



**MAINTAINING REFUGE:
ANTHROPOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS IN
UNCERTAIN TIMES**

**Edited by:
David Haines
Jayne Howell
Fethi Keles**

**A Publication of the
Committee on Refugees and Immigrants**

**Society for Urban, National, and
Transnational/Global Anthropology**

American Anthropological Association

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PREFACE

During the U.S. presidential primaries of 2016, the sharpness of the attacks on refugees and immigrants by Republican candidates—especially by Donald Trump, Ted Cruz, and Marco Rubio who all have an immigrant parent—forced many of us in the United States to recognize that we were again in a period of restriction and rejection. Furthermore, American restriction and rejection, especially of refugees, has pernicious consequences for the entire global system of refugee protection, relief, and durable refuge. At that time, under President Obama, we were already seeing an American response to the Syrian refugee crisis that was slow, halting, and proportionately far less than in many other countries both near and far (especially Canada and Germany). Canada’s goal of settling 25,000 refugees from Syria announced at the end of 2016, for example, was proportionately (in terms of population) twenty-five times as high as then-President Obama’s goal of accepting 10,000 Syrian refugees. With the election of Donald Trump, the grounds further eroded. There was not only sentiment and resistance against refugees and other immigrants, but actual, formal governmental actions to reject and exclude.

The three of us came together around this issue in 2016, searching for some way to conceptualize this worsening situation—which of course would become yet worse with the election itself. While we initially thought about the issue in terms of refugees—since the Syrian crisis loomed so large at the time—we soon began to think more in terms of the general issue of refuge, thus bypassing the often intensely legalistic and political discussions of who is or who is not a “refugee” according to whose standards. Our task became to marshal the full range of how anthropologists deal with issues of refuge, whether in the United States or elsewhere, whether in terms of durable refuge or in terms of more transitory, but often life-saving, alternatives. We were able to help arrange a number of panels on the topic at the American Anthropological Association’s annual meeting in Minneapolis in 2016 and have continued that effort for the annual meeting later in Washington, D.C. in 2017, relying particularly on the Committee on Refugee and Immigrants as the core unit within the association specifically directed at these issues.

We also sought broader written publication of anthropological views on maintaining refuge. We chose relatively short essays as the best format for reflecting on the full span of how anthropologists think and act about refuge, and do so in a range of settings that include formal academic research, practical immersion in issues of refuge, or simply personal anthropological reflections on the many meanings, barriers, and options involving refuge. The first set of these essays appeared in *Anthropology News* in June 2017, with another set forthcoming in December. But the issues of refuge in a worsening political climate elicited wider interest than we originally expected, and from anthropologists of all kinds. This book is the result.

The essays are presented in four parts, each of which has its own brief introduction. Part One addresses some of the basic barriers to refuge that have long been with us, and remain so today. Part Two focuses on more recent dilemmas caused by changes in refugee flows and by increasingly negative reactions to them, of which the U.S. case is among the worst. There are now new barriers of formal policy, of general hostility, and of pervasive uncertainty. Part Three addresses more immediate practical issues in maintaining refuge today. There is still work to be done in providing initial refuge, even if at reduced levels, and for making refuge a durable path toward a fully human future. Part Four provides a refraction back on that fuller human meaning of durable refuge by three anthropologists who came to North America from the same major refugee-producing place and time: Bosnia during the collapse of Yugoslavia. Their essays remind us how crucial, but also how contorted, refuge can be. Finally, two photo essays interleave the parts, providing spaces to contemplate issues of refuge in a more visual way.

We hope this volume will encourage a recognition of the breadth of the anthropological vision of refuge, and an application of that breadth to both the enduring and new barriers that are created against refuge—whether for people meeting formal legal standards of being refugees or for those many others for whom only durable refuge can bring a viable and meaningful human future.

David Haines, Jayne Howell, and Fethi Keles

PART ONE:
BARRIERS TO REFUGE

INTRODUCTION

Refuge has a long and complex history. It has a prominent place in most religions and its political dimensions have been crucial in world history. But the barriers to refuge are often acute. It is hard for people to escape, hard to cross borders, hard to survive extended and hazardous journeys, hard to find even a temporary refuge, and harder yet to find a durable one.

