has emerged as a growing field, populated primarily by studies of refugee mobile phone and Internet use in camps, detention centres, and resettlement countries, with less evidence from urban settings in the global south.[24] Attention has focused on communication over distance, between refugees and their social networks in sending and receiving countries. The role of information technologies within countries of first asylum, and their cities, has been neglected. Since many of the world's refugees live in cities and have social ties to refugees in other settings, their assessments of access to and the importance of different technologies provide an interesting counterpoint to existing knowledge. In cities in the global south, questions of access and literacy are paramount, and communication channels may not necessarily use new technology. This paper contributes a preliminary exploration of how technologies of communication are used by and for refugees in one such setting.

Given growing attention to the significance of transnational social relations, refugee-related technology studies have thus far largely centred on communication between refugees.[25] Communication between refugees and service providers raises a different set of questions about how information is delivered and received, given variations of culture, institution, power, language and literacy that it must negotiate. Initial studies profiling ICT interventions in refugee service provision—reflecting its growing significance in the humanitarian aid sector—have largely focused on single programs or on camp, resettlement, or emergency settings.[26] How ICT might help in urban situations in the global south has yet to be examined in depth or breadth, although such use has been recommended.[27] This paper draws together these areas of study to consider, through the case of one city, how expanded use of information and communication technologies might improve refugee experiences of urban asylum.

Pilot Project Methods

This paper considers findings of pilot research into refugee community outreach in Cairo. Three questions framed the study: First, how do service providers communicate with Cairo's refugee communities? Second, what capacities exist for the development of different information-sharing technologies? Third, what barriers complicate access to asylum information in the city?

Carried out between July 2011 and March 2012, the project was first conceived in 2006 during work on two collaborative projects in Cairo[28] and developed through research into asylum in Cairo in the years since. To facilitate an initial overview of the parameters of the topic and directions for further study, the project adopted several qualitative methods.

In twenty-four in-person, semi-structured, in-depth interviews, recorded and transcribed, participants were asked for their assessments of local dynamics and capacities. Trained interpreters assisted in around half of the interviews. The interview schedule contained open-ended questions on the content, channels, and efficacy of current information about asylum in Cairo, the development of communication and information strategies, and participant estimates of literacy and of mobile and web use prevalence.

Participants were selected based on their professional and personal experience in refugee service provision and self-assistance in Cairo. Contacted through personal networks as well as UNHCR Cairo's 2011 *Referral Guide for Refugees and Refugee Service Providers*, nine participants worked in service providing organizations (SPOs), including UNHCR, and fifteen were refugees, thirteen of whom were affiliated with community-based organizations (CBOs) from the major national groups in Cairo (Sudanese, Somali, Iraqi, Eritrean, Ethiopian).[29] The research is thus limited, most notably by the absence of input from Egyptian government officials, who I was unable to reach in the interview stage.

The research additionally draws from field notes from informal conversations with researchers, service providers, and refugees in Cairo, and participant observation in Cairo 2005–6 and 2010–12 in workshops, seminars, and events related to the topic at hand. The project also reviewed relevant published and unpublished reports (some provided by research participants), online sources, and UNHCR documents related to communication and outreach with urban refugee and asylum seeker populations. This included study of "shelved" communication projects to learn how previous plans had been conceived, what had been learned in their development, and why they failed.

Drawing from this pilot research, the following findings offer an initial view into dynamics of communication in refugee protection and services in Cairo, bringing attention to uses and potentials around information and communication technologies in the urban asylum context.

Project Findings
Communication about Asylum in Cairo:
Role and Impacts

To frame its study of information and communication technologies in asylum in Cairo, the research examined the broader role of communication between service providers and refugee communities in Cairo. As this section reviews, such outreach has had access, protection, and psychosocial impacts, both in emergency situations like the 2005 protest and 2011 revolution, and in times of relative stability. It has

been repeatedly been identified as a critical issue by those involved with refugee protection in Cairo.

Asylum in Cairo became world news in 2005, when several thousand Sudanese forced migrants[30] staged a sit-in for three months in front of UNHCR's Cairo office. Although the demonstration had its roots in multiple problems faced by Sudanese in Egypt,[31] its high numbers were also due at least in part to rumours about the benefits of joining in.[32] During the sit-in, UNHCR Cairo closed its doors, so asylum seekers newly arrived in Cairo remained unregistered and at risk of imprisonment and *refoulement.*

The 2005 protest brought multiple communication issues to light: inaccessibility of information about the rules and rights of asylum, mutual distrust between refugees and UNHCR, a spiralling rumour mill, and a "fortress mentality" from the office.[33] In an interview on the event, Barbara Harrell-Bond, who taught at the American University in Cairo at the time, stated, "What the protest symbolises is the total breakdown of communications between the UNHCR and the refugees."[34]

The event became known as a "tragedy of failures and false expectations"[35]—expectations formed by its participants in part due to a "lack of understanding on what UNHCR can and cannot do."[36] In its report on the protest, UNHCR Cairo acknowledged its "lack of dialogue" with refugees and the "need to enhance the availability and dissemination of credible information."[37] Following a brutal forced eviction by police, in which at least twenty-seven protest participants were killed, the absence of communication channels between service providers and refugees impeded the task of tracking, reuniting, and assisting the injured, arrested, and missing.

The 2011 revolution became another crisis of communication for service providers and refugee communities in Cairo. Mobility within the city became dangerous and tightly restricted by soldiers and neighbourhood patrols. The government cut off Internet and mobile phone networks for five days of the uprising. UNHCR and many of its partners closed their offices, with some staff evacuated and others working from home. Refugees could not access their jobs, services, cash assistance, or subsidized health care. The ignorance of soldiers about the special legal status of refugees resulted in at least 133 arrests.[38]

The UNHCR office reopened to a series of protests by refugees angered by what they felt was their abandonment during the crisis.[39] Efforts by high-ranking officials to address their concerns through face-to-face meetings intended to deliver information to the broader community were marred by difficulty finding representative messengers. The following months would see groups from Cairo's major refugee communities staging multiple demonstrations for

assistance and attention, resulting in several periods of closure of the UNHCR office over 2011.[40]

The 2005 demonstration and 2011 revolution and subsequent political turmoil illustrate both the important role of communication between service providers and refugee communities in Cairo, and its complex and emotional nature. The problems faced by forced migrants in the crises were multiplex and driven by major contextual factors. Yet in both, communication failures in particular impacted the access, safety, and well-being of both service providers and forced migrants.

The pilot project found such impacts evident in times of stability as well as in emergencies. First, limited distribution of information about the range of services for forced migrants in Cairo impacts access to services. An indicative example is the 2009 survey research commissioned by UNHCR into refugee livelihoods in Egypt that found that "refugees and asylum seekers lack information about most of the vocational training programs targeting them."[41] This issue is not unique to asylum in Cairo; lack of information has been shown to be a barrier to refugee service access in multiple urban contexts around the world.[42]

Second, problematic outreach to refugee communities has direct outcomes for protection. The crises described above showed that, unabated, communication problems can disrupt the functioning of service providers, with protests leading to office closures that leave both newly arrived asylum seekers and Cairo resident forced migrants without access to protection. Closures can also slow the processing of RSD procedures, resulting in delayed recognition and protection. Communication has also played a role in the physical safety of refugees: both past and ongoing protests have resulted in arrests and imprisonment. During the revolution, communication might have helped prevent army arrest of refugees and asylum seekers on the basis of ignorance about UNHCR identity cards. More indirectly, communication failures around the 2005 protest contributed to the actual injury and deaths of Sudanese men, women, and children.

Communication's role in protection emerged in studies of asylum in Cairo as early as 2002. UNHCR Cairo acknowledged that misinformation had become an obstacle to protection as the circulation of rumours in refugee communities undermined applicant confidence in the refugee status determination (RSD) process and led to a decrease in recognition rates.[43] A lack of information provision from the UNHCR side exacerbated this problem. Asylum seekers reported that they had "difficulty obtaining routine information from UNHCR Cairo about the status of their applications," were "unable to ask simple questions of UNHCR about procedures," and even were "refused at

the UNHCR-Cairo gate when trying to submit requests or inquiries in writing."[44] This inaccessibility was, not surprisingly, "a source of frustration and anxiety for applicants."[45]

Such emotional responses comprise a third impact—psychosocial—of communication about asylum. This consequence is particularly evident with regard to information about resettlement in Cairo, a lack of which may create "extreme distress" for some refugees.[46] The rules surrounding resettlement—a goal of many forced migrants in Cairo—are complex and opaque. Resettlement processes are long and undefined, entailing coordination between multiple local and international bodies, all of which have their own sets of checks, processes, and screenings. An Iraqi refugee research participant described the stasis of not knowing the status of his resettlement case as "truly a slow death, because you are waiting and waiting and waiting." The incidents described above also show how withheld or limited information can contribute to mistrust, anger, and stress in the individuals involved.

Channels of Outreach: Uses

Having argued that communication between service providers and refugees plays a significant role in how forced migrants experience and access assistance and protection in Cairo, this paper turns to review the channels used in current outreach. The pilot research found evidence of slow but positive expansion of strategies for communication and the distribution of information to refugee communities in Cairo.

Though refugee communities and service providers are spread throughout greater Cairo, in-person, site-specific communication remains the primary medium for asylum information delivery in the city, through individual case management, community meetings and workshops, and formal and informal outreach work by refugees and service providers. Research participants reported that its increase in recent years has improved the circulation of accurate information and in some cases helped address the concerns of people protesting at UNHCR.

Refugees who have formed community-based organizations or are employed by service providers often spread information informally as well, as they become known as trusted and knowledgeable in their communities. The offices of community-based organizations and businesses catering to refugee communities—restaurants, cafes, bakeries—are additional key sites of in-person information sharing.

Service providers use several kinds of printed material to link refugees with information about asylum in Cairo: distributed letters, posted results listings, information booklets, posters, and occasional brochures. The majority of printed information about asylum in the city is either

site-specific, like printed notices and letters posted in offices and businesses frequented by refugees and asylum seekers, or lengthy, with limited distribution.

Sometimes, such as in the aftermath of the 2011 revolution, or when a major office has an emergency closure, UNHCR and other major service providers send announcements in the form of letters attached to emails, usually in Arabic and English, for community-based organizations and service providers to print and post. UNHCR uses the same method to distribute lists of results of the status of individual RSD cases, which refugees can then view posted at service provider locations. Some service providers use posters to publicize details of their services or programs at their offices.

More in-depth information about asylum in Cairo takes the form of printed booklets. One is an annual 96-page listing of service-providing organizations in the city. This directory is comprehensive and useful, but published only in English and Arabic and limited in distribution. Two refugee research participants who work at service providing organizations had not seen it before their interview for this project. A 47-page booklet published by another service provider reviews refugee status determination procedures, frequent legal problems, psychosocial and health services available in Cairo, information for unaccompanied children and young people, sexual and gender based violence in Egypt, and the resettlement process and programs. It is published in the languages of Cairo's five predominant refugee communities and distributed at the organization's office and by community outreach workers.[47]

A more accessible form of print is the short brochure used by another service organization. A single, thick, full-colour page folded into three panels, an envelope is affixed to the central panel which contains the appointment time of each refugee who applies for the service. The brochure is printed with the details and requirements of the services in simple, clear language (albeit only in English and Arabic). Physically linking the appointment slip with the brochure ensures that each client receives the same essential information about the service.

Service provider use of two telephone channels to provide information to refugees in Cairo has begun to expand. Following the 2011 revolution, UNHCR introduced a phone hotline by which refugees and asylum seekers can make inquiries and appointments in their native language—services previously only accessible in person.

One Cairo service provider has introduced the use of group text messaging (also known as Short Message Service, SMS), both for reaching its beneficiaries and for contacting potential newly registered asylum seekers, whose names and numbers they get from UNHCR. The SPO subscribes to a group text service with mobile company Vodafone that provides computer software allowing them to easily send out announcements on a mass scale. The SPO also uses SMS to reschedule appointments and to remind beneficiaries to bring in certain documents, of timing of activities, or to renew their membership cards. Seeing the success of the system, other service providers have begun to adopt it.

Service provider use of websites, email, and social media to reach refugee communities in Cairo is mixed but generally limited. The majority of Cairo's service provider organizations' websites are donor oriented, describing their work much in the style of an annual report. Although this was previously the case for UNHCR Cairo, the office has recently updated their site to include its address, hours, email address, phone, fax, and location map, as well as a complete directory of their partners' organizations. At least one service provider used to have a section of its website with information for refugees, but it is now under construction; one CBO contains a listing of SPOs and CBOs but is several years out of date. Many of Cairo's refugee services websites lack even basic information about how to find or contact the organization.

An organization that deals with resettlement has an online case tracking system, but provides minimal explanation and no timing estimates. A service provider said she has a client awaiting resettlement whose online profile has simply said "pending" for the past three years—an example that illustrates the importance of helpful content to the success of even new technologies.

Email is widely used in service providers and community based organizations for interagency communication and referrals. However, the service providers interviewed for the research said that email is a less effective channel for receiving queries from refugees. Incoming messages tend to be long and complex requests which would be better dealt with through an interpreter on the phone or in person. Outgoing email, on the other hand, has been productive. As noted earlier, service providers use email to widely distribute notices in multiple languages for further oral or print dissemination.

Channels of Outreach: Considerations for Development
The pilot research considered evidence of interest in the development of outreach practices in light of both relevant features of Cairo's refugee populations and the city itself. This section reviews these findings in order to consider differentials in efficacy of channels and approaches chosen for outreach to refugee communities.

First, Egypt's heterogeneous refugee communities represent a shifting range of nationalities, languages, and education and literacy levels. At the time of the pilot study,

refugees and asylum seekers in Egypt originated from Sudan, Iraq, Somali, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Syria, and other countries.[48] An initial study with refugees in Cairo from six sub-Saharan African countries documented over thirty first languages and dialects.[49] People from linguistically diverse Sudan form the majority of Cairo's refugees and speak a range of languages and dialects. Even the differing kinds of Arabic spoken (including Sudanese, Fur, Egyptian, Iraqi) can pose significant problems of communication between them. Furthermore, some refugees for whom Arabic is not a mother tongue reject the learning of Egyptian Arabic.[50] The pilot research found misunderstandings due to language diversity to have been a major barrier to effective communication between service providers and refugee communities.[51]

Levels of education and literacy in Cairo's refugee communities also vary significantly. Participants in the pilot research reported mixed education and literacy levels in their communities, and amongst those who accessed their services. A 2009 UNHCR survey of 376 Sudanese, Iraqi, Somali, and Ethiopian refugees and asylum seekers provides a more systematic view: 38 percent of those surveyed had attended or completed technical or university education, 29 percent had attended or completed secondary education, 10 percent had attended or completed primary school, and 22 percent had not received formal education. Of those surveyed, 15 percent had very limited literacy.[52] This suggests the need for outreach to tailor to a range of literacy levels.

Second, the urban setting makes travel to offices difficult for intersecting reasons, including cost of transportation, long travel times, incompatible working hours, and insecurity (as it does for refugees accessing services in Nairobi, Kenya).[53] Given the city's notorious crowding and traffic, travel by minibus, bus, taxi, or the metro rail system pose considerable levels of cost, time, and hassle. The hardship of travel can be exacerbated by long wait times at service provider offices. Travel across Cairo can be difficult or impossible for the elderly, chronically ill, or those with physical disabilities, and can pose safety issues. Visible minorities, especially sub-Saharan Africans, face public discrimination, harassment, and abuse. Since the 2011 revolution, increased street crime has disproportionally impacted minorities in poor areas, and civil unrest has resulted in frequent and unpredictable disruptions of transport as well as office closures. One service provider interviewed called the need for travel to access information services "a great burden," stating that "it's really getting on refugees' nerves, because they deal with so many entities, different services." Stress in the experience of accessing services can build resentment that can become a communication barrier in itself.

Third, initial evidence suggests widespread use of mobile phones and growing use of the Internet by forced migrants in Cairo. In a survey made by an Iraqi refugee in 2007 of 1,320 Iraqi refugees in Egypt, 99 percent said they could be reached by mobile phone.[54] Pilot research participants were unanimous in their assessment that the majority of refugees and asylum seekers in Cairo use mobile phones, using phrases like "everyone" and "everybody" to describe how many have mobiles.

The pilot research found the Internet to play a significant role in Cairo's refugee communities. In a 2006 survey of 162 refugees and asylum seekers of various nationalities, distributed at SPOs and CBOs in Cairo, 152 (94 percent) reported that they used the Internet. Ninety-six of those surveyed said they accessed it in Internet cafes, twenty-six at home, nine at home or a cafe, and five at their workplace.[55] In a 2007 survey of 1,320 Iraqis, 86 percent said they could be reached by email or social networking sites.[56] In both surveys, the participant selection was non-probabilistic and convenience-based, so may not be generalized, but is nonetheless indicative.

Refugee research participants said that although most in their communities do not own personal computers, many nonetheless access the Internet through Cairo's many Internet cafes, and at service provider and community based organizations that have computers for public use, at least one of which offered computer classes as early as 2005. Others share computers, or rely on others for web-based information. An Iraqi refugee estimated that amongst Iraqis in Cairo, "there is one in each family who can use computers." A Somali research participant reported that Somali youth relay online information to their older family members. Computer sharing thus also helps overcome varying levels of literacy, language acquisition, and computer literacy within households. Another trend indicated in research interviews was a prevalence of social media use, which is burgeoning in refugee communities in Cairo, especially amongst young people.

Developing Urban Refugee Outreach: Interest and Ideas
The diversity of Cairo's refugee communities, difficulty of transport, and indications of rising use of new information and communication technologies in refugee communities suggest the importance of the expansion of existing outreach practices. The pilot research solicited participant assessments of the benefits, limits, and ideas for this development. This section considers potential channels in turn, demonstrating caveats and capacities in technologies old and new to improve information and communication about urban asylum.

The study found site-specific communication to be considered a cornerstone of good information provision in the city, whether at offices or through neighbourhood visits. Provided that an interpreter is present if needed, oral communication can allow service providers to explain, discuss, and respond to queries in a way that tailors to the specific needs of the individual or group present. It may also foster relationships and trust.

The employment of refugee outreach workers has been a key element. One organization has formed specifically to train and place refugee psychosocial workers in organizations and communities throughout the city. These employees travel into neighbourhoods, pass out their mobile number, and invite co-nationals to workshops and meetings. This approach was credited by several research participants as being the biggest single improvement in the regular spread of accurate information amongst refugee communities in Cairo.

The research found interest in the use of office waiting rooms to reach out during waiting times, through posters, brochures, or video—a site-specific medium which could bypass literacy barriers and, if offered in multiple languages, language difference.

Despite such potentials, however, site-specific information provision has drawbacks. It can disadvantage newly arrived asylum seekers who do not know where to find information, and those with few social ties. Messages spread within communities by word of mouth are often distorted in the process, and misinformation and rumours have often spread within Cairo's refugee communities as a result.

The utility of printed material depends on its distribution and the extent to which it addresses the diversity of languages and literacy rates in Cairo's refugee communities. Long and complicated documents were cited by multiple research participants as a problematic technology, and the use of short, simple, easy-to-distribute brochures and flyers is not common in Cairo. Yet expanded use of printed materials could offer a way to reach people who, for whatever reason, do not or are unable to make office visits or seldom attend events for refugees.

Several research participants suggested increased use of cartoons and comics developed with refugee input, to increase comprehension and efficacy of the documents being distributed. One program that gives a short, clear brochure to all who access its services reports unanimously positive feedback, whereas previously, program requirements were explained only orally and therefore vulnerable to misinterpretation or inconsistency between staff members.

One participant suggested that each service provision organization in Cairo have a short flier or brochure that briefly describes how to access their services. During discussions in regular interagency meetings, participants could stuff bags or envelopes with brochures which could then be further distributed at events and offices and easily passed along from person to person.

SMS and phone hotline programs are logical matches to widespread mobile phone use in refugee communities in Cairo. These two phone uses serve quite different purposes, but were each unanimously supported by both refugee and service provider research participants.

All participants spoke of the SMS system's success. An employee of the organization said that the system has "impacted on the relationship between staff and refugees when they are in the office. It really has improved." An Iraqi refugee said that his mother, who receives services from the SPO, has benefited from the text message system: "She doesn't need to go to [the SPO] every month to check when is the day of payroll. She receives the message every month, and they tell her the exact time to receive the money." One pointed out SMS's ability not only to instantly transfer information, but to provide a record of that transfer, and to be a resource that its recipients can consult repeatedly.

A telephone hotline established after the revolution has been another appreciated initiative, as a Somali participant commented: "I think it's a very good step forward. It saves cost, it saves time." He also noted that a friend had successfully made an appointment through the hotline in his native tongue. An Iraqi participant stated: "Phone numbers, texting, giving refugees more attention than they are giving now, it's one of the good things, good intentions that they could show to refugees, that 'We are taking care of you, we are giving you care, we are trying.'" Communication efforts that harness multiple channels thus also convey effort and respect.

Some service providers seem to underestimate refugee use of the Internet and neglect it as a channel of contact. Yet research participants unanimously supported increased use of the Internet to provide information about asylum for refugees. Their suggestions included user-friendly, multilingual websites,[57] online video, photographs and drawings, downloadable audio podcasts, and use of social media. Service providers suggested that current print information be provided online as well, with each organization given access in order to keep contact and service information up to date—information that could then also be downloaded, printed, and further distributed.

In the past years, several initiatives were launched by refugees and service providers to build informative websites, phone hotlines, and web forums for Cairo-based refugees. In the projects' initial phases, which included surveys, focus groups, and content development, both projects received strong community support and positive feedback. However,

those involved in their creation lacked institutional support or external funding to move the projects forward, and they have not come to fruition.

Conclusion

This article explored the role of information in urban asylum, and current and possible uses of technologies to facilitate urban refugees' access to needed information, services, and protection. Pilot research into communication about asylum in Cairo found it to play a serious role in access, protection, and the experiences and relationships between forced migrants and service providers. To address existing needs, questions, and misunderstandings, the content of information strategies should thus be refugee-centred. In Cairo, this includes publicizing services, addressing the need for estimates for wait times regarding RSD and resettlement processes, and more generally clarifying procedures, limits, and responsibilities vis-à-vis resettlement, rights, and benefits.

Service providers increasingly share information about asylum through face-to-face, printed, phone, and online channels. The linguistic and literacy diversity of forced migrants in Cairo, the difficulty of transit in the city, and indications of rising use of new information and communication technologies in refugee communities all suggest the importance of the expansion and development of existing outreach practices. Passive forms of information can overcome constraints of site-specific and oral communication, especially if multiple channels are used simultaneously, updated regularly, and designed with content in multiple languages and media in order to be accessible across Cairo's diverse refugee communities.

The urban setting's challenges make the expansion and institutionalization of good communication practices for refugees in cities particularly important. The project of communicating with urban refugee populations should receive more funding and attention from donors, governments, and international organizations. International philanthropic and corporate interest in ICT's use for social problems ought to be harnessed to support existing and future locally led initiatives that are designed with the participation of refugees. Service providers and refugees have made efforts in this direction but lack the required time, funds, and institutional support to make them sustainable. Further research is also needed into how refugees learn about and discuss asylum, and how the use of websites and social media to link refugee communities with information about asylum might best be developed.

Communication cannot overcome the substantial contextual barriers to asylum in Cairo, but it has the potential to mitigate their effects. Information delivery that conveniences and addresses the needs of refugee communities can strengthen protection, improve access to services, and ease refugees' experiences of asylum in the city. In the growing study of technology's role in the lives of refugees, this paper highlights the continued need to consider how intersecting geopolitical and technological contexts impact upon asylum, and to include attention to the particular experiences of forced migrants who live in cities in the global south.

NOTES

1. This paper uses "refugee" and "asylum seeker" to refer to people recognized as such by UNHCR, with the knowledge that matters discussed could be relevant to a wider population of forced migrants. It uses "refugee communities" to refer to populations of people with mixed migratory and legal statuses who originate from refugee sending countries.

2. UNHCR, "2013 UNHCR country operations profile—Egypt," UNHCR-Egypt website (2013), accessed June 30, 2013, http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e486356.html. There are 50,000 to 70,000 Palestinians who also live in Egypt, under the care of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) rather than UNHCR. See Oroub El-Abed, "The Palestinians in Egypt: Identity, Basic Rights and Host State Policies," *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 28, no. 2–3 (2009): 531–549.

3. As of June 2013, 1,250 refugees and asylum seekers remain in Saloum. See UNHCR, "Depression grips forgotten refugees stranded at Egyptian-Libyan border," UNHCR website-News Stories (2013), accessed June 30, 2013, http://www.unhcr.org/51cad70f9.html.

4. For an innovative mapping of residence patterns of Sudanese in Cairo, see Karen Jacobsen, Maysa Ayoub, and Alice Johnson, "Remittances to Transit Countries: The Impact of Sudanese Refugee Livelihoods in Cairo," *Cairo Studies on Migration and Refugees* 3 (2012): 16–18, accessed October 30, 2012, http://www.aucegypt.edu/GAPP/cmrs/reports/Documents/paper%20No.%203.pdf.

5. At time of publication, these included a growing population of Syrians, as well as new arrivals seeking asylum from Sudan and South Sudan. For current statistics, see UNHCR, "2013 UNHCR country operations profile."

6. Martin Jones, "We Are Not All Egyptian," *Forced Migration Review* 39 (2012): 16; Jacobsen, Ayoub, and Johnson, "Remittances to Transit Countries," 28, 36–39; and Michael Kagan, "Shared Responsibility in a New Egypt: A Strategy for Refugee Protection" (working paper, Center for Migration and Refugee Studies, American University in Cairo, 2011): 4.

7. Jones, "We Are Not All Egyptian," 16; Jacobsen, Ayoub, and Johnson, "Remittances to Transit Countries," 21, 28, 36–39; Zehra Rizvi and Dale Buscher, "Shifting Sands: Risk and Resilience among Refugee Youth in Cairo," Women's

Refugee Commission (2012): 6, accessed November 20, 2012, http://womensrefugeecommission.org/resources/doc_download/858-shifting-sands-risk-and-resilience-among-refugee-youth-in-cairo.

7. Kagan, "Shared Responsibility in a New Egypt," 11.

8. See Fateh Azzam, ed., "A Tragedy of Failures and False Expectations: Report on the Events Surrounding the Three-Month Sit-In and Forced Removal of Sudanese Refugees in Cairo, September-December 2005" (Report, Forced Migration and Refugee Studies, American University in Cairo, 2006): 9.

9. Ibid., 18–19; Ray Jureidini, "Irregular Workers in Egypt: Migrant and Refugee Domestic Workers," *International Journal on Multicultural* Societies 11 (2009): 75–90; Dale Buscher and Lauren Heller, "Desperate Lives: Urban Refugee Women in Malaysia and Egypt," *Forced Migration Review* 34 (2010): 20–1; Rizvi and Buscher, "Shifting Sands," 1, 9.

10. Elzbieta Gozdziak and Alissa Walter, "Urban Refugees in Cairo," Institute for the Study of International Migration (2012): 17, accessed November 22, 2012, http://issuu.com/georgetownsfs/docs/urban_refugees_in_cairo/1; Jacobsen, Ayoub, and Johnson, "Remittances to Transit Countries," 28.

11. See Emily Eidenier, "Providing Health Care Information to Refugees in Cairo: Questions of Access and Integration" (Report, Forced Migration and Refugee Studies, American University in Cairo, 2006), accessed March 2, 2012, http://www.aucegypt.edu/GAPP/cmrs/reports/Documents/Eidenier.pdf; Marisa Ensor, "Education and Self-Reliance in Egypt," *Forced Migration Review* 34 (2010): 25–6; and Sarah Hodgson, "Psychosocial Well-Being within Refugee Education in Cairo," *Fahamu Refugee Legal Aid Newsletter* (June 2013), accessed June 4, 2013, http://frlan.tumblr.com/post/51869692799/psychosocial-well-being-within-refugee-education-in.

12. Kagan, "Shared Responsibility in a New Egypt," 5.

13. See Azzam, "A Tragedy of Failures; Nora Danielson, "'Field Report: Revolution, Its Aftermath, and Access to Information for Refugees in Cairo," *Oxford Monitor of Forced Migration* 2 (2012): 57–63. Following the killing of at least twenty-eight Sudanese protesters at the end of a three-month long sit-in in front of UNHCR Cairo in 2005, growing numbers of forced migrants left Cairo to seek asylum in Israel. This trend subsided, however, following multiple instances in which Egyptian border security shot and killed those attempting to cross into Israel; ongoing cases of kidnapping, extortion, and torture by traffickers in the Sinai; and harsh measures towards asylum seekers taken in Israel. The Sinai remains a site of unhindered human rights violations in human trafficking from Eritrea and Sudan. See Human Rights Watch, "Sinai Perils: Risks to Migrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Egypt and Israel," *Human Rights Watch* (2008), accessed March 13, 2011, http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/egypt1108webwcover

.pdf; Rebecca Furst-Nichols and Karen Jacobsen, "African Refugees in Israel," *Forced Migration Review* 37 (2011): 55–6; and Rachel Humphris, "Refugees and the Rashaida: Human Smuggling and Trafficking from Eritrea to Sudan and Egypt," *New Issues in Refugee Research* 254 (2013): 4.

14. Katarzyna Grabska, "A System of Diffuse Responsibility, With Blame Shared by All," *RSDWatch* (2006), accessed October 2, 2010, http://rsdwatch.wordpress.com/2006/06/16/forum-the-lessons-of-cairo-a-system-of-diffuse-responsibility-with-blame-shared-by-all/.

15. See Kagan, "Shared Responsibility in a New Egypt," 9–20, for a more detailed overview of refugee protection in Egypt.

16. At time of publication, the total "population of concern" to UNHCR Egypt was 126,949 people. Of these, 109,933 held refugee status, 16,952 were asylum seekers, and 60 were stateless. UNHCR, "2013 UNHCR country operations profile."

17. UNHCR, *The State of the World's Refugees* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

18. See for example Noel Calhoun, "UNHCR and Community Development: A Weak Link in the Chain of Refugee Protection?" *New Issues in Refugee Research* 191 (2010); Tania Kaiser, "Participation or Consultation? Reflections on a 'Beneficiary Based' Evaluation of UNHCR's Programme for Sierra Leonean and Liberian Refugees in Guinea, June-July 2000," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 17, no. 2 (2004); Terry Rempel, "UNRWA and the Palestine Refugees: A Genealogy of 'Participatory' Development," *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 28, no. 2 & 3 (2010): 412–437; Roxane Wilber, "Leveraging Women's Community Leadership: A Model for Outreach in Urban Refugee Populations" (Institute for Inclusive Security publication, 2011), accessed April 22, 2011, http://www.inclusivesecurity.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Urban-Refugees_FINAL.pdf.

19. See for example Larry Bottinick and Areti Sianni, "No Place to Stay: A Review of the Implementation of UNHCR's Urban Refugee Policy in Bulgaria" (UNHCR Policy Development and Evaluation Service Evaluation Report 2011/04, 2011); Angela A. L. Rosi, Marco Formisano, and Ljubo Jandrijasevic, "Lives in Limbo: A Review of the Implementation of UNHCR's Urban Refugee Policy in Tajikistan," (UNHCR Policy Development and Evaluation Service Evaluation Report 2011/03, 2011).

20. UNHCR, *UNHCR Policy on Refugee Protection and Solutions in Urban Areas* (2009), accessed April 3, 2012, http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4ab8e7f72.html.

21. Tim Morris, "Selected Bibliography: Displacement to Urban Areas," *UNHCR Online* (2011), accessed June 5, 2011, http://www.unhcr.org/4b0ba1209.html.

22. Elizabeth Campbell, "Age, Gender, Diversity Mainstreaming Initiative Key to Urban Protection," *Refugees International* (2010), accessed April 15, 2011, http://www.refugeesinternational.org/print/4501; Karine Le Roch, Emmanuelle Pons, Jason Squire, Josephine Anthoine-Milhomme, and Yann Colliou, "Two Psychosocial Approaches

for Iraqi Urban Refugees in Jordan and Lebanon: Center-Based Services Compared to Community-Outreach Services," *Journal of Muslim Mental Health* 5 (2010): 99–119.

23. Linda Leung, "Phoning Home," *Forced Migration Review* 38: (2011): 24; Linda Leung, "Taking Refuge in Technology: Communication Practices in Refugee Camps and Immigration Detention," *New Issues in Refugee Research* 202 (2011); Linda Leung, Cath Finney Lamb, and Liz Emrys, "Technology's Refuge: The Use of Technology by Asylum Seekers and Refugees" (Sydney: UTS ePress, 2009); Anastasia Panagakos and Heather Horst, "Return to Cyberia: Technology and the Social Worlds of Transnational Migrants," *Global Networks* 6, no. 2 (2006): 109–124; Manuela Prejato, and Alfonso Molina, "La Tecnologia Digitale Come Strumento Di Integrazione Per I Rifugiati," in *La Tecnologia Digitale Come Strumento Di Integrazione Per I Rifugiati* (Rome: Fondazione Mondo Digitale, 2010).

24. Mette M. L. Berg, "Conference Report: Digital Diasporas," *Anthropology Today* 27, no. 2 (2011): 28; Victoria Bernal, "Diaspora, Cyberspace and Political Imagination: The Eritrean Diaspora Online," *Global Networks* 6, no. 2 (2006): 161–179; Myria Georgiou, "Diasporic Communities On-Line: A Bottom-Up Experience of Transnationalism," *Hommes Et Migration* (London: London School of Economics, 2002).

25. See Antoine Bertout, Marc de Bourcy, and Mohammad Faisal, "Luxembourg-UNHCR-Skype Synergies," *Forced Migration Review* 38: (2011): 18–19, and others in *Forced Migration Review* 38; Caitlin Van Orden, "Community Technology Access: Bridging the Digital Divide for Refugees," *The Blue Key Blog* (2011), accessed May 30, 2011, http://bluekeyblog.org/blue-key/community-technology-access-bridging-the-digital-divide-for-refugees; UNHCR, "Q&A: Former Bosnian Refugee Promotes Technology to Bring Hope to the Displaced," *UNHCR News Stories (*2010), accessed May 30, 2011, http://www.unhcr.org/print/4ced313b6.html; UNHCR, "Community Technology Access," *UNHCR Livelihoods & Self-Reliance Website (*2011), accessed May 30, 2011, http://www.unhcr.org/pages/4ad2e8286.html; UNHCR, "Innovative Learning Methods and New Technology Assist Refugees Who Learn Ukranian: The UN Refugee Agency Equips Language Lab in Odesa International Humanitarian University," *UNHCR Press Release* (2011), accessed May 30, 2011, http://www.unhcr.org.ua/news.php?in=1&news_id=206; UNHCR Regional Representation Bulgaria, "Launching the Community Technology Access Project for Refugees in Bulgaria," *UNHCR Regional Representation Central Europe Facebook Webpage (2010), accessed May 27, 2011,* http://www.facebook.com/note.php?note_id=471850182846.

26. See for example Roger Zetter and George Deikun, "A New Strategy for Meeting Humanitarian Challenges in Urban Areas," *Forced Migration Review* 38 (2011): 48–50.

27. Azzam, "A Tragedy of Failures"; Emily Eidenier, "General project proposal: 'STAR website: information and communication for refugees and volunteers in Cairo'" (2006), on file with author.

28. To maintain participant confidentiality, both organizational and personal names of research participants have been anonymized.

29. The demonstrators were primarily UNHCR-recognized asylum seekers and refugees. Of the 2,174 surviving demonstrators arrested on the night of the eviction of the protest, all but 169 were eventually released from detention on the basis of being people of concern to UNHCR. Azzam, "A Tragedy of Failures," 23.

30. Nora Danielson, "A Contested Demonstration: Resistance, Negotiation and Transformation in the Cairo Sudanese Refugee Protest of 2005" (master's thesis, University of Oxford, 2008), on file with author.

31. UNHCR Regional Office Cairo, "Response to FMRS Report: 'A Tragedy of Failures and False Expectations'" (2006): 18–20, on file with author.

32. Azzam, "A Tragedy of Failures," 5, 16, 58–59.

33. Gamal Nkrumah, "Radical Refugees," *Al-Ahram Weekly* 769 (2005), accessed 6 November 2006, http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2005/769/feature.htm.

34. Azzam, "A Tragedy of Failures."

35. UNHCR Regional Office Cairo (2006): 6.

36. Ibid., 26, 29.

37. Jones, "We Are Not All Egyptian," 16.

38. Mahmoud Farag, "Cairo Refugees and the Revolution" (Student Action for Refugees presentation, American University in Cairo, 23 March 2011), on file with author.

39. Jon Jensen, "For Refugees in Egypt, It's Worse," *Shooting Egypt Blog* (2011), accessed September 9, 2011, http://jonjensen.com/blog/?p=1829#more-1829.

40. Heba Moghaieb, "Strengthening Livelihood Capacities of Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Egypt," *UNHCR Survey Report* (2009): 30.

41. See for example Adam Saltsman, "Rumour versus Information," *Forced Migration Review* 26: (2010): 57–58; Adam Saltsman, "Displaced Iraqis in Jordan: Formal and Informal Information Flows, and Migratory Decisions in a Context of Uncertainty," *Refuge* 28 (2011): 81–96.

42. Michael Kagan, "Assessment of Refugee Status Determination Procedure at UNHCR's Cairo Office 2001–2002" (working paper, Forced Migration and Refugee Studies, American University in Cairo, 2002): 11, 12, 17.

43. Ibid., 20.

44. Ibid., 20.

45. Hala Mahmoud, "Disrupted Lives and Shattered Dreams: Culture, Identity, and Coping Pathways among Sudanese Refugees in Cairo" (PhD dissertation, Faculty of Politics, Psychology, Sociology, and International Studies, University of Cambridge, 2009): 3; Moghaieb, "Strengthening Livelihood Capacities," 30.

46. Since the pilot research a third booklet, 116 pages long, has been produced, which clearly presents comprehensive information on the rules and processes of asylum. At time

of publication it was available in English and Arabic, with plans to translate it into other languages.

47. UNHCR RO-Cairo, *UNHCR Egypt fact sheet, January 2012* (2012), accessed February 20, 2012 at http://www.unhcr .org/4f4c956c9.pdf. This number included some living in Alexandria and smaller towns in Egypt, and new asylum seekers who fled from the 2011 unrest in Libya to the border town of Saloum. The total did not include Palestinians living in Egypt, who do not receive assistance from UNHCR; people who had not sought recognition as refugees; people whose applications for refugee status had been rejected but continue living in Egypt; or some asylum seekers who passed through the Sinai in an attempt to reach Israel.

48. Daniele Calvani, "Initial Overview of the Linguistic Diversity of Refugee Communities in Cairo" (working paper, Forced Migration and Refugee Studies, American University in Cairo, 2003): 2–3, 9.

49. Ibid., 38.

50. Nora Danielson, "Urban Refugee Protection in Cairo: The Role of Communication, Information and Technology," *New Issues in Refugee Research* 236 (2012): 15–17.

51. Moghaieb, "Strengthening Livelihood Capacities," 14–15.

52. See Martin Anderson, "The Cost of Living: An Analysis of the Time and Money Spent by Refugees Accessing Services in Nairobi," *New Issues in Refugee Research* (2012), accessed March 30, 2012, http://www.unhcr.org/4f070ace9.pdf.

53. Email from research participant (2012), on file with author.

54. Eidenier, "Providing health care information."

55. Email from research participant (2012), on file with author.

56. A good model is the Australian website *Asylum explained* (Asylum Seeker Resource Centre 2012), which is offered in English, Arabic, Chinese (simplified and traditional), Dari, Sinhalese, Urdu, Bengali, Korean, Indonesian, Tamil, Vietnamese, Malay, Persian, Thai, and Hindi. The site lists contacts and resources, and covers the topics "What is 'seeking asylum' in Australia?"; "Am I a refugee?"; "How do I get protection?"; and "I arrived by boat" (available online, http://www.asylumexplained.asrc.org.au/).

57. Eidenier, "Providing health care information"; Helpline Egyptian for Asylum Seekers, Migrants and Refugees, "Final Report of HEAR's Activities" (2010), on file with author.

Nora Danielson holds an MPhil in migration studies from the University of Oxford, where she is a doctoral researcher in anthropology at the Centre on Migration, Policy and Society. This paper draws from research partially funded by UNHCR's Policy and Development and Evaluation Service (PDES) and is revised from a working paper written for its series New Issues in Refugee Research. The author wishes to thank PDES, as well as those who participated in the pilot research and commented on the working paper.

Social Media Usage, *Tahriib* (Migration), and Settlement among Somali Refugees in France

Houssein Charmarkeh

Abstract

Technologies are omnipresent in our society, from mobile telephone systems to satellite television and Internet broadcasting, which shape the way we live, work, and interact. They have also transformed the experience of international migration, making it possible for migrants to maintain strong ties between the host society and the home country. In this article, we examine the precarious situation lived by Somali refugees in France, and we explore their uses of social media during tahriib or their migratory path and settlement in three French cities. The first section discusses the method on which this field study is based, that of critical and multi-sited ethnography. After describing living conditions experienced by Somali refugees in France in the next section, the last section presents the findings of the field study. In doing so, the present research strives to fill a research gap by contributing to the advancement of knowledge on social media use by refugees.

Résumé

Les technologies de l'information et de la communication (TIC) sont omniprésentes et la téléphonie mobile, la télévision par satellite et internet façonnent notre façon de vivre, de travailler et d'interagir. Elles ont aussi transformé la migration internationale, rendant possible pour les migrants le maintien des liens forts entre la société d'accueil et le pays d'origine. Dans cet article, nous examinons le sort précaire des réfugiés Somaliens en France et explorons leurs usages des médias sociaux pendant le tahriib ou trajet migratoire et l'installation dans trois villes françaises. Dans un premier temps, nous allons présenter la méthode de l'ethnographie critique et multi-sites sur laquelle repose cette présente enquête de terrain. Il s'agit en dernier, après avoir décrit les conditions de vie des réfugiés Somaliens en France, de présenter les résultats. Cette présente recherche tente de contribuer à l'avancement du savoir sur les usages des médias sociaux par les réfugiés.

Introduction

Information and communication technologies (ICT) permeate today all levels of society and undoubtedly contribute to a sense of reduced space and time. The accelerated development of these technologies arises from a radical transformation of a largely globalized capitalist economy.[1] Mobile telephone systems, satellite television, and Internet broadcasting shape the way we live, work, and interact. They have also transformed the experience of international migration, making it possible for migrants to maintain strong ties between the host society and the home country. Many studies have been conducted in this context on the uses of ICT by migrants in host countries.[2] However, studies focusing on the uses of ICT by refugees during their migratory trajectories and their settlement are limited. In a research report prepared by Linda Leung[3] for the UNHCR and published in 2011, the author highlights the fact that there was little consideration of the particular importance technology held for refugees and asylum seekers, individuals who are also affected by problems of migration and marginalization. The present research strives to fill this gap by contributing to the advancement of knowledge on social media use by refugees. In this context, "social media" refers to primarily new media including Facebook and YouTube. There are also supporting instant communication tools such as Skype, MSN Messenger, and VoIP (Voice over Internet

Protocol). In order to do so, the analysis of social media use by refugees should not limit itself by considering technical devices as guarantors of individual autonomy and by taking refugees to be actors in control of their social and economic environment. Consequently, a more critical view is needed of the discourses claiming that society has become more "equal" and "solidary" thanks to ICT. This utopia, as described by Armand Mattelart,[4] poorly hides relations of domination and exclusion in society, which are based on ethnicity, social class, gender, and age. In this article, we examine the precarious situation lived by Somali refugees in France, and we explore their uses of social media during their migratory trajectory and settlement in three French cities. The first section discusses the method on which this field study is based, that of critical and multi-sited ethnography. After describing living conditions experienced by Somali refugees in France in the next section, the last section presents the findings of the field study.

Critical and Multi-sited Ethnography

The research is based on data collected during a critical and multi-sited ethnographical study carried out in France, namely in the cities of Rennes, Angers, and Paris. The field study took place between January and April 2011 and centred on the understanding of the role played by social media in the migratory trajectory of Somali refugees in France. The choice of methodology reflects the critical approach and aims at denouncing social and economic inequalities lived by refugees in France. Critical ethnography has for the objective to uncover processes that create iniquity and injustice lived by a specific social group in a specific context.[5] In critical ethnographic research, the researcher feels that he or she has a moral obligation to attempt to change these processes.[6] To do so, the researcher must use available resources and skills in an effort to arrive at a deeper understanding of the lived experience of excluded groups and to make their usually hidden experiences and silenced voices accessible to others.[7] However, critical ethnography is more than a field study on socially marginalized groups; it largely denounces all sorts of domination exerted on individuals.[8]

The ethnographic approach used in this study is also multi-sited. In Rennes, Angers, and Paris, we approached approximately one hundred Somalis, but only thirty-four of them agreed to directly take part in the research, complete a questionnaire on media use and ICT devices, and participate in an individual and a group in-depth interview. The two methods combined allowed us to collect data on the uses of ICT by immigrants as they migrate from Somalia to France and particularly to listen to the voices of those who are not often awarded the chance to speak.

When it comes to studying a community in diaspora and its complex, contemporary migratory trajectories, the multi-sited ethnography method is increasingly becoming the method of choice in media studies, technological sciences, and cultural studies.[9] While traditional ethnography involves the practice of participant observation for extended periods of time at a specific site (thick ethnography), multi-sited ethnography is committed to studying a spatially dispersed field whereby the ethnographer moves across two or more locations.[10] This epistemological turn was advanced by Georges Marcus who in 1995 demonstrated the inability of traditional ethnography to capture multiple and complex effects of contemporary social systems and structures on individuals. For other authors, the popularity of multi-sited ethnographic research lies in the fact that the researcher is required to follow "the steps" of the individuals under study who are becoming increasingly mobile. The increased popularity of this method also corresponds with the changing work conditions of researchers whose time is split between their field studies, search for funding, teaching duties, and family obligations.[11] Therefore, professional, family, and economic needs are increasingly driving the researchers to conduct multi-sited ethnographic studies that take place "here" and "there" and "between" different projects, as researchers are no longer immersed in studying one single site for long periods of time.[12]

Two important factors facilitated the completion of this field study. The first factor is the help received from a Somali family with whom we came into contact in Rennes in 2002 during the participant recruitment campaign. The family has since become a gatekeeper with whom we established privileged ties. The second factor is related to our proficiency of the Somali language spoken by Somalis. In this regard, George Marcus writes:

> Just as 'knowing the language' guarantees the integrity of traditional fieldwork and gives the bounded field—e.g. a people, an ethnic group, a community, its most coherence as culture, this skill is as important in multi-sited fieldwork and even with more exactitude.[13]

Research participants were selected through the snowball sampling method. We met the first participants in Rennes, who later recommended other Somalis residing in Angers and Paris who they felt were "trustworthy." Although the snowball sampling method produced non-representative and non-random samples, the participants were chosen with the aim of obtaining various profiles, in terms of sex and age. This method was a preferred method due to the fact that many Somalis are suspicious of inquiries into their migration trajectories since many of them were

seeking asylum as refugees through the French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons.[14] Another reason behind the suspicion expressed by Somalis is the fragile psychological state of many Somalis whose journey since leaving Somalia has been traumatic. In this context, our research first consists of gaining Somali asylum seekers' trust before carefully obtaining data. The snowball sampling method is well adapted for research projects which deal with sensitive topics.[15]

Living Conditions of Somali Refugees in France

To our knowledge, there are no studies which focus on Somali refugees in France despite the fact that there are French research specialists who work on issues related to Somalia and its Diaspora.[16] And yet, the number of Somalis living in France has continued to grow in the last ten years, as confirmed by the statistics published by the Office français de protection des apatrides et des réfugiés (OFPRA) (see Table 1). Somalis traditionally settle in a country where a Somali community already exists or, for historical reasons, in countries of former colonizers, such as England or Italy. Many other Somalis choose Scandinavian countries which generously accepted asylum seekers until the 1990s.[17]

The number of Somalis living in France is estimated to be between two thousand and three thousand.[18] Even though the choice to settle in France is motivated by the asylum acceptance rate, Somali families hesitate to move to France due to limited assistance offered by the French government as well as due to difficulties finding accommodation. According to a study by the French Refugee Integration Observatory,[19] it is estimated that refugees in France, much like other categories of immigrants, experience great challenges in accessing independent accommodation and that they are faced with serious obstacles such as low income, prohibitively expensive rents, and inability to find a guarantor for rent leases, as well as racial discrimination. The study specifies that the issue of limited access to accommodation within the refugee context is common to most of the European countries.