This section of the book addresses some of these crucial barriers to refuge that continue to stymie the best of efforts, even in places where the overall response to refugees and immigrants remains relatively positive.

Beth Baker begins the discussion with a sharp warning about the very word “refugee” and how it often undermines understanding issues of flight and refuge, especially for people who fall outside the legal definitions of refugee that are based largely on the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. She urges a broader consideration of how and to whom refuge should be provided.

Bernadette Ludwig then considers the experiences of Liberian refugees in Staten Island and how important are the issues of local context. In Staten Island, the refugees face the dilemma of being in a red (Republican) section of a blue city and a blue state. Her message is, a bit like Baker’s, a warning about the assumptions that underlie conventional understandings of refuge, and that derail both the conceptual and practical work needed.

Marisa Ensor moves the discussion to Africa and the more temporary and uncertain refuge that is the fate of most refugees—however defined. In her essay, in particular, one can see how people’s mobility through space and their mobility through the life-course are intertwined. For youth, blockage in geographical mobility produces blockage in development, leaving them in a limbo from which they seek to escape—even if escape is back into conflict zones.

In the succeeding chapter, Zaitceva Asya considers a case of what initially appears to be stable and durable refuge in

Austria for the Chechen. Yet even this official, legal refuge is fraught with limitations. One result is that the Chechen remain separate in Austria, often aiming for a life at least partly—and perhaps eventually wholly—back in Chechnya. While refuge has been provided in legal terms, it remains incomplete in human terms.

Alexander Ryll reports on the two Spanish enclaves on the south of the Mediterranean that are surrounded by Morocco. Here is a particularly contorted issue of borders. The border between North Africa and Europe is actually within North Africa. The experience of those seeking refuge plays out in complex ways across those convoluted borders, highlighting the hindrances to mobility but also the intensity of people's desires for it.

Finally, Caitlin Fouratt and Chelsea Power consider the case of Salvadoran youth who have sought refuge in Costa Rica. Here again, the technicalities of refuge are relatively positive and durable. The youth have clear legal status and they are specifically included in the educational system. But, as often for refugees, the devil is in the details. Delays in processing and gaps in educational frameworks render those formal guarantees only intermittently useful.

If there is a central thread to these essays about very different kinds of refuge in very different kinds of places for very different kinds of people, it is that refuge is complex in its formal structures and its contextual details. The barriers to refuge range from the very definitional issues of who is to be considered a refugee, through bureaucratic processes that may undermine laudable formal efforts, through unexpected contextual implications of where refuge is found, to the complexity of the ways that different kinds of refugees (whether by gender, class, education, language, politics, or culture) interact with the systems and the people who are trying to aid, avoid, or sometimes demonize them.

WHEN IS A REFUGEE A REFUGEE?

Beth F. Baker

It's the evening of September 10, 2015, and I am watching CNN news. There's a segment on the "Syrian refugee crisis" in Europe. While initial reports of Syrian refugees were not very sympathetic, this changed when the body of a small boy washed up on a Mediterranean beach and the image of an emergency worker picking up the boy's lifeless body was broadcast around the world. The image sparked a crisis of conscience and there followed a few weeks of cheery reports showing warm-hearted Europeans opening their homes to Syrians, greeting them with cookies and stuffed animals, and negotiating their passage across borders. In the segment on Syrians that I watch this night, a male reporter from the United States is standing on an unidentified beach with Syrians getting out of boats and walking around in puffy orange life-vests. They could be mistaken for vacationers—well-dressed, groomed, taking selfies, and making calls. The reporter says that this beach is an unofficial dock for Syrian "refugees." This segment is immediately followed by another that reports on "immigrants" to Europe. It shows a clip of a church-run aid center in Italy where mostly Nigerians take shelter. The clip, with no reporter ever visible or audible, shares the story of a Nigerian woman who lost two family members to Boko Haram before fleeing for her life, but she is still referred to as an "immigrant." A young Nigerian man describes how they do not feel welcome in Italy, recounting his attempts to play soccer with some locals who tell him, "No blacks, no." There is limited discussion of what constitutes being a "refugee" or "immigrant," and the unspoken subtext is that some people are more deserving of haven than others, with the primary distinction between the two being "race" and national origin.

Clearly, the terms “refugee” and “immigrant” are used by the media and in popular discourse with little precision or historical context. Unfortunately, however, the same could be said of national governments the world over. Too often, these categories function not to create refuge for the displaced but to construct a moral hierarchy of human value in which “refugee” is more deserving than “immigrant” (which is much more deserving than irregular or undocumented person), in an era when all of these are regarded with suspicion. These news segments unhesitatingly designated light-skinned Syrians as “refugees” and dark-skinned Nigerians as “immigrants,” though both groups might just as easily meet the formal definition of “refugee.” The placement of the two segments, one after the other, crystallizes some of the problems with the names we use for people who move across national borders—“refugee,” “immigrant,” “migrant,” “tourist,” “expat,” “business traveler”—these terms are applied inconsistently and according to political exigency, and they reflect and reinforce other social hierarchies like “race,” nation, gender, and ethnicity. Even more worrisome than the muddled lexicon is the fact that distinguishing between these types of people, which is required when adjudicating their claims to rights, is much more complicated than it might appear. For example, many of the undocumented immigrants in the United States should, according to international agreements, be considered refugees, even though they are not. They are what some refer to as “undocumented refugees” (Ngin 2017)—people who meet the formal definition of a refugee but were not able to apply for this designation before arriving in the United States. Once in the country, these “undocumented refugees” must apply for political asylum, but rates of approval are so low for certain groups, such as Central Americans and Mexicans, that it constitutes a virtual exclusion from the protections for which they in theory qualify.

Scholarly discussions about the political and conceptual distinctions between “refugees” and “immigrants” are nothing new, but my aim in this essay is not simply to rethink the distinction or to advocate for better mechanisms for implementing refugee law; it is to encourage us to think beyond these categories and to imagine more productive ways to talk about human mobility. Of course, we want to protect people who experience violence and displacement, and the legal instruments around refugees and asylum are some of the only tools we have to do that, but they feed the notion that some people deserve

legally protected mobility and some do not, and they create a hierarchy of suffering that privileges certain forms of displacement over others. And because the nation-state remains the de facto arbiter of refugee deservedness, refugee policy inevitably serves the political ends of particular states and regimes. I address each of these critiques briefly before offering an alternative. I focus on the United States, though my critique is not simply of the United States, but of the categories themselves.¹

The legal meanings of “refugee” and “political asylum” in the United States derive from the Refugee Act of 1980, which draws directly for its definition from the 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (as amended by the 1967 Protocol), to which the United States is a signatory. The Refugee Act defines a “refugee” as:

... any person who is outside any country of such person’s nationality or, in the case of a person having no nationality, is outside any country in which such person last habitually resided, and who is unable or unwilling to return to, and is unable or unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of, that country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.

In practice, the adjudication of claims to asylum has been fickle, largely determined by political conditions and foreign relations. For example, admissions of refugees in the United States peaked during the early 1980s, when civil wars were raging in Central America. However, very few Central Americans in the United States were recognized as refugees or were able to gain political asylum. Even though many met the formal definition of “refugee” in U.S. and international law, they were fleeing regimes friendly to the United States, which did not want to admit that allies persecuted their own people. Individuals fleeing communist countries had much higher rates of approval than all others and the pattern continues to this day, when Chinese applicants are close to half of all approvals. In addition, rates of asylum approval in the United States vary widely depending on the immigration judge and the location of the court, indicating that the laws are not applied consistently but vary due to differences between immigrant judges and courts.

In addition to being vulnerable to political manipulation, refugee law emerging from the Second World War could not anticipate, and does not reflect, the types of conditions that impel people to cross national borders today. For example, gang violence is endemic to Central America and is driving many people to flee for their lives, but victims of gang violence have difficulty fitting the definition of having a “well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.” No national government has agreed to consider “non-gang members” or “young people” as a class or particular social group vulnerable to persecution, yet they are. Similarly, as the boundaries between state violence, drug cartel and gang violence, and gender-based violence blur in countries like Mexico or El Salvador, it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish between someone persecuted because of membership in a particular group and someone who is victimized because of generalized violence. However, both scenarios produce the same outcome: the need to move or die. And nowhere does refugee law acknowledge that people who are denied economic resources sufficient to sustain life must also move or die, a class and ideological bias in the 1951 Convention that continues today.