Most Somalis who participated in the present research live in immigrant residences. During the three months that this research was being conducted, we spent entire days, from morning until late evening, in the presence of Somalis living in these residences. The goal was to immerse in the environment and the daily life as much as possible. In small, one-person, sparsely furnished rooms, three or sometimes even four Somalis occupy the space, lacking any form of privacy. Kitchen and bathroom are shared by the residents living on the same floor. Meals are prepared together, while all administrative matters related to the asylum application process are handled jointly. When they are not in their rooms, Somalis always walk together in groups in parks or shopping centres. The process of adapting to the new environment is undertaken in groups which are formed in accordance with age and their home city or village. As an aside, it is important to note the geographic location of the participants. The majority of participants were from the cities of Borama, Burao, and Mogadishu. Borama and Burao are located in Somaliland which comprises the northern part of the country and has had independence from Somalia since the civil war of the 1990s.

It is in this set-up that the youth gather in groups and live together. The oldest Somalis do not hesitate to socialize with younger ones, producing somewhat of a paradox since in Somalia younger men are kept at a distance by the elders, who hold more decision-making power in the Somali society. Clan affiliation seems to be less restrictive and plays a lesser role in the living arrangements of Somali groups. In her study on the migrants temporarily living in "transit" countries such as Egypt and Sudan, the author Fabienne Le Houérou notes that:

> …in exile, clans, without disappearing, become less restricting realities. Somalis belonging to competing clans in Somalia can be found sharing the same residence apartments here—a living arrangement perceived as scandalous back home. What makes sense for the individual is *the shared experience,* and it's rather this principle that guides residential group living.[20]

In the respondents' profiles (Table 2), it is of interest to note the high number of young people aged between eighteen and twenty-nine. With regard to the gender dimension, there a very limited number of women among the Somalis in France. Additionally, the living arrangements in France (crowded housing and multiple residents) made it even less appealing for women to settle in the country. The few Somali women that we did come across were living either

Table 1. Number of Somali Asylum Seekers in France per Year

Year	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Number of Somalis	120	115	91	139	123	57	57	101	776	360

Source: Office français de protection des apatrides et des réfugiés (OFPRA)

alone or with their spouse and it was difficult for them to participate in the interviews due to cultural norms of interaction. Women in the Somali culture are more easily identified as Muslims due to religious clothing. Religion plays an important role in the lives of Somali women. A study found that the increased veiling among the Somali women living in Finland is connected on the one hand to their increased religious knowledge and observance and on the other hand the necessity to preserve their own culture and identity in the Diaspora.[21] Based on this, we can assume that the Internet is central to their access to their religious knowledge.

Table 2. Demographic Variables

Age	Percentage %
18–29	76
30–39	12
40 or more	12
Total	100

Sex	Percentage %
Female	12
Male	88
Total	100

Most of the time Somalis eat two meals per day and sometimes even only one meal. Those individuals who have submitted their asylum application receive a welfare supplement, the so-called "*revenu de solidarité active,*" which amounts to about 300 euros per month. However, those individuals whose fingerprints have been clearly or partially identified by the Eurodac[22] database are not entitled to assistance and must wait several months before receiving the final decision regarding their asylum application. In the meantime, they are hosted by the Red Cross housing centres where meals are provided, or are housed by churches. Some of the respondents confided that they sometimes sleep on the street when they are not able to find accommodation. The asylum application process can last up to two years, and during this waiting period refugees do not have a permit to work or to take French classes. Based on the income data of our participants, we were able to calculate that 41 percent of our respondents earned an annual income of 1,000 to 5,000 euros and that 29 percent of them had no income, numbers which are significantly below the poverty line which is at 11,400 euros per year, according to French government statistics.[23]

Such dire conditions in which Somali refugees live are a result of the toughening of asylum regulations in France

and of the will "to show asylum seekers that we know how to dismiss but not how to expel."[24] These initiatives are similar to those recently taken up in Canada where in April 2012 the federal government proposed to reform health benefits available to refugees. This government proposal, which sparked an outcry and a collective protest by Canadian doctors, social workers, and lawyers, was intended to take away refugee health benefits that include access to medication, care, and non-urgent treatment such as pregnancy care and chronic illness care.

Tahriib, *Migratory Trajectories, and Usage of Instant Communication Tools and Social Media*

Tahriib refers to a recent phenomenon and can be translated from Somali into English as "illegal entry" into European countries. The word *tahriib* is used by Somalis [25] living in Somalia, Djibouti, and Ethiopia. After the fall of President Siyaad Barré's regime in December 1991, large numbers of Somalis abandoned their country as it was being ravaged by a civil war. They ran from armed militia which, in the absence of a central government, was terrorizing famished populations. In the last twenty years, the main cities in the South have been shaken by fierce fighting between a number of opposing groups. Close to a million Somalis have since been forced to leave their homes.[26] Consequently, many Somalis are trying to join the Somali Diaspora which formed in Scandinavian countries (Norway, Denmark, and Sweden), Netherlands, the UK, and North America. In this sense, *tahriib* is the only means of entering Europe.

Seventy percent of Somali respondents admitted to having lived in at least three European countries before coming to France. In the late 1980s, migrants' linear trajectories that would originate from one point (in the South) and end in another (in the North) began to transform into diverted, circular, or even zigzag trajectories.[27] To come to France, Somali refugees had three possible routes to take:

(1) starting their journey in the United Arab Emirates, they obtain a tourist visa for Russia from where they cross countries like Ukraine, Hungary, Romania, and Austria to finally arrive in Western Europe;

(2) after a long and perilous journey through countries such as Eritrea and Sudan, refugees arrive in Libya, where they board makeshift boats destined for Italy and Malta;

(3) from Djibouti, they take a flight to Morocco with a stopover in Paris, where they submit a request for asylum immediately upon arrival. This route is no longer possible since France introduced an airport transit visa (VTA) in 2008 for passengers coming from Djibouti, reducing the number of Somali asylum seekers.[28]

The majority of participants stated that during their entire journey they would use cybercafés in order to gain access to the Internet and telephone. The respondents who provided the most descriptive accounts of social media use were those who crossed African countries. While staying in an African "transit" country, Somalis regularly frequent cybercafés which they call *Somali staag*. [29] Telephone and Internet booths proliferate in urban neighbourhoods of African cities and offer numerous services such as access to high-speed Internet, telephone communications, and the possibility to receive money sent by families, as well as the possibility to purchase cigarettes and other food products. Cybercafés are not only places with access to ICT but also a space for socialization. In this way, cybercafés provide a space where Somalis are able to meet with others to talk, exchange useful information, and offer support to each other as they face the fear of being arrested in the "transit" country. One respondent comments:

> *Somali Staags* are very important places for us because thanks to the Internet they allow us to stay in permanent contact with the members of our families who've stayed back in Somalia or are living in other European countries or in North America. It's also a place where we can find all kinds of information concerning rental accommodation, smugglers' contact information, pending departure for another country, and news about friends who've crossed the border and into another country.

Fabienne Le Houérou[30] notes that in "transit" cities forced Somali migrants can be distinguished from migrants of Abyssinian origin, who thanks to their "inexhaustible ingenuity" and "creativity" devise strategies for finding cheapest possible communication with the use of the Internet and even establish cybercafés. Communication has always been central to the Somali identity, creating and cementing relationships both personal and professional. Somalis are often referred to as "a society of poets" because poetry served, and still serves, as a traditional form of communication. The Polish linguist and literary scholar B. W. Andrzejewski [31]explored and documented the intense love of poetry and language that has in one form or another underpinned Somali culture for at least a century and a half.[32] From poetry as a traditional form of communication, Somalis have transitioned on to new forms of communicative tools based on the Internet. For example, a recent study found that Somalis often watch past Somali plays based on poetry on the Internet.[33]

In what follows, we describe the different uses of the Internet by Somalis in *Somali Staag* or cybercafés. Most of the respondents confirmed that their use of the Internet was

essentially for the purpose of communicating and that they use the phone for emergency situations.

MSN Messenger

MSN Messenger allows migrants to maintain contact with others by sending emails via Hotmail and by chatting online with family members in Somalia, Europe, and North America in order to keep them updated on the situation. This direct link with the family is crucial because in cases where Somalis are arrested by the police in "transit" countries or where the smuggler's price is too high, they are still able to receive money sent by the family via *Hawalas* or through money transfer companies which are sometimes located inside the cybercafé. MSN Messenger is also used for receiving information from friends[34] regarding the next step in the journey, making it possible to plan in advance and to adapt to potential new obstacles. Somalis also use MSN Messenger to look for information on the European country that they are trying to reach and that accepts asylum applications by refugees coming from Somalia. They contact their friends whom they have met while crossing the "transit" countries to learn of the different options possible once they arrive in Europe. This constant search for information on European asylum policies continues once they arrive in Europe and after their asylum application is denied. They engage in so-called "asylum shopping" in an effort to apply for asylum following a rejection so as to increase the chances of obtaining asylum in a given country.[35]

Skype

Among the wide array of technologies used by Somali refugees, Skype figures as yet another option. Skype makes videoconferencing possible with friends living in Europe and family members in Somalia. However, parents of refugees are often less familiar with the technology than the youth, and due to the lack of access to Internet connection at home, they rely on cybercafés in Somalia to see their children and hear their voices. Often, cybercafé employees or their children assist them with setting up the connection and videoconferencing. In his research on the uses of ICT by Ecuadorian migrants, Jacques P. Ramírez stresses that among all other modes of communication videoconferencing produces the "strongest emotional and affective effects," and "the possibility of seeing 'the loved one' on the screen allows families to meet again, for a moment, and to observe each other despite the distance."[36]

For those participants who do not use Skype, they remain in contact with their families through communication using "Voice over Internet Protocol" (VoIP). VoIP telephone communication, originally designed to support communications between computers through software, is a method

of making phone calls via the Internet. Developments in telecommunications systems revolutionized communication. Somali telecommunications companies like Telesom-Albarakat, Telecom, Olympic, and others have adopted VoIP and now offer the service to their customers. Participants reported that their families choose often subscribe to VoIP through local telecommunications company. With this option, Somalis in France can make international calls at a lower cost.

Facebook

The social media tool Facebook is the second preferred tool used by the Somalis. As a media platform, it allows its users to search for childhood friends with whom they lost contact when they left their homeland, with friends living in Europe, and with those individuals with whom friendships were formed while in exile in Sudan, Eritrea, and Libya. Facebook is also an ideal tool for finding one's "soulmate." According to young Somali respondents, Facebook can help to establish romantic ties with Somali girls successfully settled in Europe and with a European citizenship. In this light, the possibility of marrying a European citizen represents for a Somali migrant a way out of the precarious situation he is in. Moreover, several respondents[37] that we met in Angers had gotten married to Somali women living in other European countries just a few weeks before our meeting. Once in France, Somalis continue to use MSN to get in touch with their friends or family members for the purpose of verifying the accuracy of the news reported on websites regarding political events that took place in their region. The participants explained that despite the proliferation of news media and the almost instantaneous availability of a wealth of news on Somalia, most of the sites publish exaggerated stories in order to generate considerable online traffic and thereby earn money from advertisements. A young Somali man explains:

> Somali media do not produce accurate reporting and television shows. Also, the information broadcasted by Somali media is biased. For these reasons, I rarely go to Somali outlets. All the information I need I can find on Facebook. My contacts living in Somalia give me the latest news. Sometimes, I call my family or my friends to obtain additional information on the situation in the region I am from. Then, I compare these news with the news broadcasted on the Somali websites, and so I am able to filter fabricated news from real news.

Even though Somali refugees consult Somali websites, they remain very critical of their country's media, and the majority of them stay informed by reading a variety of news sources so as to avoid reading only biased interpretation of events. In regard to Somali websites, Bjork[38] suggests that these websites can contribute to the strengthening and even recreation of sub-national identities which are most often clan-based.

YouTube

Some 85 percent of respondents stated that they watch YouTube videos posted by the Diaspora or by Internet users in Somalia. Some of these videos are old theatre plays and songs that were broadcast on national television under the former president Syaad Barre's regime, as well as films made by young Somalis in diaspora and especially podcasts from different Somali websites and television stations owned by the Somali Diaspora such as Somali Channel and Universal TV. Some of the podcasts are taken from Al Jazeera's websites and the Somali-language BBC website. Sometimes these podcasts are recovered, posted on YouTube, and discussed by Somali migrants. The popularity of YouTube may be based on that fact that is easy to use from being able to view videos, comment, and search for additional content.

The use of social media by Somalis and their knowledge of computer technology paint a contrast with the stereotypical and sordid images that are usually associated with refugees. Somalia, with its hordes of refugees, is often portrayed by the media with a plethora of negative terms, calling it the most dangerous country in the world and the greatest failed state in recent history. Images depicting chaos, famine, violence, and anarchy flash across television screens around the world. However, the Independent Institute, cited by BBC,[39] states that:

> far from chaos and economic collapse, we found that Somalia is generally doing better than when it had a state [and] urban businessmen, international corporations, and rural pastoralists have all functioned in a stateless Somalia, achieving standards of living for the country that are equal or superior to many other African nations..

These observations were confirmed by researchers Benjamin Powell, Ryan Ford, and Alex Nowrasteh[40] who, basing their work on the data collected by the World Bank and United Nations agencies, indicate that Somalia is doing noticeably better without the state than when it had a state and that the standard of living has generally improved compared to many other African countries. Following the same line of argument, they note that in the area of telecommunications there has seen considerable progress. The authors highlight the fact that the country is ranked eighth out of a total of fifty-four African states for the number of telephone lines, sixteenth for mobile phones, eleventh for Internet users, and twenty-seventh for the number of households

48

with television. In a stable country such as Kenya, it takes several years for a telephone line to be installed, while it generally takes only three days in Somalia.[41] Indeed, four telecommunications companies operate in Somalia, out of which three are in the South (Telcom, Nationlink, and Hormuud) and one (Somtel) in the self-declared independent region of the North (Somaliland). These telecommunications companies are taking advantage of the no-tax environment and are offering Internet access, mobile phone and landline services at record-breaking low prices. Such conditions have sparked a proliferation of cybercafés in all neighbourhoods, bringing ICT access to the Somali population and even mobilizing the civil society in order to ensure people receive training on how to use these technologies. Two participants recount:

> I was in Mogadishu. The city was at war. You know, even if there's war, life goes on. I wanted to learn how to use a computer, so I took a training course offered by an NGO. When fighting was going on in the neighbourhood where we were supposed to have training, we would move all the equipment to another, safer neighbourhood. In Mogadishu, at the height of the war, people had iPhones, sometimes even the latest models. Others use phones on Android or Galaxy tablets.

> All the communication technologies that we can see here and in the rest of the world also exist in Somalia. Phones and computers are sometimes much cheaper there than here [France]. I find this surprising. If, for example, a family member asks me to send them a computer, I prefer to send them money so that they can buy a computer there, because it's much cheaper. Ethiopia is one country, for example, that imports computers and mobile phones from Somalia.

ICT use by Somali refugees stands in contrast to stereotypical and dark images that often go hand in hand with refugees. What is more, our data show that the majority of our participants in France own a computer despite their low incomes.

Internet Access, ICT Equipment, and Media Practices in France

Once arrived in France, Somalis extend their usage of media to include traditional forms, particularly television. It is worth exploring as they settle into the country, the conditions under which they have Internet access and ICT equipment, as well as the presence of French television.

The questionnaire distributed to our participants specifically asks the respondents to indicate how many technological devices they own (laptop or desktop computers, television sets, subscription to a cable package, DVDs, VCRs, radios, and digital cameras) and to describe their Internet access. The data collected reveals that 62 percent of the youth, aged eighteen to twenty-nine, and all interviewed adults, aged thirty to thirty-nine, own a laptop (see Table 3). In France, the price of a laptop varies on average between two hundred and three hundred euros, which is significantly higher than Somalis' monthly salary. Those who are not able to purchase a computer go to cybercafés for Internet access. Others find solutions by going to municipal public libraries where Internet access is free of charge. It should be noted, however, that individuals who wish to use a computer at a public library are required to show an identity card with a valid address if they are to receive a library access card. Somali refugees resort to different strategies in order to obtain the library card. It can also be noted that our data highlight a gap that exists between the Somalis aged eighteen to thirty-nine and those aged forty and above in terms of the ownership of ICT equipment. This gap points to a technological divide that separates two different age groups of Somali refugees.

In terms of Internet access or TV sets, Somalis who own an Internet connection or digital television in their room through subscription are Somalis whose asylum application was accepted and who received housing in the immigrant residences. Out of the thirty-four participants, only three were in this situation. The vast majority of Somalis find other ways such as going to residence rooms of their fellow Somalis and taking turns to connect their or borrowed laptops to their friends' Internet.[42]

Television is the second most used technology after the computer. Somalis generally watch French television:

Table 3. ICT Equipment and Devices

Age	Computer/ Laptop	TV Set	DVD	VCR	Radio	Camera
18–29	62%	69%	4%	0%	0%	0%
30–39	100%	75%	25%	25%	25%	25%
40 and above	0%	25%	0%	0%	0%	0%

When I see television images, I realize that the French have a different culture. There are great differences between my culture and theirs. Besides television, when I am outside, I observe French people. I see that they are workers who always have something to do. They are people who work all the time, who try to improve their lives and bring progress to their country.

Like my friend, I watch television. I see that the French are really different from us, especially in terms of poverty. The French are rich. You could say that there is a great gulf between us and the French. But, let's not forget that they've also had war and poverty like us. We know history and what happened. In this region where we are, people have fought to have bread. In terms of human relations and culture, the French know how to live with others. They are people with whom you can live.

French television is a companion to the Somalis, even if they do not fully master the French language; it stays on all day and serves as an introduction to the French culture. It is a showcase of the West. When they were in Somalia, they watched through satellite channels. It is no longer a distant dream, the West. They constantly compare television fiction to reality of French life. Somalis, as large consumers of news, often compare major television networks such as BBC World News and Al Jazeera with BFM TV and LCI.

Studies have shown that the media in host countries play the role of mediators for newly arrived migrants[43] and especially for refugees who do not speak the language.[44] However, this role is not always positive. A study by Ridjanovic[45] on the place occupied by the media in the adaptation process of Bosnian refugees in Quebec City showed that refugees, due to their painful experiences in their home countries, are particularly sensitive to negative media representations of immigrants and foreigners. In this regard, during the interview, we asked questions about the representation of Somalis in French television and they strongly criticized the projected images:

The French media often talk about terrorism and piracy. When they are not talking about that, they are broadcasting news about disappeared or kidnapped journalists in Somalia […], when people ask us what country we're from, we say we're from Somalia and immediately, they say to us: "You are the Somali pirates!" People think that all Somalis are pirates. Before, people didn't used to associate us with piracy. No one's interested in Somali history and identity.

As shown above, Somalis employ social media as much as traditional media. However, these two types of media do not fulfill the same function, as social media are strongly linked to mobility and are used for the purpose of finding a safe refuge, while traditional media serve as a window into France and French culture for Somali refugees.

Conclusion

Studying the way refugees use social media may appear trivial when compared to the dire and increasingly worsening living conditions of refugees. Collectively, these two notions, of social media and refugees, serve as the prime example of the technological divide which separates social media users living as citizens of rich countries and those living as refugees, lacking equipment and technology training. This study strove to show that refugees know how to employ social media, contrary to prevailing clichés, because social media play a crucial role in their navigation of the migratory trajectories and also allow them to find a place where they feel accepted. International organizations and governments should facilitate access to ICT for refugees and asylum seekers. Nevertheless, in the words of Dominique Wolton, "having the same keyboard and the same information is not enough to create equality."[46] Or, in other words, we need to distance ourselves from the utopian idea that would have us believe that easier access to ICT could improve the refugees' living conditions.

Notes

1. Francis Jauréguiberry and Serge Proulx, *Usages et enjeux des technologies de communication* (Paris: Erès, 2011).
2. Asu Aksoy and Kevin Robins, "Banal Transnationalism: The Difference That Television Makes," in *The Media of Diaspora,* ed. K. H. Karim (London: Routledge, 2003); Myria Georgiou, *Diaspora, Identity and the Media: Diasporic Transnationalism and Mediated Spacialities* (Cresskill, NJ,: Hampton Press, 2006); A. Adams Parham, "Diaspora, Community and Communication: Internet Use in Transnational Haiti," *Global Networks* 4 (2004): 199–217; Burrell Jenna and Ken Anderson, "'I Have Great Desires to Look beyond My World': Trajectories of Information and Communication Technology Use among Ghanaians Living Abroad," *New Media & Society* 10, no. 2 (2008): 203–224; Sherry Yu and Daniel Ahadi, "Promoting Civic Engagement through Ethic Media," *Journal of Media and Communication* 2, no. 2 (2010): 54–71.
3. Linda Leung, "Taking Refuge in Technology: Communication Practices in Refugee Camps and Immigration Detention" (Research Paper No. 202, Policy Development and Evaluation Service, UNHCR, 2011).
4. Armand Mattelart, "Une éternelle promesse: les paradis de la communication," *Le Monde diplomatique,* November 1995.
5. D. Soyini Madison, *Critical Ethnography: Method, Ethics, and Performance* (California: Sage Publications, 2005).
6. Ibid.

7. Jim Thomas, *Doing Critical Ethnography* (California: Sage Publications, 1993).

8. George E. Marcus, "Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24 (1995): 95–117.

9. Marc-Anthony Falzon, "Introduction," in *Multi-sited Ethnography: Theory, Praxis and Locality in Contemporary Research,* ed. M.-A. Falzon (Cambridge: Ashgate Publishing, 2009).

10. Cindy Horst,. "Expanding Sites: The Question of Depth Explored," in *Multi-sited Ethnography: Theory, Praxis and Locality in Contemporary Research,* ed. M.-A. Falzon (Ashgate Publishing, 2009), 119–135; Ulf Hannerz, "Being there... and there... and there!: Reflections on Multi-Site Ethnography," *Ethnography* 4 (2003): 201–216.

11. Hannerz, "Being there... and there... and there!"

12. Marcus, *Ethnography in/of the World System,* 101.

13. Ibid.

14. "Rapport d'activité," OFPRA (Office français de protection des réfugiés et des apatrides), http://www.ofpra.gouv.fr/index.html?dtd_id=10&xmld_id=2679 .

15. P. Biernacki and D. Waldorf, "Snowball Sampling: Problems and Techniques of Chain Referral Sampling," *Sociological Methods and Research* 10, no. 2 (1981): 141–163.

16. Roland Marchal, "La militarisation de l'humanitaire: l'exemple somalien," *Cultures & Conflits* 11 (1993): 77–92; Roland Marchal, "Mogadishu dans la guerre civile: rêves d'Etat" (Paris: Les Etudes du CERI, no. 69, 2000), 1–36; Didier Morin, "Reconstruire la Somalie," *Politique Africaine* 23 (1986): 117–131; Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, "Des diasporas africaines en construction: le cas du Nigeria," *Anthropologie et Sociétés* 30, no. 3 (2006): 183–199; Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, "Villes en guerre en Somalie," *Les dossiers du CEPED,* no. 59 (2000); Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, "Interprétations d'un conflit: Le cas de la Somalie," Travaux et Documents du Centre d'Études d'Afrique Noire, no. 70 (2001).

17. T. K. Bauer, M. Lofstrom, and K. F. Zimmermann, "Immigration Policy, Assimilation of Immigrants and Natives' Sentiments towards Immigrants: Evidence from 12 OECD-Countries" (Working Paper No. 33, Center for Comparative Immigration Studies, University of California-San Diego, La Jolla, California, 2001).

18. It is difficult to determine the exact number of Somalis who are currently living in France or in Europe due to the difficulties related to obtaining firm numbers of foreigners with irregular immigration status, the lack of a harmonized national census system, and especially the phenomenon of secondary and tertiary migration of Somalis.

19. Étude de l'Observatoire de l'intégration des refugiés statutaires, décembre 2008, Panorama des initiatives sur l'accès au logement des refugiés dans 15 pays européens, rédigé par Christophe Andreo, Samantha Dallman, Antoine Janbon et Isabelle Pelletier, http://www.cear.es/files/Estudio.pdf.

20. Fabienne Le Houérou, *Passagers d'un monde à l'autre, migrants forcés éthiopiens et érythréens* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2004), 103 (my translation).

21. Marja Tiilikainen, "Somali Women and Daily Islam in the Diaspora," *Social Compass* 50, no. 1 (2003): 59–69.

22. Created after the 1990 Dublin Convention, Eurodac is a European digital database that stores fingerprints and aims at preventing asylum seekers from submitting several applications at the same time. The database also ensures that applicants must apply in the member state which has allowed them to enter Europe. This measure has the objective of dissuading asylum applicants from "shopping" for the most generous country.

23. Philippe Lombardo, Éric Seguin, and Magda Tomasini, "Les niveaux de vie en 2009," division Revenus et patrimoine des ménages, INSEE (Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques), 2009, http://www.insee.fr/fr/themes/document.asp?ref_id=ip1365.

24. Luc Legoux, "Changements et permanences dans la protection des réfugiés," *Revue européenne des migrations internationales* 20, no. 2 (2004), 9, my translation; accessed June 2012, http://remi.revues.org/961.

25. "Somali" refers both to the citizenship of the people of Somalia and to a specific ethnic group (Pérouse de Montclos, "Des diasporas africaines en construction"). Somalis are Cushitic nomads spread over four countries: they form the dominant ethnic group within Somalia (between six and seven million people); they also represent two-thirds of the Djibouti population (500,000 people) and constitute important minorities in Ethiopia (more than a million individuals in the Haud and Ogaden regions) and in Kenya [300,000 people in the northeast region; François Piguet, "Des nomades entre les villes et le sable" (Paris: Karthala, 1998)]. In other words, Somali ethnicity is not coterminous with borders of Somalia. However, this study concerns the Somali citizens from Somalia.

26. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), "Somalia's Missing Million: The Somali Diaspora and Its Role in Development" (Nairobi: UNDP, 2009).

27. Le Houérou, *Passagers d'un monde à l'autre, migrants forcés éthiopiens et érythréens.*

28. Anafé-Gisti (L'association nationale d'assistance aux frontières pour les étrangers et le groupe d'information et de soutien des immigrés), Visas de transit anti-tchétchènes: annulés par le Conseil d'État, rétablis cinq jours plus tard par décision ministérielle, 2008, http://www.gisti.org/spip.php?article1183.

29. "Somali staag" literally means in the Somali language "the place where the Somalis stand."

30. Le Houérou, *Passagers d'un monde à l'autre, migrants forcés éthiopiens et érythréens.*

31. B. W. Andrzejewski, "The Literary Culture of the Somali People," *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 23, no. 1 (2011): 9–17.

51

32. Ruth Finnegan and Martin Orwin, "Introduction," *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 23, no. 1 (2011): 1–3.

33. Often, Somalis will plan their escape and travel in groups, either with friends from Somalia or with new-found friends whom they meet while on their journey.

34. Marie-Claire S.F.G. Foblets, "Europe and Its Aliens after Maastricht: The Painful Move to Substantive Harmonization of Member-States' Policies Towards Third-Country Nationals," *American Journal of Comparative Law* 42, no. 4 (1994): 783–805.

35. J. P. Ramírez, " 'Aunque sea tan lejos nos vemos todos los días': Migración transnacional y uso de nuevas tecnologías de communicacón," in *Los usos de internet: Comunicación y sociedad,* ed. C. Albornoz et al. (Quito and Ottawa: Flacso-CRDI, 2007), 7–64; cited in T. Mattelart, "Les diasporas à l'heure des technologies de l'information et de la communication: petit état des saviors," *tic&société,* online 3, no. 1–2 (2009), DOI : 10.4000/ticetsociete.600.

36. The participants who got married thanks to Facebook shied away from expressing themselves on the subject. We learned about it from other respondents who talked about how some of their friends met their spouses.

37. Houssein Charmarkeh, "Médias ethniques et pratiques médiatiques des Somaliens au Canada," *Les enjeux de l'information et de la communication* 2012 (2012): 44–59.

38. Stephanie R. Bjork, "Clan Identities in Practice: The Somali Diaspora in Finland," in *Somalia: Diaspora and State Reconstitution in the Horn of Africa,* ed. A. Osman Farah, Mammo Muchie, and Joakim Gundel (London: Adonis & Abbey Publishers, 2007).

39. BBC News Africa, "Somalia: Far from a failed state?" 20 February 2012, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-17080664.

40. Benjamin Powell, Ryan Ford, and Alex Nowrasteh, "Somalia after State Collapse: Chaos or Improvement? *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization* 67 (2008): 657–670.

41. Joseph Winter, "Telecoms Thriving in Lawless Somalia," BBC News, 19 November 2004, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/4020259.stm.

42. During our group interviews, we were able to observe that some participants were using their laptops at the same time as they were responding to our questions. It was explained to us that a computer connected to the Internet was used in turns and that regardless of the circumstances no connected time was to be wasted.

43. Robert E. Park, *The Immigrant Press and Its Control* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1970); S. H. Chaffee, C. I. Naas, and S. M. Yang, "The Bridging Role of Television in Immigrant Political Socialization," *Human Communication Research* 17, no. 2 (1990): 266–88.

44. Young Yun Kim, *Communication and Cross-Cultural Adaptation: An Integrative Theory* (Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters Ltd., 1988).

45. Amra Curovac Ridjanovic, "Le rôle des médias dans l'adaptation des réfugiés dans leur pays d'accueil. Le cas des réfugiés bosniaques dans la Ville de Québec," Recherches Qualitatives, Hors Série, 4 (2007): 69–91.

46. Dominique Wolton, "Le même clavier et les mêmes informations ne suffissent pas à créer une égalité" (2003): 32; my translation.

Houssein Charmarkeh is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Communication at the Université Sorbonne Nouvelle, Paris 3. His current research examines the usage of social media by refugees in North America and Europe. He has applied critical and multi-sited ethnography to the study of migration patterns and usage of ICT. He is a lecturer in the Department of Communication at the University of Ottawa. His current research includes a multi-year, multidisciplinary project which was awarded a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) grant to explore the role of digital technologies and media in the integration and adaptation of immigrants to Ottawa (Ottawa Multicultural Media Initiative, http://artsites.uottawa.ca/ommi/).

Impact of Remittances on Refugees' Lives in Canada: Views of Sudanese and Vietnamese Leaders and Settlement Counsellors

Phyllis J. Johnson and Kathrin Stoll

Abstract

Focus groups were conducted with Sudanese and Vietnamese refugee leaders and settlement counsellors (twenty seven participants) to identify their views about the effect of sending remittances on refugees in these two communities, and their suggestions about optimizing the situation. Leaders and counsellors noted that refugees feel pride at helping out and guilt at not being able to send sufficient money. They postponed education and skills upgrades, and worked several jobs to support family here and abroad. Newcomers were advised to focus first on settling in and creating realistic expectations about their resources before sending remittances. Changes in family reunification policy were suggested.

Résumé

Des groupes de discussions ont été organisés avec les représentants des réfugiés vietnamiens et soudanais et des conseillers en établissement (vingt-sept participants) afin de connaître leur point de vue sur l'impact qu'avait sur les réfugiés leurs envois de fonds dans leurs pays d'origine, et leurs suggestions pour améliorer leur situation. Les représentants et les conseillers ont noté que les réfugiés étaient fiers de pouvoir aider leur famille financièrement ou se sentait coupable de ne pouvoir le faire. En effet, ils remettent à plus tard leur éducation et la mise à niveau de leurs compétences et prennent plusieurs emplois pour pouvoir soutenir leur famille ici et à l'étranger. On a recommandé que les nouveaux arrivants se concentrent d'abord sur leur installation et sur des objectifs financiers réalistes avant d'envoyer des fonds à leur famille. On a également suggéré des changements à la politique de réunification des familles.

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to identify Vietnamese and Sudanese leaders' and settlement counsellors' views about how sending remittances to relatives living in other countries affects the lives of refugees resettled in Vancouver, Canada. Participants were also asked for their views about the effect of family reunification policies on remittance sending, and their suggestions for educational or policy initiatives to optimize the situation.

In the extensive literature on migrants and immigrants sending remittances, the focus has been on the impact of remittances on the recipients or the recipients' country.[1] Studies concerning the impact on remittance senders have looked at one refugee group each.[2] This study is unusual in examining two refugee groups living in Vancouver, one of which has been settled in Canada for over thirty years (the Vietnamese) and one that has arrived in the past ten years (the Sudanese). After Toronto and Montreal, Vancouver has the largest number of immigrants in the country.[3]

Studies of Vietnamese refugees' economic and social adaptation have usually highlighted the early days of their resettlement, which peaked in Canada between 1979 and 1981.[4] Although remittances are mentioned in some of these publications, the consequences of sending remittances to Vietnamese senders are not known.[5]

The current study builds on previous research by the first author about the adaptation of Vietnamese and Sudanese refugees. Including both groups provides an opportunity to assess the effect of remittances on documented refugees from different parts of the world who have different lengths of time in Canada, but who have experienced resettlement under some similar circumstances (e.g., Canada's refugee resettlement program, no prior ethnic community available when they arrived, and both resettling in Vancouver, Canada).

A second novel aspect of this study is that it sought the views of leaders of the refugees' ethnic communities and of settlement counsellors. Leaders have knowledge about their community that goes beyond their own experiences. Moreover, they have been involved in organizing community activities and in serving as a liaison with the agencies assisting in settlement and integration. Settlement counsellors have considerable experience and training in providing settlement assistance to newcomers to Canada. Knowing the counsellors' views of the situation and how these compare to the leaders' views provides an assessment of whether there is congruence in understanding the potential impact of remittances on refugee settlement and integration. Such congruence is important because counsellors and leaders are potentially in a position to effect educational changes and program initiatives related to refugee resettlement.

A third aspect of this study is the inclusion of questions concerning the participants' views about the effect of family reunification policies on sending remittances. The rules governing refugees' sponsorship of relatives as potential immigrants can ameliorate or exacerbate financial and other problems of resettlement and remittance, and refugee leaders and counsellors have relevant views concerning possible changes in those rules.

Literature Review

This section provides a review of the situation of Vietnamese and Sudanese in Canada: information about Canada's Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program under which they were settled; the size of the communities; what is known about their remittance patterns; and a description of Canadian family class sponsorship, which is highlighted because of the decision refugees face about saving to sponsor family or continuing to send remittances to family members left behind.

Canada's Refugee Resettlement Program and Number of Vietnamese and Sudanese Resettled

The Canadian Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program includes both private and government sponsors. Private sponsors are church or community groups or groups of five or more individuals who agree to assist the refugees financially for up to a year. Funds from the government through the Resettlement Assistance Program provide similar financial assistance for the government-sponsored refugees. Both types of sponsorship provide assistance with locating housing, obtaining employment, upgrading occupational training and English skills, and learning about life in Canada. The Vietnamese were the first group resettled under this system.[6] Vietnamese refugee arrivals from 1979 through the 1990s and subsequent sponsorship of family members created a 2006 census count of 22,950 Vietnamese in Vancouver; all but 1,295 arrived prior to 1991.[7]

The Sudanese could potentially be settled under either type of sponsorship; however, the majority was government sponsored. The private sponsorship program is no longer designated for an unnamed refugee, but is for named refugees who have been identified by relatives and by refugees already settled in Canada.[8] Church and community groups were the main private sponsors. The 2006 census count was 765 Sudanese refuges, mainly Christian from Southern Sudan, in Vancouver; 60 percent arrived between 2001 and 2006, with the remainder between 1991 and 2000.[9]

Vietnamese as Remitters

During their initial resettlement, meeting the obligation of supporting family in Vietnam or refugee camps was difficult for refugees with limited wages or sporadic employment.[10] Many showed considerable ingenuity in sending food, clothing, medical items, and money to relatives in Vietnam during their early resettlement.[11] Reasons for not sending money included being too poor, having lost contact with relatives, or parents being deceased.[12]

As North American trade relations with Vietnam evolved in the mid-1990s, the Vietnamese were able to return for visits, to work with Vietnamese businesses manufacturing consumer goods for export, and to serve as consultants in development projects.[13] Such visits were also opportunities to provide remittances. One other pattern of remittances is that Vietnamese men go to Vietnam to choose a marital partner, and then send money to support her until sponsorship is completed.[14]

A World Bank study of remittance channels between Canada and Vietnam found that remittances are now primarily for special holidays, weddings, or funerals, rather than sent on a routine basis, and some are for investing in family-run businesses. The study noted that nothing is known about the consequences of such remittance behaviours for either the sender or the recipient.[15]

Sudanese as Remitters

Positive and negative effects of sending remittances to Sudan were identified by Akuei.[16] Refugees were often pressured to remit money, and were overwhelmed by the expectations to send money for emergencies and ongoing living expenses. They felt anxious and guilty when they could not juggle their own expenses and those of family abroad who were in more dire financial straits than themselves. They also felt pride at sending remittances that helped maintain kinship ties. Not fulfilling their responsibility to family created distress for Sudanese in Ontario.[17] In their early resettlement, Sudanese men experienced high levels of emotional and financial strain from remitting an average of $148 per month.[18]

Lim[19] noted that Sudanese refugees in the US gave up educational opportunities to work more hours to support family elsewhere. Others noted that financial difficulties[20] and financial role strain[21] had an impact on their adjustment in their new country.

Findings from two Canadian studies on remittances provide context for Vietnamese and Southern Sudanese remittance patterns. In the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada, 21 percent of new immigrants sent money in the first two years; 29 percent at four years. Refugee and Family Class (sponsoring family) were more likely to send money than the Economic Class (skilled workers, entrepreneurs) immigrants (28 percent, 27 percent, and 23 percent, respectively). As a percentage of a remitter's family income, the rates were relatively low, 3 percent at two years and four years after arrival. Refugees experienced more of an impact on income because of their lower incomes.[22] A Vancouver survey of immigrants' transnational activities found that 24 percent of refugees sent money to family in their home country.[23]

Remittances or Family Sponsorship: A Tradeoff?

Vietnamese and Sudanese families are extended ones, which may translate into extensive financial responsibilities for remittances or for eventually sponsoring relatives to Canada. In addition, refugees whose kinship ties may have been fragmented, with close family escaping to different countries, or whose close family members were killed, may establish closer ties with remaining relatives, even distant ones. How these family relationships are defined by immigration policy is critical in the refugees' ability to sponsor and build family support networks in their new country. If sponsorship is not possible, continuing to support these extended family relationships financially through remittances may be the refugee's only recourse. The competing demands on refugees' income include saving to qualify for sponsoring family while continuing to send remittances and supporting themselves in the new country.

Canada's immigration legislation on family sponsorship allows citizens and permanent residents who are over the age of eighteen to sponsor the following family members: (i) spouse, common-law partner, or conjugal partner; (ii) parents and grandparents; (iii) dependent children; (iv) brothers, sisters, nieces, nephews, or grandchildren under age eighteen and not married or common-law. If the refugee does not have a member in the first category, then he or she may sponsor someone from the next category, and so on.[24] Proof of financial ability to sponsor is required. Sponsors must provide for basic requirements for a minimum of three years for a spouse or ten years for other relatives.[25]

Longitudinal data indicate that fewer than 10 percent of Vietnamese in Vancouver were able to qualify to sponsor family after four years in Canada; however, after ten years, 29 percent had sponsored, with over half of them sponsoring two or more family members.[26]

Method

Participants were recognized leaders who were current or past officers in their respective community associations or leaders serving as liaisons with settlement agencies. A published listing of Vietnamese associations and agencies serving Vietnamese was the source used to identify and recruit Vietnamese participants. The Southern Sudanese Association was the source of male leaders; female leaders were recruited from those women who had served as liaisons with the settlement agencies. Settlement counsellors who had worked with African refugees, in particular those from Southern Sudan, were recruited from the major settlement agencies.

A consultant who had worked with immigrants was hired to organize and conduct the focus groups, with the assistance of the second author, who was similarly trained. The questions covered three areas: (1) remittance practices used by members of the community, (2) the effect of sending remittances on individuals and families, and (3) the effect of family reunification policy on remittance sending, and potential educational or policy initiatives to optimize the situation.

Focus groups were chosen to stimulate discussion that might not have been possible with individual interviews. There were seven focus groups: two for Vietnamese (one with two women; one with three women and two men), two for Sudanese women (one with two and one with five women), one for Sudanese men (five men), and two (four people each) of settlement counsellors. To facilitate participation, settlement counsellors suggested separate focus groups for Sudanese, but not Vietnamese, men and women.

Vietnamese female leaders were more interested in participating than male leaders; Sudanese men and women were equally interested. A male Vietnamese leader who was also a settlement counsellor but not a participant in the study read through a summary report of the findings to provide an additional assessment of the Vietnamese remittance situation. He made editorial but not substantive changes to the report.

Focus groups were in English, took place after work or on weekends, and were held in a local community meeting room. Participants received a $25 honorarium. The sessions lasted 1.5 to 2.5 hours, with more time spent by the Sudanese than the Vietnamese participants. The sessions were audio recorded and transcribed by a professional transcriptionist.

Open coding, followed by categorizing, was done for each set of questions and participant group; comparisons of themes across groups were then completed.[27] Comparisons were between Vietnamese and Sudanese in their early years of resettlement, male and female leaders within each refugee group, and leaders' and settlement counsellors' views.

Findings

Participants' Views about the Sender's Perspective on Remittance Sending

The leaders and settlement counsellors discussed remittance practices, noting potential effects on the sender and how refugees coped with meeting the needs of family members in Canada and overseas. The leaders in both communities said that sending remittances was a very common practice and members of their communities soon learned that it was too expensive to send goods so they focused on sending money. The leaders also noted that remittances are viewed as an obligation, that meeting the obligation has consequences for the remitters, and that refugees develop strategies for coping with the obligation.

Remittances are an obligation

Remittances are a necessity rather than a choice, at least initially. "Obligation" has multiple meanings, including an urgent need, reciprocation for past help received, and cultural views regarding familial support.

The Sudanese leaders noted that family overseas have a desperate need for remittances for their survival. As stated by one female leader, "We have to send money because where we come from people are suffering so they need help from us… ." Money sent often addresses the most urgent situation, not the support of a specific close family member if the need is greater for a distant relative or friend overseas.

The male Sudanese leaders gave examples of the pressure to meet financial obligations. "[T]hey kind of send a message to us—we need your help financially—you have to contribute—you find that to be an obligation." If they do not answer a phone request for remittances, the overseas relatives say on the voice mail, "We know you are there—you don't want to answer."

As conditions improve for the family remaining in Vietnam, the meaning of obligation has less urgency and reflects primarily traditional cultural expectations. The Vietnamese leaders noted that in contrast to the early days of their resettlement, sending remittances was no longer urgent because relatives in Vietnam are not poor and goods are available for purchase more cheaply there than they are in Canada. However, there are circumstances based on traditional customs and filial piety when remittances would be sent, and obligation, regardless of need, would be the basis for the remittances. A Vietnamese leader said, "You are obliged to send, especially during the [lunar] New Year. If your parents are alive you will [send] no matter how rich they are."

While the urgency of the remittance obligation may decrease with time, most of the settlement counsellors did not think that the practice would ever stop. Reasons for continuation were that there may not be enough work in the home country, wars create an urgent need for support of family, and sponsorship of family has not been completed, especially for the more recently arrived refugees. Another ongoing reason is the desire to locate a spouse from one's own culture, which requires remittances to a wife until sponsorship is completed.

Impact on the sender of remittances

The leaders and settlement counsellors identified effects on the remitters of carrying out the obligation of remittance sending. These effects included reduced money for living expenses in Canada; working multiple, low-wage jobs; postponement of their own skill or language upgrades in order to send money; conflicts in family relations; and guilt or pride, depending upon whether the obligations were met.

According to the Vietnamese leaders, sending remittances affected families "quite a bit" in the early days of their resettlement. In particular, they did not have a break from work, or worked several jobs, which meant that there was no time for school, for improving English, or getting their job qualifications recognized. In essence, a chance for a well-paying job was less likely because of the urgent need to get employment to support themselves and their families elsewhere. Similar negative effects were identified by male but not female Sudanese leaders. The male leaders also noted that needs of family in Canada were not being met and funds were not being saved for future education of the children. Thus, development, or recognition, of their skills

and education was postponed or not done as the money was needed for remittances.

For both groups of refugees, accumulation of financial resources was not possible in the early days of their resettlement; this was due to sending remittances and to having a low income, both during their time as a sponsored refugee and as an entry level employee in low-wage work. In speaking about Sudanese refugees, a settlement counsellor gave this example of the effects of sending remittances on their inability to increase their financial resources:

> They send money regularly and this puts financial pressure on them, such as can't afford to buy a house … and then you don't have any help to just cover the hole because you keep sending—and you have also other commitment here—you have to live—you have to eat—you have to feed your kids or your loved one and your commitment to your community and the other end you're sending the money again in the other country so—you will be poor every day.

An example of long-term effects of sending remittances was given by a Vietnamese leader who described the impact on an eldest son who continued to carry out the traditional obligation to support his extended family here and overseas. He earned a good wage but had had financial difficulties because of his continuing remittance obligations. In comparison to others who arrived in Canada at the same time, he had neither become a homeowner nor did he have a newer model car.