The burden of proof is often far too difficult for asylum applicants to prove their persecution. For example, many of the women and children fleeing Central America today have reasonable fears for their lives if returned to the region because of gang violence. Simply being a young person can put one at risk of forced recruitment into a gang, rape and trafficking by gang members, or retribution for resisting gang orders. But in the absence of physical proof, such as bodily scars from torture, a written death threat, a police report, or a news report that demonstrates individual persecution, it is almost impossible for people from Latin America to win asylum cases in the United States. Most people fleeing conditions of generalized or criminal violence lack such proof. This results in their being categorized as unworthy of protection and forced to return to life-threatening conditions. Another group of displaced people who have difficulty accessing the benefits accorded to “refugees” are those fleeing natural disasters and climate change. Like Hondurans and Haitians, they may be granted Temporary Protected Status (TPS) in the United States, but with no access to long-term legal protection from forced return. Victims of climate change who cannot survive in their home countries are a perse-

cuted class of people because we clearly know the causes and effects of climate change in their lives, yet do nothing about it. Is their displacement any less “political” or dire than someone targeted for their political beliefs or religion?

I have argued that refugee and asylum laws are based on antiquated understandings of persecution that fail to capture the reality of most forms of displacement today, and I have pointed out that these laws are applied haphazardly based on political exigencies rather than objective conditions of displacement. Just as harmful is the creation of false dichotomies between those who move because they have to and those who move because they want to, and between those who deserve safe haven and those who do not. Traditional approaches to fixing refugee law focus on pushing for a more liberal approval of applications for asylum or increasing the numbers of refugees accepted into a country. However, the assumptions embedded in the terms “refugee” and “immigrant” fail to capture the complexity and multiplicity of ways that people can become displaced and endangered today. If we are to address the crisis of displacement today—exactly what the international agreements on refugees sought to do in the post-WWII era—we have to rethink how we determine who deserves protection from violence and who does not, who deserves the right to mobility and who does not, and who deserves access to food and water and who does not. While the creation of the concept “refugee” was meant to aid people displaced by war, the moral hierarchy of the deserving and the undeserving that it creates leaves most displaced people today with no opportunity for refuge.

My work with people who are displaced but not considered worthy of protection and who are persecuted but forcibly returned to the places where they were brutalized has convinced me that we cannot fix refugee law, and that the very existence of the concept of the “refugee” is leading us to ignore the main causes of displacement today. Refugee law allows us to offer protection to a small group of people displaced by war or individual persecution, but does nothing for the masses of people who will die from generalized violence, poverty, or climate change if they cannot safely move. In creating a category of people who deserve mobility, we automatically create a category of people who do not—people literally incarcerated by the nation-state system.

At the heart of refugee law is the assumption that nation-states should have the right and responsibility to control human mobility. Any attempt to reform or modify refugee law simply reinforces and instantiates this power. Our job as anthropologists is not to support existing power relations but to see beyond and through them. We know the historic role of geographic mobility in human physical evolution and cultural development, so why naturalize geographic incarceration now? Instead of trying to improve refugee law and policy, it is time to start talking about mobility rights for all people. Of course, states cannot afford to give everyone the special forms of economic support that people determined to be “refugees” or citizens get, but everyone should have the right to move and to be free from immigration incarceration and forced return. Instead of reinforcing the political and discursive power of nation-states to define human life, we ought to be recognizing the many ways in which they should not or cannot define human life. As conditions causing mass human displacement around the world continue, we cannot afford to do less.

ENDNOTE

1. In my own fieldwork over several decades of studying human mobility, I have worked with individuals granted “refugee” and “asylee” status, but most of the people I work with have been denied these designations despite their exposure to state, economic, gendered, ethnic, and racialized violence in their home countries and in the United States. These experiences have shaped my perspective on the topic of “refugees,” but this paper is not ethnographic.