Meeting the remittance obligation was exacerbated by the disconnection between the perceptions of those overseas about the resettled refugees' finances and the reality of the refugees' finances. The perception that those settled in Western countries had money overshadowed the refugees' explanations of any difficulties they might have in sending money. We labelled this a "mirage of financial resources." In talking about family in Sudan and neighbouring countries, a female Sudanese leader said,

> They have [the] idea that people who come here they have money. They don't even know what's going on for you—maybe your child needs a dental treatment or—that costs a lot of money so—do they ever ask you how you're doing here and how things are going. Well they ask but it doesn't really make it any different like if you even try to explain that we are struggling here too—that doesn't really count in their minds.

A settlement counsellor gave an example of why some refugees send more remittances than they can afford, reinforcing this "mirage of resources." A mother of six children sent $500 and then did not have enough to live on for the rest of the month. Her solution was to go to a settlement counsellor to borrow money. The client said, "At least here I can go back to immigration or whatever and I can borrow more but back home there's nowhere they can get the money."

Refugees' memories of what life was like in the home country, and how they themselves had reacted to family members not sending them sufficient remittances, reinforced feelings of guilt at not meeting those expectations. The male Sudanese leaders provided examples of the quandary refugees faced when they could not meet the expectations and did not want to let their relatives down: "We don't want to kill their hopes—we are the hope—so if this person is sick and relying on you and if you say completely no—his hope is going to die."

Meeting the obligation, that is, sending money to family, fostered additional family members seeking some financial help, as described by a settlement counsellor:

> [Y]ou start sending money just to your mom—or to your sister—she start dressing up—somehow—people start seeing her getting better—and other relatives will start emailing you—phoning you—writing you letter—so you end up having a kind of customership you know in the family.

Female Sudanese leaders highlighted problems remittance sending created in family relationships, including divorce. The Sudanese male leaders talked about how arguments and misunderstanding between the spouses might occur in deciding which relatives would be sent remittances. The Vietnamese leaders noted that over time sending remittances has created conflicts between spouses and between parents and children. Conflicts occurred in deciding which side of the family received the remittances, whether the person making the money had control over who would receive the remittances, and whether the money was for family in Canada or in Vietnam. In some instances, a spouse sent money to his or her family secretly, which was upsetting to the other spouse, who felt that the money should be sent to both sides of the family.

Recognizing that family conflicts might have arisen about equity in sending money, the Sudanese and Vietnamese leaders also noted that sending remittances was one way to keep the family connected. In the words of a male Sudanese leader,

> We try to protect our family tree—so like you send to your mother and then you send to your father or you just send to somebody from your mother's side or somebody from your father's side and also you send to someone from your wife's side—you know both sides too—so you know that keeps all this family coming together.

Although the leaders emphasized that meeting the obligation was important, they also expressed the concerns that refugees have about recipients becoming dependent on continued financial support. The Vietnamese leaders gave several examples that showed how upset the refugees, who had worked hard to send the money, felt when they visited relatives in Vietnam and saw how the recipients lived and used the money they had received. The settlement counsellors noted that the money received was not sufficient to set up a business, but was enough to live on. Because the people knew the money was coming regularly, they did not get a job, but remained dependent on the remittances.

Dependency on remittances was not an issue for the Sudanese, as they understood the need for remittances for immediate survival and they were not yet at a point of discussing longer-term dependency. Settlement counsellors cautioned that war zones are different and that people residing in those areas cannot really seek a job but remain dependent on support from elsewhere; thus, reinforcing remittances are an urgent need.

The Sudanese male leaders were concerned that the focus on working hard to meet the remittance obligation might have a negative impact on the development of the Southern Sudanese community. Because community members were working many hours, they had less time to organize and attend cultural events. Such events were viewed as important in developing a sense of community to teach their children about their heritage and to contribute to the needs of Sudanese here and overseas. Similar concerns were not expressed by the Vietnamese leaders.

All of the focus groups noted that the refugees felt proud that they could help out by meeting their remittance obligations, that they slept well knowing they had taken care of their family members, and that they were pleased that their remittances had had a positive impact on the recipients. Sudanese leaders said the remittances delivered the recipients from debt, provided them with basic living expenses which were necessary given that their wages had not been paid for several months, and paid for their educational fees. Vietnamese leaders identified a number of positive effects on the recipients because of the outside financial help: chances to renovate or buy houses, to run a business, to get an education, to get medical care, and to raise their children. They noted that recipients are proud of how they have done in comparison to others in Vietnam, and know that their success was not possible without the remittances. Knowing that their remittances had helped the recipients in so many ways reinforced the senders' feeling good about meeting the obligation.

Coping with the remittance obligation
The Sudanese, but not the Vietnamese, leaders provided a number of examples of how members of their communities dealt with the obligation to send remittances. The strategies were primarily financial, but also included a reliance on cultural strengths.

The main financial strategy was getting a job with adequate wages to support relatives overseas. The leaders noted that refugees' current minimum wage work was not sufficient to meet remittance obligations and their own living expenses. As well, their savings accounts were bare and they no longer had a good credit rating. The remaining source of finances for an emergency was their friends. Thus the Sudanese had "a credit union among us" that did not have set payback periods, but commitment to repay was honoured. The female leaders noted the strategy of women pooling their finances and rotating which person's family would receive the remittance that month. This system provided more money than individual contributions, but at less frequent intervals.

Spirituality was evident as a coping mechanism to handle the circumstances they and their relatives overseas were facing. A male leader said, "We believe in God … He will change the [plan] one day and that keeps us moving you know." A female leader said, "We are not here without purpose—and I know in my heart that there's to be a time that everything will be okay—-and especially for those [in] the places where we came."

Another male leader identified the cultural value of sharing as a basis for dealing with the remittance obligation:

[W]ell it's part of our nation because sharing is one of the privilege[s] that we believe in—whether you have plenty or you are in need—you have to share with your friend or family or whatever—because every—every human you know need another human—if we share the least we have I think we feel that we have reached for perfection—yeah—so it's not a matter of how much we get but how little we get and how we share [it].

Additional cultural strengths of humour and resilience were highlighted by other male leaders: "[T]hen there is our ties together as people—we talk to each other—we joke about everything—about the situation" and "Sudanese are very resistant to difficult situations—maybe based on history."

Remittances and Family Sponsorship: Ways to Optimize the Situation
Participants discussed ways to optimize the situation of handling the remittance obligation. They also identified issues with current family sponsorship policy and suggested

initiatives to address those issues to help refugees achieve family sponsorship.

Advice about meeting remittance obligations

The leaders' practical advice emphasized creating realistic expectations for refugees and their overseas relatives about the amount of remittances possible, focusing on settling in first before sending remittances and on budgeting for remittances.

The Vietnamese leaders suggested that newly arrived refugees should be sincere about their situation, e.g., that they are not doing well and cannot afford to send money or at least not at the level that relatives overseas might expect. This advice came from what they had observed in their early years in Canada: some Vietnamese felt they needed to say, "I am doing well here. I can buy a lot of things and things are wonderful here," even though they were struggling to send money while supporting family in Canada. The Sudanese male leaders in highlighting the juggling act refugees have between their dreams for life in Canada and their desire to support people back home also suggested presenting a realistic picture of the situation for newcomers: "The advice that I would give them—they have to drop their highest expectations—they have to live reality and they have to adjust to the reality of where they are now."

Both Sudanese and Vietnamese leaders said that newcomers should focus on getting settled first, rather than getting a job right away to send money. Settling in meant that they would have time to use wisely Canada's refugee resettlement program's provisions for education, language, and other skill upgrades. With the additional training and knowledge gained, they would be able to get a job that would support their family better in Canada and overseas.

Vietnamese leaders' advice to newcomers was to budget their money carefully in order to meet their needs and to send remittances. This is important because the newcomers may not have a good grasp of the costs of living in the new country, or how far the settlement assistance or entry-level earnings will go to support family here and abroad. As well, the Sudanese female leaders cautioned newcomers not to assume that the initial large amount of money received upon arrival for settlement purposes (e.g., rental deposits, purchasing household and personal items, etc.) would continue to be paid out on a monthly basis. A male Sudanese leader gave specific advice on how to send remittances so that the monthly amount was not too great and allowed for the refugees meeting their own needs, as well as emergencies for relatives overseas. He said:

> Don't send at the same time—if you send to your uncle—at the same time don't send to your brother—leave another month

for yourself here ... don't send money end of the month ... because you'll find yourself not paying your rent—so you're going to be kicked out of the house.

Family sponsorship issues

In discussing current family reunification policy, the leaders noted difficulties in carrying out family sponsorship, in sponsoring the relatives refugees wanted rather than the priority established in the policy, and in meeting the financial obligations to qualify for sponsorship.

Evident in the discussions were transnational issues, with difficulties arising from regulations in the home county as well as in the receiving country. For example, the leaders identified instances of family members applying to leave Vietnam and being denied because the Vietnamese government blocked their exit. From the Canadian perspective, the Vietnamese leaders told stories of refugees applying to sponsor family but not being eligible to sponsor that particular relative, and emphasized the long time (e.g., several years) it took to obtain authorization for the sponsored relative to come to Canada. The Sudanese leaders gave examples of extended family members who had applied to the Canadian commission to come to Canada but were rejected. At the time of this study, the Canadian government was not bringing in sponsored refugees from Southern Sudan, and most of the local residents were not earning enough to sponsor relatives. As a result, the leaders remembered only a few in their community who finally succeeded in family sponsorship after eight or nine years in Canada. Their recourse has been to turn to church groups, who have assisted in sponsoring their relatives. Their Sudanese Association has been given the authority to be a sponsoring organization. The first person they had tried to sponsor had been turned down by the Canadian embassy in Cairo and they were discouraged about trying to sponsor others.

A major concern expressed by all of the participants was that Canadian immigration policy on family sponsorship uses a narrow definition of family, when an extended family definition is more appropriate for their culture. The Sudanese leaders talked extensively about how family members reacted when they explained that they could not sponsor them. The relatives wanting to be sponsored thought that their Canadian-based relatives just did not want to sponsor them, not that they were not able to sponsor them, given the official priority for sponsorship. As a result, there was tension between family in Canada and Sudan and between specific family members within each country.

Regulations on sponsorship also made it difficult for refugees to take responsibility for relatives who would traditionally be under their care. For example, in Sudan, if a

man was widowed, his sister-in-law might raise the children. However, if the sister-in-law was in Canada and wanted to sponsor the children, they would be excluded from sponsorship because they have a father to provide for them. As a result, she could not fulfill her obligation to her extended family.

The Sudanese leaders said that the number of years refugees would be financially responsible for sponsored family members was not a major problem. However, they were concerned about members of the community meeting the financial requirement to qualify to sponsor, which made it easier to support elderly family abroad than to sponsor them. The male leaders said, "If we take care of them at home [with remittances]—why can't we take care of them once they are here with us." The Vietnamese did not provide information on this issue; sponsorship was no longer a current issue for them.

Suggested policy initiatives. The leaders and counsellors identified an expanded definition of family as their main policy initiative. The Sudanese leaders clarified this by saying Sudanese refugees wanted to sponsor relatives such as brothers and cousins, who could get employment; together, they could support their extended families overseas or have the financial ability to sponsor them.

The Vietnamese leaders thought that making it easier to visit Canada would create less tension for refugee newcomers. Two situations that had made getting visitors' visas difficult were: (1) relatives overstaying their visas, which then made getting a visitor's visa more difficult for subsequent legitimate visitors, and (2) relatives could not come on a visitor's visa while their sponsorship application was under consideration. Temporary work visas were also suggested. They could legally work in Canada for a specified time, provide for themselves, and also help ease the burden of sending money to relatives overseas.

The female Sudanese leaders wanted the Canadian government to know the pressures that sending money created on their lives in Canada, and that a large quantity of money was sent to support extended family elsewhere. Because having dependents in Canada brings income tax breaks, they thought support of dependents elsewhere should qualify for a tax break.

Discussion

The leaders and settlement counsellors presented their views about Sudanese and Vietnamese refugee remittance practices and the impact of sending remittances on the remitter. A comparison of the leaders' and counsellors' views about the experiences of a more established group of refugees (the Vietnamese) with those of a more recently arrived group (the Sudanese) allows us to examine changes in remittance patterns over time. While the need for remittances is great in the first few years of resettlement due to the political situation in the home country, this need should diminish as the home country becomes more stable politically and economically. Much of the discussion during the Vietnamese focus groups centred on past remittance practices, when the political situation in their home country was more unstable and relatives relied heavily on money sent from abroad. Over thirty years later, the Vietnamese are still sending money, not because there is a dire need, but because cultural norms prescribe that money is sent for holidays and filial responsibilities.

Sudanese refugees, who have a short history in Canada, provide evidence of the strain—emotional and financial—that refugees face when they are safe and have their basic daily living needs met, but have little left over to send to family to help them reach safety or to provide for their needs. The early years for both refugee groups show a constant balancing act between expectations, of the refugee and of family members back home, and the reality of limited financial resources. A situation of potential "lost opportunities" emerges if refugee newcomers opt for early low-wage employment in order to support family elsewhere rather than taking the advice of leaders to settle in and take advantage of language, education, or employment training in Canada's resettlement program. Findings from two recent qualitative studies with Sudanese refugees in the United States and Australia show the negative effect of financial obligations to family back home on educational advancement[28] and adjustment.[29]

The similarity of Vietnamese and Sudanese remittance patterns and views about sending remittances in the early years provides some evidence that the longer-term experiences of the Vietnamese may be reflective of the future situation of the Sudanese refugees. If so, the obligation to remit money, the desperate and urgent need for money, guilt at not meeting obligations, family conflicts about equity in sending money, and the financial struggle associated with the remittance obligation will be less evident, and remittances will be for special events rather than on a regular basis. This scenario is likely if the financial situation has improved for those in Southern Sudan, as well as in Canada, and the prolonged Sudanese conflict abates. However, if wars continue and family members are not sponsored to safety, the need for remittances will continue for years to come.

Unrealistic expectations about remittances on the part of both relatives and remitters are a concern. Relatives not only anticipate that the refugees are better off financially than they are, "a mirage of financial resources," they also do not believe any statements to the contrary. The refugees also have high expectations about their need to meet all of the

remittance obligations. Leaders advised newcomers to lower those expectations. Incoming refugees might benefit from a discussion during their orientation sessions about remittances, set within the context of settlement funds/entry level wages and cost of living in Canada. Such information could be made available on web sites through testimonials of the experiences of others, and/or through discussion groups with refugees who have had several years of experience in Canada.

One effect on senders that the leaders and counsellors identified that has not been highlighted in previous research with these groups is the family conflicts that occurred when remittances were sent too frequently at the expense of family needs in Canada, or were not sent equitably to both sides of the family. Thus, an act that kept family connected, which had a positive effect for the remitters, also created conflicts for them. Additional research is needed to identify the conditions under which remittances are viewed as keeping the family together or potentially pulling it apart.

Coping with the necessity as well as the obligation to send remittances was particularly salient for the Sudanese refugees, whose leaders provided insight on how refugees dealt with the potential stress. Sudanese cultural strengths, including a sense of sharing, spirituality, and humour were emphasized. These have been described as core Southern Sudanese values in the social science literature.[30] Settlement counsellors and leaders of other newly arrived refugee groups need to identify and build on specific cultural strengths in helping newcomers to deal with the necessary obligation of sending remittances.

Similar to the Sudanese male leaders, the female leaders described the obligation to remit money, the lack of financial resources to remit enough money, reliance on friends for financing remittances, and the positive effects of remitting, such as supporting sick and aging relatives and funding the education of children. They agreed with the men that the remittance obligation was stressful, as relatives back home were suffering, desperately relied on the remittances, and did not understand the financial struggles of resettled refugees. As well, both male and female leaders identified family conflicts about sending remittances.

Gender differences among the Sudanese seem to reflect traditional roles of men as providers and women as the managers of home and family. The male but not female leaders talked about working several jobs, not having time for courses to improve their English or job skills, having used up their savings and credit, and not having time to participate in community activities. Male leaders spoke more than female leaders about systemic inequities and inadequate refugee policies. It should be noted that life circumstances in Canada led to changes in traditional roles: for example,

the majority of female leaders were single parents who described the situation of women in the community in similar circumstances. As such, they were "providers" responsible for supporting family in Canada and elsewhere from their employment or social assistance income.

Family reunification policy and remittances are clearly intertwined, especially in the early years. Refugees seem to have difficulty in earning sufficient income to support family here and elsewhere while saving to sponsor family to Canada. Given that social support is helpful in the adjustment of newcomers,[31] identification of workable strategies for fostering family sponsorship are needed. While encouraging the group's refugee association to sponsor relatives is one option, and has occurred for the Sudanese, it is likely to be difficult for such associations to have sufficient financial capability on their own. Unless churches or non-profit organizations can assist the associations financially, it is unlikely that the refugee associations can amass the amount of money needed to meet the community's sponsorship needs.

Two existing policy provisions were not in existence during Vietnamese resettlement, and have not met the sponsorship needs of the Sudanese. One is the "named refugee" opportunity for private sponsorship groups, in which vulnerable refugees named by refugee relatives in Canada can be sponsored, and the "one year window of opportunity" for sponsoring non-accompanying family members without meeting the financial requirements.[32] The refugees may not know where their relative is, having been separated from them during their flight from conflict; they may not realize that they need to identify relatives within one year; and they may identify extended family, such as adult children or cousins, or relatives who for some other reason, do not qualify as non-accompanying family members. Settlement counsellors also alluded to the fact that these two policies are not well-known among refugee groups. They believed that the "one year window of opportunity" should be extended indefinitely for a refugee's spouse and dependent children. Additional effort to inform refugees and their leaders about the actual policies seems warranted, either through the orientations offered by settlement agencies or by programs offered by the refugee associations. Information needs to be provided more than once during the resettlement assistance period as this is one of numerous important issues covered during the initial resettlement.

Vietnamese leaders mentioned difficulties in relatives obtaining visitors' visas and not being able to visit while their sponsorship to Canada was being considered. Recent changes to Canadian immigration policy allow parents and grandparents to apply for expedited and extended visitors' visas, with which they can stay twenty-four months for each

visit. If permanent relocation to Canada is not the goal, such visas should be helpful for participating in important family events. Reducing the wait times for family sponsorship has been a continuing problem. With the advent of extended visitors' visas, application to sponsor parents and grandparents is closed for two years; the hope is that the backlog for other applicants will be reduced. [33] Whether sponsorship or extended visas for parents and grandparents are preferred by refugees is an area for future research. Factors affecting preferences may be the political and economic vulnerability of those family members.

One issue on which all of the leaders and counsellors agreed was that the definition of family in Canada's family sponsorship policy is not sufficiently inclusive for Sudanese and Vietnamese extended families. However, expanding the definition of family without changing the order of priority for sponsorship may not meet the need of refugees who want to sponsor relatives, such as a sibling who can get employment and help support the extended family abroad. As well, the "one year window of opportunity" for refugees' sponsorship of family uses the same definition of family.

Continued family separation rather than unification seems to be fostered because of the mismatch between refugees' and the government's definitions of family.[34] Rather than changing the definition of family or order of sponsorship, changes in Canadian immigration policy have focused on extended visas, possibly as an alternative to sponsoring parents and grandparents. Given that refugees' spouses and dependent children could be sponsored under the one year criterion, and without having to meet the financial requirement, refugees could save to sponsor another family member. Some policy consideration should be given to their wishes and knowledge about which relative might be the most helpful in supporting family. Tax recognition for remittance obligations is not likely to be included in taxation law, as national rather than transnational boundaries determine income tax deductions for dependents. Others have suggested that if a policy could be established between the countries to verify that dependent parents were being supported, Canada might grant a tax credit for such assistance.[35]

The leaders and settlement counsellors provided examples that were based on their own experiences with their respective refugee communities. Their views were very similar about remittances and family sponsorship issues, and are consistent with the limited available literature about the impact of remittances on refugees. Such demonstrated congruence in knowledge is useful for effecting orientation sessions about refugees' remittances and family sponsorship.

A limitation of our study is the small number of Vietnamese focus group participants. Fewer Vietnamese men and women participated in the study compared to Sudanese men and women, most likely because they did not regard remittances as an urgent problem in their community. In addition, it was difficult to assess the effect of sending remittances on women versus men due to the relatively small sample size.

This study has focused on two refugee groups settled in Vancouver approximately twenty years apart. Our findings can be placed in a broader perspective of remittance obligations for other financially stressed refugee and immigrant groups in Canada. For example, Kosovar refugees made sacrifices in their own consumption to have some money to send to family whose needs they viewed as more urgent than their own.[36] Guatemalan refugees were stressed by trying to meet financial obligations to their family, feeling pulled between survival for their family in Canada and financial help to extended family in Guatemala. Low incomes, high living costs in Canada, and high costs of making transnational connections (visits, phone calls, and remittances) resulted in the refugees becoming isolated from their extended family in Guatemala.[37] Caribbean immigrants have a strong commitment to financial support to family elsewhere. Such support continues because of close transnational ties of affection and obligation. Recipients also reinforce that such support is important and appreciated.[38] Simmons summarized the importance of remittances in the transnational cultural and family lives of immigrants and refugees.[39] The themes identified and discussed with the Vietnamese and Sudanese refugees in the current study appear to be relevant for other refugee and immigrant groups experiencing strong remittance obligations coupled with limited or strained financial circumstances.

Conclusion

For political refugees, reaching a safe country is the beginning of the journey to reduce their family's political vulnerability. Because the refugee is now safe, his or her situation, regardless of resettlement difficulties, always appears to be better than that of those left behind. Knowing that remittances are of considerable help reinforces that this is an important ongoing obligation. The feasibility of sponsoring family, given the legal financial requirements and definition of family, are continuing concerns for refugees, especially when family members remain in a politically unstable situation. There is room for improving existing immigration and sponsorship policies to reduce financial and psychological strain on refugees who are expected to remit money. Education about policy provisions available to facilitate visits and achieve sponsorship is necessary. As well, orientation sessions for refugees would benefit from including the advice of leaders and counsellors on how to

handle the remittance obligation while adjusting to life in the new country.

Notes

1. Ismail Ahmed, "Remittances and Their Economic Impact in Post-war Somaliland," *Disasters* 24 (2000): 380–389; Bimal Ghosh, *Migrants' Remittances and Development: Myths, Rhetoric and Realities* (Geneva: International Organization for Migration, 2006); Nicholas Glytsos, "Determinants and Effects of Migrant Remittances," in *International Migration: Trends, Policies and Economic Impact,* ed. S. Djajic (New York: Routledge, 2001), 253–272; Oded Stark and Robert Lucas, "Migration, Remittances, and the Family," *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 36 (1988): 465–481.

2. Stephanie Riak Akuei, *Remittances as Unforeseen Burdens: Considering Displacement Family and Resettlement Contexts in Refugee Livelihood and Well Being. Is There Anything States or Organizations Can Do?* accessed September 20, 2004, http://www.unhcr.ch/chi bin/texis/vtx/home/; Phyllis Johnson and Kathrin Stoll, "Remittance Patterns of Southern Sudanese Refugee Men: Enacting the Global Breadwinner Role," *Family Relations* 57 (2008): 431–443; Soh-Leong Lim, "'Loss of Connections is Death': Transnational Family Ties among Sudanese Refugee Families Resettling in the United States," *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 40 (2009): 1028–1040; Ann Lindley, "The Early-Morning Phone Call: Remittances from a Refugee Diaspora Perspective," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 35 (2009): 1315–1334; Dianna Shandy, "Global Transactions: Sudanese Refugees Sending Money Home," *Refuge* 23, no. 2 (2006): 28–36.

3. Statistics Canada*, Census Snapshot—Immigration in Canada: A Portrait of the Foreign-Born Population, 2006 Census,* accessed September 10, 2012, http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-008-x/2008001/article/10556-eng.htm#21

4. Louis-Jacques Dorais, Lise Pilon-Le, and Huy Nguyen, *Exile in a Cold Land: A Vietnamese Community in Canada* (New Haven, CT: Yale Southeast Asia Studies, 1987); Steven Gold, *Refugee Communities: A Comparative Field Study* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1992).

5. Raul Hernández-Coss, "The Canada-Vietnam Remittance Corridor: Lessons on Shifting from Informal to Formal Transfer Systems*"* (World Bank Working Paper No. 48, World Bank, Washington, DC, 2005).

6. Bob Orr, "Resettlement: A Durable Solution," *Canadian Issues,* March 2004, 22–24.

7. Statistics Canada, *Immigrant Status and Period of Immigration (8) and Place of Birth (261) for the Immigrants and Non-permanent Residents of Canada, Provinces, Territories, Census Metropolitan Areas and Census Agglomerations, 2006 Census—20% Sample Data,* accessed September 10, 2012, http://www5.statcan.gc.ca/bsolc/olc-cel/olc-cel?catno=97-557-X&chropg=1&lang=eng.

8. Orr, "Resettlement: A Durable Solution."

9. Statistics Canada, *Immigrant Status and Period of Immigration.*

10. Don Locke, *Increasing Multicultural Understanding* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1992).

11. Gold, *Refugee Communities.*

12. Dorais, Pilon-Le, and Nguyen, *Exile in a Cold Land.*

13. Rosalie Wieder, "Who Are the Vietnamese Americans?" in *Asian American Almanac: A Reference Work on Asians in the United States,* ed. S. Gall and I. Natividad (Detroit, MI: Gale Research, 1995), 165–174.

14. Hung Cam Thai, "Money and Masculinity among Low Wage Vietnamese Immigrants in Transnational Families," *International Journal of Sociology of the Family* 32 (2006): 247–271.

15. Hernández-Coss, *The Canada-Vietnam Remittance Corridor.*

16. Akuei, *Remittances as Unforeseen Burdens.*

17. Laura Simich, B.Khamisa Baya, Hayley Hamilton, and Gertrud Neuwirth, *The Study of Sudanese Settlement in Ontario: Final Report,* Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Settlement Directorate, Ontario (May 28, 2004), acessed September 18, 2012, http://atwork.settlement.org/downloads/atwork/Study_of_Sudanese_Settlement_in_Ontario.pdf.

18. Johnson and Stoll, "Remittance Patterns of Southern Sudanese Refugee Men."

19. Lim, "'Loss of Connections is Death.'"

20. Jane Shakespeare-Finch and Kylie Wickham, "Adaptation of Sudanese Refugees in an Australian Context: Investigating Helps and Hindrances," *International Migration* 48 (2010): 23–44.

21. Kathrin Stoll and Phyllis Johnson, "Determinants of the Psychosocial Adjustment of Southern Sudanese Men," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 29 (2007): 621–640.

22. René Houle and Grant Schellenberg, "Remittances by Recent Immigrants," *Perspectives,* July 2008, 5–16.

23. Daniel Hiebert and David Ley, "Characteristics of Immigrant Transnationalism in Vancouver," in *Transnational Identities and Practices in Canada,* ed, V. Satzewich and L. Wong (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2006), 71–90.

24. Andrew Telegdi, "Family Reunification: The Key to Successful Integration," *Canadian Issues: Immigration and Families,* Spring 2006, 94–96.

25. Citizenship and Immigration Canada, *Sponsoring your Family* accessed January 2009, http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/immigrate/sponsor/index.asp; Rell DeShaw, "The History of Family Reunification in Canada and Current Policy," *Canadian Issues: Immigration and Families,* Spring 2006, 9–14.

26. Phyllis Johnson, "Financial Responsibility for the Family: The Case of New Residents from Southeast Asia," *Journal of Family and Economic Issues* 24 (2003): 121–142.

27. John Knodel, "The Design and Analysis of Focus Group Studies: A Practice Approach," in *Successful Focus Groups: Advancing the State of the Art,* ed. D. L. Morgan (Newbury

Park, CA: Sage, 1993), 35–50; Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin, *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1990).

28. Lim, "'Loss of Connections is Death.'"

29. Shakespeare-Finch, "Adaptation of Sudanese Refugees."

30. So-Leong Lim, " Loss of Connections is Death"; Shakespeare-Finch and Wickham, "Adaptation of Sudanese Refugees"; Stoll and Johnson, "Determinants of the Psychosocial Adjustment of Southern Sudanese Men."

31. Laura Simich et al., *The Study of Sudanese Settlement*; Shakespeare-Finch and Wickham, "Adaptation of Sudanese Refugees."

32. Orr, "Resettlement: A Durable Solution."

33. Citizenship and Immigration Canada, *News Release—Government of Canada to Cut Backlog and Wait Times for Family Reunification—Phase I of Action Plan for Faster Family Reunification,* accessed July 1, 2012, http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/department/media/releases/2011/2011-11-04.asp.

34. Brooke Wilmsen, "Family Separation: The Policies, Procedures, and Consequences for Refugee Background Families," *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 30 (2011): 44–63. 35. Alan Simmons, Dwaine Plaza, and Victor Piché, *The Remittance Sending Practices of Haitians and Jamaicans in Canada* (CERLAC, York University, Toronto, 2005), accessed June 15, 2013, http://www.yorku.ca/cerlac/documents/remittances.pdf.

36. Kathy Sherrell and Jennifer Hyndman, "Global Minds, Local Bodies: Kosovar Transnational Connections beyond British Columbia" (Working Paper Series No. 04–10, Vancouver Centre of Excellence: Research on Immigration and Integration in the Metropolis, Vancouver, BC, 2004), accessed June 15, 2013, http://mbc.metropolis.net/assets/uploads/files/wp/2004/WP04-10.pdf.

37. Catherine Nolin, *Transnational Ruptures; Gender-Enforced Migration.* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006).

38. Alan Simmons, *Immigration and Canada: Global and Transnational Perspectives* (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press and Women's Press, 2010).

Phyllis Johnson (corresponding author; phyllis.johnson@ubc.ca) is in the Department of Sociology at the University of British Columbia. She is the author of the book Consumer Acculturation: Financial Issues of Immigrants and Refugees *(Springer, forthcoming, anticipated publication date 2014). She was the 2011 recipient of the Jan Trost award from the National Council on Family Relations' International Section in recognition of her significant research contributions to cross-cultural family scholarship.*

Kathrin Stoll has degrees in psychology and sociology, and recently completed an interdisciplinary PhD (midwifery/nursing/epidemiology) at the University of British Columbia. She has been active in academic and community based research for the past ten years with a focus on immigrant and refugee and maternity care issues. She is a postdoctoral fellow at the University of British Columbia and a part-time lecturer in the European Master's of Midwifery program.

Resilience among Single Adult Female Refugees in Hamilton, Ontario

Karen Chung, Ellie Hong, and Bruce Newbold

Abstract

Single adult females remain among the most vulnerable of all refugee populations. However, there is a lack of research on supporting and empowering these women. There is a new interest in identifying factors that reinforce resilience and, ultimately, adjustment to the host country. In line with the current work on resilience, semi-structured, in-depth, personal interviews with single refugee women were conducted in the city of Hamilton, Ontario. A grounded theory approach revealed participants' perspectives on the support received from religious or cultural communities, non-governmental organizations, and the government in terms of their perceived contribution to adaptation. Both informal and formal support, along with individual characteristics, were found to be crucial for reinforcing resilience among these refugees, reflective of a collective resilience model that moves beyond individual and community resilience. Future research should aim to investigate the perspectives of those who did not receive social support from shelters as well as to assess the efficacy of current refugee support services.

Résumé

Les femmes adultes célibataires demeurent parmi les plus vulnérables des groupes de réfugiés. On remarque cependant un manque de recherches sur le soutien et l'autonomisation de ces femmes. Il y a par ailleurs un nouvel intérêt pour l'identification des facteurs augmentant la résilience et par conséquent la capacité d'ajustement au pays d'accueil. En lien avec ces travaux sur la résilience, des entrevues individuelles approfondies et semi-structurées avec des femmes réfugiées célibataires ont été effectuées à Hamilton en Ontario. L'approche basée sur la théorie a mis en lumière leur point de vue sur le soutien qu'elles reçoivent des communautés culturelles et religieuses et des organisations gouvernementales et non-gouvernementales, plus particulièrement au niveau de leur adaptation. Le soutien formel et informel, en plus des caractéristiques personnelles, s'avèrent être des facteurs importants pour l'amélioration de leur résilience, illustrant un modèle de résilience qui va au-delà de la résilience individuelle et des communautés. Les recherches à venir devraient examiner la perception des réfugiés qui n'ont pas reçu de soutien social et évaluer l'efficacité des services actuels de soutien aux réfugiés.

Introduction

Internationally, there has been a sustained increase in the number of people who seek refuge from harm in their home country.[1] Although Canada prides itself on its humanitarian role and acceptance of refugees, there is comparatively limited research evidence surrounding the needs of refugees, as well as their ultimate success in adaptation to the host country. Indeed, a systematic review of published research on Canadian refugee health emphasizes the urgent need to fill the gaps of health knowledge for refugee populations, including the refugees' perspective on factors that ease their relocation.[2]

The limited research on refugees in the host country context typically focuses upon the barriers to health care encountered by refugees that limit or slow their adaptation to the host country.[3] While these barriers are relatively well understood, there is a new interest in identifying the

strengths or features that promote resilience and, ultimately, adjustment to the host country, rather than focusing on problems, risks, and failures. This is what is referred to as an asset-focused model: factors that support the ability for refugees to overcome barriers and that promote more successful integration to the host society.[4] Much of this work is conducted through the concept of resilience. While there are varying definitions of resilience, it can be broadly defined as "a class of phenomena characterized by the ability to bounce back and cope effectively in spite of serious threats to adaptation or development."[5] Resilience is distinct from adaptation: it refers to a refugee's ability to resist serious stress during the process of adapting to a new community. Although many refugees are likely to have experienced war, political instability, physical/sexual violence, death of family or friends, and multiple displacements across refugee centres,[6] there is significant optimism about the capacity of refugees for resilience to trauma and dislocation.[7] As Pulvareti and Mason note, "Resilience is often said to be about bending, not breaking, when facing stress, trauma and adversity."[8]

To date, however, much of the work has searched for individual protective factors,[9] rather than identifying it as a collective process,[10] leading to calls for moving research away from a focus on individual resilience toward recognition of the role of multiple factors, including group composition, institutions, non-governmental agencies, and public policies.[11] As an alternative, "collective resilience"[12] differs from individual resilience (personal resilience) and community resilience (resilience in one community). While individual attributes remain important, collective resilience allows the exploration of the broader structures that bridge and hold communities while providing support and enable resettlement, including support from the wider society, particularly contributions "from community members; people from the same country of origin or people who share values; respect for each other; empathy and support of local people; and community members talking, negotiating, discussing and balancing their needs and views."[13]

Within collective resilience, the community can provide assets, including support networks, infrastructure, and resources that empower and create participation. Social support from within the community, including shared vision, mutual assistance, cooperation, and attachment, has been noted to aid resilience and adaptation to the host society. For example, social support, including strong religious beliefs, engenders increased psychological well-being in refugees.[14] In building community support, more people gain support from the community, reinforcing the process, and ultimately aiding adjustment and resettlement in a circular and cumulative process. Conversely, if social support is missing, resilience may be lower and resettlement slower.

For example, single adult females remain among the most vulnerable of all refugee populations,[15] with differences including origin, journey, health status, language ability, refugee status, and culture having different impacts on how these women will adapt to the host country.[16] Social and community supports may be missing or cannot be accessed owing to limited opportunities and barriers that prevent support access. Such risk factors, inclusive of the individual or community, can reduce or deny individual opportunities and prevent meaningful participation in the community.

In order to understand these similarities and differences as well as the factors that promote resilience, narratives from refugee women are needed. The objective of this study is to share the perspectives of single, low-income refugee women on factors that encourage successful adaptation into new communities by examining how resilience is promoted, reinforced, or grown among refugee women in Hamilton. It is our hope that this will be a stepping stone for policy advocates and invested stakeholders to gain a more comprehensive awareness of relevant public policies, forms of social support, and more appropriate resource allocation.

Background

Hamilton, Ontario, is a mid-sized Canadian city located in southern Ontario, about sixty kilometres west of Toronto. The city has an estimated 500,000 residents, including a foreign-born population greater than 100,000. Approximately 1,440 refugees arrive annually in Hamilton; around 440 are government-assisted refugees (GAR), while 1,000 are refugee claimants or individuals who claim refugee status after arrival in Canada.[17] Up to one-third of all foreign-born within the city entered Canada as refugees, representing a greater proportion of all immigrants than observed for all Ontario or all Canada, with Hamilton's refugees arriving from a diverse set of origins. Due to its proximity to Toronto and its lower cost of living, Hamilton is also an important centre for "secondary" settlement of refugees (i.e., settling in Hamilton after an initial settlement elsewhere).

Prior to changes to refugee health care (enacted by the Canadian federal government in June 2011), both refugee claimants and GARs were eligible for health coverage through the federal government's Interim Federal Health Program (IFH).[18] Following a three-month residency period in the province, GARS could also apply directly to the provincially funded Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) which provides more extensive health coverage.[19] In comparison, IFH is a temporary health insurance program (twelve months, with options for extending up to twenty-four months for recipients with identified special health needs[20]) that covers urgent and essential health needs including prenatal, contraception, and obstetrical

care; essential prescription medications; emergency dental treatments; and treatment and prevention of serious medical conditions. Counselling or psychotherapy, diagnostic procedures, certain ambulance services, and vision care are also covered to an extent but required preapproval from Citizenship and Immigration Canada. GARS also receive access to resettlement services (funded through the federal government) which provide services including health, employment, language, and settlement. Refugee claimants, on the other hand, are not eligible for IFH and are also unable to access settlement and integration services until they have attained permanent status (i.e., until their refugee claim has been approved).

Refugees commonly arrive in Canada with greater health, social, and economic needs than other immigrants: a significantly greater proportion of refugees report physical, emotional, or dental problems than all other immigrants. One reason for this is that refugees are much more likely to have experienced war, political instability, physical/sexual violence, death of family or friends, and multiple displacements across refugee centres.[21] Refugee women suffer in strikingly different ways than men upon arriving in Canada, and are particularly vulnerable to mental health issues during resettlement.[22] Due to the subordinate role of women in many cultures, they are at greater risk of facing exposure to violence, lack of or reduced autonomy, lack of recognition of foreign credentials and experience, cultural and systematic barriers to care, poverty, underemployment, the burden of multiple roles within the family, social isolation, and loss of pre-existing social support. Single and low-income women may face even greater barriers than married women because they often arrive without any pre-existing forms of social support.[23] Cultural norms that govern women's roles in social situations may render it difficult for them to become part of larger refugee communities: this isolation may heighten risks of sexual and gender-based violence, including sexual exploitation and forced prostitution.[24] As a result, they are more likely to experience low income and to be among the most vulnerable.

While these barriers to successful acculturation exist, there may be resources and opportunities that promote resilience and ultimately enable individuals to overcome barriers. Formal services such as government programs, settlement services, immigrant groups, and informal forms of support such as religious and cultural communities may all facilitate resilience for these women. This paper will consider these forms of support from the perspectives of single refugee women.

Methods

This research paper aims to examine how resilience is promoted, reinforced, or grown among low-income single refugee women in Hamilton. In order to assess this, formal support received from government agencies, NGOs, and religious organizations, along with informal support from family and from religious and cultural communities, were evaluated through their experiences. The strength, positive attitude, and resourcefulness of these refugee women were also assessed. Both were accomplished through personal, semi-structured interviews of single adult female refugees of childbearing age, eighteen to fifty years.

Refugee women who arrived in Hamilton within the period of one month to ten years before the study date of September 2011, with an annual income below the 2010 Statistics Canada low-income cut-off, were recruited to the study. Approval was gained from the author's institutional Research Ethics Board (REB) before proceeding with the recruitment process. Study recruitment flyers were translated prior to recruitment into Czech, Hungarian, Arabic, and Spanish. The interviewees were recruited with the help of three community service centres in Hamilton. These centres were contacted in advance to request permission to place study recruitment posters in traffic-heavy areas. With further permission from administrative members from these centres, administrative staff recruited interviewees by word of mouth.

A total of nine interviews between September and December 2011 were conducted. The women interviewed came from diverse backgrounds including Hungary, Nigeria, Iraq, Cameroon, Afghanistan, Sudan, and Congo, with three out of the nine interviews requiring a professional translator to be present at the interview. Prior to each interview, interviewees were given a consent form and notified that they could withdraw from the study at any point, which would in turn lead to the deletion of any recorded information. A recording device was used during the interview to record the interview proceedings. An interview guide was used to facilitate responses from interviewees, whereby a combination of open- and closed-ended questions were used. The interview script included questions addressing their life prior to arrival, the arrival and settlement process, their experience with social, educational, and health services in Canada, support used and received (inclusive of family, friends, and providers), and sources of fear and stress upon coming to Canada and settlement. After the interview, interviewees were provided with a small token of appreciation for participating in the study, consisting of two bus passes and a $20 grocery gift card.

Interviews lasted an average of fifty-five minutes and were transcribed for a total of twenty-four hours verbatim,

and their content was analyzed. Transcripts were marked with a number that replaced the interviewee's name to ensure confidentiality, and to identify which recorded information must be deleted in the event that a given interviewee wished to withdraw from the study. As this was an exploratory study, the research did not attempt to test existing theories.[25] Instead, a grounded theory approach was used during the coding process to facilitate understanding about resilience.[26] Grounded theory enables theory generation related to social processes "grounded" in empirical data and the experiences of participants,[27] with the resulting theory able to inform research and interventions. Data collection and analysis occurred simultaneously, with each transcript coded for themes relating to resilience. These themes were placed in categories based on the source/type of resilience identified, and then further broken into subcategories reflecting participants' experiences of those barriers. Common themes within and across groups were identified through the coding process and further discussed by the authors for relevance and significance.

Results

The narratives of these single, low-income refugee women reveal how resilience was promoted through informal sources, NGOs, government support, and personal characteristics such as their resourcefulness, determination, and strength. Most strikingly, all participants were dependent on all of these supports in order to meet their needs, reflecting notions of collective resilience, although some services were seemingly more important than others.

All but one of the women interviewed for this project were single when they arrived in Canada, either having separated from their husbands or having been widowed before arrival in Canada. The one woman who arrived in Canada with her husband later separated from him after arrival and prior to the interview. Most (six) brought young children with them. Most came directly to Canada from their home country; others transited through other countries before arriving in Canada. Six came directly to Hamilton after landing in Canada, while the others transited or temporarily resided in other Canadian cities before arriving in Hamilton. Once in Hamilton, all used temporary accommodation (typically refugee shelters) for their first few weeks in the city before finding their own accommodation, often with the assistance of the shelter, friends, or community groups.

All of the interviewees were unemployed at the time of the interview and received their income from the provincial government through the Ontario Works program. Most were taking, or had taken, ESL courses to strengthen their English ability, and two volunteered in the local community. Despite the circumstances that they found themselves in—single mothers, low income, living in a new community, and reliant on the government for income support—their resilience was apparent: more than just adapting to their new life, the resilience among the women interviewed for this project was enhanced by various assets within the community. The discussion below explores why.

Support from the Government

Although education is not a direct avenue of support, refugee women interviewed for this study saw education, which is funded through the provincial government, as an instrumental factor in securing their long-term success in Canada. The single female refugees who arrived with children were very pleased with the educational support provided by the government. Seeing their children transition to life in Canada aided by the educational system gave these women hope and motivated them to attain educational success as well. Following the educational experiences of her children, one woman commented: "I know but I want education now. Because for me this is important, I can't work all my life in McDonald. For the future, I want a good job" (5).

The education system also provided a significant source of hope to these women. Many of these women came from occupations they were interested in pursuing after settlement in Canada. "I have master degree in English language teaching, but I cannot get a job in Egypt, here they said you can go to Mohawk degree, they say you can work at least as a teacher in any organization here" (3).

However, like many below the low-income cut-off, these women struggled with the financial and health services provided by the government. All of these women arrived with little financial resources, having spent most of their savings to get to Canada. Thus, although the women were grateful for whatever the government could provide, the struggle to gain financial resources and access to health care eroded resilience and made it difficult for these women to adapt.

> I get paid $334 from Ontario Works, $200 for rent. It's not enough, food and groceries are very expensive. $200 is just good for the food. For one month, $800, not enough. Internet, home, it's not enough. And other bills are lots. It's good child tax give me $1000, with this I manage the house. But you don't have no choice. (5)

Being part of the workforce is crucial to resilience through the creation of long-term sense of belonging and community. One woman expressed feelings of frustration from not being able to obtain a job of a similar status to what she had in her home country because of her lack of Canadian experience. Not being able to find a job decreased her sense of belonging:

Because if you read in the Immigration Canada website, they promise you everything, they promise you everything. They promise you a job. But when you come here you realize that the jobs here are less than the people. And the jobs that are menial jobs, 8 to 10 dollars, minimum wage. It's not something I want to do. I did these a student, but I didn't expect to do it here now in Canada, with all my qualifications I thought I could get a job. But no, they told me that I don't have a Canadian experience. So that is the barrier that we are facing. (4)

Beyond employment, good health and access to health care when needed are critical to resilience promotion. As noted in McKeary and Newbold,[28] lack of access to health care remains a concern among refugees in particular and newcomers to Canada more generally. Surprisingly, and despite the fact that other researchers and providers alike have noted consistent issues with the IFH,[2] refugees did not discuss the role or need of health insurance and the program. For some, they had not needed to venture into the health care system, or had not been in Canada long enough to have received coverage through the provincial health plan. For those that had used the health care system, community groups or shelters had helped to facilitate finding a doctor and/or they persevered in finding health care. Still, one-third of respondents did not know what IFH was and did not know how it worked.

Support from NGOs

Government support for refugee health care (i.e., through the IFH program) or other services is limited both temporally as well as financially, forcing refugees to seek assistance with settlement from other organizations or communities. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) enhance resilience by providing refugee women not only with the resources that they need to adjust to living in Canada (i.e., access to language services, shelter, food, and other services), but also with connections and opportunities to become established and enhance their resilience by building personal assets.

Language support has been identified as a significant barrier to health care and other services following arrival. NGO support included English language training, mental health, and employment assistance. NGOs also provided refugees with access to better shelter, child services, transportation, food, and clothing, and are often critical supports for refugees by filling in the blanks that government programs do not provide:

Yeah when I came to [the community centre] that night, they said oh no problem, you sleep here, you stay here, so they gave me food, and gave me bed, before that I showered, hadn't showered in 2 weeks, got up in the morning and showered. I didn't have

any clothes, so I got taken to the warehouse and got myself some clothes. (4)

Oh it was, I, I, thank God it was good! The most important thing for me is shelter, the shelter and the food. That's what is important, you have this for your kids, your kids when they say I'm hungry and there is nothing, your heart is break. You know? But there's food, there's shelter. …they give us the food and the shelter. (6)

We actually got contact information from the shelter to get in touch with a person where we can get help with navigating, and planning appointments, and just helping us with the settlement process. We got a lot of help that was very helpful. (1)

Mental health issues remain a concern within the population and are vital for resilience, as many refugee women have come from a place of war and political instability, while being subjected to physical and sexual abuse. However, only three of the nine interviewees mentioned that they had used some form of counselling. This is in line with current evidence that Western mental health services are often underutilized because they are "culturally alien to most refugees, the majority of whom come from non-Western societies and bring with them culturally specific ways of understanding and responding to psychological distress."[30] NGOs are crucial support networks that can help these refugee women overcome emotional and psychological challenges that may prevent their successful adaptation: "Yeah, Oh [the community centre people] are very good people, you know they helped me to, to you know, move from my trauma and get past that" (7).

This support is important, because when these women arrive in Canada, some of them still struggle from the trauma that they have experienced as refugees. In addition, many of these women miss their families and their friends—and find it difficult to adapt to the reality that they may never see them again.

While NGOs help refugees manage, the assistance is often only short term. For some of our participants, shelter was provided for the period of one year by NGOs, after which their eligibility for support ended. When the year finishes, these participants needed to move out and find shelter and furniture for a permanent place to live:

The home that we're in is only for one year, it's not ours. Ours no, but they provide for us a dinner table, couch and chairs and they put bed and drawers and they helped me a lot because they put bed and everyone tells me they look for bed and mattress and stuff and now after we stay here…kitchen, everything I got, blankets I got, jacket I got. (7)

NGOs provide important support and assets by providing resources, education, encouragement, and support to refugees, all of which built resilience. At the same time, support from NGOs is often limited, forcing refugees to find other forms of support. While it is reasonable to expect that support should be withdrawn at some point after arrival, the termination of support at one year appears to be arbitrary, and threatens resilience given that it often takes longer than a single year to adjust to the host community.

Informal Support from Religious or Cultural Communities

Community, and more importantly community assistance and support for refugees, is an important component of resilience. For new arrivals, creating or participating in a community is vital and provides support and a sense of belonging through attachment and place. At the same time, community enhances resilience by providing coping mechanisms through social networks, infrastructure, education, encouragement, support, and resources and can create opportunities that encourage meaningful participation in the community. However, such community must be built, as most refugees lost a large degree of their social network, including family, in coming to Canada. Likewise, community does not occur naturally, and must be nurtured through contributions by community members, shared values, and engagement. Consequently, refugees needed to rely on a range of individuals for their social network, inclusive of others sharing their same origin or ethnic background as well as the broader community who provided opportunities to discuss problems with adjusting to Canadian life.

Regardless of the process that brings newcomers to Canada, the existence of religious, ethnic, or cultural communities is generally seen as an advantage and enabler of social and economic acculturation to the host society. Cultural background plays a major role in the informal support that a refugee woman may receive. Like many newcomers, the refugee women sought emotional and informational support from peers, relatives, and friends established in Canada.[31] Most newcomers viewed those who came to Canada before them as an important source of support because they had first-hand knowledge of Canadian society, customs, and the settlement process.[32]

> From Egypt, there is somebody there. He helped me, he's like my translator? Yeah, he helped me a lot, he came to me, we came to Niagara Falls, anyways he helped me, he came to me over there, he helped me, we stayed with a friend for two three days and we came to the [community centre] house. (7)

The women also relied upon their religious community to help overcome barriers to health and language:

> I have friends, before I don't have friends, now I have gotten friends, I have pastor that talk to me, I have church that come to visit me. They bring so many things for me. Each time they come they bring so many things for me. They bring clothes for my baby, for my son, only that because I'm too fat, sometimes they say that they will bring things for me, only that because I'm too fat, they don't have my size you know? They can't find my size in their wardrobe. But for my kids, for my little baby, for my son, they bring things for them. My house is full you know? They call me on phone and talk to me, do you have any you know, do you need things? (2)

While providing material and social support, the religious community helped to build community, enable settlement, and integrate refugees in the community, and often linked them into the broader community beyond their own, potentially more narrowly defined, ethnic group. Ethnic or cultural communities filled a similar role in providing both short-term support as well as long-term assistance that contributed to resilience. Importantly, resilience wasn't something that just happened, but reflected a process that unfolded over time and through interaction with various agents and providers. Refugees who came from cultural backgrounds previously established in Hamilton had an advantage in that connections into the community could be easier and access to NGOs and other forms of support were facilitated. Oftentimes, these community members understood their challenges and empathized with them.[33] "And they make a contact here—the Sudanese people they met me and at the border when I crossed the border they met me and… we went to that shelter" (7).

Being understood, and having a community in which to relate their experiences, allowed these refugee women to improve upon their coping mechanisms and fostered a sense of belonging. However, there are also refugees from cultural backgrounds that are not as well established in Hamilton. Many miss their families and their friends, and find it difficult to adapt to the reality that they may never see them again. Some participants found life lonely and isolating given the lack of a pre-existing refugee community, and especially because their cultural understanding of community differed drastically from that found in Hamilton. For example, many women were born and raised in small communities with lots of family and where friends were considered family too. These women found it difficult to adapt to a community of strangers: "And back home too, always something happening with aunts and grandma, but

here—there's no one … and they told me, "don't knock on anybody's door" (6).

Thus, participants revealed that this form of support lead to a more successful acculturation, while a lack of a cultural or religious community seems to have a negative impact on resilience.

Other informal forms of support included family and the social environment of the community. Of the nine single refugee women that were interviewed, only three arrived without children. Participants with children described them as a source of social support and motivation for life:

> I'm very happy with my life. Thank God I have my kids. I'm happy, I'm going on. I don't need anything else. For me my kids is important. This, everyday is going on. Life goes on. Just stand up and say I'm happy. You need to keep yourself strong. I think this was bad happening to me, I'm done now, because I have two more kids. My job, I go on, for my kids. I'm going on for my kids. I want to be both mother and father. (5)

Furthermore, almost all agreed that the community in Hamilton was supportive, open, welcoming, and respectful:

> It was good. Over here, in Canada everything is available. Healthy, the country is helping the women for the food and the services. This is good. For us culture, if women is single and divorced with kids, no one give them clothes or food. There are no services. These women and kids die on the road. This place is a 100% better than our countries. Good services, good school. This experience is healthy experience for women especially. (5)

> I have so many that talk to me, my doctor is the first person…. I have friends, before I don't have friends, now I have gotten friends, I have pastor that talk to me, I have church that come to visit me. They bring so many things for me. Each time they come they bring so many things for me. … They call me on phone and talk to me, do you have any you know, do you need things? Does your daughter need anything? Sometimes I say, it's okay my house is full, I don't need anymore, they say Sabina you need! Your daughter need! Brittney is growing! And I have a friend, she gets me things wow, very, very well. When I was in my house she always came to visit me—even now she came to visit me, call me on phone. Okay, so they care, people care for me, they want me to live! (7)

It was specifically noted that there was a lack of racial discrimination in Hamilton, a factor which could reduce resilience by creating barriers to the broader community.[34]

> …I like to talk about the experience with people. Because where we come from, no one says hi to us because of our origin. This is not a problem here, because everyone says hi and smiles. There is no problem here. (1)

Support from family and a welcoming environment typically encouraged resilience by promoting a positive approach to life. Thus, these forms of informal support meet emotional, informational, material, and social needs, greatly contributing to successful acculturation in a new community.

Strength, Positive Attitude, and Resourcefulness of the Women

Interviews with refugee women identified that resilience is both conditional upon the assistance of the broader community and also constructed through the support of community, agencies, family, and friends. Refugees clearly valued the support that they received from service providers, including help that was timely, relevant, and reflective of community strengths. Fundamental to resilience, but also beyond formal and informal support, each interviewee demonstrated incredible courage and strength, not only with their decision to come to Canada, but in how they dealt with challenges upon arrival. These difficulties included, but were not limited to, discrimination, food, language, work, culture, and lack of financial resources. Though the challenges that many of these women faced were daunting, their strength, positive attitude, and resourcefulness showed that they are capable individuals, able and willing to contribute to the community. Furthermore, the women demonstrated great resourcefulness as they were not reliant on just one group, but rather used a combination of resources provided by the government, NGOs, and cultural organizations in order to succeed. The ability to ask questions underscores their resilience:

> "So how were you able to learn about the bus system?"

> "Because I am always asking. I keep asking." (2)

as well as the ability to manage their lifestyle and spending habits:

> 747 dollars…it's not enough, you consider, internet, rent, TV. It's not enough. I try to manage. (3)

Moreover, there was a sense of independence among the refugee women interviewed, especially refugee women with children:

> I wanted to depend on myself, I don't want everyone doing for me like a baby, you know no! But like you know they give me and they

say its' your responsibility, yeah but they tell you, they advise you know? How to do—and then it's for you. (6)

For me it's easy, I'm a mother, it's normal. (5)

Not only were the refugee women able to manage given the few resources provided, but they also many maintained a positive attitude despite the language, resettlement, and cultural barriers they encountered:

Now, thanks God thanks God thanks God... Before I came here I was crying, you know? But now I look at it and say thanks God, thanks God we came here and everything here is better, different life, different, different life, different life different everything. What do you want more? (2)

I'm very happy with my life. Thank God I have my kids. I'm happy, I'm going on. I don't need anything else. You should be going on. If sometime bad is coming, you don't want to stand up and say I'm done. You can't be like that. You need to keep yourself strong. (5)

Thus, these refuge women, through their optimism, strength, and determination, were able to foster a sense of collective resilience by drawing upon the resources that they embodied, but also by drawing upon the community resources. This is turn acted to promote their successful acculturation into the broader Hamilton community.

Discussion

This research paper sought to explore how resilience is reinforced among refugee women in the Hamilton community. The ability of these women to adapt is dependent on who they are (internal), as well as on the external supports (assets) available in their community. Refugees are, by nature, a resilient group, given the traumatic experiences they encountered before finding a way to come to Canada.[35] As such, individual strengths and traits are necessary, but not sufficient, for resilience. Instead, resilience extends to the broader community "collective," including an individual's ability to draw on various assets for support: government services, NGOs, and informal religious and cultural communities: all provided education, encouragement, and support that enabled resilience by allowing them to cobble together sufficient resources to allow them to manage and overcome barriers. It can be said that it is the ability to "manage" what they have that underscores a successful acculturation. Resilience also appears as a process—it is not something that necessarily has a defined start or end point, but continues as settlement occurs, new languages are learned, and lives are reconstructed through new opportunities.

The assets supporting resilience and integration into the host society are collective and are reinforced by the strength, positive attitude, and resourcefulness of the women, enabling this vulnerable population to manage despite the challenges and difficulties they are faced with.[36] Collective resilience, encompassing support from government agencies, NGOs, and informal sources, was crucial in creating and reinforcing resilience among refugee women. More than just aiding their adaptation to their new country, these sources of support allow the ability to overcome barriers to adaptation by drawing upon their own strengths while also connecting the women to a larger community and knowledge of the resources that are embedded within it. That is, promotion and building of resilience will aid adaptation.

However, not all assets were equally strong. Government support, for example, appeared limited to programs such as Ontario Works and access to some services including health care through the IFH program, meaning that NGOs were consequently forced to pick up what is not covered by the government. Support from NGOs provided the women with access to language services, shelter, food, services for their children, and transportation information; however the support is often short-term and limited to GARs, while refugee claimants are largely forced to find their own way. In other words, the support provided by NGOs is only as good as those provided by more formal institutions, and refugee claimants are forced to rely on these multiple sources of support.

Likewise, support through social networks, such as religious or cultural communities and peer and family support, enabled resilience and is an influential factor of emotional and physical health.[48] However, not all social networks were supportive or well established, with some commenting on their still developing networks, while others noted the difficult time immediately after arrival when they had no one. Without a sense of community and belonging, feelings of rejection and depression can often persist,[37] while establishing proper support networks will help promote resilience among refugee women and ultimately allow them to contribute and thrive in their adopted communities.

Social capital cannot, on its own, substitute for more formal resources. Instead, such facilitating and positive sources of resilience are most effective when available together. However, resilience supporting assets can be withdrawn and/or weakened, jeopardizing resilience and integration. In 2011, for example, the Canadian federal government significantly reduced health coverage for refugee claimants.[38] Likewise, a major settlement service closed in the years prior to this work. Although other agencies had stepped in to cover the missing services, overall funding was reduced and the loss of the one provider demonstrated

the frailty of the system. Such examples highlight the many funding reductions and program restructuring with respect to refugees, with cuts affecting the most vulnerable. NGOS are unlikely to have sufficient resources to fill the new gaps that emerge. Instead of cutting funding towards refugees, more programs that address the unique challenges experienced by refugees in Hamilton (and likely elsewhere) need to be made available, with funding for programs reflecting the long period of adaptation to the host country—a period that cannot be neatly defined by a single year. If the refugees interviewed in our study are reflective of the broader refugee population and arrive in Canada having experienced trauma and the distress of relocation to a strange land, this would include tackling sources of emotional or psychological distress upon arrival, along with counselling services.

Throughout the interviews, measures were in place to maintain objectivity. We remained aware of the assumptions we made regarding the barriers with accessing proper health care, finding proper housing, receiving proper education, and eating healthfully. However, a limitation of this study was that the administrative staff members from the two community service centres were the ones actively recruiting the interviewees. This may have biased the administrative staff members to select interviewees that had received the best support from their service agency. As a result, the interviewees chosen for the study may have had a much more positive outlook on given social services than what might be representative of the entire population of single refugee women in Hamilton, Ontario. A second limitation was that this study only recruited interviewees through community service centres. Thus, refugees who were not able to receive this form of support (inclusive of claimants) were not included and their perspectives should be taken into account in future investigations. Finally, there is the concern that the limited number of participants may not reflect the refugee women in the community. Although the sample size is relatively small, it should be noted that participants were recruited until data saturation was reached. Future research should aim to investigate the perspectives of those who did not receive social support from shelters as well as to assess the efficacy of current refugee support services.

Notes

1. United Nations, "Refugees, Resources for Speakers on Global Issues," http://www.un.org/en/globalissues/briefingpapers/refugees/nextsteps.html; S. Martin, "Refugee and Displaced Women: 60 Years of Progress and Setbacks," *Amsterdam Law Forum* 3 (2011): 72.

2. C. L. Patil, T. Maripuu, C. Hadley, and D. W. Sellen, "Identifying Gaps in Health Research among Refugees Resettled in Canada," *International Migration* (2012), doi:10.1111/j.1468-2435.2011.00722.x).

3. M. McKeary and K. B. Newbold, "Barriers to Care: The Challenges for Canadian Refugees and Their Health Care Providers," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 23 (2010): 523–545; J. Naish, J. Brown, and B. Denton, "Intercultural Consultations: Investigation of Factors That Deter Non-English Speaking Women from Attending Their General Practitioners for Cervical Screening," *British Medical Journal* 309 (1994): 1126–1128.

4. M. Pulvirenti and G. Mason, "Refugee Women's Experiences of Violence and Resilience: Early Explorations," Australian and New Zealand Critical Criminology Conference, 2010, http://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/bitstream/2123/7377/1/Mason%20and%20Pulvirenti_ANZCCC2010.pdf.

5. M. A. Sossou, C. D. Craig, H. Ogren, and M. Schnak, "A Qualitative Study of Resilience Factors of Bosnian Refugee Women Resettled in the Southern United States," *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Diversity in Social Work* 17 (2008): 365–385.

6. Pulvirenti and Mason, "Refugee Women's Experiences of Violence and Resilience: Early Explorations."

7. A. Fielding and J. Anderson, "Working with Refugee Communities to Build Collective Resilience" (ASeTTS Occasional Paper 2, ISBN 1 74067 587 8), http://asetts.vacau.com/Documents/collectiveresilenceweb.pdf.

8. Pulvirenti and Mason, "Refugee Women's Experiences of Violence and Resilience: Early Explorations."

9. S. Luthar, D. Cicchetti, and B. Becker, "The Construct of Resilience: A Critical Evaluation and Guidelines for Future Work," *Child Development* 71 (2000): 543–562; T. A .P. Witmer and S. M. Culver, "Trauma and Resilience among Bosnian Refugee Families: A Critical Review of Literature," *Journal of Social Work Research* 2 (2001): 173–187.

10. S. Mohaupt, "Review Article: Resilience and Social Exclusion," *Social Policy and Society* 8 (2008): 63–71.

11. Pulvirenti and Mason, "Refugee Women's Experiences of Violence and Resilience: Early Explorations."

12. Fielding and Anderson, "Working with Refugee Communities to Build Collective Resilience."

13. Ibid.; Martin, "Refugee and Displaced Women."

14. R. Schweitzer, F. Melville, Z. Steel, and P. Lacharez, "Trauma, Post-migration Living Difficulties, and Social Support as Predictors of Psychological Adjustment in Resettled Sudanese Refugees," *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry* 40 (2006): 179–187; J. Ahern, S. Galea, W. G. Fernandez, K. Bajram, R. Waldman, and D. Vlahov, "Gender, Social Support and Posttraumatic Stress in Postwar Kosovo," *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease* 192 (2004): 762–770; M. Brune, C. Haasen, M. Krausz, O. Yagdiran, E. Bustos, and D. Eisenman, "Belief Systems as Coping Factors for Traumatized Refugees: A Pilot Study," *European Psychiatry* 17 (2002): 451- 458.

15. Martin, "Refugee and Displaced Women"; Z. Deacon and C. Sullivan, "Responding to the Complex and Gendered Needs of Refugee Women," *Affilia* 24 (2009): 272–284.

16. Beth Dewitt and Naomi Adelson, "Toward Equitable Health and Health Services for Cambodian Refugee Women: An Ethnographic Analysis," http://pi.library.yorku.ca/dspace/bitstream/handle/10315/10248/AdelsonDewitt2005.pdf?sequence=1 ; McKeary and Newbold, "Barriers to Care."

17. S. Wayland, "A Demographic Profile of Immigrants to Hamilton" (Hamilton: Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council, 2010).

18. Citizenship and Immigration Canasda, "Interim Federal Health Program: Summary of Benefits," http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/outside/summary-ifhp.asp.

19. The Canadian federal government enacted major changes to the IFH following data collection and analysis. We raise the potential implications of this policy change in the conclusion.

20. J. Wales, "Interim Federal Health: A Public Health Perspective," *McMaster University Medical Journal* 7 (2010): 50–52.

21. K. E. Miller and L. M. Rasco, *The Mental Health of Refugees: Ecological Approaches to Healing and Adaptation* (Mah Wah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2010).

22. V. Crooks, M. Hynie, K. Killian, M. Giesbrecht, and H. Castleden, "Female Newcomers' Adjustment to Life in Toronto, Canada: Sources of Mental Stress and Their Implications for Delivery Primary Mental Health Care," *GeoJournal* 76 (2011): 139–149.

23. Deacon and Sullivan, "Responding to the Complex and Gendered Needs of Refugee Women."

24. Martin, "Refugee and Displaced Women"; Deacon and Sullivan, "Responding to the Complex and Gendered Needs of Refugee Women."

25. M. Cope, "Coding Qualitative Data," in *Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography,* 2nd ed, ed. I. Hay (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2005); K. G. Esterberg, *Qualitative Methods in Social Research* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2002);

26. J. Corbin and A. Strauss, *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory,* 3rd ed. (London: Sage, 2007).

27. D. Walker and F. Myrick, "Grounded Theory: An Exploration of Process and Procedure," *Qualitative Health Research* 16 (2006): 547–559; H. Starks and S. Brown Trinidad, "Choose Your Method: A Comparison of Phenomenology, Discourse Analysis, and Grounded Theory," *Qualitative Health Research* 17 (2007):1372–1380.

28. McKeary and Newbold, "Barriers to Care."

29. Ibid.

30. Miller and Rasco, *The Mental Health of Refugees.*

31. M. Stewart, J. Anderson, M. Beiser, E. Mwakarimba, A. Neufeld, L. Simich, and D. Spitzer, "Multicultural Meanings of Cultural Support amongst Immigrants and Refugees," *International Migration* 46 (2008): 123–159.

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid.

34. S. Edge and K. B. Newbold, "Discrimination and the Health of Immigrants and Refugees: Exploring Canada's Evidence Base and Directions for Future Research in Newcomer Receiving Countries," *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health,* DOI 10.1007/s10903-012-9640-4. 2012.

35. J. Hooberman, B. Rosenfeld, A. Rasmussen, and A. Keller, "Resilience in Trauma-Exposed Refugees: The Moderating Effect of Coping Style on Resilience Variables," *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 80 (2010): 557–563.

36. C. L. Dennis and L. Ross, "Women's Perceptions of Partner Support and Conflict in the Development of Postpartum Depressive Symptoms," *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 56 (2006): 588–599.

37. P. A. Thoits, "Mechanisms Linking Social Ties and Support to Physical and Mental Health," *Journal of Health and Social Behaviour* 52 (2011): 145–161.

38. These changes were announced and put in place following the completion of the data gathering stage of this project.

Karen Chung and Ellie Hong were students in McMaster University's Health Sciences program.

Just Kids? Peer Racism in a Predominantly White City

James Baker

Abstract

This article examines the effects of racialized name-calling on a group of twelve visible minority refugee youth from Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada. Through one-on-one in-depth interviews, the author discusses their experiences in order to better understand how this important group of adolescents conceptualizes, constructs, and copes with racism while living in a highly homogeneous white Canadian city. The author concludes by noting that these experiences are having a negative effect on their social integration and that increased efforts by teachers and administrators are needed to help combat peer racism in this predominantly white city.

Résumé

Cet article examine les effets des injures raciales sur un groupe de jeunes réfugiés de douze minorités visibles de Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador, au Canada. À l'aide d'entrevues individuelles approfondies, l'auteur examine leurs expériences dans le but de mieux comprendre comment ce groupe important d'adolescents comprend le racisme et négocie cette réalité dans le cadre de leur intégration dans une communauté urbaine canadienne blanche et homogène. L'auteur arrive à la conclusion que ces expériences ont un effet négatif sur leur intégration sociale, et que les enseignants et administrateurs doivent fournir un effort supplémentaire pour lutter contrer le racisme par les pairs dans une ville canadienne blanche, telle que St. John's.

Introduction

Over the past few years, the role that immigration can play in sustaining Canada's, and specifically Newfoundland and Labrador's, population has been well documented.[1] The province, however, has had problems in attracting and retaining immigrants; in fact, in 2009, Newfoundland and Labrador attracted less than 1 percent of the total immigration population arriving in Canada.[2] This process is further complicated by the fact that as many as 70 percent of those who arrive in Newfoundland and Labrador leave within the first year.[3] Coupled with this exodus is a low provincial retention rate which, according to a report completed for Citizenship and Immigration Canada, averaged about 43 percent from 2000 to 2006.[4] Still, Newfoundland and Labrador continues to slowly increase its immigrant and refugee population, especially from such areas as Asia, Africa, and South America. In 2002, for example, 404 immigrants arrived in the province while in 2011, that number had increased to 682.[5] Indeed, as the province continues to diversify, there is no doubt that the issue of racism will gain greater public salience.

While many Canadians take pride in the belief that Canada is viewed as a country that promotes immigration and multiculturalism, the fact remains that racism does exist within contemporary Canadian society.[6] Ibrahim M. Alladin argues that many visible minorities living in large urban centres (such as Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver) have experienced widespread discrimination in housing, employment, and education.[7] In fact, a 2005 poll conducted by the Dominion Institute and Ipsos Reid suggests a shift in those targeted by racism. In 1993, it was reported that Canadians felt that African-Canadians were the most likely population to be discriminated against; however, by 2005, that view had shifted towards individuals from the Middle East.[8] Regionally, the same poll found that 15 percent of Atlantic Canadians felt they had been a victim of racism while 10 percent believed that racism had increased in Atlantic Canada in the past five years. While research and polling on racism tend to focus on the experiences of visible minority adults, there is still a paucity of research on the experiences of adolescent visible minorities, especially

younger refugees living in a smaller urban centre like St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador. Indeed, the focus on refugee youth is especially important given the fact that numerous studies have identified the effect that racism has on the lives of visible minorities.[9] As Varma-Joshi and her colleagues note, "Studies suggest that children are aware of racial differences, can cite experiences in racism, hold racial preferences, and demonstrate discriminatory behaviour as early as four years old."[10]

The purpose then of this study is threefold: to understand how adolescent refugees conceptualize racism; to describe the nature of racism as experienced by those living in a predominantly white city; and to examine their coping responses to racist incidents. The specific questions asked were: *How do self-described adolescent victims of racism conceptualize the term? What is the nature of racism as experienced by self-described adolescent victims of racism in the St. John's Census Metropolitan Area (CMA)? How do self-described adolescent victims of racism respond to perceived racist incidents?* In order to address these research questions, this article focuses on the experiences of twelve refugee youth aged fourteen to twenty who were enrolled in three junior and senior high schools in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador.[11]

This research was partly driven by a desire to better understand the nature of racism as experienced by adolescent refugees living in a small urban centre (defined in this study as having a CMA population of less than 200,000) as well as to contribute, in a small way, to the literature on racism.[12] This article was also conceived, in part, after a discussion with individuals who are associated with, and work for, the Association for New Canadians. After several discussions with the Association's Settlement Team, it was becoming quite clear that racist incidents among refugee youth were increasing within the St. John's CMA.

Given the similarities between New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Labrador, and the desire to research racism in a smaller centre, it was thought that replicating the methodological approach of Cynthia Baker's New Brunswick study would be both useful and practical.[13] Generally speaking, both New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Labrador have a relatively homogeneous population (although New Brunswick has a more visible Aboriginal population located closer to the major population centres of Fredericton, Moncton, Saint John, and Miramichi). In terms of population, Newfoundland and Labrador has approximately 514,000 residents with 196,000 of these individuals located within the St. John's CMA while New Brunswick has an approximate population of 751,000 with 138,000 located in Moncton, 127,000 located in Saint John, and 94,000 in Fredericton.[14] Furthermore, based on the 2006 census, the total immigrant population in Newfoundland and Labrador is estimated to be 8,380 (representing approximately 2 percent of the total provincial population) which is relatively comparable to New Brunswick (its total immigrant population is estimated to be 26,359 representing approximately 4 percent of the total population).[15] As these numbers will also include immigrants from the United States of America, the United Kingdom, and other white European countries, the number of visible minorities who are newcomers will be invariably lower.

Sampling and Methodology

This research involved twelve Government Assisted Refugee (GAR) adolescents aged fourteen to twenty (from geographic areas that include Eastern Europe and South Asia [n=4], Africa and Middle East [n=4], as well as South America [n=4]) who were residing in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador at the time of the study. A potential participant was described as a visible minority GAR youth who believed her/himself to be a victim of a racist incident. One of the key issues for this research was agreeing on a proper definition of youth. For example, a cursory review of Statistics Canada reports suggests that the definition of youth can range anywhere from fourteen to thirty-five, depending on the research, and even the *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization* (UNESCO) differs in its assessment (using fifteen to twenty-four in some instances and fifteen to thirty-five in others).[16] As such, for the purposes of this study, youth will be defined as fourteen to twenty-five, based on Statistics Canada's *National Longitudinal Study of Children and Youth.*

In order to secure potential participants for the research, GAR youth were contacted with the assistance of the Association for New Canadians, a non-profit, community-based settlement agency located in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador. As the main settlement agency in the province, it was believed that they would be best positioned to help identify youth who would be able to address the research questions. The Association's Settlement Social Worker made an initial contact with potential participants and, if the individual agreed to participate, the researcher followed up shortly afterwards. In an attempt to achieve as large a sample as possible given the research limitations, the snowball technique was utilized. With this process, existing study subjects recruit future subjects from among their acquaintances. This was especially important given that the population was uncharacteristically small (i.e., self-identified victims of racism aged fourteen to twenty among a refugee youth population of approximately one hundred at the time of the study). While this technique is useful in managing the characteristics of a sample, it would be nearly

impossible to balance the sample by location, age, or gender. Moreover, due to the small sample size, the schools remain unidentified in order to maintain participant anonymity. The final sample included seven females and five males from Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Ukraine, Sierra Leone, Colombia, Iraq, and India.

Researching youth is especially important given that the millennial generation (those born post-1980) are the largest, most racially diverse generation in Canada. There is no doubt that such changes will have important implications for smaller provinces like Newfoundland and Labrador which remains largely (greater than 95 percent) homogeneous and may experience resistance from the local population as it continues to diversify.[17] Furthermore, for those who arrive in Canada as refugees, asylum seekers, or low-skilled immigrants, research conducted by the Canadian Race Relations Foundation found that the unemployment rate is higher among foreign-born visible minorities and Canadian-born visible minorities than their white counterparts, that good jobs remain elusive for minorities, that higher education offers fewer payoffs for minorities, and that racism, especially subtle racism, continues to be a factor in the workplace.[18] Finally, refugee youth are an important cohort for study given that there is so little research on this group within either the Canadian or Atlantic Canadian context.

Table 1: Youth Participants

Gender	Age	Source Country
M	14	Ukraine
F	18	Kyrgyzstan
M	18	Kyrgyzstan
M	18	Liberia
F	17	Liberia
M	18	Colombia
M	14	Colombia
F	14	Colombia
F	20	Sierra Leone
F	17	Colombia
F	15	Iraq
F	15	India

Each of the twelve participants engaged in an in-depth one-to-one interview on the subject of racism. Interviews were chosen as the preferred method of research for a number of reasons: first, it was felt that other methods (such as focus groups) would limit the discussion given that the research addressed a sensitive topic; second, with the interview process, the researcher could ensure both confidentiality and anonymity (which would not be the case with focus groups); and third, given scheduling limitations, the interview process proved to be most effective for the interviewees (it is easier to schedule for one person rather than to try to schedule for a group).

To ensure that no problems arose during the interview, responses were recorded via both hand and tape. Although the questions were predetermined, the interviewer had flexibility in following up on related topics, and in order to ensure consistency, the author conducted all the interviews. In order to get a reasonable sample, some interviews were conducted via telephone. This proved to be highly convenient for the interviewee given that the interviews were conducted during the exam period for the students, thereby allowing them to participate in the research while ensuring minimal disruption to their studies. The author also believed that the telephone interviews put an emotional distance between the interviewer and the interviewee, allowing for a freer discussion on racism. Unfortunately, phone interviews were not practical for all participants given that the English language skills of some interviewees were limited. It is important to note that interpreters were not used as the researcher wanted to ensure that the interviews reflected, in their own words, participants' lived experiences. As such, the sample was further limited to those youth whose understanding of English was strong enough to be able to communicate reasonably well in English.

Prior to taping the telephone interviews, the consent form was verbally read to the potential participant and then the participant's desire to continue with the interview was audio recorded. The research assistant then followed up with a sealed written consent form that was provided to the student at their respective school for their signature. For the in-person interviews, youth were given a copy of the consent form and asked to read it. If they did not have any questions, and agreed to participate, they were asked to sign and date the document.

Data was collected from the participant interviews and interpreted using a hermeneutical methodology.[19] This approach is most useful when one wishes to understand what it means to be a victim of racism. As Varma-Joshi, Baker, and Tanaka note, "In a hermeneutical framework, interviews are treated as texts created by participants who were engaged in the particular experience being studied."[20] Texts were first treated as a whole, then were broken into relevant parts. These parts were constantly read and reread as the data was divided into categories in order to develop relational patterns. Indeed, Allan and Jensen note that textual interpretation is at the core of a hermeneutical framework given that "the purpose of a hermeneutical description

and explanation is to achieve understanding through interpretation of the phenomena under study."[21] As part of the constructivist inquiry paradigm, hermeneutics is useful in that it presumes that individuals bring a body of prior knowledge to new situations. Assessing the participants' prior understanding of racism was crucial, as this would not only help frame their experiences, but also contribute to a better understanding of their reality living within a predominantly white city. It is important to note that given the small sample size, the research cannot be generalized to the entire refugee youth population in the province or even St. John's; rather, the intent is to allow for a better understanding of how this particular group of refugee youth conceptualize, construct, and cope with racism while living in a relatively homogeneous white city.

"Old" versus "New" Racism

The contemporary scholarly consensus suggests that the concept of race is a modern phenomenon.[22] Ian Law, however, suggests that racism has existed in numerous forms across the globe since antiquity. For example, commenting on Middle Eastern racism, he notes, "Ancient Hebrews thought interbreeding between natural kinds abhorrent … [and the] biblical story of God cursing black Africans with eternal slavery … has been used as the single greatest justification for slavery for millennia."[23] Law further argues that Christian European racism has its origins in the expulsion of the Jews and Moors from Spain and that racism has existed in China and Japan as far back as feudal times. In effect, Law's assessment challenges the notion that "old" racism has its origins in European colonialism.[24]

The idea of "old" racism (as juxtaposed against the idea of "new" racism) can be best described as "a belief that race is the primary determinant of traits and capacities and that racial difference produce an inherent superiority of a particular race."[25] While racism can exist at multiple levels including institutional, environmental, cultural, and interpersonal, identifying individual racism may be problematic given that its identification is invariably based on one's perception of a situation and/or interaction. Whether institutional or individual, Ying Yee argues that while racism is a social construct, it does carry meaning within contemporary society, thereby influencing the ways in which individuals interpret and define the term. Hence, the definition of "old" racism is often based on skin colour, culture, nationality, or religion.[26]

This research, however, proposes that the key to assessing racism in contemporary Newfoundland and Labrador society is to apply Teun van Dijk's "new (or subtle)" racism. Van Dijk's theory can help to explain the potency of such concepts as fitting in, passing, and blaming the victim.

Indeed, the concept of "new" racism is best conceptualized as the idea that "traditional forms of racism, based on explicit beliefs in white superiority, have been giving way to new forms of racism, which are more subtle than traditional forms, and which in many cases (though by no means all) rely on discourse rather than violence and segregation…."[27] Whereas traditional racists exhibit a direct and overt pattern of discrimination, the "new' racists" actions may appear variable and inconsistent. As Dovidio and Gaertner point out, "Sometimes ['new' racists] do not discriminate, reflecting their egalitarian beliefs; other times, they do discriminate, manifesting their negative feelings."[28]

By exploring the concept of "new" racism, van Dijk argues that latent racist messages can exist everywhere, yet in some popular manifest perspectives, exist nowhere. For van Dijk, racist messages "are expressed, enacted and, confirmed by text and talk, such as everyday conversations, board meetings, job interviews, policies, laws, parliamentary debates … movies, TV programs and news reports in the press, among hundreds of other genres."[29] Thus the idea of a "new" racism can potentially provide important insights regarding the existence and influence of latent or subtle racism on adolescent refugees living in a small white urban centre.

Indeed, such contemporary racism is, as Barker argues, masked in racially neutral language and rearticulated to make it more acceptable in public discourse.[30] This "new" racism is most potent because it reflects a subtle, continued form of prejudice—even though an individual may not recognize that her/his actions are causing anguish. Indeed, as Phil Fontaine notes, "particularly in politics, racism and prejudice are always founded on seemingly rational, strategic arguments, designed to appeal to 'common sense' and so-called logical thinking."[31] His assessment implies that the prejudices, upon which such racist arguments are based, seem acceptable.

Philomena Essed also argues that the micro forms of racism have their origin in the macro forms; in other words, it is the inherent structural inequalities and historical processes that have led to the micro forms of racism. Such everyday racism is especially hurtful because it represents something that may not be consciously experienced by its perpetrators; it can occur without thought and be dismissed when attention is brought to it. It integrates itself into everyday practices and over time becomes part of the expected, the unquestionable, and the habitual. It represents "the empty seat next to a person of colour which is the last to be occupied in a crowded bus, the slight movement away from a person of colour in an elevator, [and] the over attention to the Black customer in the shop…."[32] Indeed, everyday racism is quite similar to the concept of "interpersonal

context" as described by Shelly Harrell, who argues that "at the interpersonal level, racism is manifested through both direct and vicarious experiences of prejudice and discrimination. This involves interactions with other people, as well as observation of their actions, nonverbal behaviour, and verbal statements."[33] While everyday racism (or interpersonal context) may be subtle, invisible, and ethereal to those who perpretrate it, for those who experience it, everyday racism is obvious, visible, and substantial.

It is important to recognize that everyday racism cannot simply be reduced to a singular event. It is a systemic process that works through multiple interactions, situations, and experiences. Indeed, many of the young interviewees identified multiple everyday racist experiences that, to the outside observer, might appear innocuous but to the young refugee, they can have a lasting and significant effect. As Henry et al. note, "These [everyday racist] incidents are difficult to quantify because they are only revealed in the thoughts, feelings and articulations of victims…."[34]

"Maybe I Do Something Wrong": Young Refugees' Conceptualization of Racism

Given that hermeneutics presumes that individuals bring a body of prior knowledge to new situations, it was important to understand how adolescent refugees conceptualized racism. Indeed, Essed argues that the meaning attached to specific racist events can only have significance within a framework of one's general understanding of racism.[35] For those youth from Colombia, their racist experiences in St. John's reflected a well-known negative Colombian stereotype. For example, the Colombian youth noted that their peers oftentimes made disparaging comments about their country and its connection to the drug trade. As one female student noted:

…well Colombia is known for its drug thing, the drug trade and all that because people assume that if you come from a place you necessarily, you know, do things that some other people have done so sometimes people ask me about drugs and they make constant comments about you know about being related to drugs and cocaine and marijuana or stuff like that … they'll ask me if I have some or if I grow it at home or if I smoke it.

This statement is perhaps an excellent example of a "lesser" form of racism (assuming that there are even "degrees" of racism). For the individual making the comment, it may be viewed as harmless (or merely a source of curiosity) but for this young refugee, it speaks directly to her identity. In fact, the Colombian youth interviewed in this research were highly cognizant of the "Colombian stereotype," and felt

that comments such as the one above continued to perpetrate an overall negative image of Colombian refugees.

Similarly, the three African youth interviewed for this research conceptualized racism in terms of their skin colour. Moreover, one Liberian youth indicated that there were "levels" of racism in the province, and he perceived blacks to be at the base of that racial hierarchy. He states that racism is:

…physically by color [be]cause, um, especially black and white, because if you are white and you're from Mexico they [white people] won't treat you differently because you're white, but if you're black [laughs] and you're from, and you [don't] look like white people, they treat you differently because of your color….

This statement suggests that the interviewee perceives individuals from South America as on a par with other white youth. Obviously, as the interviews indicate, Colombian students do not share this view.

Another interesting problem with conceptualizing racism stemmed from the fact that two respondents had difficulty understanding the term. While both of these individuals had little trouble recognizing the fact that they were viewed as different in St. John's, having arrived from a country where they were the majority, racism, as a concept, was foreign to them. Such a view is supported by Essed, who notes that "it may be assumed that, *without general knowledge of racism, individuals cannot comprehend the meaning of racism in their lives.*"[36]

While they were unable to conceptualize racism, the negative effect it has had on them was nonetheless compelling:

Interviewer: When I ask about the word racism, what image comes to mind or what … how would define racism or how do you see racism?

Interviewee: Racism? Umm … I don't know what it means.

Interviewer: How would you describe when someone treats you differently?

Interviewee: Mistreating me? (Yeah) okay, it's like treating me badly (uh-huh) yeah (long pause) umm maybe someone does not like me (okay) umm maybe sometime I may do something wrong and the person does not understand and maybe… I don't know…

This exchange speaks volumes regarding the problems that newcomers, especially refugees, face when coming to Canada. Two of the three African refugee youth who were interviewed were at a loss to explain why some individuals reacted this way when,

… as for you, you said racism right [nervous laugh] … I don't know the meaning of the word too good … so if anybody tells such a thing that it would not feel good … what action I would take against the person if somebody … somebody to tell me I didn't do anything to them.

Obviously, they recognize the emotional distress that racism can cause, despite their inability to "name" it.

Finally, while one Eastern European interviewee described a racist experience that was not directed toward him (rather toward a Chinese student in his class), he was nonetheless cognizant of the harm it can cause. [37] He states,

you don't expect people to think [about people like that] and when people think something like that about someone who's different, I'm different from the others, I look like Chinese too, and you just … I feel like something like that might happen [to] me, and there's going to be bad things said about me for nothing.

For his sister, however, her experience with racism was reflected through her nationality, which she recognized as making her different. She went on to describe her experience as one in which her female peers would give her demeaning glares—a prime example of the overt nature of everyday racism.

Sadly, some students in the sample perceived their racist experience as a result of their own actions. As the female Liberian youth noted, "I used to say umm 'I think most people doesn't like Blacks' and he'd [her brother] just say 'maybe no they don't want to talk to you because you just came here' and I was like 'yeah, maybe'." Such experiences may be rooted in the discourse of blaming the victim. As Frances Henry and her colleagues note, "In this form of dominant discourse, it is assumed that certain communities (such as African Canadians) lack the motivation, education, or skills to participate fully in the workplace, educational system, or other arenas of Canadian society."[38]

"I Don't Like Blacks": Young Refugees' Experience with Racism

While it was a relief to find that none of the interviewees had experienced any violent racist incidents (in contrast to the study by Baker, Varma-Joshi, and Tanaka), there was, however, concern over the number of incidents in which racial slurs were used. During the interviews, seven youth described an incident where they were subjected to a racial slur. In one incident, a female youth described how another student would not help her find a classroom because she was black:

I want[ed] to go to the ESL to see [name removed] but I thought she didn't say anything and I just put my hand on her shoulder, she was like 'Leave me alone' and I said 'Why? Can you please direct me somewhere?' and she said 'I don't want to direct you.' I said 'Why?' she said 'I don't know you' I said 'I want you to be my friend. You can direct me because I don't know anyone here.' She said 'I don't like blacks.' And I said 'Because I'm black.' She was like 'Yeah.'

Another youth reported that she remembered being called a "P—i" and an "Oreo Cookie" in elementary school.[39] Clearly, such examples go beyond the covert form of racism to a point where the individual wanted to ensure the victim knew that they were the "outsider." These racial slurs were not limited to youth of colour as four other students reported being persecuted due to their religious practices. As noted earlier, one youth noted that he was picked on for not being Jewish (while living in Israel) while a Muslim youth in the sample noted that she had been called a terrorist numerous times because she wears a hijab. As Picca and Feagin suggest, there are some whites who "engage in racialized performances to show people of color that they are *trespassers* into white space."[40]

The remainder of the sample described being subjected to anti-immigrant sentiments, stereotypes, and discrimination. The anti-immigrant comments ranged from such statements as "immigrant go home" and "you're not wanted here" to "go back to your country" and "stop killing my language." These stereotypes were reflected mostly in the comments made by the Colombian interviewees who noted that they had been subjected to numerous references about the drug trade in Colombia. In fact, when asked if there had been other racist incidents in his life, one youth responded, "Well [pause] mostly comments people make about my [pause] my country, and like my color, and stuff like that, like they make a lot of comments about drugs and stuff like that."

Finally, one of the interviewees recounted being subjected to discrimination while applying for a job in St. John's. Despite her belief that she was qualified, she felt that she was not hired due to her skin colour. She notes that she felt "like they [the business] are really racist in that place because they hadn't picked me, but it's not even in the context, that place is, like a public place." In fact, the particular individual went on to note that, from this experience she would not feel comfortable applying again for a job in the province.

"You Just Try To Be Like Everyone Else": Coping with Racism

Much research has been conducted on the social and mental effects of racism on visible minority adolescents.[41] For youth of all ethnicities, adolescence can be a difficult

time; indeed, it becomes more acute when adolescent refugees have to deal with the added pressures produced by their race or ethnicity. One of the more troubling results of racism is the sense of loneliness and isolation it can create. As Rokach and Neto note, "Loneliness has been linked to such maladies as depression, suicide, hostility, alcoholism, poor self-concept, and psychosomatic illnesses…."[42] Furthermore, Brennan has noted that "adolescence seems to be the time of life when loneliness first emerges as an intense recognizable phenomenon."[43] while Feagin and his colleagues have suggested that racism, as experienced by visible minority youth, has resulted in a higher degree of isolation, alienation, segregation, and concomitant stress.[44] Brondolo and her colleagues indicate that racism can be a significant source of stress and may have "deleterious effects even when the target does not consciously perceive the maltreatment or attribute it to racism."[45] Indeed, those affected by racism must not only cope with the substance of racism (e.g., interpersonal conflict, blocked opportunities, and social exclusion) but also must manage its emotional consequences (e.g., painful feelings of anger, nervousness, sadness, and hopelessness).

In these interviews, the youth respondents expressed feelings of embarrassment, hurt, sadness, uneasiness, and shyness. These feelings can also influence their development and lead to an increased sense of loneliness. One young refugee noted that after experiencing the initial racist incident, he remembered being sad and moody. He went on to note that racism "makes me feel not good about myself, like, I don't know, makes you think, like, that you don't deserve to be like everyone else and all that." Surprisingly, only two interviewees indicated that their experience with racism made them angry—a natural response given the seriousness of the issue.[46]

Another refugee youth suggested that he had to "act white" in order to be accepted; indeed, this acceptance would come at the expense of his own identity. Indeed, the coping tasks posed by racism may create a need to manage the damage to one's self-concept and social identity.[47] He states, "You know like you don't always like being the one who is outside who is like you know … it's like you and everybody else … so you just like try to be like everyone else is…." This too has serious implications for Canada given the emphasis that is placed on promoting multiculturalism as an official policy. If young refugees feel that they need to "act white" in order to fit in with Canadian society, then this directly challenges the very notion of Canada as a multicultural mosaic. Indeed, his sentiment mirrors the anecdotal evidence as reported by settlement counsellors at the Association for New Canadians in Newfoundland and Labrador. They have observed that some African youth have adopted the African

American identity—perhaps as a means to fit into "traditional" North American society and to adopt traditional behavioural norms associated with that identity.[48]

Two trends deal with the way in which these youth address the emotional pain created by these experiences. First, there appears to be a tendency for these young refugees to dismiss their experience with racism by attempting to ignore the comments and incidents. Second, and perhaps even more serious, reflects the fact that their parents are also encouraging this behaviour. The majority of those interviewed indicated that their parents advised them to forget about their experience, and even suggested that it was not all that important. As one youth noted, "They [his parents] said that we just had to get used to it because ahh … like racism really exists everywhere all around the world." If these youth bottle up the associated feelings they have with racism, it may create greater emotional and social problems for them in the future. Interestingly, evidence suggests that specific coping mechanisms may be culturally based. Brondolo et al. reported that while black Americans would "try to do something and talk to others" in response to a racist incident, Asian immigrants in Canada would prefer to "regard it as a fact of life, avoid it or ignore it."[49]

While some youth in this sample felt the need to ignore the pain of racism, others sought social supports from their family and friends. Social supports are defined as the presence or availability of network members who express concern, love, and care for an individual and provide coping assistance.[50] Seeking social support involves communicating with family and/or friends about the experience, and many of the youth interviewed indicated that they had the support of their friends in dealing with racism in St. John's. While they recounted there were times when they felt they were an outsider, the fact remains that they do have some degree of peer support. Several students indicated that their friends came to their defense during the racist incident and provided support following it. This is especially important to young refugees since it may give them cause to believe that not all of their white peers espouse racist attitudes or beliefs, and that their adopted country will support and protect them.