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**LOOKING FOR REFUGE IN THE OTHER NEW YORK CITY:
LIBERIAN REFUGEES IN STATEN ISLAND**

Bernadette Ludwig

When people think of New York City, celebrations of multiculturalism, centuries of welcoming and incorporating immigrants from all over the world, and a bastion of liberalism tend to come to mind (see for example, Kasinitz, Mollenkopf, and Waters 2002; de Graauw and Vermeulen 2016). While this may be true for most parts of the metropolis, this has not been the case for Staten Island, where thousands of Liberians resettled after fleeing war in their native country (1989–2003). Staten Island is the only New York City borough with a non-Hispanic White majority and that consistently votes Republican, making it difficult for Liberian refugees to truly find refuge.

In this essay, I highlight how borough/neighborhood sentiments have greatly influenced if and how newcomers can find refuge. I also explore the possibility of a partial refuge, which I connect to what Aleinikoff (2015, para. 12) calls “second exile.” “Second exiles”—usually refugee camps—are defined as “places where [refugees] face deep and long-standing exclusions ... [from] benefits that hosting states (e.g. right to health care, education, work) provide to their citizens.” While Liberians notably are not excluded and discriminated against by law, they are often excluded by daily practices and customs.

Arguments presented here draw on data collected through long-term, on-going ethnographic research that started in 2009. The two main sources for this study are in-depth interviews (and re-interviews) with fifty-five Liberians and refugee resettlement staff and notes from extensive participant observation.

RELOCATING TO STATEN ISLAND

When Liberians in West African refugee camps learned that they were among the few lucky ones to be resettled in the United States, they, like Janjay Waggah,¹ a single fifty-three-year-old mother, imagined that “their suffering days would be over.” Many felt that they would be, like Varney Konneh who spent most of the Liberian war as an internally displaced person (IDP), put it, “within walking distance

of heaven.” These expectations were fueled by what they had heard about the United States while growing up in Liberia, which is after all a former quasi U.S. colony, movies they had watched, and the pictures and tales that their relatives already living in New York had shared with them. Most of these photos depicted “happy people, well dressed ... standing in front of good malls or good shops or skyscrapers,” as recalled by Asha Onyango, an Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) staff member who had worked in the Buduburam refugee camp in Ghana with Liberians. Only a few Liberian refugees were aware that life across the Atlantic would be quite the opposite of the “little heaven” they had envisioned.

Many Liberians who came to the United States as refugees were resettled in the Park Hill neighborhood of Staten Island. Today, this North Shore neighborhood represents the largest per capita concentration of Liberians outside of Liberia (Ludwig 2013). Park Hill is an urban low-income neighborhood with the moniker “Killa Hill,” where crime, violence, gang activity, and drug trade are omnipresent. Although, it should be noted that things have improved since the end of the crack epidemic; nevertheless, shootings still occur in Park Hill in 2017. The neighborhood is dominated by a large apartment building complex, which looks like a public housing project, but is not. There are barely any green spaces or parks, and those that exist have defunct swings and slides, and are cluttered with garbage, including used needles. Other infrastructure is also missing in the neighborhood. There are no grocery stores, rather just a few bodegas, phone stores, and laundromats located on the nearby thoroughfare. Public bus service in this area has been cut over the years, and is rather unreliable, which makes it difficult for Liberians to access medical offices and social service agencies. Some of these organizations, including refugee resettlement agencies (Volags), are not even in another neighborhood in Staten Island, but a bus, ferry, and subway ride away in Manhattan or Brooklyn. This journey is impossible for older and/or illiterate Liberian refugees. Overall, Park Hill has not been a welcoming neighborhood for traumatized newcomers looking for permanent refuge. The arguments Liberians have had with their native-born Black American neighbors in Park Hill have only added to this feeling.

RELATIONS WITHIN PARK HILL

Liberian refugees had anticipated that American Blacks would, as former resettlement caseworker Varney Yarkpolo said, “automatically see [them] ... as brothers and sisters.” And they were not alone with this expectation. Volags had selected the neighborhood because of this imagined racial unity and affordable housing. But it turned out differently. From the beginning, relationships among native-born and foreign-born Blacks in Park Hill have been fragile, mostly because of continued disputes over scarce resources and ownership of the neighborhood. The following examples demonstrate this. Over the years, a number of Liberian-named organizations were established. Although they offer limited services (such as a food pantry and haphazardly-run after-school programs), they are nonetheless sources of contention for Park Hill residents. During one of my many walks through the neighborhood, I observed a New York City Food Bank truck unloading groceries for one of these Liberian organizations. An African American man in his late twenties with whom I had been speaking commented on the delivery, “they always get everything, but we don’t,” implying that the food donations were only for Liberians. While Liberians reassure me that their organizations and by extension, services and goods, are available to all residents in the area regardless of ethnicity and nationality, it is easy to understand why this African American man thought this way. The name of the organization in charge of the food distribution clearly indicates a Liberian ownership, thus deterring many non-Liberians from asking for assistance. In addition, many poor native-born (Black) Americans feel that they are yet again left behind in favor of a newly arrived immigrant group.

When people do not have any other forms of capital, “ownership of a neighborhood” can become a popular substitute. This has also occurred between Liberians and native-born Black Americans. They regularly debate who the rightful owners of Park Hill are. Much of this conflict has been around an African outdoor market that Liberian refugees established over the years. In the mid-2000s, this was a transient market, which operated on the sidewalks of the neighborhood, and continued to move to escape harassment by New York City health inspectors. Finally, in the fall of 2012, through collaboration among the Liberian leadership, a prominent African American leader, and the building management, a permanent space for the market was secured. A few years later, the Business Center for New Americans wanted

to mount a sign identifying the African market near the entrance to it. But the plaque was barely hung, when one member of the African American leadership in Park Hill ran out of her Park Hill office and ripped it down, accompanied by a derogatory comment and exclamation that “this is not an African neighborhood.” To be clear, many Liberians also hold negative stereotypes about Black Americans. For example, they have adopted stereotypes of the mainstream culture and media about African Americans, and view them as not valuing education, being lazy, loud, and aggressive.

LIFE OUTSIDE PARK HILL

Liberian refugees’ problems are not confined to their neighborhood. Outside Park Hill, Liberians have frequently been reminded that Staten Island is not a “safe haven.” Concretely, Liberian refugees face racism and discrimination in employment, housing, and education. In 2015, according to the U.S. Census, 62 percent of Staten Islanders were non-Hispanic Whites and almost 11 percent non-Hispanic Black. This stands in stark contrast to New York City as a whole, where 33 percent were non-Hispanic White and nearly 26 percent non-Hispanic Black. Hence not unexpectedly, many Liberians, including Omo Zuma who arrived in the United States in 1986, feel that racism “has been very, very high ... on the island” and that it was best “to be [just] around your people, your kind.”

Liberians often talk about residential segregation, demarcated by the Staten Island Expressway, also referred to as “Staten Island’s Mason-Dixon-Line,” which separates the more racially diverse North Shore from the rest of the island. Another anomaly is the political orientation of the borough, which has reliably voted Republican on a national and local basis in contrast to the rest of the city. This tendency to vote for politicians who are more likely than Democrats to favor strict immigration and refugee policies and are overall less supportive of rights for ethnoracial minorities and welfare benefits (Brown 2013) has certainly impacted the local reception and consequently Liberians’ ability to become part of Staten Island. In other words, despite living in a blue state, Liberians feel on a daily basis that they, as Blacks and refugees, are not welcome. Garsuah Janjay, a sixty-five-year-old asylee, talked about his fear when he drives to Staten Island’s South Shore, a White Republican stronghold, where his wife, like many other Liberians, works as a home health aide.

Most Liberians I spoke with recounted how they had unpleasant encounters with South Shore residents and police officers who questioned their right to be in this neighborhood. The discrimination is not limited to public spaces, but extends to the private homes where Liberians take care of the elderly. Many of these clients and their families are racist. Consistently, Liberian refugees lament how they are treated in these homes. The experiences of fifty-seven-year-old Gloria Adams exemplify this: “I was only allowed to sit on one chair ... for twelve hours,” only permitted to get up “if the client needed my assistance.” But much worse was that Ms. Adams was told that she had to use a separate spoon and cup, so she “would not use theirs.” She concluded that this made her feel “like a slave ... who was not good enough to sit on their couch.”