Discussion and Conclusion

This paper sought to answer three key questions: "*How do self-described adolescent victims of racism conceptualize the term?*", "*What is the nature of racism as experienced by self-described adolescent victims of racism in the St. John's CMA?*", and "*How do self-described adolescent victims of racism respond to perceived racist incidents?*" It is evident that these refugee youth understand the nature of racism and are able to conceptualize it despite the fact the some

respondents appeared unable to comprehend the term. Moreover, the nature of their experiences seems to fall directly into the scope of "new" racism although one individual's experience could be considered to be institutional racism. Finally, the coping strategies of these youth varied ranging from accepting and/or ignoring it to seeking out social supports.

Indeed, the connection between the respondents' vision of racism and their own experiences is especially powerful. They recognized that racism was having a negative effect on their lives, and was creating an environment where they did not feel welcome. In fact, one of the observations made by the researcher was that the interviewees generally became quiet and withdrawn when describing their experiences. This can become problematic if these experiences begin to occur on a regular basis, especially for the younger respondents (i.e., younger than sixteen), if they choose not to discuss their experiences, or if they choose not to seek out peer or family support.

The evidence also suggests that the described experiences have the potential to go beyond the spectre of everyday/"new" racism and may reflect the possibility that a virulent overt racism is developing in the city. Indeed, a report prepared for the Association for New Canadians found that over 40 percent of white youth in the St. John's CMA felt that racism was a problem at their school.[51] Such statistics are especially relevant as St. John's seeks to move away from its traditional monocultural (i.e., English/Irish) demography to one that is more reflective of the Canadian mosaic. While the majority of Canadians may believe that Canada is generally devoid of prejudice, discrimination, and racism, the evidence presented here, at least among a select group of St. John's refugee youth, appears to contradict that assertion. Clearly, there is a discrepancy between the perceived and the actual degree to which racism is a problem within the city. Indeed, each respondent felt that racism created an environment where they did not feel welcomed or where they could not be viewed as equal to their white peers. Beyond the traditional problems associated with language and culture, refugee youth also have to deal with the issues that follow from experiencing racism.

The experiences of racism also differed among the various ethnic groups. For Middle Eastern and Indian youth, their belief system and religious practices were most likely to be attacked by their peers and their conceptualization of racism reflected this view. Moreover, the Eastern European and Colombian students seem less likely to experience racism on a level similar to African students, though the impact is perhaps just as devastating. Evidence from Warren et al. suggests that this could result from the fact that these

individuals are more accepted due to the homogeneity of their culture and language in relation to their white peers.[52]

Racism, either real or perceived, can also affect young refugees by creating undue stress in their lives. Indeed, it is the accumulation of racism-based stress that can have the most devastating effect. As Harrell notes, "The stress—and potential damage—of racism lies not only in the specific incident but also in the resistance of others to believing and validating the reality or significance of one's personal experience."[53] The reliving or retelling of the experience to someone who is doubtful can create added stress beyond the original event. Moreover, persistent racism can significantly impact the social and mental well-being and development of youth by influencing their ability and willingness to trust, to form close relationships, and to be part of a social group. It can also influence their overall academic performance.

The research demonstrates that racism has had an immediate, and in some cases, long-term effect. Many respondents indicated that they felt ashamed about being different from their white peers and that the comments oftentimes resulted in a poor self-image. When asked about how the racist comments made them feel, one student responded that "sometimes it makes me feel bad because I'm not doing anything wrong. I'm just being here." As an adolescent refugee to Canada, developing a poor self-image at such a critical stage in the integration process may have serious implications for his later emotional and cogitative development.

Another consistent observation emanating from the interviews was the respondents' belief that education can help to eliminate racism and that community groups have an important role to play. The respondents spoke about the types of events in their schools as well as the education seminars that take place. Indeed, March 21, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, was cited by many of the youth as an important part of the school year for them. Furthermore, settlement agencies, such as the Association for New Canadians, have done a tremendous job in developing programs to educate youth on such key topics as racism, multiculturalism, and cultural diversity. Yet, despite all the programs, events, and training designed to promote diversity, racism still looms large.

The interviews clearly demonstrate that adolescent refugees are experiencing increased instances of racism in St. John's, and perhaps more seriously, this racism is peer driven. Indeed, the effect that racism can have on the mental health of these refugee youth is immense and can seriously impact their integration into Canadian society. It is also perhaps likely that the limited racial diversity found in Newfoundland and Labrador may diminish the critical

impact of the interviewee's experiences. As such, given the lack of a familiar ethnocultural community, this may result in an increased mental strain on young visible minorities, especially given the tendency for the youth in this sample to cope with the racialized name calling by accepting and/ or ignoring it.

While it was anticipated that racism would exist in the city, it was disconcerting to realize its overall effect on young refugees. Both this study and the one conducted by Baker, Varma-Joshi, and Tanaka suggest that racism does have immediate and long-term mental and social consequences for adolescents.[54] It is hoped that this research will not only help to increase the knowledge of the effects of racism in a predominantly white city but also provide the necessary impetus for teachers and administrators to act to address it sooner rather than later.

Notes

1. Wade Locke and Scott Lynch, *A Survey of the Attitudes of Employers in Newfoundland and Labrador Toward the Recruitment and Employment of New Canadians and International Workers* (St. John's: Leslie Harris Centre of Regional Policy and Development, 2005), accessed 25 October 2009, http://www.mun.ca/harriscentre/reports/research/2006/immigartion_final_report.pdf; Goss Gilroy Inc., *Retention and Integration of Immigrants in Newfoundland and Labrador—Are We Ready?*(St. John's: Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and the Coordinating Committee on Newcomer Integration, 2005), accessed 25 October 2009, http://www.nlimmigration.ca/media/2854/immigrationstudyfinal.pdf; Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism, *Diversity ~ Opportunity and Growth: An Immigration Strategy for Newfoundland and Labrador* (St. John's: Human Resources, Labour, and Employment, 2007), accessed 25 October 2009, http://www.nlimmigration.ca/media/2842/strategydoc-mar07.pdf.
2. Canada, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, *Canada Facts and Figures: Immigrant Overview Permanent and Temporary Residents* (Ottawa: Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2010), 31.
3. Goss Gilroy, *Retention and Integration of Immigrants,* 19.
4. Canada, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Research and Evaluation, Ima Okonny-Meyers, *The Interprovincial Mobility of Immigrants in Canada* (Ottawa: Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2010), 4.
5. Canada, *Canada Facts and Figures,* 30.
6. Keith Banting and Will Kymlicka, "Canadian Multiculturalism: Global Anxieties and Local Debates," *British Journal of Canadian Studies* 28 (2010): 43–72.
7. Ibrahim M. Alladin, *Racism in Canadian Schools* (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Canada, 1996).

8. "March 21st, International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination," Ipsos Reid and the Dominion Institute, accessed January 31, 2013, http://www.dominion.ca/Downloads/IRracismSurvey.pdf.
9. Russell W. Rumberger, "Dropping Out of High School: The Influence of Race, Sex, and Family Background," *American Educational Research Journal* 20 (1983): 199–220; Ruben G. Rumbaut, "The Crucible Within: Ethnic Identity, Self-Esteem, and Segmented Assimilation Among Children of Immigrants," *International Migration Review* 28 (1994): 748–794; Rodney Clark, Norman B. Anderson, Vernessa R. Clark, and David R. Williams, "Racism as a Stressor for African Americans: A Biopsychosocial Model," *American Psychologist* 54 (1999): 805–816; Toni Terling Watt and Susan F. Sharp, "Race Differences in Strains Associated with Suicidal Behavior among Adolescents," *Youth and Society* 34 (2002): 232–256.
10. Manju Varma-Joshi, Cynthia J. Baker, and Connie Tanaka, "Names Will Never Hurt Me?" *Harvard Educational Review* 74 (2004): 176.
11. As the interviews were conducted between May and June 2007, it is important to note that this research occurred well before the adoption in 2012 of Protecting Canada's Immigration System Act. While this legislation will no doubt influence all categories of immigration (including refugees), the implication of those changes are not discussed in this paper.
12. The 2011 census estimated that the St. John's CMA had a population of 196,966 while the 2006 Census estimated that it had a population 181, 113.
13. Cynthia J. Baker , Manju Varma-Joshi, and Connie Tanaka, "Sticks and Stones: Racism as Experienced by Adolescents in New Brunswick," *Canadian Journal of Nursing Research* 33 (2001): 87–105.
14. Canada, Statistics Canada, "Population and Dwelling Counts, for Census Metropolitan Areas and Census Agglomerations, 2011 and 2006 Censuses" (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2011), accessed January 31, 2013, http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/dp-pd/hlt-fst/pd-pl/Table-Tableau.cfm?LANG=Eng&T=201&S=3&O=D&RPP=150.
15. Canada, Statistics Canada, "Immigrant Population by Place of Birth, by Province and Territory (2006 Census)" (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2006), accessed February 10, 2013, http://www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/l01/cst01/demo34b-eng.htm. Please note that these estimates are based on the 2006 census data as the 2011 numbers were unavailable.
16. UNESCO, "UNESCO: Acting with and for Youth," accessed February 10, 2013, http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/youth/.; Canada. Statistics Canada, "National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth" (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2010), accessed February 10, 2013, http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&SDDS=4450&Item_Id=25609&lang=en.

17. Canada, Statistics Canada, "Community Profiles (2006 Census)" (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2006), accessed May 27, 2013, http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/prof/92-591/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CMA&Code1=001&Geo2=PR&Code2=10&Data=Count&SearchText=St.%20John%27s&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=All&GeoLevel=PR&GeoCode=001.

18. Jean L. Kunz, Ann Milan, and Sylvain Schetagne, "Unequal Access: A Canadian Profile of Education, Employment and Income" (Ottawa: Canadian Race Relations Foundation, 2000), accessed February 12, 2013, http://www.crr.ca/images/stories/pdf/unequal/Engfin.pdf.

19. Norman Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, eds., *The Handbook of Qualitative Research,* 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2000).

20. Varma-Joshi, Baker, and Tanaka, "Names Will Never Hurt Me?" 180.

21. Marion Allen and Louise Jensen, "Hermeneutical Inquiry: Meaning and Scope," *Western Journal of Nursing Research* 12 (1990): 243.

22. Michael James, "Race," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2012 ed.),* ed. Edward N. Zalta, accessed February 12, 2013, http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2012/entries/race/.

23. Ian Law, *Racism and Ethnicity: Global Debates, Dilemmas, Directions* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2010), 5.

24. Ibid.

25. June Ying Yee, "Racism, Types of," in *Encyclopedia of Race, Ethnicity and Society,* ed. Richard T. *Schaefer* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2008), 1119.

26. Ibid., 1120.

27. Marie Gillespie and Jason Toynbee, *Analysing Media Texts* (London: Open University Press, 2006).

28. John F. Dovidio and Samuel L. Gaertner, "Aversive Racism," in *Encyclopedia of Race, Ethnicity & Society,* ed. Richard T. *Schaefer* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2008), 1116.

29. Teun A. van Dijk, "New(s) Racism: A Discourse Analytical Approach," in *Ethnic Minorities and the Media,* ed. Simon Cottle, (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2000), 33.

30. Martin Barker, *The New Racism* (London: Junction Books, 1981).

31. Phil Fontaine, *Modern Racism in Canada* (Kingston, ON: Queen's University Press, 1998).

32. Frances Henry, Carol Tator, Winston Mattis, and Tim Rees, *The Colour of Democracy: Racism in Canadian Society,* 2nd ed. (Toronto: Harcourt Brace, 2000), 55.

33. Shelly P. Harrell, "A Multidimensional Conceptualization of Racism-Related Stress: Implications for the Well-Being of People of Color," *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 70 (2000): 42–57.

34. Frances Henry, Carol Tator, Winston Mattis, and Tim Rees, *The Colour of Democracy: Racism in Canadian Society,* 3rd ed. (Toronto: Thomson Nelson, 2006), 27.

35. Philomena Essed, *Understanding Everyday Racism: An Interdisciplinary Theory* (Newberry Park: Sage Publications, 1991).

36. Ibid., 77; emphasis in original.

37. It should be noted that the author was not wholly convinced that the respondent was referring to a student in his class. Varying cues and specific responses to other questions seem to suggest that the student was, in fact, describing his own experience.

38. Henry et al., 2nd ed., 27.

39. Following the example of Essed, this article does not spell out racial slurs unless it is necessary for comprehension.

40. Leslie Picca and Joe Feagin, *Two-faced Racism: Whites in the Backstage and Frontstage* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 80; emphasis in original.

41. George Dei, Josephine Mazzuca, Elizabeth McIssac, and Jasmine Zine, *Reconstructing 'Drop-out': A Critical Ethnography of the Dynamics of Black Students' Disengagement from School* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997); James H. Carter, "Racism's Impact on Mental Health," *Journal of the National Medical Association* 86 (1994): 543–547; S. Fernando, "Racism as a Cause of Depression," *International Journal of Social Psychiatry* 30 (1984), 41–49.

42. Ami Rokach and Felix Neto, "Causes of Loneliness in Adolescence: A Cross-Cultural Study," *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth* 8 (2000), 66.

43. T. Brennan, "Loneliness at Adolescence," in *Loneliness: A Sourcebook of Current Theory, Research, and Therapy,* ed. Letitia Peplau and Daniel Perlman (New York: Wiley, 1982), 269–296.

44. Joe Feagin, Hernan Vera, and Nikitah Imani, *The Agony of Education: Black Students at White Colleges and Universities* (New York: Routledge, 1996).

45. Elizabeth Brondolo, Nisha Brady ver Halen, Melissa Pencille, Danielle Beatty, and Richard J. Contrada, "Coping with Racism: A Selective Review of the Literature and a Theoretical and Methodological Critique," *Journal of Behavioral Medicine* 32 (2009): 64–88.

46. Howard C. Stevenson, Jocelyn Reed, Preston Bodison, and Angela Bishop, "Racism Stress Management: Racial Socialization Beliefs and the Experience of Depression and Anger in African American Youth," *Youth and Society* 29 (1997): 197–222.

47. David Mellor, "Responses to Racism: A Taxonomy of Coping Styles used by Aboriginal Australians," *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 74 (2004): 56–71.

48. Holly White, "Settlement Workers in the Schools Program Overview" (panel presentation, Annual Meeting of the Atlantic Region of Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (ARAISA), St. John's, NL, September 19–21, 2006).

49. Brondolo et al., "Coping with Racism," 69.

50. Irwin Sarason, Henry Levine, Robert Basham, Barbara Sarason, "Assessing Social Support: The Social Support Questionnaire," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 44 (1983): 127–139.

51. James Baker, "Not in My Backyard" (unpublished report prepared for the Association for New Canadians, 2008), 3.
52. W. Warren, E. Samuel, M. King, and J. Yealland, *Study of Adolescents in Selected Ethnocultural Groups: School, Health and Home* (Kingston, ON: Social Program Evaluation Group, 1997).
53. Harrell, "A Multidimensional Conceptualization of Racism-related Stress," 45.
54. Baker, Varma-Joshi, and Tanaka, "Sticks and Stones," 94.

James Baker is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Sociology at Memorial University. Since 2006, he has worked as a researcher with the Association for New Canadians, a community-based, non-profit immigrant settlement agency located in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Literacy, Teens, Refugees, and Soccer

Eric Dwyer and Mary Lou McCloskey

Abstract

This study examined the literacy development of teenage refugee boys in a one-month intensive summer literacy camp. The study intervention sought to abate literacy regression among language minority students in a sub-urban southern US city by combining physical training and promotion of literacy culture. Students experienced an intensive schedule of athletics and reading/writing work-shops. Data were collected regarding student writing, reading proficiency, and dispositions toward literacy practices. Outcomes included increased expressed student enjoyment expressed for both reading and writing, especially for the experience of older students reading to younger peers. In addition, data indicated that summer literacy regression was largely avoided. However, reading proficiency level assessments foreshadow obstacles for students in achieving timely high school graduation. Finally, means used by mainstream teachers of assessing the literacy of refugee students, especially compared to assessments of proficient English-speaking students, are critiqued.

Résumé

Cette étude examine le développement de la littératie de jeunes adolescents réfugiés lors d'un camp d'été intensif d'alphabétisation d'une durée d'un mois. L'intervention examinée visait à freiner la régression de la littératie chez les étudiants de minorités linguistiques d'une banlieue du sud des États-Unis, en combinant l'entraînement physique et la promotion de la culture écrite. Les étudiants ont suivi un horaire intensif d'activités athlétiques et d'ateliers de lecture et d'écriture. Les données recueillies se rapportaient à l'écriture, les compétences de lectures, et à la dis-position aux pratiques de la littératie des étudiants. Les résultats incluent l'augmentation du plaisir de la lecture et de l'écriture exprimé par les étudiants, en particulier au sujet de l'expérience qu'ont faite les étudiants plus vieux de lire aux plus jeunes. De plus, les données indiquent que la régression de littératie propre aux vacances estivales avait été évitée. Néanmoins, les évaluations des compétences de lecture laisser présager que les étudiants rencontreront des obstacles dans l'obtention de leur diplôme d'études secondaires dans les temps prévus. Enfin, on y fait la cri-tique des moyens que les enseignants réguliers emploient pour évaluer la littératie des étudiants réfugiés, surtout en comparaison avec l'évaluation des étudiants de langue anglaise.

Introduction

Just outside Atlanta, a summer camp is conducted for adolescent boys who are avid soccer players. However, this is no ordinary camp. It is intended for refugee boys from Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Cuba, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Iraq, the Karen region of Burma, Kosovo, Liberia, Nepal, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, and Sudan, and has important literacy goals. Many of these young people have experienced the violence of war and separation from parents, relatives, and mentors. Various relief agencies have helped these students and their families find a suburban community in the southern United States, one with a warm climate, some job opportunities, good public transportation, and underused apartments. Camp fees are paid by donors, and teachers are volunteers. The authors, both professionals in English language teaching, were invited to volunteer as instructors and to report to the organization's donors on the boys' literacy development during this summer literacy camp.

The boys belonged to local soccer teams working with the same coach. The purpose of this collective was not only

to provide a means for boys to play organized soccer but also to use soccer as a springboard to advance the boys' academic growth and potential. In order to participate, boys followed closely enforced restrictions, including no smoking, no drugs or alcohol, no missed practices, no gang-related activity, and no grade average lower than a C. The coach understood, however, that many students who were new to English might not maintain the C grade without extracurricular support; thus, English language development and reading were partnered with soccer practice. During the school year, every ninety-minute soccer workout was followed by a ninety-minute tutoring session. The coach instituted additional requirements for acquiring vital uniform pieces the boys needed to play in any game: regular attendance at practices and tutoring sessions and reading a minimum number of books on their own. This, along with transportation support, enabled the boys, whose families could rarely afford uniforms or other fees, to play in soccer leagues as long as they were attending practice and studying, reading, and working in school classes, including English.

Refugee Youth and Literacy Development

Numerous agencies allude to right of refugee youth to attain education and aspire toward higher education (e.g., the 1951 Refugee Convention[1] and the UNHCR in its education policy[2]). Furthermore, the Refugee Act of 1980, which initiated the Federal Refugee Resettlement Program, states, "The Secretary of Education is authorized to make grants, and enter into contracts, for payments for projects to provide special educational services (including English language training) to refugee children in elementary and secondary schools where a demonstrated need has been shown."[3] While such sentiment may be heralded, none of these policies refers in detail to *how* to educate refugees to enable them to ultimately attend college, even if they are fortunate enough to gain access to ongoing quality K-12 schooling. As such, the documents fail to indicate that educational approaches for refugees, even when they gain access to mainstream schooling, might need to be different from those used with their new peers.

In the US, in an effort to track how students progress through their educational careers and into post-secondary education, state departments of education are charged with tracking the number of students who pass standardized examinations regarding reading development.[4] In other words, there exists an underlying assumption that students' fundamental ability to achieve graduation and matriculation into college depends on their ability to read and write in sophisticated ways. These departments of education then determine which schools are successful in helping students attain predetermined literacy levels. Among these

assessments are calculations based on student ethnicity, disability, and socio-economic status. Another such calculation is derived for English language learners (ELLs), a student body often constituting students with limited access to formalized education (known as *limited formal schooling,* or LFS), students with interrupted education (usually students of migrant families who move from one school to another after short periods of time), and refugees. However, beyond the labelling of ELL, these additional descriptions of students are not teased out in state-reported data. As a result, in the US and indeed worldwide, little is known with direct respect to literacy development of refugee students.

Research in ELL Literacy Development

English language teachers currently use a number of tools to assess students' English language proficiency. The most commonly used assessment scale for English learners in the US today is the Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners (ACCESS for ELLs) based on the framework and standards of World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA).[5] At present, thirty-two states and one territory of the US use ACCESS to assess whether students should be placed in a preliminary English as a Second Language (ESL) class or in a mainstream class, for level placement in classes, and to inform instruction. Once students graduate from ESL to mainstream, they are then measured against native speakers on standardized exams and other reading assessment measures designed specifically for proficient or native English speakers (NESs).

In mainstream classes, teachers must keep track of students' reading proficiency. To accomplish such, teachers use reading inventories—a battery of reading passages rated by grade level. Since NES-based research has shown that native speakers' accurate pronunciation of words when asked to read them (also known as *decoding*) correlates strongly to their comprehension level,[6] teachers ask students to read these graded passages aloud, and teachers note mispronunciations. Students are then determined to belong to the proficiency level corresponding to the graded passage where they start making a mistake or two.

The implementation of NES-based surveys (such as the Flesch-Kincaid grade level index[7]) for ELLs has been critiqued, with suggestions that concern for syntactic complexity, rhetorical organization, propositional density,[8] and word frequency are often overlooked when teachers assess their students' reading proficiency levels.[9] In other words, many ESL teachers know that some students can decode words accurately without knowing what they mean. Additionally, these critiques point to the concept of academic language—i.e., linguistic skills specifically needed to

master schooling and textbooks[10]—as an integral feature of ELL reading development that is often disregarded by NES-based reading researchers and mainstream teachers in their lesson plans. However, in spite of the critiques, to our knowledge, no full-scale study had been developed showing the degree to which an NES-based reading assessment helped or hindered literacy development in new English readers, let alone a study directed toward refugee students.

The researchers had noted that their own teacher trainees, who had numerous experiences observing primary and secondary level classrooms, reported that often good-hearted mainstream teachers, considering ELLs to be capable and bright, treated both NESs and ELLs similarly when using cooperative learning practices.[11] Treating all students equitably is, of course, laudable; however, it may not be sufficient. DeJong and Harper have documented the importance of teachers' recognition that learners of a new language need specific support to focus on particular linguistic hurdles[12] and that classes and programs should be differentiated so that students of similar ages or language proficiency levels can study together as appropriate. In practice, however, some teachers with positive dispositions might not be grouping students of similar language abilities so that teachers and students themselves can bolster their language development in manageable ways.[13]

Additional concerns arise when students enter school at secondary school ages. The US school system navigates students through two or three years of middle school or junior high school (generally) and four years of high school. However, research suggests that newcomers may need on the order of seven years or more to master so-called academic language and perform like native-language peers.[14] Thus, any newcomer into a secondary school with little English faces a daunting challenge, as do these students' teachers. Yet very little research has been conducted on reading development of ELLs in secondary settings and the scope of this challenge is not fully understood. In other words, even when using NES-based surveys, we know little with respect to secondary students with limited formal schooling, including their overall comprehension rates or their writing development.

While little is known regarding secondary ELLs' reading development, research has indicated slow academic advancement due to socio-economic status, both in minority children[15] and English learners.[16] In addition, research has shown that some immigrant students may forget some of the English they've learned because they don't practice it over summer break, a phenomenon known as *summertime slack*.[17] In other words, refugees who already often come into school with inconsistent periods of education find summer break an additional interruption from the consistent instruction and exposure needed for students to attain the academic language that can support them toward high school graduation.

Soccer Plus Literacy Program Goals

The coach had observed that the refugee students had little to do in the summer. Most parents worked, some at two or more low-paying jobs. The boys' families didn't have financial support to send their kids to camps, had little time after work to spend with them, and were often English learners themselves who didn't have the skills to help their children with language development. The coach, concerned about a three-month lull in the boys' language development, began the first year by holding a short summer literacy camp. She instituted a reading chart and challenged the boys to read a number of books. The coach found the camp moderately successful, but she wished to improve the camp in both length and quality for the second summer. As a result, she asked the authors to help with the year-two four-week summer camp.

In conceiving language goals for the program, two major tenets were promoted—accentuating the positive (using heightened motivation and appropriate instruction to enhance learning) and defying the negative (overcoming the challenges of interrupted schooling, summertime slack, and less effective instruction).[18] Soccer was a valuable catalyst for accentuating the positive, as correlations have been cited between physical activity and academic progress.[19] The coach's observations and assumption, supported by the research of Walker and of Singh et al., was that soccer could serve as motivator, energizer, and self-esteem builder.[20] Accentuating the negative is the students' experience of the issues of *tracking*. Because students are language learners or have interrupted education, they have low entrance test scores and are frequently placed in slower-paced, lower-tracked sections and sequences in school. Unfortunately, students have a difficult time moving out of those levels and may not end up in a program that adequately prepares them for higher education.[21] The researchers designed a program to ameliorate summertime slack through treating all students positively and, while accommodating language levels, challenging them cognitively as if they were tracked into the highest-level tracks. This approach aligned well with those of the coach and the program.

With these caveats in mind, the following notions of second language development were implemented:

1. using what works to create long-term, self-initiating learners,[22]
2. fostering reading improvement through sustained silent choice reading,[23]
3. developing self-expression and cultural representation through process writing of personal narratives,[24]

4. developing science concepts and promoting environmental sustainability and responsibility through study of water ecology,[25] and

5. treating students as authors, and authors as readers.[26]

Such an approach was established in an effort to give refugee students voice[27] which could viably demonstrate students' literacy progression, as well as their potential contributions to the community.

Thus, the authors and leaders program for the academic camp that included sports, reading, and writing made use of activities designed to be appropriate to students' proficiency levels and age. We wanted this program to illustrate how literacy development can be motivating, engaging, meaningful, and purposeful though we had only one month of intervention.

Research Objectives

In sum, a group of refugee boys playing soccer needed help with their English and academic development. Their coach also desired accurate data showing the educational advancement achieved by the program to report to donors. And finally, we found opportunities within this experience to share evidence on refugee youth literacy development that had not yet been reported. At the basic level, there was a pressing desire to avert summertime slack in the boys' language development. Equally important, however, was to determine if teachers and students could parlay students' motivation for soccer into motivation for their own linguistic and academic advancement. In other words, while enjoying soccer, could the students enjoy and improve their literacy? Answers to these questions could not only serve as important information for the program donors, but also be useful information for teachers of refugees and administrators of refugee programs, particularly as they themselves report progress in reading comprehension levels and writing development to students' families, administrators, and policy makers.

Methodology

Setting: The Summer Camp Structure

The coach, other team organizers, four AmeriCorps Volunteers, and seven teacher volunteers comprised the camp staff. The program had thirty-five student participants, ranging from age nine to seventeen, with an average age of 13.7 years. (Many refugees do not have birth certificates because of such factors as war, cultural differences, and refugee camp record-keeping. The age levels were the best we could determine based on parent reports and immigration information.) The camp team met before the program began and interacted regularly during the program, both through almost daily meetings and email interactions. Teachers were asked to plan their sessions with learners to

include activity-based communicative language learning, content-based language learning, balances between reading and writing, and the development of language skills in context.[28] The following daily routine was conducted:

- *Book club*—where we focused on independent reading, shared reading, and language experience, using authentic texts chosen for interest, relevance and learner proficiency level;
- *Journals*—where we asked students to begin each day by writing in a journal, engaging with teachers or other students in informal written interactions, keeping content and communication as the primary goal, but never using this activity as a means of error correction;
- *Writing for publication*—where we examined intricacies of writing—including correction of spelling, grammar, and style—on the way to establishing some sort of community book;
- *Green Club*—where students examined their role in environmental issues, building this summer upon the themes of "reduce, re-use, and recycle," as well as water cycle and water monitoring;
- *Arts*—where students explored media and re-interpreted content;
- *Inter-class teaching and learning*—where students worked with other students through tutoring and book sharing;
- *Fitness*—where students participated in karate, yoga, and stretching;
- *Self-monitoring skills*—where students were overtly asked to participate, contribute, support, and initiate; and
- *Field trips*—usually organized around the environment theme of the camp.

In addition, a daily schedule was set:

Time	Activity
10:00–10:30 am	Workout 1
10:30–12:00 noon	Small group class time, including Book Club, journals, and content activities
12:00–12:30 pm	Workout 2
12:30–1:00 pm	Lunch
1:00–1:30 pm	Independent Silent Reading Time
1:30–3:00 pm	Art Club or Green Club
Some weekday afternoons	Field trips to content-related sites
Friday afternoon	Fun field trips and activities

Data Collection

Greene and Caracelli write of a dialectical approach to mixing methods in research practices for achieving both logical and political means.[29] As the researchers also served as two of the teachers in the summer camp, this approach was embraced within the framework of a participant action research project.[30] Since the research itself would be short, only four weeks in duration, the usual recursive nature of both dialectical and action research practices would be truncated, leaving the results here only to be judged for subsequent revisions of program structure. Nevertheless, since understanding the degrees of student enjoyment and literacy development were the most immediate goals of the research, a dialectical combining a qualitative analysis of students' verbal answers and quantitatively based assessment of student progress was employed. As a result, the following steps were applied in this research:

- a qualitative analysis of student journal writings as well as in-camp compositions;
- a learner reading survey to be given pre/post;
- an NES reading assessment, using an Informal Reading Inventory, to be given pre/post;
- a rubric-based writing assessment to be given pre/post; and
- a program listserv for teachers and organizers to share daily notes, observations, and ideas.

Student Journal Writings

At the core of examining the students' experience with literacy was having students develop portfolios. This enabled us to include qualitative analysis of students' daily journals, as well their creations manifested during a month-long book project. It was thought that diary entries and actual examples of student work would most likely yield the most in-depth descriptions of the boys' educational experience.[31] Data from these journals were analyzed with an inductive content analysis approach to identify key themes.[32]

Learner Reading Survey

In an effort to capture student attitudes toward reading and how they might change over a month, a learner reading survey was devised. As a foundation, a reading attitudes survey from the Literacy Trust in Great Britain[33] was selected and altered to meet the camp's needs. Because most students would have language proficiencies precluding them from completing the entire survey, several questions were paraphrased grammatically, while (hopefully) maintaining meaning.[34] Most learners were asked to fill out surveys on their own; however, several learners of lower language proficiency gave oral answers with researchers taking as detailed notes as possible.

The reading survey consisted of twenty questions, of which three directly applying to research goals are reported here:

- How much do you enjoy reading?
- How often do you read outside of school?
- Do you like reading to younger children?

NES Reading Assessment

A desired consequence of this research was to be able to converse with mainstream teachers about research regarding L1 reading inventory use for L2 proficiency level decision making, basing comment on actual experience by having implemented such with secondary refugee students. Thus, Lois Bader's *Reading and Language Inventory*[35] was implemented as our baseline for establishing reading grade levels. From this inventory, we chose two aspects—word lists and reading passages—both of which would help establish a reading level for each student. First, we counted pronunciation errors the students made when reading levelled ten-word lists aloud. We had to take special efforts in the training to establish which errors in reading word lists were caused by learner accents and which by lack of knowledge of the words. The grade level was established when the student made no more than two errors in reading words from that list. We then asked students to read some levelled passages written especially for children. Given the likelihood that students would out-decode their comprehension,[36] we started with a passage marked at a grade one level lower than where they scored on the word reading assessment. For example, if a student had two errors on the fourth grade vocabulary read-aloud list, we started him with a third grade reading passage. Students started by reading the passage aloud. If a student had any read-aloud errors in his oral reading, we asked comprehension questions for that passage. The Bader instrument includes prepared questions, which we asked in the following order: first unprompted; then questions for memories not mentioned; then an interpretive question. If students correctly answered the required number of questions to pass the level, we moved to the next level. If, however, frustration level was reached in the oral reading, we gave the child a second chance to read the passage silently before administering questions. If the student achieved the minimum number of accurate responses on the comprehension, we continued to the next level with oral reading, then silent reading and comprehension. However, when a student did not achieve the minimum number of accurate responses on the comprehension questions, we concluded the assessment and noted the grade level of the corresponding passage.

Carrying out such a procedure entailed a conundrum: that examining the program by comparing statistical means

would entail comparing a wide range of ages and proficiency levels to a single norm—a notion we found inappropriate. However, camp administrators explained that local stakeholders, including donors to the teams, would likely wish to look at publicly canonized numbers—namely English reading grade levels and high stakes test scores, i.e., scales designed for NESs. As a result, any quantitative research design involving pre- and post-data would most likely result in insignificant result—set here to a p-level of .05—due to the short four-week program schedule of the program. Furthermore, any dedication to levels of significance with respect to decision making might prevent making reasonable decisions for students with outlying results. Thus, in an effort to use quantitative analysis as descriptively as we could, we opted to use box plots and examinations of 95 percent confidence interval data, showing likely ranges of literacy development among the students.

Writing Assessment

For our student writing assessment, we prepared parallel pre/post prompts administered at the beginning and the end of the summer program. Teachers asked the boys to write for no more than ten minutes on the topics, which were preselected and discussed by the participants. To be parallel with our approach to reading assessment and in light of the demands for use of an NES-based analysis, we opted to adapt a noted writing rubric deigned by Ruth Culham called the *6+1 Writing Rubric*.[37] Culham emphasizes the following seven facets of writing to help learners to be engaged, practiced, and advanced: ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, conventions, and presentation. Student output was graded by two outside raters, who did not know learners or whether the sample was pre or post. Our prompts and adapted rubric may be found in Appendix A.

Writing samples were collected at the beginning and the end of the camp. Three instructors with credentials in TESOL but not involved with the camp evaluated the writings, implementing the Culham-adapted 6+1 rubric. They attended an evaluation session which began with a short training session to increase evaluator consistency. A Fleiss kappa inter-rater reliability rating was calculated, registering a .60 coefficient, indicating borderline "moderate" to "substantial agreement" on Landis and Koch's scale defining such coefficients.[38] The evaluators gave scores of 1, 2, or 3 for each of the seven categories, thus eliciting an overall writing score range of 7 to 21.

Teachers' Notes

Finally, we asked teachers to provide notes and observations of their classes each day on a listserv. Teachers were encouraged to interact with one another regarding any questions, experiences or concerns. Data from these listserv entries were analyzed with an inductive content analysis approach such that key trends might be determined.[39]

Outcomes

Students' Expressions of Their Interest in Literacy

The boys engaged in a number of writing projects over the month. One project was poetry writing. This activity sparked quite a flurry of positive experiences. The lowest proficiency level group, inspired by Nikki Giovanni's "Two Friends,"[40] a composite group poem referring to clothing, soccer uniforms, sport trademarks, wristbands, and their relationships:

> Our class has:
> Two pairs of jeans,
> Three pairs of shorts,
> Two shirts with number seven,
> Three swooshes,
> Five wristbands,

Figure 1. Radar chart regarding pre- and post-camp responses to the question, "How much do you enjoy reading?"
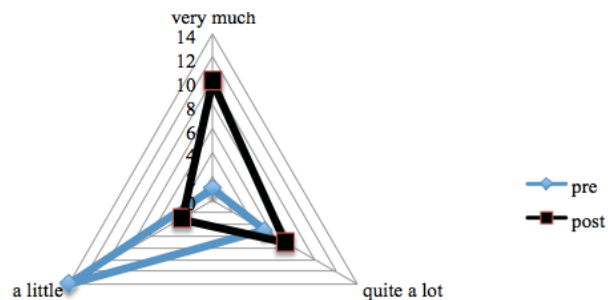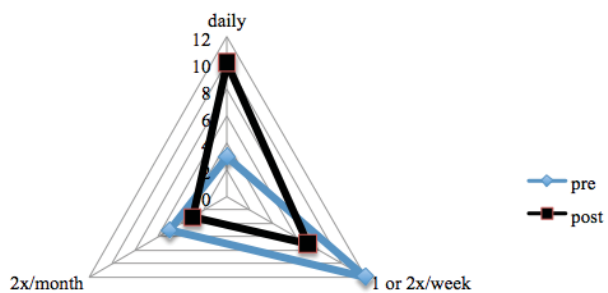

Figure 2. Radar chart regarding pre- and post-camp responses to the question, "How often do you read outside school?"

> Ten sandals and two cleats,
> One chain, one watch,
> One favorite sport—soccer—and
> One good family friendship

In another group, a student of higher language proficiency constructed a poem called "In Love with a Ball" in the format of a Shakespearian sonnet, where he asked the ball how it felt when his cleats crossed his face. In one class where a more advanced group attempted haiku, one student wrote a poem from the perspective of the pitch, a selfish turf desiring cleats but instead receiving faces. The students provided additional evidence in diary entries that the camp's writing classes provided additional enticement to attend. One student expressed that he was having fun writing haiku. Another said that poetry writing was one of the "funnest" things he'd done that summer.

Such comments were later supported by comments from the Literacy Trust adapted survey of reading attitudes. Twenty students responded at the beginning and end of camp to this question: "How much do you enjoy reading?" Notably, as evident in Figure 1, reporting of reading enjoyment among the athletes had increased.

We worked tenaciously to find books students could enjoy. Gratifyingly, students reported a tremendous upswing in reading enjoyment over one month, increasing "very much" ratings from 1 to 10, and decreasing "a little" ratings from 14 to 3. We found the study more remarkable since some of the students had already gone through a literacy camp the previous year, though without the implementation of these theoretical foci. The students may have been somewhat

convinced of the importance of reading; however, we were pleased to see such an upswing in students' saying they actually enjoyed the pleasure reading activities.

We also asked the question, "How often do you read outside of school?" Initially, three students responded with "daily"; on the post assessment the number increased to ten students. We of course wondered if students could maintain this newly attained penchant for reading over the regular school year.

One enlightening finding from the Literacy Trust adapted survey was that seventeen of twenty students reported on the pre-test that they liked to read to younger kids. Upon noticing this result, daily opportunities were built into the schedule for older students to read to younger kids. The learners enthusiastically prepared writings and read to each other during free reading and classroom exercises.

*Use of the Bader Reading Inventory*

As we worked with students for only four weeks, we were skeptical with respect to obtaining significant differences in reading results using the Bader reading inventory. The pretest mean grade level measured by this group was 4.60 (SD=2.32), meaning that the average grade level for these students, as measured by this inventory, was in the middle of the fourth grade. Considering students' ages averaged well into eighth grade, we then framed our thoughts that users of such an inventory might register these students *as a group* approximately four years behind their peers in English reading ability. More alarmingly, no student who attended high school registered a high school reading grade level, indicating that learners trying to acquire sufficient English to graduate or attend college face a mountain of work to be conquered in a very short time.

After twenty literacy camp days, learners tested at a mean grade level of 5.62 (SD=3.16) on the Bader scale. Did students make an overall gain in a month? We do not claim such (t=-1.02; SD=2.77; p=.24). However, the 95 percent confidence level plot (1) indicates no overall Werner-Smith and Smolkin-type summertime regression by the students, and (2) hints that achieving significant results is probable should such robust reading exercise continue.

Figure 3. 95% confidence interval of students' reading grade level, pre- and post, over a 4-week period, as determined by Bader Reading Inventory

Reading grade level:

A = pre; B = post

Table 1. Student reading grade level, mean and 95% confidence interval, as determined by Bader Reading Inventory

|	Pre	Post
mean	4.60	5.62
SD	2.32	3.16
95% confidence interval	3.38 thru 5.82	4.40 thru 6.84
range	0.50 thru 9.50	0.00 thru 11.50

93
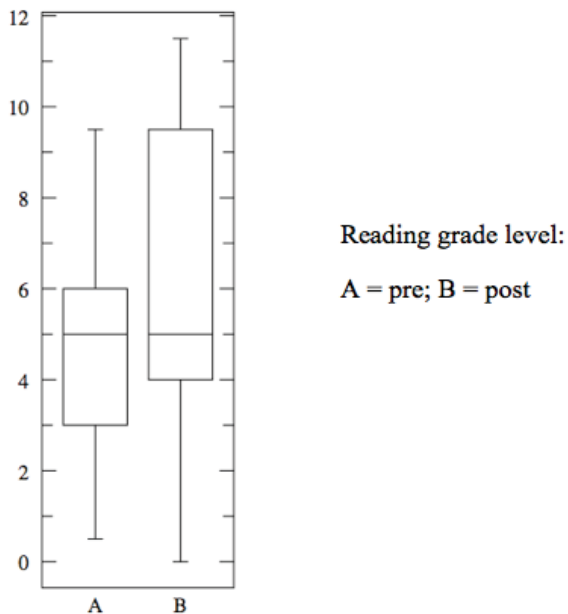
Decoding vs. Comprehension

In administering the Bader inventory, we had learners read a graded list of words to determine initial placement on the reading, then had learners read successively more difficult passages. We had suspected that in a single assessment, the difference between students' grade level pertaining to decoding a list of words and their ultimately determined reading comprehension levels would be significant. This however was *not* the case (t=1.09; SD=2.27; p=.27). As a result, at least in terms of a viewpoint across all proficiency levels from novice to superior, decoding does seem to predict to some degree English learners' ability to comprehend text. Nevertheless, an analysis of the 95 percent confidence levels comparing decoding and comprehension is compelling; such data indicate that when accounting for outliers, a good number of students seem to be decoding at levels a grade or two higher than they are actually comprehending.

If we observe that when a majority of our students score as decoding one or two grade levels higher than their com-

Figure 4. 95% confidence interval representation of student reading grade level score as determined with specific respect to pre-test decoding and overall comprehension through the Bader Reading Inventory

Reading grade level:

A = word list reading;

B = overall comprehension of passages
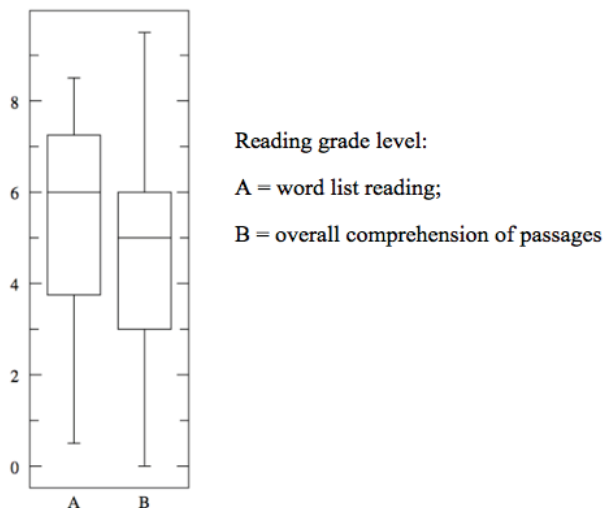
prehension assessments, we must also consider that if only NES assessments like this are used, teachers might believe their English learners to be better English readers than they actually are. An extreme example of this occurred with one newly arrived Cuban athlete, a student who was highly literate in Spanish and was able to use his knowledge of Spanish phonics to pronounce most words on the Bader word list, yet unable to answer most comprehension questions.

Table 2. Comparison of student reading grade level scores, mean and 95% confidence level, as determined with specific respect to pre-test decoding and overall comprehension through the Bader Reading Inventory

	word lists–decoding level	passages–comprehension level
mean	5.36	4.60
SD	2.23	2.32
95% confidence interval	4.36 thru 6.36	3.59 thru 5.60
range	0.50 thru 8.50	0.00 thru 9.50

These data, however, do not distinguish among grade levels or proficiency level, and there are too few students to establish grade levels in this research design. Hence, we would predict that those at beginning levels might actually have similar decoding and comprehension–that approaching zero—because the students are just getting started. Then at intermediate and lower advanced proficiencies, we might actually see greater differences between decoding and comprehension. Theoretically one's knowledge of the language's orthographic system should then level off as one adds comprehension skills; hence, in more advanced proficiency levels, a student's comprehension could conceivably approach or even catch up to one's decoding ability.

Figure 5. 95% confidence interval representation of pre- and post assessments of students' overall writing, across a 4-week period, based on Ruth Culham's 6+1 Writing Rubric (range of score: 7—21)

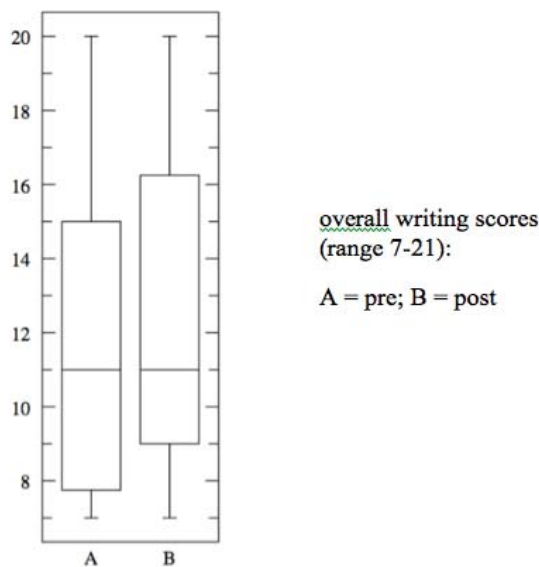overall writing scores (range 7-21):

A = pre; B = post

Table 3. Comparison of pre- and post assessments, mean and 95% confidence intervals, of student writing samples, across a 4-week period, based on adaptation of Ruth Culham's 6+1 Writing Rubric

	Pre		Post		
	Mean	*95% interval*	*Mean*	*95% interval*	*p*
Overall writing	11.78 (SD=4.17)	9.71 thru 13.85	12.28 (SD=4.14)	10.22 thru 14.34	.72
Ideas	2.00 (SD=0.69)	1.67 thru 2.33	2.17 (SD=0.71)	1.83 thru 2.50	.48
organization	1.83 (SD=0.79)	1.45 thru 2.22	1.72 (SD=0.83)	1.34 thru 2.11	.68
voice	1.72 (SD=0.67)	1.41 thru 2.04	1.78 (SD=0.65)	1.46 thru 2.10	.80
word choice	1.78 (SD=0.73)	1.44 thru 2.10	1.83 (SD=0.62)	1.51 thru 2.16	.81
sentence fluency	1.50 (SD=0.62)	1.18 thru 1.82	1.56 (SD=0.71)	1.24 thru 1.87	.80
conventions	1.44 (SD=0.62)	1.15 thru 1.74	1.50 (SD=0.62)	1.20 thru 1.80	.79
presentation	1.50 (SD=.0.62)	1.17 thru 1.83	1.72 (SD=0.75)	1.39 thru 2.05	.34

6+1 Writing Rubric

An analysis of the results indicates that, as expected, we did not achieve statistically significant improvements in overall writing skills (t=-.36; sd=4.15; p=.72). Both pre- and post-means indicate that

- most students were not currently able to write in English to a level many language arts teachers might see as "average";
- we cannot claim that gains were made with respect to the students' writing abilities; however, we can claim that Werner-Smith and Smolkin's notion of summertime regression was largely avoided;
- we can be pleased that we gave the boys opportunities to express their own ideas in writing, as the ideas assessment hints at progress;
- we offered writing opportunity for students to focus on formal composition structures, as suggested in the presentation results;
- subdivisions in writing progress over lower proficiency levels were not captured in the Culham-adapted rubric, most likely masking any possible progress students of lower proficiency level might have made; and
- overall writing improvement is indicated by the qualitative results of student compositions and poetry.

Teacher Observations

Most teachers in the program were diligent with respect to offering comments and diary entries in an online conversation over the month. Overall, there was satisfaction expressed with the reading and writing, particularly because they found that pre-class meetings were helpful in fostering teacher collaboration. Teachers felt successful in helping students choose books and in conducting

prewriting brainstorm sessions. Most notably, teachers stated that students were paying attention to the environment-related themes from the field trips, reporting that students discussed and referred to the themes *reduce, re-use, recycle* almost daily.

However, several issues did emerge with regularity over the course of the month:

1. Health issues were noted, namely eyesight and hearing. Teachers suspected that some students might need glasses or hearing aids and requested that camp leadership seek exams for the learners, a request which was granted.

2. Teachers and camp organizers were pleased that the boys were able to have a rather large choice of free reading books. The degree of choice was much larger than in the previous camp and vastly larger than would have been possible without the camp. However, the breadth of choices was clearly not wide enough and teachers experienced difficulty in finding age-appropriate books corresponding to non-native language proficiency levels and cultural relevance.

3. With respect to writing, teachers felt, much as O'Malley and Chamot suggest, that learning strategies (strategies for learners to address learning challenges and independent study) needed to be specifically incorporated into lesson plans.41 Teachers suggested showing students how to take notes as an area of emphasis in future literacy camps.

4. Teachers were somewhat surprised to see how much students, especially the older ones, appreciated teacher read-alouds during the morning "Book Club."

5. Not to anyone's surprise, teachers noted a number of pronunciation issues. Those requiring the most attention were the sound of "r" and both the voiced and voiceless "th's." as well as dropped final syllables and final "–ed's". These are common issues with new learners of English from students' language groups. Teachers reported in the online diaries how they modelled tongue placement when making difficult sounds in their

classes, and introduced tongue twisters that provided practice with these sounds in a non-threatening way.

6. Students reported difficulties with peers in their neighbourhoods, including bullying and theft. This issue actually caused the most teacher concern. One conversation included a suggestion of involving police; however, both students and program leaders suggested that this might be ineffective or even dangerous since the students still had to live in the same neighbourhood as their abusers.

Conclusions

Naturally, we wish we had had more time to do more. Certainly we fancied beginning literacy lessons earlier than 10:00 a.m. so that we could spend even more engaged time reading, writing, and conversing on academic content such as science and social studies. Nevertheless, in retrospect, we felt positive with respect to our goals. We found we could easily treat students as top learners—giving them responsibility for their learning, having them make choices, including their culture in learning activities, tutoring younger learners, and developing publishable writing—while tailoring their lessons to their proficiency level needs. In the process, in spite of a lack of statistical significance, we felt optimistic that students were making promising gains with respect to their literacy, particularly in reading and avoiding summer language regression with these students. And most clearly, our survey indicated that we successfully promoted positive attitudes toward reading and writing.

Of course, given the short-term research design, we can't claim that there is a correlation between the positive treatment of the students and their reading gains, as current quantitative practice would preclude us from doing so within such a short timeframe. We learned that, even for ELLs, assessing decoding can help us understand to some degree how English learners are comprehending their new language. However, we also learned that progress ELLs make with respect to decoding and comprehending is unlikely to be congruent to that of NESs.

More importantly, however, we learned that the reading levels of the refugee students in our group lagged approximately four years behind those of their NES peers. In fact, no high school student in the program began the summer at high school reading levels. (The accuracy of such consideration should be tempered as this assessment gives us no knowledge of learners' proficiency in their home language. Furthermore, to our knowledge, to date we know of no multilingual reading inventory that considers both the students' home languages and target language for the languages of our learners.) While there are enough data to warrant optimism that students were progressing in their reading, we left the summer worrying about the students entering their school year. We could not foster statistically significant change in students' reading ability in our month together, even in an intensive setting where literacy is emphasized for four to six hours each day. Thus, such results portend a monumental task students will likely encounter over

the regular school year. For students already in high school, hoping to graduate within one to three years and desiring college matriculation, raising reading proficiency four grade levels or more seems overwhelming and unlikely.

We observed that refugee student intellect, creativity, and cleverness were much more evident through the qualitative inquiry. In fact, an analysis of student progress levied only through quantitative means would have skipped the students' passion, poetry, humour, or intrigue in the subjects and assignments they experienced. The statistical approaches toward describing student progress did not capture the emotion or artistry exhibited in the students' writing, nor did they yield descriptions of the teachers' passion for these students. In addition, the quantitative design was not sensitive enough to register progress over four weeks. As a result, we learned that in future research designs we will want to address more detailed attributes of progress attributable to new English learners working through the beginning stages of their language learning. Our choice of an NES-based writing assessment tool taught us why mainstream teachers may not notice progress in their English learners' writing, thus potentially exposing refugee children to unwarranted criticism for not making any measurable progress. Thus, we may need to (1) combine established ELL-focused assessments including detailed descriptions of writing progress at lower proficiency levels—with NES assessments, such that *all* students, NESs and ELLs, are included in data-driven descriptions of students' progress; and (2) insist that qualitative analysis of refugees' writing examine the content and underlying affect expressed in their compositions.

Furthermore, international refugee organizations may now address reading and writing as part of education related policy, noting any of the following issues:

- Regular and persistent attention to literacy-based activities may be vital in helping refugee students attain higher education opportunities;
- Programs should account for the fact that refugee students, especially those of secondary school ages, may face daunting challenges in achieving English language proficiency levels sufficient for graduation in a timely manner;
- Current NES-based practices can misdirect teachers in their assessment of refugees' literacy proficiency; thus, assessment procedures specific to ESL students should be promoted; and
- Refugee students bring stories and experiences that can broaden and enlighten all students' education.

The soccer teams are made up of boys who have lived through unspeakable experiences, and yet the contributions these students may make to any mainstream literacy setting are immediately evident. Inappropriate assessment policies in the US could easily and dangerously foster apathy toward a group of students who merit tremendous attention, not only for the sake of their own prospects for graduation and college but also for the advancement and enrichment of their teachers and native

English speaking peers. While the summers with the refugees left us cherishing the students, we also professionally caution our colleagues to critique any analysis of ELL progress that doesn't include either ELL-specific considerations, especially at lower proficiency levels, or qualitative inquiry regarding student ingenuity.

Rubric for Six Traits of Writing

	1	2	3
Ideas	A. No clear main idea B. Limited or unclear information C. Idea is restatement of topic or answer to question – little detail D. Topic not meaningful or personal E. Not clear what is important F. May be repetitious or disconnected	A. Topic is fairly broad B. Some support for topic C. Ideas reasonable clear D. Writer drawing on knowledge or experience E. Reader is left with questions F. Writer generally stays on the topic but theme not clear	A. Narrow, manageable topic B. Quality, relevant details C. Details support main ideas D. Ideas fresh and original E. Reader's questions are anticipated and answered F. Evidence of insight – understanding of life/ choosing what is important
Organization	A. Lacks clear direction, ideas, details confusing B. Connections between ideas not made or confusing C. Lack of sequencing D. Awkward or slow pace E. No title, or title doesn't match F. Hard to find main point or story line	A. Introduction and conclusion present B. Transitions usually work well C. Some logical sequencing D. Fairly well controlled pacing E. Title is present but may be uninspired F. Organization sometimes supports main points or story line	A. Inviting introduction B. Satisfying conclusion C. Thoughtful transitions connecting ideas D. Pacing is well controlled E. Title is original and captures central theme F. Organization flows very smoothly
Voice	A. Writer is not aware of audience B. Writing is flat or in monotone C. Writing is humdrum and "risk-free" D. Writing is mechanical, overly technical, filled with jargon E. No point of view is present	A. Writer aware of audience but more generalities than personal insights B. Writing communicates in an earnest, pleasing, yet safe manner C. Only a bit of intrigue and delight D. Expository or persuasive writing lacks engagement with topic E. Narrative writing is sincere, but not unique perspective	A. Tone adds interest and appropriate for audience B. Reader feels a strong interaction with writer C. Writer risks revealing self D. Expository/persuasive writing shows why reader should care E. Narrative writing is honest, personal, and engaging

. . . .

97

Rubric for Six Traits of Writing (cont'd)

	1	2	3
Word Choice	A. Words not specific, meaning limited B. Reader confused by words that don't work C. Words used incorrectly for audience D. Limited vocabulary and/or misused parts of speech impair understanding E. Words and phrases unimaginative and lifeless	A. Words are adequate, correct, and support meaning B. Words communicate but don't capture imagination C. Attempts at colorful language D. Passive verbs, every-day nouns, mundane modifiers E. Words and phrases generally clear F. Language lacks refinement	A. Words are specific and accurate B. Some striking words and phrases C. Language appropriate for audience D. Lively verbs add energy, specific nouns and modifiers add depth E. Language choices enhance meaning and clarify understanding F. Precision and care are apparent.
Sentence Fluency	A. Sentences choppy, incomplete, random or awkward B. Sentences don't "hang together" C. Many sentences begin the same way with monotonous pattern D. Endless connectives or lack of connectives confuse reader E. Text does not invite expressive oral reading F. Abundance of compound sentences over complex sentences.	A. Although not artful, sentences get the job done B. Sentences are generally correct and hang together C. Sentence beginnings have some variety D. Reader sometimes has to hunt for clues to how sentences interrelate E. Parts of the text invite expressive oral reading	A. Sentences underscore and enhance meaning B. Sentences vary in length and structure. Fragments add style, Dialogue sounds natural C. Purposeful and varied sentence beginnings add originality & energy D. Creative and appropriate connectives relate sentences and thoughts
Conventions	A. Spelling errors frequent, even on common words B. Punctuation often missing or incorrect C. Capitalization random D. Noticeable errors in grammar or usage E. Paragraphing is missing or irregular F. Reader must read once to decode, again for meaning: extensive editing needed	A. Spelling usually correct or reasonably phonetic B. End punctuation usually correct, internal sometimes missing or wrong C. Most words capitalized correctly D. Problems with grammar and usage not serious E. Paragraphing is attempted but some problems F. Moderate editing needed	A. Spelling generally correct, even difficult words B. Punctuation is accurate, even creative, and guides reader C. Thorough understanding of capitalization present D. Grammar and usage correct and contribute to clarity and style E. Paragraphing tends to be sound and reinforces the original structure F. Writer may manipulate conventions effectively for stylistic effect; nearly ready to publish

. . . .

Rubric for Six Traits of Writing (cont'd)

	1	2	3
Presentation	A. Difficult to read and understand because of writing B. Writer has used too many fonts and sizes that distract the reader C. Spacing is random and confusing. May be little or no white space D. Lack of markers confuse reader E. Visuals do not support key ideas	A. Handwriting readable, some discrepancies in shape, form, slant, and spacing B. Experimentation with fonts and sizes somewhat successful. C. Margins may crowd edges; spacing applied but not best choice D. An attempt is made to integrate visuals and text E. Little evidence of sophisticated formatting to assist reader	A. Handwritten text has consistent slant, clear letters, uniform spacing and is easy to read B. Word-processed text uses appropriate fonts and font sizes C. White space and formatting used to help reader focus on text D. Title, side heads, page numbering, bullets, and use of style sheet makes it easy for reader E. Effective integration of text and illustrations and other graphics

Appendix

Note that we offer this rubric, adapted from Culham's *6 + 1 Traits of Writing*, as evidence of what we did. However, we do not recommend the use of this rubric for ELs unless further detailed revision is made, providing for more gradual improvement in proficiency levels.

Notes

1. UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), *Statistical Yearbook: Refugees, Asylum-Seekers and Other Persons of Concern: Trends in Displacement, Protection and Solutions* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2002).
2. UNHCR, "Education Strategy: 2010–2012" (Geneva: UNHCR, 2009), 36.
3. Accessed September 7, 2013, http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/resource/the-refugee-act.
4. Florida, in fact, has a Department of Education office dedicated to the tracking of English learners. More information regarding this office and its practices may be found at http://www.fldoe.org/aala/. Georgia similarly has an office dedicated to ESOL/Title III issues; information may be obtained at http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Curriculum-and-Instruction/Pages/English-to-Speakers-of-Other-Languages-(ESOL)-and-Title-III.aspx.
5. For more information, please see http://www.wida.us.
6. National Reading Panel, "Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction," 2000; http://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/nrp/report.cfm.
7. J. P. Kincaid, R. P. Fishburne, R. L. Rogers, and B. S. Chissom, *Derivation of New Readability Formulas (Automated Readability Index, Fob Count and Flesch Reading Ease Formula) for Navy Enlisted Personnel*, Research Branch Report 8–7 (Millington, TN: Naval Technical Training, US Naval Air Station, Memphis, TN, 1975).
8. P. Carrell, "Readability in ESL," *Reading in a Foreign Language* 4 (1987): 21–40.
9. S. A. Crossley, J. Greenfield, and D. S. McNamara, "Assessing Text Readability Using Cognitively Based Indices," *TESOL Quarterly* 42, no. 3 (2008): 475–493.
10. Academic language is described in concept in J. Cummins, *Language, Power, and Pedagogy* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd., 2001). It is teased out word-by-word in A. A. Coxhead, "New Academic Word List," *TESOL Quarterly* 34, no. 2, Summer (2000): 213–238.
11. Such findings have been reported for years, including in C. A. Harper and E. J. Platt, "Full Inclusion for Secondary School ESOL Students: Some Concerns from Florida," *TESOL Journal* 7, no. 5 (1998): 30–36.
12. E. J. DeJong and C. A. Harper, "Preparing Mainstream Teachers for English-Language Learners: Is Being a Good Teacher Good Enough?" *Teacher Education Quarterly* 32, no. 2 (2005): 101–124.
13. For more on English language teaching and differentiated instruction, please see S. Herrera and K. G. Murry, *Mastering ESL and Bilingual Methods: Differentiated Instruction for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) Students* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2005).
14. D. August and K. Hakuta, eds., *Improving Schooling for Language-Minority Children: A Research Agenda* (Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1997).
15. D. R. Entwisle, K. L.. Alexander, and L. Steffel, *Children, Schools, and Inequality* (Boulder: Westview, 1998).

16. J. S. Chall, V. A. Jacobs, and L. E. Baldwin, *The Reading Crisis: Why Poor Children Fall Behind* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990).

17. A. M. Werner-Smith and L. B. Smolkin, "An ESL/Bilingual/Bicultural Pre-Collegiate Program for Southeast Asian Refugee High School Students," *Bilingual Research Journal* 19, no. 3 & 4 (1995): 395–408.

18. Angela Carrasquillo and Vivian Rodríguez write of an additive process, where students are respected as coming in with their own education, though such may not be congruent to local senses of schooling. *Language Minority Students in the Mainstream Classroom*, 2nd ed. (Tonawanda, NY: Multilingual Matters, 2002).

19. F. Trudeau and R. J. Shepherd, "Physical Education, School Physical Activity, School Sports and Academic Performance," *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity* 5, no. 10 (2008), accessed September 24, http://www.ijbnpa.org/content/5/1/10.

20. G. Walker, "Inner-City Soccer SCORES Big," *Soccer New England*, November 20, 2002, accessed September 24, 2008, http://www.soccernewengland.com/articles/view_article.php?id=11; please also see A. Singh, L. Uijtdewilligen, J. W. R. Twisk, W. van Mechelen, and M. J. M. Chinapaw, "Physical Activity and Performance at School: A Systematic Review of the Literature Including a Methodological Quality Assessment," *JAMA Pediatrics* 166, no. 1 (2012): 49–55.

21. R. M. Callahan, "Tracking and High School English Learners: Limiting Opportunity to Learn," *American Educational Research Journal* 42, no. 2 (2005): 305–328.

22. Please see L. N.. Levine and M. L. McCloskey, *Teaching Content and Language in Mainstream Classes: One Class, Many Paths*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2013); please also see Y. Freeman, D. Freeman, and S. Mercuri, "Helping Middle and High School Age English Language Learners Achieve Academic Success," *NABE Journal of Research and Practice* 1, no. 1 (2005): 110–122.

23. K. S. Cho and S. Krashen, "Acquisition of Vocabulary from the *Sweet Valley Kids* Series: Adult ESL Acquisition," *Journal of Reading* 37 (1994): 662–7.

24. N. Zaragoza, *Rethinking Language Arts: Passion and Practice* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1997); please also see J. K. Klingner and S. Vaughn, "The Helping Behaviors of Fifth Graders while Using Collaborative Strategic Reading during ESL Content Classes," *TESOL Quarterly* 34, no. 1 (2000): 69–98.

25. M. Tenam-Zemach, "An Analysis of Themes of Environmental Sustainability in the United State Curriculum Science Content Standards" (Ed.D. dissertation, Florida International University, 2007).

26. A. F. Ada and I. Campoy, *Authors in the Classroom: A Transformative Education Process* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2003; please also see N. Zaragoza and E. Dwyer, *Look, I Made a Book* (New York: Peter Lang USA Publishing, 2005).

27. William Tierney writes that qualitative research should not only chronicle silenced lives but also challenge the oppressive voices doing the silencing. In William G. Tierney, "Loose Change: The Production of Texts, in *Power/Knowledge/Pedagogy: The Meaning of Democratic Education in Unsettling Times*, ed. Dennis Carlson and Michael Apple (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998), 264–270.

28. Levine and McCloskey, *Teaching Content and Language in Mainstream Classes.*

29. See J. C. Greene and V. J. Caracelli, "Defining and Describing the Paradigm Issues in Mixed-Method Evaluation," in *Advances in Mixed-Method Evaluation: The Challenges and Benefits of Integrating Diverse Paradigms* (New Directions for Evaluation, No. 74, pages 5–17), ed. J. C. Green and V. J. Caracelli (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997); please also see T. S. Rocco, L. A. Bliss, S. Gallagher, A. Pérez-Prado, C. Alacaci, E. S. Dwyer, J. C. Fine, and N. E. Pappamihiel, "The Pragmatic and the Dialectic: Two Views of Mixed Methods Use in Education," chapter in *Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social and Behavioral Research*, ed. A. Tashakkori and C. Teddlie (2002), 595–615.

30. S. Kemmis and R. Taggart, "Participatory Action Research: Communicative Action and the Public Sphere, in *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*, ed. N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Productions, 2007), 271–330.

31. T. Schram, *Conceptualizing Qualitative Inquiry: Mindwork for Fieldwork in Education and the Social Sciences* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill-Prentice Hall, 2003).

32. M. Q. Patton, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2002).

33. C. Clark and A. Foster, "Children's and Young People's Reading Habits and Preferences: The Who, What, Why, Where and When," National Literacy Trust, 2005; accessed June 30, 2008, http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/research/Reading_Connects_survey.pdf.

34. J. Abedi, "High-Stakes Tests, English Language Learners, and Linguistic Modification," *Sunshine State TESOL Journal* 6, no. 1 (2007): 1-20.

35. L. A. Bader, *Bader Reading and Language Inventory and Reader's Passages and Graded Word Lists (Spiral-Bound)* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2004).

36. B. Gamse, R. Jacob, M. Horst, B. Boulay, and F. Unlu, *Reading First Impact Study Final Report (NCEE 2009-4038)* (Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, US Department of Education, 2008); please also see Colorín Colorado, "Reading in Second and Third Grades," 2007; accessed May 24, 2010, http://www.colorincolorado.org/educators/teaching/secondreading..

37. R. Culham, *6 + 1 Traits of Writing* (New York: Scholastic, 2003).

38. J. R. Landis and G. G. Koch, "The Measurement of Observer Agreement for Categorical Data," *Biometrics* 33 (1977): 159–174.

39. M. Q. Patton, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2002).

40. N. Giovanni, *Sing a Soft Black Song* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1987), 25.

41. A. U. Chamot and J. M. O'Malley, *The CALLA Handbook: Implementing the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach* (White Plains, NY: Addison Wesley Longman, 1994); please also see L. N. Levine and M. L. McCloskey, *Teaching English Language and Content in Mainstream Classes: One Class, Many Paths* (Boston: Pearson, 2013).

Eric Dwyer is Associate Professor in the Department of Teaching and Learning, Florida International University, Miami, Florida. Mary Lou McCloskey is Director of Teacher Development and Curriculum Design at Educo, Atlanta, Georgia.

The Location of Refugee Female Teachers in the Canadian Context: "Not Just a Refugee Woman!"

Snežana Ratković

Abstract

This paper explores intersectionality of oppression and social agency in refugee narratives of four female teachers from Yugoslavia who immigrated to Ontario and Quebec between 1994 and 1998. These narratives reveal a number of systemic barriers participants encountered in their new country, such as lack of coordination between immigration and settlement services, lack of information about the teacher recertification process, systemic ignorance towards international teaching credentials and experiences, and a number of settlement practices that pushed the participating women teachers to the margins of the Canadian educational system. In addition to reporting a number of systemic barriers to teaching, these women also revealed self-imposed psychological and culturally constructed barriers to settlement such as personal perceptions of having limited language competencies, of being "too old" to continue education, and of remaining permanent outsiders to Canadian ways of being. Women also discussed their choices and priorities in terms of their personal and professional lives and the ways in which these preferences facilitated and/or hindered their integration in the Canadian education system and society. The paper challenges the master narrative of refugeehood in Canada by exposing the ways in which race, class, gender, age, ethnicity, and professional identity, in addition to refugeehood, shape the oppression and the privilege of refugee women in the Canadian context.

Résumé

Cet article explore l'interaction entre les limitations et l'aptitude sociale au cœur des récits de quatre enseignantes yougoslaves qui ont immigré en Ontario et au Québec entre 1994 et 1998. Leur récit révèle plusieurs barrières systémiques auxquelles ces femmes ont été confrontées dans leur nouveau pays, telles que le manque de coordination entre les services de l'immigration et les services à l'établissement, le manque d'information au sujet du processus de certification des enseignants, l'ignorance systémique des expériences et des reconnaissances internationales en enseignement et des pratiques de résolution, qui ont refoulé ces enseignantes vers les marges du système canadien d'éducation. En plus de signaler ces barrières à leur activité d'enseignante, ces femmes ont également dévoilé des limites psychologiques et culturelles qu'elles se sont imposées et qui ont nui à leur établissement, telles que leur perception de leur compétences linguistiques réduites, d'être trop vieille pour poursuivre leur éducation, et de demeurer malgré tout étrangères au mode de vie canadien. Ces femmes ont également discuté de leurs choix et de leurs priorités dans le cadre de leur vie personnelle et professionnelle, et comment ces décisions ont facilité ou freiné leur intégration dans la société et le système d'éducation canadiens. Cet article conteste le discours courant sur les réfugiés au Canada en mettant en lumière comment la race, la classe, le sexe, l'âge, l'ethnicité, et l'identité professionnelle, en plus du statut de réfugié, contribuent aux limitations et privilèges des femmes réfugiées dans le contexte canadien.

I am a woman. I am a person with much potential, I wouldn't say quality, I don't know how somebody would judge that, quality or not quality but potential [sighs]. I like to challenge, expand, I am a person that could be very useful, and it's popular to say [I could be very useful] in making a difference [laughs].

—Zlata, Interview 1, May 2010

Canada has been recognized as a leading advocate of international refugee protection and the third largest settlement country, with eleven thousand new asylum claims received each year. In 2008, the Conference Board of Canada suggested increasing immigration levels and refugee intakes in the country to meet Canada's economic needs.[1] The Board also stated that the Canadian immigration system must be transparent about the selection criteria, working conditions, and available supports for immigrants and refugees, as well as responsive to the immigrants' and refugees' needs and expectations. However, credentials and skills of highly educated immigrants and refugees are often ignored in the host country.

Refugees leave their countries under extreme conditions and come to Canada to re-establish their lives. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights defines a refugee as:

A person who is outside his/her country of nationality or habitual residence; has a well-founded fear of persecution because of his/her race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion; and is unable or unwilling to avail himself/herself of the protection of that country, or to return there, for fear of persecution.[2]

Such a definition, while providing some useful criteria, hides the differences across individuals and groups assigned the *refugee* label and contributes to a portrait of refugees that is far too simplistic and therefore problematic. More specifically, this definition does not address the complexities of refugee experiences often negotiated through and shaped by the intersections of race, class, gender, age, ethnicity, and professional identity. Citizenship and Immigration Canada provides additional insights into refugee experiences by describing refugees as Government Assisted Refugees, Privately Sponsored Refugees, Refugee Dependants Abroad, or Asylum Refugees. Although helpful in terms of developing immigration and settlement policies and practices, these categories continue to ignore other differences among refugees, which are often based on refugees' social location such as race, gender, and class.

This paper is a part of a larger study interrogating transitions, experiences, and identities of ten refugee female teachers from Yugoslavia who immigrated to Ontario and Quebec between 1994 and 1998, during and after the civil war in the country (1991–1995). For the purposes of this paper, I document intersectionalities of oppression and social agency in refugee narratives of four female teachers from Yugoslavia. Firstly, I discuss the theoretical lens and refugee literature used to analyze participants' narratives. Secondly, I report systemic barriers to teaching encountered by these women in Ontario and Quebec, their self-imposed psychological and culturally constructed barriers, and their personal choices and priorities. Thirdly, I describe the ways in which these women encountered and discussed neoliberalism—a dominant discourse in Canada that emphasizes self-responsibility for one's place in the society. Fourthly, I challenge the master narrative of refugeehood in Canada by exploring the ways in which race, class, gender, age, ethnicity, and professional identity shaped the oppression and the privilege of the refugee women teachers participating in this study.

Theoretical Framework: Post-colonial Feminism, Intersectionality, and Identity

The *refugee* label is often perceived to be a symbol of disadvantage, as are other labels, such as *immigrant, visible minority,* and *Third-World woman.*[3] According to Khayatt, the perception of refugees as disadvantaged people raises the issue of discrimination and reveals the danger of labelling and marginalizing groups and individuals.[4] Uma Narayan challenges the process of sorting people into homogeneous and fixed categories by complicating the sense of what it means to "inhabit a culture,"[4] especially the culture of a Third-World woman and feminist. She explains:

Finally, though calling myself a Third-World feminist is subject to qualification and mediation, it is no more so than many labels one might attach to oneself—no more so than calling myself an Indian, a feminist, or a woman, for that matter, since all these identities are not simple givens but open to complex ways of being inhabited, and do not guarantee many specific experiences or concerns, even as they shape one's life in powerful ways.[5]

In the excerpt above, Narayan points out the danger of labelling individuals and groups and highlights the intersectionality of ethnicity, gender, and epistemology in one's life. She argues that human experiences are diverse, unpredictable, and negotiated.

Chandra Talpade Mohanty also draws attention to intersectionality in people's lives: "It is the current intersection

of anti-racist, anti-imperialist and gay and lesbian struggles which we need to understand to map the ground for feminist political strategy and critical analysis."[6] She examines race, empire, and citizenship in US feminist projects and observes that corporate cultures of power, domination, and surveillance overlap with a politics of complicity in the US academy.[7] Mohanty urges progressive scholars to analyze the language of imperialism and empire: "Theorizing the place of immigrant, poor women of color in the citizenship narrative of Women's Studies, and challenging the rescue narrative of privileged US feminists wherever it appears is a crucial aspect of feminist solidarity praxis at this time."[8]

In order to theorize the place of refugee women in the Canadian citizenship narrative, I explore how intersections of race, class, gender, age, ethnicity, professional status, and refugeehood condition and complicate refugee women's lives in the Canadian context.

Literature Review: Women, Refugeehood, and (Professional) Identity

Refugee women in particular are a highly vulnerable segment of the population because of both physical realities and traditional cultural roles. The gap between refugee women's pre-exile and exile professional and socio-economic status is often so wide that it becomes hard to overcome, regardless of the fact that women are already used to balancing multiple roles and responsibilities (e.g. working and caring for the family at the same time). Nikolić-Ristanović states:

> In refuge, they [refugee women] often bear a heavier burden of physical work, to which they are not accustomed. In addition, their education and previous experience turn out to be insufficient for finding a suitable job in their field in the country of asylum.[9]

Refugee women teachers, in general, encounter multiple challenges in re-establishing their teaching careers in a new country. Some of the key challenges reported in the literature include: non-recognition of teaching credentials and work experience,[10] lack of proficiency in the official language,[11] lack of cross-cultural knowledge and a lack of familiarity with the multicultural student population,[12] and negative stereotyping and discrimination by potential employers and government services, as well as domestic responsibilities and financial difficulties.[13]

Unsettled in Canada

In Canada, refugee women teachers are oppressed not only by their refugee status and gender, but also by the workings of competition, "a salient feature of neoliberalism."[14] The free market in the neoliberal context sees its citizens as solely responsible for their success in the society. Social responsibility for systemic inequities vanishes in the light of the individual's responsibility for his/her place in the social and economic order. This view perpetuates the production of a "permanent underclass, and even a permanent criminal class, along with a class of aliens, or noncitizens."[15] In such a context, even university-educated refugee women teachers are unable to find jobs and often suffer high levels of poverty.[16] Even when refugee women teachers succeed in finding employment, they usually obtain short-term, low-wage, non-teaching jobs.[17] These women find themselves first and foremost constructed as *refugee women* and continue to be re-presented as an economically, socially, and politically marginalized group.

The location of the refugee female teacher within the Canadian neoliberal context is further troubled by myths and stereotypes which are deeply embedded in the master narrative of forced migration. This master narrative warns us that refugee women come to Canada to do the "dirty work"[18] and "steal jobs from Canadian-born women."[19] They "get into Canada by manipulating the system and bring with them their problems and conflicts"[20] to this refugee-welcoming country. Refugee women are often portrayed as uneducated women of colour who do not speak English or French[21] and as women who are "more feminine, docile, sexually available, obedient."[22]

According to Morris and Sinnott, refugee women in general, and refugee female teachers in particular, are often perceived as being different from the mainstream groups in Canada (i.e., different from those who are white, Canadian-born, and English-speaking).[23] In the same vein, Ng and Shan argue that a lack of recognition of international teaching credentials is a form of *othering* that underlines "a colonial legacy that downgrades education, training and credentials from non-Western societies, thereby re-inscribing and exacerbating existing inequalities based on age, gender, and race."[24]

Border Pedagogies and Borderless Possibilities

Over the past decade, the Canadian classroom has become more culturally and linguistically diversified. The teacher population, however, does not mirror such classroom diversity.[25] Furthermore, the research indicates that Canadian teachers—who are mostly white, middle class and female—are often poorly prepared for teaching students of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.[26] Armstrong and McMahon warn: "The reforms have failed to deliver their espoused targets of excellence, equality, and high achievement for urban students, particularly as they relate to social class, race, ethnicity, language, and gender."[27]

Dlamini and Martinovic urge educators to recognize the value and the potential of a diverse student/teacher population in Canada:

> …diverse classes—classes that work in and in between two or more languages and cultures to create students and teachers as engaged brokers, investigators, participants and producers of culture, language and identity—would provide a more complex, rich and politically sensitive learning experience.[28]

Dlamini invites schools and faculties of education to embrace border pedagogy and "re-imagine the mainstream as intercultural and multilingual in make-up."[29] She references Giroux and argues for the implementation of *border pedagogy* as a tool for progressive classroom teaching, a pedagogy that employs difference as an analytical tool and encourages students to cross over "into cultural borders that offer narratives, languages and experiences that provide a resource for rethinking the relationship between the centre and the margins of power as well as between themselves and others."[30] According to Giroux, border pedagogy is linked to critical democracy.[31] Educators must understand the frameworks in which "difference is constructed through various representations and practices that name, legitimate, marginalize, and exclude the voices of subordinate groups."[32] Border pedagogy does not simply recognize difference as a social and historical construct, but makes the axes of power visible within and across educational settings. Such a pedagogy should be seen as a site for critical analysis, creativity, and possibility:

> …these pedagogical borderlands where blacks, whites, latinos [sic], and others meet demonstrate the importance of a multicentric perspective that allows students to recognise and analyse how the differences within and between various groups can expand the potential of human life and democratic possibilities.[33]

Dlamini warns, however, that border pedagogy fails to ask the fundamental questions about power in the classroom and can produce "a further marginalization of the very discourses it aims to elevate."[34] Therefore, teachers must understand that border pedagogy is not only about teaching new skills and knowledges but also about challenging belief systems, ways of living, and social privileges "that others would kill to safeguard."[35]

Issues of representation remain crucial in educating a socially and culturally diverse student population. Teachers from a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds

> not only provide role models for minority youth, but bring diverse teaching styles, modes of communication and knowledge into schools for the benefits of all students…and enhance learning opportunities for all students who must learn to exist within an increasingly globalized local context.[36]

Therefore, constructing and sustaining diverse classrooms in Canada requires modelling acceptance, appreciating difference, and fostering equity and social justice. In this context, refugee female teachers can be perceived as key players in the implementation of border pedagogy and development of social justice education. According to Carr and Klassen, teachers of diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds can benefit the multicultural Canadian classroom by "enhancing cultural compatibility, demystifying the hidden curriculum, developing positive attitudes towards persons from a variety of backgrounds, expressing lived experiences, connecting with the students, and connecting with the communities."[37]

Methodology

I approached this study with an understanding that many epistemologies are possible in the research process. I chose transnational feminist epistemology[38] to guide my research decisions. I acknowledge the problematic nature of constructing a feminist way of doing objective research, but I am hesitant to "completely throw the idea to the wind leaving room for only absolute relativism."[39] For me, objectivity and subjectivity are not conflicting paradigms; "feminist objectivity means quite simply *situated knowledges.*"[40] I consider these situated and embodied knowledges as being space within knowledge creation that allows for difference, complexity, contradiction, and social change. Furthermore, I assume that knowledge production is a political and socially constructed process; it is neither universal nor separated from its process of production. This approach to knowledge and objectivity is critical for my data analysis and decisions about representation; it does not only allow for multiplicity of knowledge, but considers the role of gender, race, class, and other social constructions in the production of knowledge.

I am also cognizant of the power and authority issues embedded in my relationship with those whom I research. I understand the importance of reflexive practice and the need to question and articulate my personal and research standpoints throughout the research process. I am aware that in my research with Yugoslavian refugee women teachers, I am both an *insider* and an *outsider* to the experience. As a refugee woman teacher from the former Yugoslavia, I share some major status characteristics such as race, gender, and refugee status with participants in my study. As a cultural insider, I was able to gain easy access to the Yugoslavian refugee women teachers' population in Ontario and Quebec and to develop a rapport with these women in

a short period of time. Sharing some characteristics with the participants, however, does not necessarily enable me to fully understand their lived experiences.[41]

Data Collection and Analysis

I conducted two individual, in-depth and open-ended conversations with each of the women. Each individual conversation was two to three hours long, digitally recorded, and transcribed verbatim. I also conducted two focus group conversations, one in Ontario and one in Quebec. The focus group conversation conducted in Quebec involved seven participants and lasted for four hours while the Ontario focus group conversation involved three participants and lasted for two hours. I kept notes and used a ten-minute debriefing session at the end of each focus group interview to verify the most frequent themes emerging from the conversation. I transcribed the focus groups' digital recordings using purposeful transcription (i.e., I transcribed only those lines relevant to the main stories verified during the debriefing sessions). I kept field notes and a reflexive journal to document the research process. I was also interviewed by one of my Ph.D. colleagues before I started interviewing other women to construct my personal narrative, one which will not be influenced by other women's stories. I used these conversations to explore personal and cultural assumptions and biases inherent in my interview protocol and my personal understandings of exile, settlement, and professional identity.

As I was aware that face-to-face interviews make anonymity and even confidentiality difficult to achieve, I invited participants to choose pseudonyms. Three women chose names of their family members (e.g., sisters, aunts, or nephews). One woman, however, selected the pseudonym Nina Bloom, the name of the main fictional character in Patterson and Ledwidge's novel *Now You See Her.*[42]

During transcription and data analysis, I allowed for multiple voices and subjectivities and employed poetic transcription,[43] the *storying stories* method,[44] and *concentric storying*[45] as alternative modes of data analysis and re-presentation. I created transcript poems using the participants' words. I first identified main stories in the transcript and condensed those stories into poems by keeping in key words and phrases while taking out prepositions, adjectives, and adverbs. I kept enough of the participants' words together to represent their "way of saying things."[46] Finally, I reread each poem several times to trim the poem down to its core, trimming down for rhythm, rhyme, and memorable stories. My goal was to achieve *metaphorical generalizability and* "inspire an empathic, emotional reaction, so the consumer of research can develop a deep, personal understanding of the 'subject' of the data."[47]

In addition to transcript poems, I used the *storying stories* method[48] to move from digital recordings and transcripts to meaningful stories. I searched for plots while listening to recordings and typing up transcripts. I watched for what was said, how it was said, and what remained unsaid but signalled between the lines. I looked at interview transcripts through multiple lenses: active listening, narrative processes, language, context, and significant moments.[49] I created story subtitles and the main title for each conversation, including the first interview, the second interview, and the focus group interview. After identifying a number of subtitles and one main title for each interview, I developed an interpretative story for each interview.

I sent each transcript and synopsis including transcript poems, interpretative story subtitles, interpretative story titles, metaphors, and *storying-the-researcher notes* to participants for member check. After receiving the participants' approval for each transcript and for my interpretations of their words, I created an interpretative story for each of the interviews. While I was frequently revisiting the transcripts to write up interpretative stories, I noticed that each participant would mention a particular story over and over again throughout our conversations, a dominant story that embodied the core values and beliefs of the participant and offered an opportunity for creating a new story by answering the following questions: Are there similarities? Does the same theme underline the stories? Is the character passive or active? Is the conflict similar each time? Has the participant resolved the conflict in the same way? Is the mood consistent? What kind of mood is it?[50] Finally, I compiled interpretative stories and dominant stories together with transcript poems and metaphors to compose a personal experience narrative of refugeehood, teaching, and teacher identity for each participant. Each personal experience narrative was sent to participants for member check and after their approval was included in this text.

To honour transnational and translingual identities of refugee female teachers from Yugoslavia, I created bilingual data sources. My conversations with refugee women teachers from Ontario were held in English. Conversations with refugee female teachers from Quebec, on the other hand, were held in the Serbo-Croatian language due to my language limitations in French. The Serbo-Croatian language was our point of connection and allowed the refugee female teachers from Quebec to be heard in English-speaking environments. All the transcript poems and quotations included in this paper from the interviews conducted in Ontario are presented in English. Poems and quotations created from the interviews conducted in Quebec and in the Serbo-Croatian language are, on the other hand, offered as bilingual text.

Starting a Collective Narrative of Refugeehood, Teaching, and Teacher Identity in Canada

In this section of the paper, I first present Jagoda, Nada, Zlata, and Nina Bloom through the summaries of their personal experience narratives including a short biography, interpretative story titles, dominant story title, personal experience narrative title, and one of their transcript poems echoing their narrative. Next, I chart the overlapping characteristics of their stories viewed through systemic and self-imposed barriers to settlement in Canada. Finally, I highlight the unique characteristics of each woman's narrative.

Jagoda's Personal Experience Narrative

Jagoda is a French and Latin language teacher from Yugoslavia. She first escaped from Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), then a province of Yugoslavia, to Serbia. Jagoda and her family joined a big wave of refugees immigrating to Serbia from other Yugoslav provinces between 1991 and 1996. Due to this big wave of refugees, Serbia was experiencing a great economic crisis. Jagoda started working as a Latin language teacher in a rural area. For the next three years, she was not able to obtain Serbian citizenship. She lost her job and was forced to seek a better life outside of Serbia. She was forty years of age when she arrived in Quebec with her husband and two children. Jagoda planned to continue her education and re-establish her teaching career in Quebec, but encountered a number of personal, social, and systemic obstacles in her settlement. These obstacles convinced Jagoda to give up her teaching career. She volunteered, however, at an elementary school as a lunch supervisor and was invited by the school principal to work full-time in this capacity. Jagoda accepted the offer and continues to work as a lunch supervisor to date.

Storying Jagoda's stories…

Story Title 1:

Da sam bila mlađa [kad sam došla u Kanadu], ne bih se nikada odrekla škole.

[If I were a younger woman, I would not give up my education.]

Story Title 2:

Ne žalim što sam došla u Kanadu, ali Kanada nije moj dom.

[I don't regret coming to Canada, but Canada is not my home.]

Story Title 3:

Kanada je moja maćeha.

[Canada is my stepmother.]

Dominant Story:

Ljuta sam na Srbiju.

[I am angry with Serbia.]

Personal Experience Narrative:

Odrekla sam se škole i izgubila svoj dom
[I gave up my teacher identity and lost my home.]

Odrekla sam se škole	I gave up school
Ulagati u sebe nema smisla,	Investing in me didn't make any sense;
jer moja djeca rastu	my children were growing up,
i u njih ulagati treba.	it was time to invest in them.
Odrekla sam se škole i ne žalim,	I gave up school,
ne, ne žalim,	I have no regrets,
jer da sam okupirana sobom bila	I wasn't the centre of the universe,
tko zna kakva bi se nevolja zbila.	my children's future was at stake.

Nada's Personal Experience Narrative

Nada is a Serbo-Croatian language teacher who immigrated to Quebec from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Yugoslavia, in 1995 with her husband and two daughters. She taught the Serbo-Croatian language and literature for eleven years prior to her immigration to Quebec. Immediately after her arrival, Nada started volunteering at a second-hand store. She did not speak any French at the time. Nada tried to obtain employment as a Serbo-Croatian language teacher for Canadian solders going to Bosnia and Herzegovina after the war, but she was not accepted due to her ethnic origin. Nada's professional title is Serbo-Croatian language teacher, rather than Bosnian language teacher. For this reason, she was labelled as unqualified for this job. Despite her expertise, Nada was not able to convince her potential employers from the Canadian government that she was born in Bosnia and that she speaks the Bosnian language "*koji je do juce bio srpsko-hrvatski*" [which used to be Serbo-Croatian until yesterday] (i.e., before the civil war in the country).

Nada gave up her teaching career due to her limited French-language skills, her subject area (i.e., Serbo-Croatian language and literature) that was rarely needed in Quebec, and her personal characteristics, including her devotion to her family and the fact that she is not overly ambitious. She is *požrtvovana majka* (an overprotective mother, a mother who is willing to sacrifice her happiness for her children) and she always puts first "*svu svoju porodicu a tek onda svoju profesiju*" (her family and then, and only then her profession) (Conversation 1, April 2010). Nada works as a manager at the same second-hand store where she started volunteering in 1995 and manages forty people with care and grace. Nada's supervisor once noted that she looks like a teacher who keeps her classroom efficient and well organized.

Da rata nije bilo...	If the war never happened...
Živjeli bi normalno u Jugoslaviji,	We would live a normal life in Yugoslavia,
imala bih 25 godina radnog staža,	I would have 25 years of teaching,
razmišljala o skoroj penziji,	I would think about retirement,
fakultetski obrazovani,	as university educated people,
imali bi svoj stan i kuću,	we would have our apartment and house,
život mirniji.	a life of peace.
Ovde se puno radi	Here, we work too much,
i to mi malo smeta u mojim pedesetim.	I am getting worn out, already in my 50s.
Imam dvije djevojke koje će sad na fakultet,	I have two daughters at university,
neotplaćenu kuću,	I have a mortgage,
moju majku koja je daleko a pomoć joj treba.	and my mother so helpless and so far away.
Previse je toga na plećima mojim;	My shoulders are sore;
da radim,	I must work,
da pomognem dok djeca ne porastu,	I must help my children,
dok ne postanu ljudi.	help them grow up.
Moram, moram izdržati.	I must, I must endure.

Storying Nada's stories...

Story Title 1:

Mi ovdje u principu ne radimo ono što volimo nego ono što nas je zadesilo.

[We do what we are given to do, not what we desire to do.]

Story Title 2:

Mi smo poklon Kanadi, Snježana.

[We are a gift to Canada, Snježana.]

Story Title 3:

Ostala sam ista: vrijedna, praktična i otvorena.

[I am still the same woman: diligent, practical and honest.]

Dominant Story:

Zadovoljna sam. Nisam ambiciozna.

[I am ok. I am not ambitious.]

Personal Experience Narrative:

"Mi smo poklon Kanadi, Snježana, ali su nam šanse male."

[We are a gift to Kanada, Snježana, but our chances to teach are slim to none.]

Zlata's Personal Experience Narrative

Zlata is a Serbo-Croatian language and literature teacher who immigrated to Ontario from the war-torn Yugoslavia in 1994. Zlata and her husband came to Ontario through an immigration program for ethnically mixed–marriage couples from the former Yugoslavia at that time. As an ethnically mixed couple, Zlata and her husband did not feel safe in any of the former Yugoslav provinces. This situation provided them with the opportunity to immigrate to Canada and receive one year of financial support from the government. Zlata was in her late thirties when they landed in Ontario.

Zlata graduated from the University of Philosophy and Philology and taught Serbo-Croatian for fourteen years at the high school and university level in a large city in BiH. She loved her profession, her students, and her colleagues. For her, teaching was a mission. Zlata found her first years in Canada difficult; she was a language teacher and spoke six languages (Serbo-Croatian, Macedonian, Slovenian, French, Spanish, and Italian), but did not speak any English at the time. Once in Canada, Zlata studied English fourteen hours a day. Her "home" was language and teaching, and she could not afford to remain homeless in Canada. Zlata works part-time as a project manager and sessional instructor at a language institute. She is, however, disappointed with the role and the place of education in Canadian society. For Zlata, the attitude towards education in Ontario is akin to the attitude of going to the shopping mall. As a university instructor, she feels lonely and disposable.

Storying Zlata's stories...

Story Title 1:

ARE WE HERE ONLY TO ENTERTAIN!? I want to participate actively in this society.

Story Title 2:

I feel drained out and feared of being on the street, but every human being has to go through ups and downs. There is time to cry and there is time to laugh.

Story Title 3:

I feel disposable.

Dominant Story:

I'm proud of being born in Yugoslavia.

Personal Experience Narrative:

I want to participate actively in this society, but I feel disposable. ARE WE HERE ONLY TO ENTERTAIN!?

I want to paint on the walls of the cave

As humans we first thought about survival,
at the same time, people thought about art,
they described their life every day,
and that is missing today, you know,
those paintings on the walls of the cave.

That is what I don't feel I have, you know?
This is just biological existence,
I exist,
and I'm lucky that I have the theatre,
and literature,
and people who inspire me,
who teach me something new every day.
I am lucky to have the energy
to write a line,
to write a poem.

At work
only teaching inspires me.
After classes, I'm exhausted
but happy.
It's only that positive energy,
that energy what keeps me alive,
I am so lucky to teach!

My office work
is another story,
it doesn't give me that motivation,
that urge to paint
on the walls of the cave.