Employment is only one of the areas where Liberians are targets of racism and xenophobia. Discrimination in the housing market is twofold for Liberian refugees. On one hand, they experience address discrimination (Neckerman and Kirschenman 1991) and, on the other hand, racist real estate practices keep many from establishing homes outside of Park Hill. For example, several 1.5 generation Liberian refugees reported how their Park Hill address serves as a marker of undesirability. Young Liberians feel that potential employers “perceive Park Hill ... [as] a high crime neighborhood [and ask themselves if they] can ... trust this person,” as a long-term resident of Staten Island and mother of three, Cynthia Sherif, explained. The stigma and vices associated with Park Hill have motivated Liberians, once they achieve some upward mobility, to leave this neighborhood for a better and safer one. However, moving from Park Hill has not been easy. Liberians, such as Oman Zumo, recounted that even local realtors have told him and others that they could sell a house in certain neighborhoods neither to Liberians nor to other Blacks because “they [Whites] will never allow you in that neighborhood.”

These rejections and discrimination in and outside of Park Hill have fueled Liberians’ continued search for places of real refuge. Most of these places are in Park Hill, despite the drawbacks of this neighborhood. One of these refuges is the aforementioned outdoor African market, where Liberian and a few other West African women sell African peppers, palm oil, cassava leaves, potato greens, smoked fish, African clothing, and other items. The market not only gives these women an opportunity to make money, but it provides Liberians

with a “sense of home away from home,” where they retain and pass on aspects of Liberian culture to the next generation. Other places where Liberians retreat from Staten Island’s harshness include countless small Christian immigrant churches that convene throughout the North Shore.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, many would expect that Liberian refugees readily found a safe haven in the American city of immigrants, New York City. But this has not been the case. They were resettled in a “red bubble” in a “blue” state and “blue” city, which has been a significant barrier to establishing refuge. Therefore, Liberians continue to live in a modified version of the “second exile.” Thus, this study shows that refugees’ ability to integrate into a new society and establish a thriving community is also affected by the supra-local context, in addition to the national, state, and city policies. Put differently, despite living in a city that celebrates and welcomes immigrants, Liberians have been met with hostility by their Black and White Staten Island neighbors. Resentments, whether rooted in racism, xenophobia, and/or anxiety about limited resources, have kept Liberians in a continued “second exile.”

ENDNOTE

1. All personal names are pseudonyms chosen by the research participants themselves.

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**REFUGEE AND YOUTH RADICALIZATION IN CHAD: DILEMMAS
OF REFUGEE PROTECTION IN CENTRAL AFRICA**

Marisa O. Ensor

CRISIS IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

While the horrific violence and associated displacement of millions of Syrians remain the focus of worldwide attention, the crisis in the Central African Republic (CAR) has been unfolding with far less visibility. Yet current figures suggest that more than one in five of CAR's 4.9 million inhabitants (U.N. Data 2017) have been displaced and nearly half of the population is urgently in need of assistance. The Christian-majority country has struggled with failing governments, violent conflict, and poverty for decades. Violence intensified in 2012 as Christian-dominated militias, known as anti-Balaka, took retribution against the minority Muslim population for violent acts blamed on the former government and its supporters—a coalition of mostly Muslim rebels, known as the Séléka.

Beginning in mid-June 2016, CAR plunged into even deeper unrest barely six months after the election of their new President, Faustin-Archange Touadéra. Without a respite from violence, affected communities experienced—and possibly themselves perpetrated—numerous acts of violence and property crimes. Murders, assaults, rapes, and kidnappings became widespread, along with looting and vandalism. Tens of thousands of refugees have crossed the border into neighboring Chad and Cameroon to escape the increasingly untenable circumstances in their fragile country (HRW 2017). Over a hundred thousand people were displaced in May 2017 alone (OCHA 2017).

A large proportion of these refugees are Muslim youth whose hopes of attaining social adulthood have been thwarted, as they face the prospect of languishing for years in isolated camps. Characterizations of this “displaced youth bulge” as harbingers of violent extremism are not uncommon. “We have an entire generation of young Muslim men who have lost everything and are extremely angry,” cautioned Peter Bouckaert, Emergencies Director for Human Rights Watch. Given the combination of generalized poverty, mounting insecurity, and the frustration of unmet humanitarian needs, local Chadian

authorities and international experts share a concern that villages along the border and refugee camps may become breeding grounds for further violence and radicalization.