Nina Bloom's Personal Experience Narrative

Nina Bloom came to Ontario in 1995 with her husband and two sons, who were seven and nineteenyears of age at that time. She was forty-three years old and eager to teach in Ontario. Nina Bloom already had twelve years of teaching experience. Prior to her arrival to the province, she taught the Serbo-Croatian language and literature and English as second language at an elementary school in Croatia, Yugoslavia. One year after her arrival to Ontario, she obtained her TESL, TEFL, and TOEFL certificates. While studying English at an Ontario college, Nina Bloom was told by one of her instructors that she shouldn't be studying English; she should be teaching it. Soon after this event, Nina Bloom started a part-time teaching job at the college. She continued working in this capacity for eight years until the college management changed. The new management let Nina go.

Nina Bloom studied hospitality together with her older son at the same college from 1997 to 1999. Nina also worked full-time as an administrator at a hotel. She also studied adult education courses together with her younger son at a local university from 2007 to 2009. She is only five credits from her degree, but financially she cannot sustain her studies at this point of time. Nina Bloom regrets not finishing her adult education courses at a Canadian university and not teaching in Ontario. She feels fully competent, capable, and entitled to teach, but she finds the teacher recertification process in this province to be exhausting and discriminatory. She has retreated completely from this unjust process and this society.

Storying Nina Bloom's stories...

Story Title 1:

They [The Ontario College of Teachers] made it hard.

Story Title 2:

I didn't make right decisions and this is haunting me.

Story Title 3:

Žao mi je, ali ne mogu doći na grupni intervju; jedna moja prijateljica me zamolila za   uslugu   i   ne mogu je odbiti.

[I am sorry, but I will not make to the focus group interview today; an old friend of mine   asked me for a favour and I can't say no to her.]

Dominant story:

I have retreated completely.

Personal Experience Narrative:

They [the Ontario College of Teachers] made it hard and I have retreated completely.

I was better educated than my judges were

My teaching credentials weren't recognized
and this deeply affected me,
only one credit they recognized
out of 13.
"It's not compatible," they said,
"Canadian experience you don't have."
You must have heard that line
over and over again.

110

And what is, please, "Canadian experience?"
Is it more,
more valuable than Croatian,
Serbian,
Yugoslav,
Bulgarian?

Twelve years thrown away.
I was hurt,
resentful,
I knew,
I was better educated than my judges were.

Teaching in Canada: Challenges and Opportunities

Jagoda, Nada, Zlata, and Nina Bloom have made attempts to re-establish their teaching careers in Canada, but no woman has returned to her pre-exile professional position. In other words, no woman in this study secured permanent, full-time employment in her subject area and her school division within the Canadian context.

Jagoda encountered three self-imposed barriers to establishing her teaching career in Canada. First, Jagoda came to Quebec for her children so protecting them was her first priority. Second, she planned to continue her education and re-establish her teaching career, but she was told by one of the local school principals that her chance of getting a teaching position in Quebec, even with a teaching certificate, would be only 50–50. For Jagoda, this probability of obtaining a teaching position in the province was not good enough; she did not want to sacrifice her family time and her children's future for embarking upon such a risky adventure. Third, she trusted that coming to Quebec at the age of forty was another barrier to her professional career; she felt too old to continue her education and obliged to support her children's education rather than her own.

Jagoda also encountered financial difficulties and made some personal choices. Jagoda's husband did not speak any French when they arrived in Quebec and was not able to obtain any employment. Jagoda became the family provider, took care of her family, and paid all the bills. She could not devote any time to studying in her already busy schedule. Finally, Jagoda experienced two systemic barriers to teaching in Canada: deskilling by the education authorities in the province and discrimination by a parent who did not trust Jagoda's teaching credentials from Yugoslavia and, as a result, transferred his child to another school. With all these obstacles in front of her, Jagoda gave up teaching. She was willing to work harder than anybody else in her school, but she grew to understand that her work and her expertise would be dismissed anyway.

Nada also reported encountering two systemic barriers to her integration in Canada: lack of French language proficiency and non-recognition of her teaching credentials and experiences. She, however, argued that it was her personal choice to give up teaching in order to work, take care of her children, protect her family, and lead a humble but decent life. For Nada, family always comes first. She is more than satisfied with her managerial position at a second-hand store. Nada warns, however, that refugee women teachers are not allowed to choose their careers in Canada; they do what they are given to do. She concludes that refugee female teachers from Yugoslavia are a gift to Canada, but their chances to teach in this country are slim to none.

Zlata—who continued her education in Canada and obtained a part-time teaching position at an Ontario university—reported non-recognition of her teaching credentials and experiences as well as discrimination against refugee women in Canadian society as systematic barriers to her settlement in Canada. She is aware of individual circumstances that shape each refugee woman's life such as marital status, motherhood, age, membership in a refugee diaspora, and personal connections to people and the landscape. She argues, however, that the role of the Ministry of Immigration and Settlement, the role of the government agencies serving refugees, and the role of education authorities in Ontario are critical for the refugee women teachers' settlement in the province. Although Zlata has obtained two part-time jobs in Ontario, she feels excluded from Canadian society, a society based on the politics of difference, colonial hierarchy, and systemic marginalization of refugee and immigrant women.

Nina Bloom lives somewhere in between her Yugoslavian and her Canadian life. At first, I wondered why she chose the pseudonym Nina Bloom. To grasp the meaning of Nina Bloom's pseudonym, as well as similarities and differences between these two women, I read Patterson and Ledwidge's novel before I analyzed Nina Bloom's transcripts. In the novel, the fictional character Nina Bloom is a successful lawyer and a loving mother.[51] She would do anything to protect her life built in New York—including lying to her daughter about her past. I wonder if Nina Bloom, the participant in this study, would do anything to protect the lives of her husband and her sons—including lying to everyone, even herself, about her perfect Canadian life. But when a researcher comes along asking about her teacher identity, Nina Blooms admits that her life is not perfect; she misses teaching.

Similarly to Nina Bloom, the fictional character whose secret life began eighteen years ago in New York, the participant in this study began her refugee journey fifteen years ago in Croatia, Yugoslavia. She had looks "to die for," a

handsome caring husband, two lovely sons, and a teaching job she adored. Nina Bloom's world is, however, shattered once Yugoslavia was torn apart by civil war. She escaped war-torn Croatia and changed her identity once and for all. In Ontario, Nina Bloom experienced discrimination based on her place of origin and has completely retreated from Canadian society. She left the professional/public sphere behind and took refuge within a safe domestic sphere, sheltered by her family and her books: "I retreated completely" (Conversation 1, May, 2010). By choosing the pseudonym Nina Bloom, the participant brought up a number of gender issues including female body image (e.g., the looks to die for), vulnerability, and domestic sphere identity (e.g., being predominantly a wife and a mother).

Narratives told by Jagoda, Nada, and Nina Bloom reveal a number of self-imposed barriers (i.e., these women's personal perceptions of their capacity to learn and teach in Canada) to their settlement such as perceptions of lacking language competencies and perceptions of being "too old" to continue their education in Canada. They also discussed their choice of prioritizing motherhood and familyhood over their teacher careers. Zlata's narrative, however, proved that a lack of proficiency in the official language is not necessarily a key barrier to refugee women's settlement as is often suggested in the Western literature.[52] Zlata learned English upon her arrival in Canada. She states, however, that one of the main barriers to refugee women's settlement in this country is a lack of cross-cultural knowledge among government officials serving refugees, which is often and unjustly attributed to refugee women teachers.[53]

In addition to self-imposed barriers to teaching, the women also identified a lack of information about the teacher recertification process, a lack of coordination between immigration and settlement services, and systemic ignorance towards international teaching credentials and experiences, as well as discrimination, as systemic barriers to their integration in the Canadian education system. For example, non-recognition of teaching credentials and experiences was characteristic of each woman's story. All the women also reported discrimination on the basis of origin and/or ethnicity.

A number of similarities emerged from women's narratives. For example, Jagoda and Nada both felt too old to continue their education in Quebec while Zlata and Nina Bloom highlighted incidents of discrimination and emotions of not belonging to Canadian society. Participants also reported some unique aspects of refugeehood. For example, Jagoda gave up her teaching career to invest her time, energy, and money in her children's education rather than her own, while Nada argued that she was not only too old to learn the language and pursue teacher recertification

in Quebec but also practical and "not overly ambitious" (Individual Conversation, April 25, 2010). Another example of uniqueness can be illustrated by comparing and contrasting Jagoda's and Nina Bloom's narratives: Jagoda felt too old to continue her education in her early forties, while Nina Bloom completed college in her early fifties, started an undergraduate degree in her late fifties, and concluded: "What is life without learning" (Conversation 1, May, 2010)!?

Participants' narratives challenge Canadian stereotypes of refugee women teachers by exposing the ways in which race, class, gender, age, ethnicity, and professional status, in addition to refugeehood, shape the oppression and the privilege of refugee women in this country. Similarly to Khayatt, Narayan, and Mohanty, who critique stereotyping of racialized, immigrant, and Third World women, [54] participants' stories reveal that refugee women are not uniform and inferior citizens but rather polyglots, university-educated professionals, lifelong learners, and caring mothers, as well as capable and passionate teachers whose learning and teaching "can expand the potential of human life and democratic possibilities"[55] in Canada.

Coda

Inclusion of Yugoslavian refugee women teachers' voices in narrating settlement experiences in Ontario and Quebec illuminates the ways in which settlement processes, policies, and practices shape refugee women teachers' lives in these two provinces. It is important to note that the abovementioned immigration, settlement, and education practices have not delivered their objectives of excellence, equity, and full professional integration for refugee women teachers from Yugoslavia. Canadian society fails to recognize these women as key players in the Canadian classroom and as capable and contributing citizens. Such an exclusion of refugee women teachers from Canadian schools and society might result not only in a lack of representation and diversity in the Canadian classroom, but also in a lack of equity and social justice in Canada.

Bringing to light the Ontario and Quebec settlement contexts and the dynamics of each Yugoslavian woman's story might help educators, government officials, and educational authorities in Canada understand the multi-layered social, cultural, and political space within which these women's stories and experiences are contextualized. Immigration and settlement services as well as teacher education authorities in Canada have failed Jagoda, Nada, Zlata, and Nina Bloom. However, these women prevail despite of systemic ignorance and discrimination and continue to share their wisdom with other refugee women teachers:

Izbeglim nastvnicama	To refugee women teachers

Ostanite u struci,	Stay in your profession,
radite ono što volite,	do what you love to do,
učite jezik i struku paralelno,	learn the language and profession,
jezika se ne boj'te.	it's up to you.
Vase znanje i iskustvo su veliki,	Don't fear any language,
ne gubite vreme,	your knowledge will do,
nikada nije kasno	your heart will grow,
za kanadske fakultete.	it's up to you.
	Don't waste your time,
	don't wait for the state,
	continue your education,
	it's never too late.

(Focus Group Conversation, June 13, 2010)

NOTES

1. Douglas Watt, Tim Krywulak, and Kurtis Kitagawa, "Renewing Immigration: Towards a Convergence and Consolidation of Canada's Immigration Policies and Systems," Conference Board of Canada, accessed September 3, 2011, http://www.conferenceboard.ca/Libraries/NETWORK_PUBLIC/lri2008_research_renewingimmigration.sflb.

2. UNHCR, "Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees" (Geneva: UNHCR, 1951).

3. Didi Khayatt, "The Boundaries of Identity and the Intersection of Race, Class and Gender," *Canadian Woman Studies* 14, no. 2 (1994): 6.

4. Uma Narayan, *Dislocating Cultures: Identities, Traditions, and Third-World Feminism* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 4.

5. Ibid., 4–5.

6. Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Feminist Encounters: Locating the Politics of Difference," in *Destabilizing Theory: Contemporary Feminist Debates,* ed. M. Barrett and A. Phillips (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press 1992), 87.

7. Chandra Talpade Mohanty*, Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 7.

8. Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "US Empire and the Project of Women's Studies: Stories of Citizenship, Complicity and Dissent," *Gender, Place and Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography* 13, no. 1 (2006): 17.

9. Vesna Nikolić-Ristanović, *Women, Violence and War: Wartime Victimizations of Refugees in the Balkans,* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2000), 152.

10. Susan Walsh, Susie Brigham, and Yina Wang, "Internationally Educated Female Teachers in the Neoliberal Context: Their Labour Market and Teacher Certification Experiences in Canada," *Teaching and Teacher Education* 27 (2011): 657.

11. JoAnn Phillion, "Obstacles to Accessing the Teaching Profession for Immigrant Women," *Multicultural Education* 1, no. 1 (2003): 41; Hanna Ragnarsdóttir, "Internationally Educated Teachers and Student Teachers in Iceland: Two Qualitative Studies," *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy* 100 (2010): 1.

12. Dragana Medic, "Foreign Trained Teachers: The Emergence of the Right to Practise Their Profession in Ontario" (master's thesis, Brock University, St. Catharines, ON, 2007).

13. Angela Rhone, "Caribbean-Immigrant Educators: More Than an Ocean of Difference," *Childhood Education* 84, no. 1 (2007): 44.

14. Susan George, "A Short History of Neoliberalism: Twenty Years of Elite Economics and Emerging Opportunities for Structural Change" (paper presented at the conference on economic sovereignty in a globalizing world, Bangkok, Thailand), accessed January 10, 2009, http://www.globalexchange.org/campaigns/econ101/neoliberalism.html.

15. Wendy Brown, "American Nightmare: Neoliberalism, Neoconservatism, and Dedemocratization," *Political Theory* 34, no. 6 (2006): 695.

16. Guida Man, "Gender, Work and Migration: Deskilling Chinese Immigrant Women in Canada," *Women's Studies International Forum* 27, no. 2 (2004): 135; Shahrzad Mojab, "De-skilling immigrant women," *Canadian Woman Studies* 19, no. 3 (1999): 123.

17. Nikolić-Ristanović, *Women, Violence and War:* 152.

18. Audrey Macklin, "Women as Migrant: Members in National and Global Communities," *Canadian Woman Studies* 19, no. 2 (1999): 24.

19. Marika Morris and Jennifer Sinnott, "Immigrant and Refugee Women," Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, accessed April 7, 2012, http://www.criaw-icref.ca/ImmigrantandRefugeeWomen.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid.

22. Macklin, "Women as Migrant."

23. Morris and Sinnott, "Immigrant and Refugee Women."

24. Roxana Ng and H. Hongxia Shan, "Lifelong Learning as Ideological Practice: An Analysis from the Perspective of Immigrant Women in Canada," *International Journal of Lifelong Learning* 29, no. 2 (2010): 169–184.

25. George J. Sefa Dei, Sonia James-Wilson, and Jasmine Zine, *Inclusive Schooling: A Teacher's Companion to Removing the Margins* (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 2002); S. Nombuso Dlamini, "From the Other Side of the Desk: Notes on Teaching about Race When Racialised," *Race, Ethnicity and Education* 5, no. 1 (2002): 51; S. Nombuso Dlamini and Dragana Martinovic, "In Pursuit of Being Canadian: Examining the Challenges of Culturally Relevant Education in Teacher Education Programs," *Race, Ethnicity and Education* 10, no. 2 (2007): 155.

26. Benedicta Egbo, *Teaching for Diversity in Canadian Schools* (Don Mills: Pearson Education, 2009); Denise E. Armstrong and Brenda J. McMahon, eds., *Inclusion in Urban Educational Environments: Addressing Issues of Diversity, Equity, and Social Justice* (Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing, 2006).

27. Armstrong and McMahon, eds., *Inclusion in Urban Educational Environments;* Dlamini and Martinovic, "In Pursuit of Being Canadian".

28. Dlamini and Martinovic, "In Pursuit of Being Canadian".

29. Dlamini, "From the Other Side of the Desk," 52.

30. Henry A. Giroux, "Resisting Difference: Cultural Studies and the Discourse of Critical Pedagogy, in *Cultural Studies,* ed. L. Grossberg, C. Nelson, and P. Treichler (New York: Routledge, 1992): 209.

31. Henry A. Giroux*, Border Crossings: Cultural Workers and the Politics of Education* (New York & London: Routledge, 2005): 24.

32. Ibid., 24.

33. Ibid., 26.

34. Dlamini, "From the Other Side of the Desk," 64.

35. Ibid.

36. Dei, James-Wilson, and Zine, *Inclusive Schooling,* 176.

37. Paul R. Carr and Thomas R. Klassen, "Different Perceptions of Race in Education: Racial Minority and White Teachers," *Canadian Journal of Education* 22, no. 1 (1997): 70.

38. Interpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan, eds., *Scattered Hegemonies: Postmodernity and Transnational Feminist Practices* (Minneapolis: Minnesota Press, 1994); Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses," *Boundary* 12, no. 2 (1992): 333–358; Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes Revisited: Feminist Solidarity through Anticapitalist Struggles," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 28, no. 2 (2002): 499–535.

39. Tanya Bahkru, "Negotiating and Navigating the Rough Terrain of Transnational Feminist Research," *Journal of International Women's Studies* 10, no. 2 (2008): 209.

40. Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective," *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 3 (1991): 575–599.

41. Chaterine Kohler Riessman, "When Gender Is Not Enough: Women Interviewing Women," *Gender and Society* 1 (1987): 172–207; Josephine Beoku-Betts, "When Black Is Not Enough: Doing Field Research among Gullah Women," *NWSA Journal* 6 (1994): 413–433.

42. James Patterson and Michael Ledwidge, *Now You See Her* (New York: Little, Brown, 2011).

43. Laurel Richardson, "The Consequences of Poetic Representation," in *Investigating Subjectivity: Research on Lived Experience,* ed. C. Ellis and M. G. Flaherty (Newbury Park: Sage, 1992); Laurel Richardson, "Nine Poems," *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 23, no. 1 (1994): 3–13; Corrine Glesne, "That Rare Feeling: Re-presenting Research through Poetic Transcription," *Qualitative Inquiry* 3 (1997): 202–221, accessed July 20, 2011, http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/107780049700300204.

44. Coralie McCormack, "From Interview Transcript to Interpretive Story: Part 1—Viewing the Transcript through Multiple Lenses," *Field Methods* 12, no. 4 (2000): 282–297, accessed November 11, 2009, http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1525822X0001200402; Coralie McCormack, "From Interview Transcript to Interpretive Story: Part 2—Developing an Interpretive Story," *Field Methods* 12, no. 4 (2000): 288–315.

45. Anne Elliott and Susan Drake, "Concentric Storying: A Vehicle for Professional Development in Teacher Education" (paper presented at the Ontario Educational Research Council, December 1999).

46. Glesne, "That Rare Feeling."

47. Rich Furman, Cynthia Lietz, and Carol L. Langer, "The Research Poem in International Social Work: Innovations in Qualitative Methodology," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 5, no. 3 (2006): 25.

48. McCormack, "From Interview Transcript to Interpretive Story: Part 1"; McCormack, "From Interview Transcript to Interpretive Story: Part 2."

49. Ibid.

50. Elliott and Drake, "Concentric Storying."

51. Patterson and Ledwidge, *Now You See Her.*

52. Phillion, "Obstacles to Accessing the Teaching Profession for Immigrant Women"; Ragnarsdóttir, "Internationally Educated Teachers and Student Teachers in Iceland."

53. Medic, "Foreign trained teachers"; Rhone, "Caribbean-Immigrant Educators.".

54. Khayatt, "The Boundaries of Identity"; Narayan, *Dislocating Cultures;* Mohanty, "Feminist Encounters."

55. Giroux*,* "Border Crossings."

Snežana Ratković is a science teacher from the former Yugoslavia who immigrated to Canada in 1998, after the civil war in the country. She works as research officer in the Faculty of Education at Brock University, St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada. Her research focuses on forced migration and settlement, teacher identity, teacher education, research ethics, and social justice studies. She has published in The Reading Professor, Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*,* South African Journal of Higher Education*,* Power and Education, Educational Action Research Journal*,* Studies in Higher Education*, and* Brock Education.

Ancient Laws and New Canadian Refugee Legislation: Evaluating Bill C-31 in Light of the Book of Deuteronomy

Mark Glanville

Abstract

Some important innovations within Bill C-31, Protecting Canada's Immigration System Act, run contrary to the biblical ethics espoused in the book of Deuteronomy, from the Judeo-Christian scriptures. Components of Bill C-31—such as mandatory detention, no right of appeal, and a five-year delay for application for permanent residence (all these apply to only certain groups of claimants)—are challenged by the ethics, system of justice, and polity of Deuteronomy. In Deuteronomy, the Hebrew word "ger" ("stranger") occurs twenty-one times, indicating the importance of ethics concerning the stranger for this book. Townships and families in Israel have the responsibility to include the stranger in their agricultural, ritual, and cultural lives. Deuteronomy's ethic towards the stranger is embedded in Israel's own history of being a "stranger" or "refugee."

Résumé

Certaines innovations importantes dans le projet de loi C-31 — la Loi visant à protéger le système d'immigration du Canada — va à l'encontre de principes éthiques bibliques préconisés dans le livre du Deutéronome des Écritures judéo-chrétiennes. Des composantes du projet de loi C-31 — telles que la détention obligatoire, l'absence de droit d'appel, et le délais de cinq ans pour demander la résidence permanente (composantes s'appliquant seulement à certains groupes de demandeurs d'asile) — sont contredites par l'éthique, le système de justice et la politique du Deutéronome. Dans ce livre biblique, le mot hébreu pour «étranger» apparaît 21 fois, soulignant l'importance de l'éthique du Deutéronome à l'égard de
l'étranger. Les établissements et les familles en Israël ont la responsabilité d'intégrer l'étranger dans leur vie agricole, rituelle et culturelle. L'éthique du Deutéronome à l'égard de l'étranger est ancrée dans l'histoire même d'Israël en tant qu'étranger et réfugié.

Introduction

There has been widespread questioning of Bill C-31, Protecting Canada's Immigration System Act (adopted in 2012), for its alleged violation of human rights protected by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and, as Catherine Dauvergne put it, for its failure to maintain Canada's humanitarian tradition.1 But there is also a basis for critique arising from ethical principles grounded in scriptures that are fundamental to many religious communities who have consistently been at the forefront of advocacy on behalf of refugees as well as the sponsorship of refugees. This paper focuses on ethical principles articulated in the Bible, specifically in the book of Deuteronomy: some important innovations within Bill C-31 run contrary to the biblical ethics espoused in this book. Components of Bill C-31—such as mandatory detention, no right of appeal, and a five-year delay for application for permanent residence (all these apply to only certain groups of claimants)—are challenged by the ethics, system of justice, and polity of Deuteronomy.

Deuteronomy deals extensively with social practice concerning the "stranger." More will be said below, but for now I note that the term "stranger" in Deuteronomy refers to the vulnerable ethnic other who lives among the Israelites, with some correspondence to our contemporary category "refugee."2 As I will demonstrate, Israel was to offer hospitality to the stranger, taking responsibility for their economic and social inclusion.

Summary: Five Aspects of Bill C-31 Which Run Counter to Deuteronomy

Before we get into a detailed discussion, here is a summary of five aspects of Bill C-31 and the ways in which they run counter to Deuteronomy.

1. Claimants from "designated countries of origin" will have their claim process seriously restricted. *Deuteronomy's political vision prohibits those who "make the decisions" from engaging in shrewd and economically efficient practices that disadvantage vulnerable populations (e.g., Deut.17:14–20).*[3]

2. Hearings for claimants from "designated countries of origin" will be held within either thirty or forty-five days, which does not give adequate time for preparation. *Deuteronomy insists upon a system of "rigorous justice" that goes to great lengths to ensure that justice is done for vulnerable people (e.g., 16:20).*

3. Access to the Refugee Appeal Division (RAD) is denied to "irregular arrivals" and to refugees from "designated countries of origin." *Deuteronomy insists upon equality in the law courts, especially, and explicitly, for the "stranger" (e.g., 1:16).*

4. Those considered to be "irregular arrivals" may not apply for permanent residence for five years and are not able to sponsor family members to come to Canada for over five years. *Deuteronomy insists that Israel go to lengths to provide a "home" for strangers in her midst (e.g., 16:11, 14).*

5. "Irregular arrivals" will face mandatory detention. *This runs afoul of the command to "love the stranger (10:18–19) and laws protecting families (e.g., 5:14, 18; 16:14) and, in Deuteronomy's own terms, amounts to "kidnapping" (24:7).*

Worldview and Ethics in Deuteronomy: Radical Hospitality

The Hebrew word behind the Old Testament word "stranger," "alien," and "sojourner" is (usually) *"ger."* The noun *"ger,"* in Deuteronomy, describes someone who is both ethnically displaced and economically vulnerable. The circumstances of the *"ger"* in Deuteronomy may be further clarified as being in a dependant relationship with the Israelites with whom she lives. *In Deuteronomy "ger" ("stranger") occurs twenty-one times, indicating the importance of ethics concerning the stranger for this book.*

There are two main narrative trajectories, so to speak, that undergird Deuteronomy's ethic toward the stranger. The first is that God has generously given land and its produce to Israel and this gift is to be shared. Ancient Israel's worldview begins with a gift: at the heart of reality is a God of limitless generosity. In turn Israel is to respond with thanksgiving and generosity. These three dimensions—gift, thanksgiving, and generosity/inclusion—are all joyfully displayed at the seasonal harvest festivals that Israel shares at the sanctuary. Israel is commanded:

And you shall rejoice before the Lord your God, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant, the Levite who is within your towns, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow who are among you… (16:11; see also 16:14; 26:11)

Thus Deuteronomy's social program can be summarized well with the words of Craig Blomberg: "God owns it all, and wants everybody to be able to enjoy some of it."[4]

The second "story" undergirding Deuteronomy's ethic towards the stranger is Israel's own history of being a "stranger" or "refugee."[5] This story begins with the displacement of Israel's fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (26:5). It is exemplified with Israel as a "stranger" in Egypt in the time of Jacob and Joseph (e.g., 26:5). When Israel was residing as a stranger in Egypt, Egypt did not offer Israel the hospitality she would have desired, but oppressed her with slavery (e.g., 26:6–7). The Lord her God delivered Israel from Egypt's slavery and gave her laws that would shape a new society in which every person could thrive, as a deliberate response to Egypt's oppression (e.g., 26:8–11). That history is the background for this famous passage, along with many others:

[The Lord your God] executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing. Love the stranger, therefore, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. (10:18–19)

In light of these two powerful stories of the Lord's deliverance and provision, it is no surprise that *Deuteronomy's ethic concerning the "stranger" is an ethic of radical welcome.*

An examination of all the details of Israel's responsibility toward the "stranger" would require a substantial book, so for now I briefly note two aspects of their responsibility: First, as Deuteronomy's laws unfold it becomes apparent that the implications of the command to "love the stranger" include welcoming the stranger into whatever town they might wish to live in (23:15–16). Second, individual families in Israel have the responsibility to include the stranger in their agricultural and cultural lives, including the most joyful events on their calendar: annual journeys to the sanctuary in order to celebrate with feasting and joy (16:11, 14; 26:11).

I note at this early point that it may be objected that the modern concept of nationhood is foreign to the Old Testament, and so applying its inclusivist ethics to a modern state such as Canada is invalid. Certainly, in Israel there was not a conception of sovereignty as we have today, and

116

Israel's borders were more porous than Canada's are now. Yet there *was* an understanding that Israel was distinct from other nations (just as Canada is) and there was some concept akin to citizenship for Israelites. Indeed this is implied by the very notion of an outsider or stranger. Furthermore the threat of religious contamination, from people of other nations, is a relentless concern of Deuteronomy, making Deuteronomy's ethics of inclusion for vulnerable people of other ethnicities all the more remarkable.

I stress too at this early point that I do not seek to argue from Deuteronomy that Israel's social and religious borders were utterly porous and that anybody and everybody was welcome—Deuteronomy's concerns are more complex than this. I will demonstrate more narrowly that Deuteronomy has an ethic of inclusion concerned with the *vulnerable* stranger; for all such people, Israel was to offer a radical welcome.

Let's now examine in more detail the five aspects of Bill C-31 mentioned earlier.

"Designated Country of Origin"

At the discretion of Canada's Minister for Citizenship and Immigration, certain countries will be categorized as "designated countries of origin." This categorization applies to countries deemed to be safe by the minister or else to countries from which claims have often failed or ended prematurely. Claimants from these countries have their claim process seriously restricted: namely, through reduced claim preparation time for hearings and no right of appeal to the RAD.

On one hand this legislation is certainly efficient: claims deemed less likely to succeed on the basis of country are expedited. A news release from the government of Prime Minister Stephen Harper predicts it will save about $1.65 billion over five years: "Too many tax dollars are spent on bogus refugees."[6] On the other hand, this legislation may endanger vulnerable people within these countries who are rightly seeking refuge. The danger this legislation poses for such people has been expressed succinctly in the *Montreal Gazette:* "Safe countries are not necessarily safe for everyone in them."

This law then disadvantages certain refugee groups for the sake of efficiency. As such, it runs counter to Deuteronomy's political vision, which prohibits those who "make the decisions" from prioritizing shrewd and economically efficient practices that disadvantage vulnerable populations. The "law of the King" for example (17:14–20) is a tenaciously egalitarian description of political responsibility that insists the King treat all his fellow Israelites as his "brothers." Any accumulation of wealth that the king might engage in at the expense of "his brothers and sisters" is

forbidden and is furthermore characterized, chillingly, "as sending the people 'back to Egypt'."[7] (In the context of the whole of Deuteronomy, the "brothers," to whom the King is responsible, includes the "stranger.") Thus, restricted refugee claim processes for the sake of efficiency runs counter to Deuteronomy.

Preparation Time for Hearings on Claims Is as Short as Thirty Days

For claimants from "designated countries of origin," hearings on claims are expected to occur within forty-five days for those who lodge their claim upon entry and within thirty days for those who do not, according to background briefing notes issued by Citizenship and Immigration Canada. Those who support foreign nationals in their claims for refugee status explain that this is inadequate time to gather evidence and meet with legal counsel and will hinder a refugee's ability to present their case in the best light possible.

The protective wall around Deuteronomy's security for vulnerable people is fair and reliable recourse to the legal system. Deuteronomy 16 describes the appointment of judges and officers and then exhorts: "You must *rigorously pursue justice,* that you may live and inherit the land that the Lord your God is giving you" (16:20). The phrase "rigorously pursue justice" may also be translated: "Justice, only justice shall you pursue..." In Deuteronomy, a justice system that rigorously pursues a fair process, especially for vulnerable people, is a crucial safety net that ensures that all people can thrive. It is important to add that the character of "justice" in Deuteronomy is shaped by the two formative narrative trajectories I have detailed above: first, it is a response to the Lord's generous gift of land and its bounty, and second, it is a response to the Lord's delivering Israel from Egypt. Thus, "justice" is especially concerned with protecting the lives and well-being of vulnerable people (rather than protecting the privilege of the King or the wealthy; see 10:17–18; 24:17–18).

In the case of Bill C-31, inadequate time to prepare claims compromises the justice of the refugee claim process and so falls short of the rigor required by Deuteronomy.

Denial of an Effective Appeal for Some Claimants

The Refugee Appeal Division (RAD) provides an important security net for failed claims. Bill C-31 denies this system of appeal to "irregular arrivals" and to refugees from "designated countries of origin." Denial of appeal to the RAD for certain claimant groups is at odds with Deuteronomy's insistence upon legal equity for all people, including and especially the "stranger." I reiterate here that the term "*ger*" or "stranger" in Deuteronomy is to be defined as the vulnerable and displaced ethnic other, who is in need of ongoing

hospitality; legal equity is to apply, especially, to such people. See for example how Moses exhorts Israel's judges:

> And I charged your judges at that time, "Hear the cases between your brothers, *and judge righteously between a man and his brother or the stranger who is with him.* (1:16)

It is striking that the stranger is mentioned in this passage. The stranger gets an explicit mention here, I would think, as this is the category of people most likely to be excluded from just legal process (yes, the stranger was vulnerable in ancient times as well!) *The stranger is mentioned in order to ensure equality in the law courts.* However Bill C-31 denies access to the RAD for "irregular arrivals" and to refugees from "designated countries of origin," offering these claimants a legal process that no Canadian citizen would think fair should it be applied to them.

A Five-Year Ban on Permanent Residence Applications for "Irregular Arrivals," with Implications for Family Reunification

Bill C-31 designates certain refugee groups as "irregular arrivals." This designation may be applied to a newly arrived group whose identity is difficult to confirm or to a group whose arrival has involved so-called smuggling. These groups have no right of appeal and are subject to short hearing preparation times, as described above. In addition, should they be accepted as refugees, they may not apply for permanent residence for five years. This means that these refugees are not able to sponsor family members to come to Canada for over five years.

These last two restrictions run against Deuteronomy's insistence that Israel go to lengths to provide a "home" for strangers in her midst. The provision of a home is perhaps exemplified in the seasonal sojourners to the sanctuary described in Deuteronomy. Seasonal sojourns to "the place the Lord will choose" punctuate Israel's calendar with a rhythm of worship and celebration. Yet these celebrations are radically inclusive: Israelite households include the "stranger," orphan, widow, and Levite in their journey and celebration—four groups who are economically vulnerable and often without land themselves. Together with the "stranger" and other vulnerable people, an Israelite household journeys to the sanctuary, worships, and then feasts together with great joy (16:11, 14, 26:1–11). These inclusive harvest festivals are a striking example of the radical hospitality and "home making" for displaced people that Israel is called to.

A five-year delay on application for permanent residence and subsequent delays in sponsoring family members runs

counter to this radical hospitality, disrupting Canada's accessibility as a "home" for homeless people.

Mandatory Detention

"Irregular Arrivals" face mandatory detention under Bill C-31. While detention is not mandatory for children under the age of sixteen, detained families are faced with the decision to send their children into foster care in a foreign country and culture or else to have their children with them in detention. Dr. Meb Rashid of the Christie Refugee Health Clinic in Toronto writes:

> As a physician who has had the privilege of working with refugee populations for over ten years, I am deeply concerned about the impact of mandatory detention on the health status of an often already traumatized population... I urge the government to reconsider Bill C31—it will cause tremendous hardship on refugee populations and will be a major impediment to successful integration.[8]

I myself, an Australian citizen, know too well of the well-documented mental illness and high suicide rates among refugees resulting from mandatory detention laws in Australia.

Such an arrangement is simply unthinkable within the ethics of Deuteronomy. First, it runs counter to the right of all people to an equitable social order (4:8). Second, it is an abrogation of the command to "love the sojourner" (which is in turn grounded in the reality that God "loves the sojourner," 10:18–19). Third, it runs counter to Deuteronomy's vision for the shared life of families: families work and rest together (5:15), worship together (12:18), feast together (12:18), remember the saving acts of the Lord together (16:11–12), hear the law together (31:12–13), etc. Fourth, from the range of social practices in Deuteronomy, the practice closest to mandatory detention is, I would think, the forbidden act of kidnapping (24:7, cf. Exodus 21:16).

Concluding Reflections

In light of these reflections one may reply: yet is it not valid for a nation to pursue national interest? And does not nationhood entail such goals? And might not national interest entail the exclusion of refugees, perhaps for the sake of Canada's wealth or internal stability? I reply that nationhood today, as back then, implies principles about ensuring the security of co-nationals and defending the interests of the nation, but it need not entail the unjust exclusion of others, and Deuteronomy shows that it *should* not entail such unjust exclusion. Certainly, Canada should protect itself from violence, both internal and external, but it is only an unjustifiably selfish nation-statism that thinks Canada

has a right to do this in ways that excludes the vulnerable on its doorstep. And it is only a deeply problematic political theory or political theology that seeks to defend such an approach.

How may we appropriate Deuteronomy's ethics of radical welcome? For Jews, Christians, and Muslims, Deuteronomy makes a normative claim upon individuals and upon society, calling for a radical welcome and just process for all strangers who find their way to our gates, for refugees who arrive in any of a variety of ways to Canada. This ancient Near Eastern law code has called society and church to just practices for around three thousand years and it roundly condemns these five aspects of Bill C-31 as unjust.

Notes

1. "Refugee Rules the End of Canada's Humanitarian Tradition," Toronto *Globe and Mail,* January 29, 2013, http://www.theglobeandmail.com/commentary/refugee-rules-the-end-of-canadas-humanitarian-tradition/article7937115/.

2. So F. A. Spina, "Israelites as Gerim: Sojourners in Social and Historical Context," in *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Sixtieth Birthday,* ed. C. L. Meyers and M. O'Connor (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983), 322.

3. All biblical citations are from the book of Deuteronomy unless otherwise stated and are taken from the *English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Crossway Bibles, 2001).

4. Craig Blomberg, *Neither Poverty nor Riches: A Biblical Theology of Possessions* (Illinois: Apollos, 1999), 241.

5. Nathan MacDonald, *Not Bread Alone: The Uses of Food in the Old Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 93f.

6. "News Release: Harper Government Introduces the Protecting Canada's Immigration System Act," Citizenship and Immigration Canada, http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/department/media/releases/2012/2012-02-16.asp.

7. S. D. McBride, "Polity of the Covenant People: The Book of Deuteronomy," *Interpretation* 41(1987): 41.

8. "Collected Comments on Bill C-31," Canadian Council for Refugees, http://ccrweb.ca/fr/node/14505.

Mark Glanville is a PhD candidate with Trinity College, Bristol, UK, residing in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

Reimagining Asylum: Religious Narratives and the Moral Obligation to the Asylum Seeker

Silas W. Allard

Abstract

The narrative that grounds the asylum policy of the United States portrays asylum seekers as passive objects of external forces. This narrative emerges from the complex interplay of exceptionality and victimization that characterizes the legal status and popular perception of the refugee. It is then read back onto the asylum seeker through a supererogatory asylum policy that is unable to recognize the moral demand made by the asylum seeker. The project this essay is drawn from seeks to challenge the policy of asylum as charity by interrogating alternative narratives grounded in the Hebrew Bible story of the Exodus and the Qu'ranic story of the Hijra. In these narratives, flight from oppression is portrayed as an act of moral agency, and the asylum seeker's capacity as Other to make a moral demand on the Self emerges. Thus, I argue that an asylum policy informed by these alternative narratives needs must question its supererogatory assumptions.

Résumé

Le discours à la base de la politique d'asile des États-Unis représente les demandeurs d'asile comme des objets passifs subissant des forces extérieures. Cette représentation émerge de l'interaction complexe entre l'exception et la victimisation qui caractérise le statut légal et la perception populaire du réfugié. Ce discours est renvoyé au demandeur d'asile à travers une politique d'asile surérogatoire qui ne reconnaît pas les exigences morales du demandeur d'asile. Cet article vise à remettre en question la politique de l'asile en tant que charité en faisant appel à des discours différents prenant leur source dans le récit biblique de l'Exode

et dans le récit coranique de l'Hégire. Dans ces récits, la fuite de l'oppression est représentée comme l'exercice d'une capacité morale, et émerge alors la capacité du demandeur d'asile dans son altérité de faire une demande morale en tant que soi-même. En conséquence, on soutient qu'une politique d'asile basée sur ces alternatives doit remettre en question les présomptions surérogatoires.

> The world found nothing sacred in the abstract nakedness of being human.
>
> —Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*[1]

Arendt's critique of the international community's response to the statelessness crisis of the Second World War is well-known and well-worn in the field of refugee studies, but it remains a pointed and poignant critique of the limits imposed on refugee subjectivity. Solely human—without political affiliation—the refugee subject is an exception to the logic of state-centric legal systems, which, in turn, recognize no obligation to the refugee. This exceptional subjectivity is further entrenched through narratives about refugees that locate refugee identity in portrayals of passive victims upon whom the larger force of persecution works. Refugee identity as passive objectivity is then reified through supererogatory policies of protection; the refugee is again the object of an outside force.

The central question of this essay is whether and how it is possible to reimagine asylum-seeker subjectivity in a way that recognizes the moral demand asylum seekers make on receiving states. What follows is an adumbration of and introduction to a larger project that aims to challenge the

idea of asylum as charity and disrupt the cycle of narrative and policy that perpetuates the figurative, and consequentially literal, exclusion of asylum seekers.[2] In particular, I want to examine the ways in which current conceptions of asylum-seeker subjectivity obscure the asylum seeker's moral demand and to suggest that alternative narratives exist—I draw on the Hebrew Bible story of the Exodus and the Qur'anic story of the *Hijra*—in which flight from oppression is conceived as an act of moral agency.

This article is inspired and informed by the possibility inherent in the work of Emmanuel Lévinas and by thinkers, in particular Judith Butler, who have taken up the possibilities inherent in Lévinas while struggling with the philosophical abstraction that distances the Lévinasian ethic from personal and social experience. It is Lévinas who provides the theoretical substructure that points to the critique of current US asylum policy and suggests the route to a real ethics of asylum. For this reason, I start with a brief discussion of Lévinas and the ethical demand of the asylum seeker as Other.

Lévinas and the Demand of the Other

From Arendt on, authors discussing refugee subjectivity have often made recourse to concepts of bare humanity to capture the social and political dislocation that occurs in the flight from persecution, as well as the consequences of such dislocation.[3] To be a refugee is to have lost the vestiges of social belonging, group affiliation, and associative identity, resulting in a profound vulnerability and dependence. This bare humanity would, seemingly, beget the central moment envisioned by Lévinas's ethics of the face.[4] Exposed in her bare humanity, the refugee would seem to epitomize the conditions of the Lévinasian face:

> Stripped of its form, the face is chilled to the bone in its nakedness. It is a desolation. The nakedness of the face is destitution and already supplication in the rectitude that sights me. But this supplication is an obligation… . [T]he face imposes on me and I cannot stay deaf to its appeal, or forget it, what I mean is I cannot stop being responsible for its desolation.[5]

What animates Lévinasian ethics is the moral obligation that the Other makes upon the Self; the Other, in the form of the face and by reason of its nakedness and desolation, interrupts the formation of the Self with a precondition of moral obligation.[6] Lévinas's argument is a powerful assertion of relationality as the fundamental aspect of human experience. Even before there is a Self, that Self is already in a relation of obligation to the Other. If the moment of impingement, by which the Other makes its demand on the Self, occurs through the naked visage of the face—the nothing-but-humanness

of the Other—shouldn't the refugee's bare humanity be the very occasion of that impingement?

That the Lévinasian moral demand of the Other is preconscious, preliteral, and, in the end, preontological—even before being there is relation—is the great promise of Lévinas's work, but it also points to the difficulty of realizing such a vision. In the conscious, concrete world, social norms function to obscure the demand of the face.[7] As Judith Butler writes regarding Lévinas: "The 'inauguration' of the subject takes place through the impingement by which an infinite ethical demand is communicated. But this scene cannot be narrated in time; it recurs throughout time and belongs to an order other than that of time."[8] As soon as the "infinite ethical demand" is confined to the genre of narrative, it is inscribed in a context conditioned by normativity and power. Thus, Butler, for whom the constricting nature of normativity and power is central, poses the problem of the encounter with the Other this way:

> In asking the ethical question "How ought I to treat another?" I am immediately caught up in a realm of social normativity, since the other only appears to me, only functions as an other for me, if there is a frame within which I can see and apprehend the other in her separateness and exteriority. So, though I might think of the ethical relation as dyadic or, indeed, as presocial, I am caught up not only in the sphere of normativity but in the problematic of power when I pose the ethical question in its directness and simplicity: "How ought I to treat you?"[9]

Counter-intuitively, the actual state of bare humanity frustrates the Lévinasian ethic by obscuring or obfuscating the Other's face. In Butler's terms, the frame for understanding the asylum seeker as Other is conditioned by the narrative of the passive victim. The Lévinasian face disrupts the Self with its demand, but the asylum seeker's subjectivity is understood as passive, without demand. As Arendt wrote, "It seems that a man who is nothing but a man has lost the very qualities which make it possible for other people to treat him as a fellow-man."[10] Or, as Peter Nyers has written in a more contemporary context:

> Refugee identity is a limit-concept of modern accounts of the political and is constituted through an exceptional logic: whatever qualities are present for the citizen are notably absent for the refugee. The visibility, agency, and rational speech of the citizen is lacking in the prevailing representations of the refugee. Instead, qualities of invisibility, voicelessness, and victimage are allocated with the effect of effacing the political subjectivity of the refugee.[11]

Instead of treating asylum seekers as complex, multifaceted fellow humans, their subjectivity is flattened,

reduced to a singular dimension. The consequence of this reduction is that receiving states recognize no moral obligation, but conceive of asylum as a form of charity. It is offered unilaterally and at the discretion of the state. As Carol Bohmer and Amy Shuman write:

> [W]e have a category [of asylum], but we are frightened to use it except in the most obvious and sympathetic cases. We fear that if we use it too enthusiastically, we will open the floodgates to all the miserable, needy, people fleeing war or crisis, so common in our current world… . The whole process is riddled with fallout from this fear… . Asylum seekers are guilty until proven innocent.[12]

This response is not driven simply by the fear of a flood of human misery washing upon our shores; rather, the characterization of asylum seekers as miserable, needy victims and asylum as charitable relief makes rejecting refugees a cognizable option. The asylum seeker's extreme vulnerability is an opportunity for state action; because asylum seekers are vulnerable and in a position of dependence they are seen by the receiving state as objects carried on the tides of greater forces, namely persecution and protection.

At first glance, the vulnerability and dependence of the asylum seeker would seem to be the conditions for a Lévinasian encounter. Confronted with actual asylum seekers, however, the question of how we, as receiving states, ought to treat them is framed by the passive victim narrative. Contextualized in this way, the asylum seeker's vulnerability and dependence—the bare humanity that should be a demand—serve to obscure the face and quiet the demand.

It is not the case, of course, that no one who requests asylum receives it; moreover, the analysis to this point would seem to beg the question: Isn't asylum—an application-based procedure—a demand at its heart? This next section briefly examines asylum law, in this case US asylum law, in order to discuss how the asylum law and procedure reifies the construction of refugee subjects as passive victims and nullifies any moral demand present in the act of seeking asylum by requiring that the asylum seeker perform that preconceived identity.

The Interplay of Asylum Narratives and Asylum Law

Whether and how a person meets the definition of a refugee, and is therefore eligible for asylum and admitted to the United States, is the focus of Section 208 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA):

> The Secretary of Homeland Security or the Attorney General *may* grant asylum to an alien who has applied for asylum in

accordance with the requirements and procedures established by the Secretary of Homeland Security or the Attorney General under this section *if* the Secretary of Homeland Security or the Attorney General *determines* that such alien is a refugee within the meaning of section 1101(a)(42)(A) of this title.[13]

It is important to note two aspects of the text quoted above. First, the grant of asylum is entirely discretionary. The Secretary of Homeland Security or the Attorney General *may* grant asylum, but there is no positive obligation upon them to do so. Second, eligibility is determined by either the Secretary or the Attorney General, which means that an asylum seeker must narrate an identity consistent with what these officials (or their proxies) consider a refugee's story.

Skepticism permeates this process. The manifest concern is that only the "truly needy" should be assisted; therefore, the asylum process must be vigilantly policed for fraud and merit.[14] As Bohmer and Shuman note, "[W]e quiz asylum applicants endlessly, to convince ourselves that they are really fleeing persecution and not lying to us so they can slip into a safer country in search of a better life."[15] This concern results in a presumption against the asylum seeker; the asylum seeker is presumed not to be a refugee. The presumption against refugee status is evident when looking at who is allocated the burden of proof during an asylum determination: the asylum seeker must bear the burden of proving that she meets the definition of a refugee.[16] In other words, the asylum seeker is presumed not to be a refugee unless and until she can prove otherwise. The asylum seeker's testimony alone may be sufficient *if* "the applicant satisfies the trier of fact that the applicant's testimony is credible, is persuasive, and refers to specific facts sufficient to demonstrate that the applicant is a refugee."[17] Thus, the asylum seeker's burden of proof has three components: a burden of credibility, a burden of persuasion, and a burden of fact.[18] Unless the asylum seeker can meet the burdens of credibility, persuasion, and fact her asylum claim will be denied.

Most problematically for the asylum seeker, she does not receive a presumption of credibility; rather, the trier of fact is free to determine that an asylum seeker is not credible based on any indication of inconsistency.[19] Any lapse in an asylum seeker's narrative, "without regard to whether an inconsistency, inaccuracy, or falsehood goes to the heart of the applicant's claim," can be the basis for an adverse credibility determination.[20] The trier of fact may also demand any evidence that the trier of fact determines is necessary to corroborate otherwise credible testimony, which evidence *must* be provided "unless the applicant does not have the evidence and cannot reasonably obtain the evidence."[21] In an asylum determination, so much turns on the asylum

seeker's ability to maker her case (both figuratively and literally given that she bears the burden of proof), that the statutorily inscribed fragility of her credibility is particularly damning. It both reflects and reinforces the idea that the asylum seeker has no power in the relationship.

It is the most clear-cut, sympathetic cases of unambiguous persecution that will be both the most persuasive, most credible, and easiest to prove.[22] In other words, the story one expects to hear is the most compelling. The asylum process becomes a series of stages for the performance of a prescripted refugee identity. In this context, the Self overdetermines the Other that is narrating. The Other must meet a set of a priori expectations as to form, content, consistency, and veracity. The result for asylum seekers is that the asylum seeker's personal story is often and increasingly likely to narrate an insufficient account.[23]

In this way, the asylum application falls short of a Lévinasian demand because it compels or obliges nothing in terms of response from the receiving state. Instead, a demand runs from the receiving state to the asylum seeker for the asylum seeker to narrate a prefabricated identity. By setting the definition of their identity, the conditions of their performance, and placing upon them the burden of proof, the receiving state takes no risks in the encounter and is unchanged by the asylum seeker. The refugee as "mere, bare, naked, or minimal humanity"[24] is a subject to whom no duty is owed, but whose plight may warrant a gratuitous favour if the story of persecution meets expectations. This is not the face that interrupts, and it fails to interrupt because the face of asylum is a construction created by the receiving state.

What would it mean to reconceive asylum seekers as agents fulfilling a moral responsibility? What if, instead of simply victims subject to the powers of persecution and protection, asylum seekers were understood as engaged in a deliberate act of safeguarding their own dignity and humanity? In what follows I argue that asylum seekers are, in fact, more than bare humanity and when recognized as such the cycle of passive victim and charitable state is disrupted. First, I turn to what I believe are compelling alternative narratives of what it means to flee persecution drawn from two religious narrative traditions: the Exodus and the *Hijra*.

A Theological Ethics of Flight

What if, instead of faceless bare humanity and passive object of sympathy, the asylum seeker was understood as a moral agent fulfilling an ethical imperative to flee persecution? This is the nature of the moral subjects who fled Egypt under Moses' guidance and those early Muslims who, with the Prophet Muhammad, fled the persecution of Mecca for the oasis of Medina. An ethic of flight holds that persecution is an affront to our anthropology, and the flight from persecution is a righteous act to preserve the integrity of what Christians might refer to as the *imago dei,* the image of God, or what one scholar of Islamic Studies, Muddathir 'Abd al-Rahim, has called, "human dignity . . . graciously conferred by God … ."[25] Because humanity is tasked to protect its dignity, flight from persecution is an act of moral agency. As 'Abd al-Rahim notes, "One of the greatest blessings that God has graciously conferred on humanity in addition, and one that is certainly more germaine [*sic*] to the dignity which He conferred on the children of Adam entire, is that of moral autonomy or freedom of choice and conscience."[26]

The Exodus

The Exodus story is usually read as an account of God's delivery of Israel from slavery in Egypt. Accepting that liberation motif, it is worth examining the flight aspect and what it reveals about the moral agency of the Israelites.[27] The second chapter of Exodus closes with God taking notice of the suffering of the Israelites in Egypt.

> The Israelites groaned under their slavery, and cried out. Out of the slavery their cry for help rose up to God. God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God looked upon the Israelites, and God took notice of them. (Exod. 2:23–25)[28]

Chapter 3 then narrates God's first intercession with Moses. It is here that God announces God's plan for the Israelites: justice for Israel and freedom from persecution will come by way of a migration. God commands Moses: "[C]ome, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt" (Exod. 3:10). God's delivery from Egypt is fulfillment of the covenant as was already foretold to Abraham many generations before[29] (Gen. 15:12–21), but it is a fulfillment of the covenant that comes in response to Israel's cries under the persecution of Pharaoh and relies upon the Israelites' action in concert with God. God creates the conditions that allow the Israelites to flee, but it is up to the Israelites to make that moral choice. The Israelites' capacity for moral agency is reflected in their initial rejection of Moses: "Moses told [what God had said] to the Israelites; but they would not listen to Moses, because of their broken sprit and their cruel slavery" (Exod. 6:9).[30] God does not usurp the Israelites' agency; rather, God creates a possibility, which the Israelites must realize through their own action.

The moral agency of the Israelites' flight is exemplified in Moses and Aaron, who are God's agents before Pharaoh. As leaders of the community and moral exemplars, Moses

and Aaron's charge to Pharaoh is reflective of the narrative's moral commitment. When God sends Moses and Aaron before Pharaoh, their edict is clear: Let the Israelites go from the land of Egypt (Exod. 7:1–7). God enjoins Pharaoh through his agents, Moses and Aaron, to allow the Israelites to do their moral duty and flee the slavery and persecution of Egypt.

The Exodus narrative is profoundly influential in both the Jewish and Christian traditions. Though there are numerous examples of the importance of this narrative, perhaps one of the simplest and yet most explicit can be see in the Jewish ritual calendar; the flight from persecution inaugurates a new era. "The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt: This month shall mark for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you" (Exod. 12:1–2). The instruction for the new priestly calendar is given as part of the instructions for the Passover, and so it is that the Passover celebration marks the new year in the ritual calendar of Judaism. The purpose, the teleology, of the Passover is the Exodus: "At the end of four hundred thirty years, on that very day [Passover], all the companies of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt" (Exod. 12:41). By fleeing the persecution in Egypt, the Israelites safeguard their dignity, but they also inaugurate a new history; the power of this act is not minimal, it is expansive.

The Hijra
An act of flight also marks the beginning of the Islamic calendar. As ʿAbd al-Rahim notes,

> the day of the Prophet's *hijrah* to Medina—neither his birthday, nor the commencement of the revelation of the Quran, nor his entry in due course into Mecca as the magnanimous conqueror— was adopted, only a few years after his departure from this world in 632 C.E., as the beginning of the Muslim calendar and the Islamic way of reckoning of time across the ages.[31]

Thus, as in Judaism, a foundational event that comes to orient the tradition temporally and theologically is an act of flight from persecution.

The Islamic tradition first emerged in the Arabian city of Mecca as the Prophet Muhammad spread his message and recruited followers. However, perceiving the new religion as a threat to its power and influence, the *Quraysh,* the tribes that controlled Mecca and, in particular the holy shrine known as the Kaabah, began to persecute the Muslim community. Sharifah Nazneen Agha describes the persecution that early Muslims faced in Mecca:

> Muslims of low social status were freely tortured by the *Quraysh* to force a renunciation of the new faith, whilst other persecutory

measures were imposed to effect a complete marginalization of the entire Muslim community. The prohibition of trade in essential goods and provisions was particularly oppressive, and resulted in a 3-year period of starvation, acute depravation [sic] and certain death.[32]

In the face of such persecution, the Prophet Muhammad initially sent seventy Muslims to seek asylum in the territory of King Negus, an Abyssinian Christian, who welcomed the band of Muslims and offered them protection in the face of diplomatic and political pressure from the Meccans.[33] However, the persecution of Muslims in Mecca continued. In the interim, the oasis of Medina to the north had grown increasingly sympathetic to Islam and had begun to accept Muslim refugees from Mecca. Finally, in 622 CE, the Prophet Muhammad embarked on what ʿAbd al-Rahim describes as the epoch-making migration to Medina that is known as the *Hijra.*[34]

This new era is inaugurated through the early Muslim community's decision to flee persecution. Agha puts it well when she says: "The *hijrah* event is extraordinary for Muslims as it marks the birth of the Islamic age, the onset of which was made possible only by *decisive action* of the *muhajirun* to mobilize and seek refuge in foreign territory."[35] The *muhajirun,* meaning "emigrants" in Arabic and used to describe those early Muslims who undertook the *Hijra* to Medina,[36] are moral agents both in their flight from persecution and in their action to create the conditions to preserve their new religion. It is also worth noting the importance of the Prophet Muhammad's identity as a *muhajirun* and participation in the *Hijra*. The teachings and example of the Prophet (*sunnah*) emerged early in Islamic history as second only to the Qur'an in terms of authority.[37] Thus, the Prophet's decision to flee the persecution of Mecca and to establish his new religious community through asylum lends further credence to the moral agency of fleeing persecution.

The Islamic tradition of recognizing moral agency in flight is also reflected in the Qur'an. As Khadija Elmadmad notes, "In a sense, seeking asylum is a duty. Muslims are not obliged to live in places where there is injustice and persecution and they are urged by Islam to leave these places and seek protection elsewhere."[38] The directive to flee in the face of persecution appears in the Qur'anic text both as an injunction and as an act worthy of reward. Surah 4:97 contains the genesis of the command to flee:

> When angels take the souls of those who die in sin against their souls, they say: "In what (plight) were ye?" They reply: "Weak and oppressed were we in the earth." They say: "Was not the earth

of God spacious enough for you to move yourselves away (from evil)?" (Qur'an 4:97)[39]

'Abd al-Rahim, in his discussion of the duty to seek asylum, notes that the Qur'an places a heavy importance on the believer's obligation to struggle against evil—including tyranny, oppression, and persecution.[40] However, when the struggle is futile, the believer should not submit to evil and persecution. Thus, 'Abd al-Rahim comments on Surah 4:100:

> [T]he Quran then describes those who resign themselves to passive acceptance of oppression and humiliation as people "who have wronged themselves". For, the argument continues, if they happened to be too weak to put up effective resistance to tyranny and injustice, they should leave those lands (or homes) in which they would otherwise be deprived of the dignity and freedom which define their very existence as humans.[41]

The Qur'an makes the point rather strongly here that persons are responsible for guarding their God-given dignity, and if flight is the way to do so, then one has a duty to seek asylum.

The Qur'an also speaks of seeking asylum as an action worthy of reward. In Surah IV, verse 100, the Qur'an says:

> He who forsakes his home in the cause of God, finds in the earth many a refuge, wide and spacious: Should he die as a refugee from home for God and His Apostle, his reward becomes due and sure with God: and God is Oft-giving, Most Merciful. (Qur'an 4:100)

There is a notion of creation inherent in this verse that dovetails with the notion of human dignity given by God. The creation is a place where the dignity of persons should be able to flourish. It is God's intention, 'Abd al-Rahim notes, that

> all those who strive in conscious devotion to God and with intent to abide by divine guidance will be able to find other lands (or homes) in which they can then live in dignity and freedom—as they were meant to do by their Creator and Sustainer from the very beginning.[42]

It is good to find in the creation a place where one's dignity can flourish; to do so is an action worthy of reward.

Both the Exodus and the *Hijra* narratives tell stories of persons becoming the guardians of their own dignity through the act of flight. Theologically speaking, the children of God, endowed by their creator with inherent dignity, have an obligation to protect that dignity; God has provided for a bountiful creation that enables the possibility of flight; therefore, the act of fleeing persecution is an act of moral consequence. In these narratives, flight is not a condition driven by the context of persecution; rather, it is a decision, an act, and a defining moment. It is not the persecution that defines the communities in these stories so much as their liberation, and that liberation comes through flight. I believe that, even outside their theological significance, these stories can inform receiving state approaches to asylum by helping to reframe the actions of asylum seekers as the moral choice of an agent to flee persecution.

Conclusion: *The Demand of a Moral Agent*

What can receiving states learn, or more aptly, how can receiving states and the people of those states begin to reimagine asylum in light of these alternative narratives? Asylum seekers are not thrown or washed upon the shores of receiving states; asylum seekers are making a moral demand in the very act of their flight. If it is every person's duty to avoid persecution—even if it is only a person's right to be free from persecution—and the world is a place where the opportunity to escape persecution exists, then seizing that opportunity is a demand in the Lévinasian sense. By starting from this perspective, it may be possible to rethink receiving-state asylum policy, which is the broader goal of this project.

This is particularly true because asylum is intrinsically an interrelational process. The world that God made so large, in the Qur'anic formulation, has been shrunk by humanity's insistence on drawing political boundaries. It is not enough to physically move away from persecution; in a world of states, effective protection requires being admitted or permitted to cross a border. Thus, in order for an asylum seeker to take advantage of the vast earth's possibility for freedom from persecution, borders must be able to give way. Put differently, the asylum seeker commits a moral act by fleeing persecution, but the efficacy of that act requires a relationship with the receiving state where she seeks asylum. Flight is a relationship, a priori, and the receiving state is not an independent self that can act towards the asylum seeker outside of that relationship or overdetermine the asylum seeker's narrative. Receiving states should allow themselves, as Butler says, "to be addressed, claimed, bound to what is not me, but also to be moved, to be prompted to act … ."[43] If the asylum seeker is the guardian of her own dignity, she disrupts the continuum of agency that runs from persecutor to protector. For the receiving state, this means that the state is not the lone actor when it comes to protection. Understanding the asylum seeker as the guardian of her own dignity, whose moral act of flight becomes complete in the relationship of asylum, challenges the notion of asylum as charity. Asylum is not simply something that receiving

126

states grant at their pleasure but a moral response to the moral demand of the Other.

I am not arguing that only flight fulfills the duty of protecting one's dignity or that every instance of persecution necessitates flight. Nor am I arguing that those who do not flee are not moral agents. There are clearly other ways of vindicating ones dignity;[44] if we take seriously the stories of the martyrs, some vindications of dignity may appear antonymous to flight. I must also note that acknowledging the moral agency of flight neither excuses persecution nor effaces the need to end persecution. As Edward Said goes to pains to point out, exile is devastating even when it is necessary.[45]

Furthermore, to seek asylum requires the capacity to negotiate a host of power dynamics (economic, political, and social) that I have not raised here. Particularly when we are discussing asylum in a place like the United States, those who are able to reach US shores to apply for asylum often, though not always, have some social, economic, or political capital in their country of origin. To suggest that the failure to seek asylum is a moral failing or lack of moral agency when circumstances circumvent such an opportunity would be uncritical.[46] Persons who do not flee persecution are also moral agents, and what it means to recognize them as such is the subject of another study. For my purposes, I emphasize that among the ways an individual may protect her dignity, the decision to flee persecution should be seen as the choice of a moral agent—a choice that should be recognized for the moral demand it is.

By way of concluding, let me suggest how this project may intersect with other developments in the field of refugee studies. Several authors have argued for a critical turn to the refugee as a way of thinking through the modern political landscape.[47] It may be that only by reorienting away from state-centredness to exile-centredness can we hope to address the refugee reality, both in terms of the persons who present themselves and the conditions that make refugees a permanent fixture of the modern landscape.[48] To the latter Giorgio Agamben counsels, "inasmuch as the refugee unhinges the old trinity of state/nation/territory—this apparently marginal figure deserves rather to be considered the central figure of our political history."[49] This exile-centredness, however, is a process. It is a process that may challenge but cannot forego the current state-centric reality. It is a process, however, that may begin by recognizing the moral agency of refugees and asylum seekers. Furthermore, if there is a turn to exile-centeredness, it is important to recognize that such a perspective has multiple valences.[50] As a critical category, the refugee or asylum seeker is a limit-account of the modern political subject,[51] but, it also can

be, as this project argues, an account of the moral demand of the Other.

NOTES

1. Hannah Arendt, *Imperialism: Part Two of The Origins of Totalitarianism* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1968), 179.
2. I focus on asylum policy in the United States because, as a US resident and researcher, it is the context that I know best. I believe, however, that the critique I develop in this article has implications beyond the borders of the United States, in many of the so-called "receiving" states.
3. I borrow the particular term "bare humanity" from the work of Liisa Malkki. Liisa H. Malkki, "Speechless Emissaries: Refugees, Humanitarianism, and Dehistoricization," *Cultural Anthropology* 11, no. 3 (1996): 388–90. See also Giorgio Agamben, "We Refugees," trans. Michael Rocke, *Symposium* 49, no. 2 (1995): 114–19. The version of Agamben's article referenced for this essay is found on the website of the European Graduate School, accessed July 12, 2013, http://www.egs.edu/faculty/giorgio-agamben/articles/we-refugees/. Bare humanity in the work of Arendt and Agamben reflects the socio-political position of the refugee who is marginalized in the global order of politics and power oriented around states and citizens. For Malkki, bare humanity has a different valence; the concept describes the identity that is projected onto refugees rather than an intrinsic element of the refugee's positionality vis-à-vis the larger political order. The two are not, however, mutually exclusive, and Malkki may capture the vast scope of what it means to be rendered as bare humanity best when she describes it as "a merely biological or demographic presence." Malkki, "Speechless Emissaries," 390.
4. Emmanuel Lévinas, *Humanism of the Other,* trans. Nidra Poller (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2006).
5. Ibid., 32.
6. Ibid., 32–33.
7. Ibid., 32–33, 62; Richard A. Cohen, "Introduction: Humanism and Anti-humanism—Lévinas, Cassirer, and Heidegger," in *Humanism of the Other,* by Emmanuel Lévinas, trans. Nidra Poller (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2006), xxx–xxxi. This is the great promise of Lévinas and the foundation for his claim of "ethics as first philosophy." The Lévinasian project is nothing less than reorienting philosophical discourse. The possibilities and barriers to such reorientation reaching out beyond the bounds of academic philosophy is an aspect of this project.
8. Judith Butler, *Giving an Account of Oneself* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), 96.
9. Ibid., 25.
10. Arendt, *Imperialism,* 180.
11. Peter Nyers, *Rethinking Refugees: Beyond States of Emergency* (New York: Routledge, 2006), xiv–xv. See also

Malkki's work on the refugee image and agency, where she describes the construction of refugee humanity as follows:

> The visual conventions for representing refugees and the language of raw human needs both have the effect of constructing refugees as a bare humanity—even as a merely biological or demographic presence. This mode of humanitarianism acts to trivialize and silence history and politics—a silencing that can legitimately be described as dehumanizing in most contexts. And yet … one might argue that what these representational practices do is not strictly to dehumanize, but to humanize in a particular mode. A mere, bare, naked, or minimal humanity is set up. This is a vision of humanity that repels elements that fail to fit into the logic of its framework.—Malkki, "Speechless Emissaries," 390.

12. Carol Bohmer and Amy Shuman, *Rejecting Refugees: Political Asylum in the 21st Century* (London: Routledge, 2008), 11.

13. Immigration and Nationality Act § 208(b)(1)(A), 8 U.S.C. § 1158(b)(1)(A) (2006) (emphasis added). All subsequent references to Section 208 of the Immigration and Nationality Act will be to the US Code.

14. Bohmer and Shuman, *Rejecting Refugees,* 264–65.

15. Ibid., 11.

16. § 1158(b)(1)(B)(i).

17. § 1158(b)(1)(B)(ii).

18. In the US legal system, as a default position, the party that bears the burden of proof must establish these three elements unless the burdens or presumptions are otherwise allocated by law. Depending on the legal context, the burden of proof may be more or less onerous. In a civil case, the plaintiff carries the burden and must generally meet the burden with a preponderance of the evidence. In a criminal case, the state carries the burden and must establish its proofs beyond a reasonable doubt. Though the asylum seeker, like the criminal defendant, is at the mercy of the state, she carries the burden of proof and what constitutes sufficiency is highly discretionary.

19. § 1158(b)(1)(B)(iii) ("Considering the totality of the circumstances, and all relevant factors, a trier of fact may base a credibility determination on the demeanor, candor, or responsiveness of the applicant or witness, the inherent plausibility of the applicant's or witness's account, the consistency between the applicant's or witness's written and oral statements (whenever made and whether or not under oath, and considering the circumstances under which the statements were made), the internal consistency of each such statement, the consistency of such statements with other evidence of record (including the reports of the Department of State on country conditions), and any inaccuracies or falsehoods in such statements, without regard to whether an inconsistency, inaccuracy, or falsehood goes to the heart of the applicant's claim, or any other relevant factor. There is no presumption of credibility, however, if no adverse credibility determination is explicitly

made, the applicant or witness shall have a rebuttable presumption of credibility on appeal.").

20. Ibid.

21. § 1158(b)(1)(B)(ii).

22. Bohmer and Shuman's extensive treatment of which types of claims are recognized and which are excluded lead them to conclude, "Part of the problem with the system for granting asylum is that we're ambivalent about our moral obligation to the people who make claims. Increasingly we go to greater and greater lengths to strengthen the barriers to entry and to make sure that only a few people slip through the net… . We let in people whose experiences are so horrifying that we're shocked; others don't get in." Bohmer and Shuman, *Rejecting Refugees,* 263.

23. For a detailed account of the various difficulties asylum seekers face in relating their stories to ajudicators see ibid., chaps. 3 & 4.

24. Malkki, "Speechless Emissaries," 390.

25. Muddathir 'Abd al-Rahim, "Asylum: A Moral and Legal Right in Islam," *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 27, no. 2 (2008): 16, doi:10.1093/rsq/hdn029.

26. Ibid., 17.

27. For another discussion of Exodus as asylum narrative see Jonathan P. Burnside, "Exodus and Asylum: Uncovering the Relationship Between Biblical Law and Narrative," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 34, no. 3 (2010): 243–66, doi:10.1177/0309089210363028. Burnside reads Exodus as a narrative of asylum but understands asylum to be sanctuary from retribution for persons wrongly accused of homicide, which is how the concept was understood in the ancient Near East. Ibid., 255 n.11.

28. All biblical citations are to the New Revised Standard Version as published in Michael D. Coogan et al., eds., *The New Oxford Annotated Bible,* 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

29. My thanks to Brian Green for pointing out that, if the flight from Egypt is part of the covenant whereby the Israelites are promised a particular geographical area to reside in, then the Israelite devastation of Canaan and its consequences for the Canaanites are implicated in the flight. I do intend to excuse the devastation of Canaan as morally acceptable because it is the consequence of an act of flight. Although it is beyond my scope to treat the issue here, I note briefly that persons are complex as moral subjects and the commission of a moral act does not preclude subsequent or concurrent immoral acts.

30. See also the following passage from Exodus 14:10–12: "As Pharaoh drew near, the Israelites looked back, and there were the Egyptians advancing on them. In great fear the Israelites cried out to the Lord. They said to Moses, 'Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us, bringing us out of Egypt? Is this not the very thing we told you in Egypt, "Let us alone and let us serve the Egyptians"?

For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.'"

31. 'Abd al-Rahim, "Asylum," 19.

32. Sharifah Nazneen Agha, "The Ethics of Asylum in Early Muslim Society," *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 27, no. 2 (2008): 33, doi:10.1093/rsq/hdn031.

33. 'Abd al-Rahim, "Asylum," 19.

34. Ibid.

35. Agha, "The Ethics of Asylum in Early Muslim Society," 30 (emphasis added).

36. See ibid., 36–37. Khadija Elmadmad also uses the term *muhajirun* as a translation for "forced migrants" in the contemporary sense. Khadija Elmadmad, "Asylum in Islam and in Modern Refugee Law," *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 27, no. 2 (2008): 57, doi:10.1093/rsq/hdn016.

37. Wael B. Hallaq, *Sharīʿa: Theory, Practice, Transformations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 39–41.

38. Elmadmad, "Asylum in Islam and in Modern Refugee Law," 54.

39. All Qur'anic citations are to the translation of Abdullah Yusuf Ali as published in Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary* (Elmhurst, NY: Tahrike Tarsile Qur'an, Inc., 2001). The Ali translation is printed as verse, with each line capitalized. Capitalization has been altered where appropriate to facilitate inclusion of quoted material as prose.

40. 'Abd al-Rahim, "Asylum," 17–18.

41. Ibid., 18.

42. Ibid. 'Abd al-Rahim also quotes two further Qur'anic verses to support this point:

> As for those who migrated in God's cause after being wronged, we shall give them a good home in this world, but the reward of the hereafter will be far greater, if they only knew it. They are the ones who are steadfast and put their trust in their Lord. (Qur'an 16:40)

> As for those who migrate (and strive) in God's sake, and are then killed or die—God will most certainly provide for them a goodly sustenance [in the life to come] for, verily, God—He alone—is the Best Provider. He will most certainly admit them to a state [of being] that will please them well. (Qur'an 22:57–58)

> Ibid., 18. For the translations consulted in the preparation of these verses see ibid., 16 n.3.

43. Butler, *Giving an Account of Oneself,* 136.

44. This includes a compelling critique by Saba Mahmood of the scholarly emphasis on agency, and, in particular, forms of universalized agency that may elide other ways of being within power structures that cannot be plotted solely along the axes of oppression and resistance. Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

45. Edward W. Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 173–75.

46. The Qur'an makes note of this particular problem with the duty to seek asylum. In Surah 4:98–99, following the command to seek asylum when persecuted in 4:97, the Qur'an says, "Except those who are (really) weak and oppressed—men, women, children—who have no means in their power, nor (a guide-post) to direct their way. For these, there is hope that God will forgive: For God doth blot out (sins) and forgive again and again" (Qur'an 4:98–99). I also note that the conditions for flight in the Exodus narrative are the plagues that God visits upon the Egyptians.

47. See, e.g., Agamben, "We Refugees," para. 5; Nyers, *Rethinking Refugees,* xiv–xv.

48. Such orientation must, however, take as a caution Said's reminder not to romanticize exile. "Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience." Said, *Reflections on Exile,* 173.

49. Agamben, "We Refugees," para. 5.

50. See, for example, Malkki's discussion of her work among Burundian Hutu refugees from in Tanzania in the early to middle 1990s and the contested notions of refugee identity that existed between the refugees and the international aid workers. Malkki relates that the refugees saw their refugee identity as a positive, powerful position located in a history of exile and return. To be a refugee was to be part of the community whose story had a teleology of homecoming. The aid workers, in contrast, often perceived the Burundian population as no longer refugees, despite their documented legal status, because they had, to a limited degree, prospered in Tanzania and no longer fit an idealized notion of the refugee as a person in a position of desperate need. For the aid workers, to be a refugee was to be a victim; whereas, the refugees saw their identity in terms of seeking protection in order to return home. Malkki, "Speechless Emissaries," 379–85.

51. Nyers, *Rethinking Refugees,* xiv.

Silas W. Allard is Harold J. Berman Senior Fellow in Law and Religion and Associate Director of the Center for the Study of Law and Religion at Emory University. This essay is part of an ongoing project. The author is deeply grateful to Abdullahi An-Na'im, Elizabeth Bounds, Steve Kraftchick, Rebecca Spurrier, and John Witte, Jr. for their valuable guidance and feedback. The author would also like to thank the Centre for Refugee Studies at York University for the opportunity to present a version of this essay at the conference "Power, Representation, and Identity: Narratives by, about, and around refugees and forcibly displaced persons," held at York University on April 27–28, 2012. In the hope of bettering this project and continuing these conversations, critique and comment are encouraged. The author can be reached by email at silas.allard@emory.edu.

129

Report

"Migration and Violence: Lessons from Colombia for the Americas" A workshop of the Transatlantic Forum on Migration and Integration and the Refugee Research Network (TFMI)

Jorge Salcedo

Introduction

The conference, "Migration and Violence: Lessons from Colombia to the Americas" was held in Bogotá D.C., Colombia at the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana on June 29, 2012. The main objective of the conference was to develop inter-disciplinary academic research in Central America and Mexico regarding the relationship between violence, particularly narco-violence, and migration. The setting in Bogotá D.C. was deliberate as the participants discussed how lessons learned from Colombia's experience with narco-induced migration could be leveraged for the benefit of Central America and Mexico. With the participation of experts on international migration, government representatives, academics, and civil society, the conference highlighted research results and relevant intervention experience concerning this problem in Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Mexico.

This article presents an analysis of the presentations given and the discussions held at the conference. It consists of four parts. The first section compares the similarities and differences regarding migration and violence in Colombia and El Salvador, Guatemala, and Mexico. The second section presents the major epistemological challenges emerging from research and models of intervention. The third section presents the implications of the epistemological challenges and their impact on public policy. The fourth section concludes with principal lessons from Colombia for research and intervention in the problem of violence and migration.

1. Through a comparative lens: The relationship between migration and violence in Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Mexico

From the 1980s to present, Colombia and the region comprised of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Mexico have experienced periods of armed internal conflict, gang-related aggression, and community violence which have produced forced migrations.[1] While each country has encountered similar types of problems, each has experienced them at different times or at different levels of intensity. This has led each country to consider different forms of public policy to resolve the problem.[2]

Internal displacement generated by armed internal conflicts

The armed internal conflicts between the leftist guerillas, the government, and other paramilitary structures were marked by gross violations of human rights and breaches of international humanitarian law that generated large flows of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). In El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua during the 1980s and mid-1990s about three million people were displaced and forced to find refuge in another part of the region or fled to the United States.[3] Colombia has reported that from the late 1980s to present, there have been 4–5.5 IDPs and 400,000 refugees[4], the majority of whom have made their way to neighboring countries.[5] In both cases, the humanitarian crises have had regional aspects characterized by

restrictions pertaining to the protection of refugees in host countries.

In the Central American region, a set of peace agreements in the mid-1990s outlined a solution that worked to aid the return of a large portion of refugees and IDPs. However, in Colombia, the peace agreements signed in the 1990s did not obtain the commitment of all guerilla groups. As a result, the country still experiences violence and the return of internally displaced persons has been impeded, as the situation does not guarantee property restitution to the victims. Even though the country had implemented measures to ensure restitution in 1997, it has not been met with much success as guerilla groups continue to inhibit the implementation of these agreements. Likewise, extended efforts made in 2005 and 2011 by transitional justice frameworks recognized the rights of the IDPs in their condition as victims to truth, to justice, reparation, and to the guarantee that said events would not occur again. However, these measures have not been fully implemented and do not seem to identify the root of the problem. Unfortunately, sixty individuals[6], who had taken it upon themselves to lead other victims in hope of exercising their rights, have been killed in recent years.[7]

Mexico emerged as a scene of political violence in the 1990s with the surge of Zapatista guerillas and paramilitary groups that were repressed by the government. Most of the violence occurred in southern Mexico and generated high levels of internal displacement of indigenous peoples in this area.

The political violence behind social and economic conflicts in Colombia, Guatemala, and El Salvador persisted despite the peace agreements signed in the two regions. Problems such as social exclusion, poverty, uneven distribution of land and wealth, and political corruption were not addressed by the aforementioned agreements and continued to neutralize any progress made.

Forced Migration and Organized Crime
In El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, and Colombia, violence and the frequent outbreak of organized crime have triggered forced migration and have victimized international migrants. In the first two countries mentioned, continuities exist from conflict to post-conflict periods as both countries have felt the impact of transnational crime[8] on forced migration. In the last five years, following the peace accords, there has been a notable increase in migration. Organized crime in these four countries is composed not only by private armies engaged in illegal economic activity but also by the civil sector, military, police, businessmen, and politicians of different parties.

Meanwhile, violence in Mexico has been exacerbated to the extent that 60,000 causalities[9] have been reported in the last six years, with consequences for forced migration. On one hand, this has initiated an invisible refugee process made up of middle and upper class people fleeing to the United States and Canada, seeking protection. On the other hand, this has created internal displacement of those belonging to lower socio-economic classes without the monetary means to leave the country. These internally displaced persons (IDPs), estimated at 270,000, have been visible[10], as they have taken advantage of the shelters that have been erected by their municipalities.

Organized crime in Mexico has also victimized international migrants trying to reach the United States. In addition to being victims of human trafficking, migrants are vulnerable to attacks by Mexican cartels seeking to prevent the use of corridors that they have deemed most vital to the transit of illegal drugs, illicit money, and weapons. The network of corridors secures their transactions, allowing them to gain more economic stability and to place them in a position to seize more political power. Aside from taunting migrants who are attempt to use the corridors, the cartels monitor corridor gateways and demand money from the migrants' families who are waiting to help their relatives on the other side. Although this has reduced the amount of illegal immigration, it has increased the number of kidnappings of undocumented migrants.

In Guatemala for example, there is evidence that drug trafficking and money laundering have compromised the judicial system, which has contributed to the corruption of the banking system and entrepreneurship. The pharmaceutical industry, especially, has been targeted for its development of new synthetic drugs. In Mexico, there is the perception among a few sectors that the Federal government should have pursued the Gulf Cartel and the Zetas more than the Sinaloa cartel.

In relation to the visibility of these problems in public policy, the developments in Central America and Mexico arise mainly because authorities refuse to recognize the gravity of the situation. There are laws recognizing refugees from other countries but there are no laws that recognize the existence of internally displaced persons. However, the process to create a law for these victims is being discussed in Mexico. The repressive policy facing international migrants traveling through Mexico trying to reach the United States has been reduced, but it has been accompanied by a lack of protection against threats from organized crime. In Colombia, the institutional response to forced migration by violence has attracted a high level of expertise in the legal and institutional framework and has been able to produce tangible achievements not seen before in the case of victims' rights. Although state-sponsored responses have been low among the four countries, the Catholic Church

132

and multiple NGOs have compensated for this by paying particular attention to the rights of migrants and displaced peoples.

In the case of Colombia, crime has intertwined with, and strengthened, the armed internal conflict under the guise of paramilitary counterinsurgency, making it one of the major drivers of forced displacement. In the background of organized crime in Colombia, there exists the dispute of over control of legal and illegal sources of economic resources in the territories such as mining, drug trafficking and public budgets.[11]

The fact that these groups have evolved by contracting integral control over territories through violent mediums reflects their desire to gain political power that includes control of everyday life while using methods that differ from guerrilla groups also present in Colombia. In these situations, these zones are managed in an authoritarian matter and have led to the displacement of people who do not follow the governance imposed within the violent and hegemonic areas. As far as human trafficking is concerned, Colombia is a country of origin, transit, and destination where the main victims are women and children. The women tend to be the heads of households and are, on average, between 18–24 years old. Those of African descent and the indigenous are among the most vulnerable.

In Central America and Mexico, there are no figures representing the magnitude and the characteristics of this new cycle of forced migrations due to violence in recent years. Meanwhile, Colombia has registered substantial improvements in systematizing information regarding displacement from state, church, and non-governmental sources, however problems still exist with underreporting.

Forced Migration, Community Violence, and Young People

In both regions, the relationship between migration, organized crime, community violence and youth are closely related.

In Colombia, the most powerful criminal organizations control sectors of cities through its coordination with juvenile neighborhood gangs and local or micro local outreach. Correspondingly, the forced recruitment of young boys, girls, and adolescents is one of the main effects of internal displacement within the country.

Leftist guerillas recruit young people and minors, those who reside in rural and poor zones that have been neglected by the government, to their ranks. Similarly, new paramilitary groups recruit and utilize the youth community to increase their range of criminal activity in both rural and urban areas. The minors that have been linked to non-governmental armed groups are legally recognized as victims

although they are victimizers as well. Lastly, IDPs fleeing from political violence in the countryside to cities are frequently victims of community violence in the zones where the heads of the gangs and dealers of hallucinogens are located.

In the case of Central America the large cartels have contributed to the scope and phenomena transnational crime where "maras" like "Salvatrucha" and "18" stand out and have established their presence in California in the United States. The spread of these gangs across international borders—Mexico, and of the Central American Triangle, particularly El Salvador—is in itself a product of the dynamics of migration, refuge, and deportations. In Guatemala, organized crime related to narcotics controls the gangs and uses repressive measures to legitimize itself among civil society, replacing the state's function as protector and regulator of the populace.

2. Epistemological challenges for understanding the relationship between migration and violence.

The experience of violence and migration in these four countries presents various valuable, but complex, epistemological challenges to understanding the links between violence and migration.

Broadening the conceptual range of migration categories and addressing current violence

Given the implications that conceptual categories for understanding migration have for the protection of migrants, overcoming the conceptual shortcomings of current categories used to describe migration induced by violence was one of the principal challenges identified by conference participants.

Although various adjectives, including political, economic, social, and cultural, are used to generate understandings of migration on micro and macro levels, care should be taken not to lose sight of the instances where these categories intersect or overlap. This points to the need to restructure the traditional categories of migration beyond the classification of refugee, IDPs, human trafficking, economic, natural disaster-related, and "mixed flows". If there is a situation of mixed flows wherein migrants do not fit into any pre-determined category, they face the possibility of being catalogued as an illegal immigrant in the country of destination where they will be refused rights and where there is no framework of protection made available to them.

Several solutions were discussed in response to the above mentioned problems, including: extending the existing categories, creating new categories that are more inclusive that cannot have universal validation claims but are commensurate to regional and local differences, and responsive

instances of varying nature within their countries and other countries.

An interdisciplinary view of migration and information systems

The second biggest challenge discussed was the development of an interdisciplinary view on migration that takes into account different focal points of research such as wars, armed conflict, the economy, state mafias, transnational organized crime, drug trafficking, gangs, *maras,* poverty, inequality, and exclusion. In this sense, moving towards a more complete identification of the range and nature of novel research in this area, one that implements more robust methodologies, is important. Each country should define short, medium, and long-term research agendas that are key in the development of academic research groups and that strengthen the dialogue on the research and intervention, given that public policy does not always feed off of the developments made within research.

Among what has been prioritized in research, there are a few that stand out significantly: the return of migrants is a major part of different agendas concerning migration policies, including, for example, landholding. Another top priority is the research on the migration of women, children, afro-ethnic groups, and indigenous people due to the vulnerability that these groups face during migration and the lack of attention these cases receive. Collecting the stories of those who have been abused and victimized, especially stories from young gang members that have been a part of induced migrations is also a priority as they are seen as victims of domestic violence and have been robbed of economic opportunities, etc. Although there is a lack of academic work in the area, displacement that occurs along the borders has been given much attention. Similarly, it is necessary to advance the study of human trafficking focusing on public health, sexual and reproductive rights, beyond criminal acts. It is necessary to understand how violence can take many different forms and how these forms intersect to generate migrations; for example, the violence of powerful organized groups such as those who traffic drugs, their relations with official forces, and the blurred instances of community violence domestically and among the youth. The study of crime strategy and how armed groups control territories and achieve their objectives is also given high priority. Furthermore, the methods in which they combine silent and invisible forms of control using strategic information pertaining to the territories and the use of extreme demonstrations of violence and massacres. Additionally, it is of high priority to study the drug transportation routes within the United States that are normally conceived in Mexico.

Equally, it is important to improve the production and systematization of quantitative and qualitative data that allows the systematic study of migration and also allows public policy to monitor and address these studies. This is a great endeavor due to the different forms of forced migration that take place, especially when considering that they are not readily seen and often occur in secret. In Colombia, considerable advancements have been made to track forced displacement; however, information about destination points do not exist as Colombia lacks the secondary sources to keep a record of migrants once they have fled. Other occurrences that are associated with migration such as refuge, trafficking, and victimization suffer from systematic methodologies and are not as well documented. Meanwhile, systematic figures representing forced migrations due to current violence have been recorded in Central America and Mexico.

3. Implications for Public Policy

In regards to the violent actors that generate migration, the states should establish an area that is committed to the protection of rights and that manages the affects of such violence in the lives of the victims. Notwithstanding, the form in which the phenomena related to migration is defined and classified also determines the scope of national and international regimes in protecting the rights of the migrants. In other words, conceptual and methodological discussion to understand and classify forced migration is a political discussion in order to construct laws, institutions and establish priorities and applicable areas for public policies.

It is recognized that the tools to prevent new actors from impacting migration are lacking from public policy. Human rights laws provide the tools to violations within the state as international humanitarian law and transitional justice are meant to control non-state actors that want to become official state actors. However, tools are needed to control the actors today that have the dual ability of producing new orders without attempting to replace the state but can capture the state from "within" and to face the companies that are linked to grand violations of rights that have been regulated as of today.

The same issue arises with narco-traffickers*,* actors for which there are few tools or methods of engagement other than the criminal justice system. However, we find that the drug trafficker has certain capacity of governance, of territorial ordinance, and the ability to restructure economics, and so the question remains, how do you make peace with the drug traffickers after or beyond criminalization? In Colombia, there has been negotiation with the drug trafficking network disguised as political peace negotiations and,

as a result, former narco-traffickers have become legitimate political actors.

Colombia is also illustrative of the consequences generated by forced displacement such punishable crime in regards to the attribution of penal and civil responsibilities. The traditional attribution of culpability to an individual that has generated forced displacement has been transcended by more systematic approaches to the consequences of crime. The Colombian approach to dealing with the loss of land by victims of crime is the best example of this trend. Colombia also faces the challenge of determining whether displacement took place due to political violence or other types of violence, differentiating the infractions of international humanitarian law within the framework of armed internal conflict, mass violations of human rights, generalized violence, and/or of internal strife and unrest. From the above, the classical distinctions within political violence and violence due to common organized crime do not appear to function adequately in all cases in order to account for the political nature of local actors like narcotraffickers, to the extent that it also groups diverse legal actors like officials and businessmen that seek to control political, economic, and social relations that are woven together in a territory.

In this sense, the *Ley de Victimas y Restitución de Tierras* or "The Law of Victims and Land Restitution" issued in 2011 in Colombia represents a setback in the recognition of rights of victims of displacement. Furthermore, the scope of protection for those who have been displaced due to fumigations, the victims of so-called emerging gangs, the victims who sough refuge abroad, and collective victims such as labor unions, as well as those who are a part of social movements and opposing parties. The economic activities in rural areas like mega-mining and the cultivation of agrocombustibles, among others, have raised questions as to how they can finance non-state armed groups that create new cycles of displacement.

It is important to advance a regional approach to migration and violence while taking into account the links between similar situations that exist within these countries in fields such as the regulation of illicit activities, the validity of peace, the development of democracy and the defence of human rights, regional integration and security, the state's presence through preventative policy, social and economic development, regulated economies and social institutions. If there exists globalized crime, the states should face the situation based on an integrated perspective through preventative policy.

Facing international migration, it is necessary to insist that states disassociate migration policy from national security because this convergence can affect the rights of the migrants that need protection.

It is also necessary that public policy on migration advance to adopt a management and indicator system that produces results permitting interested parties to monitor and control the situation through an interdisciplinary dialogue concerning rights and the economy.

4. Conclusions: Lessons from Colombia for the Americas

By and large, Central America and Mexico can learn from the case in Colombia. The adoption of a special institution tending to victims of complex situations of violence is linked to the process of peace negotiations as a way to resolve situations of grave violence.

The complexity of the violence in Colombia coalesces ideological armed internal conflict with armed disputes among apparatuses of power that combine illegal action with legal action in all aspects of their functioning. With respect to organized crime, it is another area where Central America and Mexico should further characterize the actual situations of humanitarian crisis, overcoming the narrowness of the categories defining migration and the analysis of traditional violence.

Considering that young people are frequently recruited by various armed organizations, they are their principal victims. The states should prioritize preventative policies beyond distinctly repressive policy. Likewise, they should provide specialized protection to women, children, and ethnic groups who are traditionally excluded, like those of indigenous and afro descent.

Similarly, the experience of multi-track analysis of migration and peace processes highlights the importance of considering different levels of incidence and negotiation. This involves not only states and international actors, but also social groups of distinct classes including flexible associations of social organizations, universities, churches and other authority figures. The aforementioned is key to face regional integration among the countries, their authorities, their social organizations, and citizens to agree on investigative agendas and intervention facilitating exchange and joint lessons about the complicated relations among migration and violence in the Americas.

They can also nourish themselves with the wealth of academic publications and research coming from Colombia concerning migration, violence, forced displacement, information tracking systems, and the adoption of public policy indicators tracking the effectiveness of rights.

Notes

1. El Salvador and Guatemala, together with Honduras, comprise what is known as the "Northern Triangle" of Central America and share the same regional dynamic with Mexico

2. In this context, both regions at the same time or another, have been considered the most violent places on earth: Colombia in the 1980s and the 1990s; Mexico, in combination with the Northern Triangle in the 2000s till now.

3. Casasfranco Roldan and Maria Virginia, *Las Migraciones y los Desplazamientos Forzados: Análisis Comparativo e Integral Desde un Enfoque de Derechos Humanos* (San José de Costa Rica, 2001).

4. CODHES, "Desplazamiento Creciente y Crisis Humanitaria Invisibilizada," en *Codhes Informa* (Bogotá: CODHES, 2012).

5. At the forefront of forced displacement, women and children continue to be the principal victims due to their vulnerability and exposure to sexual violence within the community or familial. They suffer not only because of the armed internal conflict but also due to do everyday life in an unprotected state.

6. Caracol Radio, Junio 12 de 2012. http://www.caracol.com.co/noticias/judicial/mas-de-60-lideres-de-restitucion-de-tierras-han-sido-asesinados-en-siete-anos-defensoria-del-pueblo/20120612/nota/1704578.aspx.

7. In 2011, the displacement that took place in Colombia continued and increased to include 73 mass movements. Some were generated under counterinsurgency operations, for example, the operation commanded under Alfonso Cano and the FARC. Additionally, displacements occurred in the areas that had been given priority by the government and where intervention had been coordinated by military command. On the other hand, despite the major blows that have dealt to the guerillas, they are far from being defeated and the cost of the lives of official forces is high.

8. In both cases, organized crime has contributed to drug trafficking, arms trafficking, extortion, election fraud, manipulation of institutions, human trafficking, among others.

9. Miguel Wilchez Hinojosa, "Migration and Violence: Lessons from Colombia for the Americas," Bogotá, 2012.

10. Ibid.

11. Between 1980 and the mid-90s there were sharp disputes between large drug cartels that generated displacements, the scope of which is undeterminable due to the lack of information. These disputes surfaced again in the late-90s and early 2000s when the paramilitary group, United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia, had been formed. This contributed to another dispossession of a millions of hectares of productive land, the control of production and local institutions as well as another wave of forced migration. They reconfigured themselves following the government initiative to demobilize paramilitary groups in the first decade of the 2000s. Although paramilitary groups have been maintained to a certain extent, different criminal gangs have begun to emerge focusing on the consolidation of control over captured territories.

Jorge Salcedo teaches at Universidad del Rosario, Bogotá D.C., Colombia