Belom Camp, near Maro in the Moyen Chari region of Chad, houses mainly long-term refugees from the Central African Republic.

The border between CAR and Chad has, in effect, been officially closed since May 11, 2014, when Chadian President Idriss Déby Itno announced that it would be “sealed” to everyone except returning Chadian citizens until the crisis in CAR was resolved (UNHCR 2017). Implementation of this directive has been, however, obstructed by the infeasibility of monitoring the almost one thousand kilometer (620 mile) border. Furthermore, since many people fleeing the conflict in CAR lack documentation, it is difficult to accurately determine their nationality. Overall, Chadian attitudes towards CAR refugees have hardened in recent years, forcing humanitarian actors to operate in an increasingly unreceptive environment.

Access to humanitarian assistance, while imperative for survival in the desperate circumstances facing most displaced Central African youth, is not enough to provide them with a sense of hope in a better future. (Re)joining the fight and engaging in paid militia work is, not entirely surprisingly, perceived by many as a more attractive path out of poverty and alienation than barely surviving in bleak refugee camps in countries where they feel unwelcome. As anthropologist Scott Atran, founder of the University of Oxford’s Centre for the Resolution of Intractable Conflict, has posited, we must “[e]ngage youth in the search for meaningful ways to make sense of the issues

on their personal agenda, whether that be about oppression and political marginalization, lack of economic opportunity, the trauma of exposure to violence, or problems of identity and social exclusion” (Atran 2015).

THE CONTEXT OF DISPLACEMENT

There is little doubt that a rapidly increasing population of young refugees is likely to impact a country’s political landscape. This so-called “youth bulge” has often been regarded as a negative phenomenon in developing and fragile nations, with increasing numbers of disaffected young men contributing to an increased likelihood of violence (Cincotta 2005). An alternative standpoint views displaced youngsters as potential “key actors in building resilience within their communities”—as valuable resources to “help to identify good practices that promote rehabilitation and social integration of [those] involved in acts of violent extremism” (Ensor 2017: 4-5).



While both female and male youth express a sense of alienation, females’ options are even more limited, rendering them vulnerable to human trafficking and survival sex.

Seeking to better understand the lived experiences of young African refugees in Chad, I joined a team of international and local researchers and interpreters (Arabic, Sara, and Sango speakers, in addition to French). The study, carried out between 2014 and 2016, focused on local means of conflict resolution and the determinants of social cohesion as a protective mechanism against radicalization. A combination of participatory action research and rapid ethnographic

research methods was implemented, including focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and participatory youth-centered exercises (i.e. “risk prioritization,” “risk calendar,” “community resource mapping,” and “community social mapping”).

Research findings reveal a bleak situation for Central African refugees. Doyaba and Siddho camps, located in southern Chad where a large portion of the fieldwork was conducted, are just transit camps—little more than aggregates of flimsy cotton shawls stretched over thin branches twisted into a cone shape. Refugees would eventually be moved to a new camp near Maro town, as the older and more established Belom Camp—the main research site—in the southern Moyer Chari Region has already reached full capacity. Camps are overcrowded, access to sanitation is very limited, malnutrition is rising as food and water are scarce, and many people remain at risk from violent cross-border attacks by CAR-based militias. UNHCR’s efforts to assist the Chadian Government in providing assistance to these refugees is hampered by woefully limited resources, as international donors direct their attention elsewhere.

The situation appears even more problematic for youth, some of whom had acquired a secondary and even college education in CAR. Expressing anger and frustration at the non-existent opportunities in Chad, a male of twenty-two years lamented, “There is nothing, nothing to do here—we just sit around all day ... There are many frustrated youth here; there is nothing to do. Back home we worked or studied, but here we just hang about.” Those sentiments were echoed by his peers. “Some NGOs have brought footballs, so the boys can play. Little girls sometimes play too, but we do not. There is nothing for us,” contributed an adolescent girl wearing a dusty, tattered hijab. “This isn’t the right way to live; even if they feed us and put a roof over our head. This isn’t life. We might as well be dead,” added an older male, hinting at priorities that go beyond mere physical survival.

Physical survival is, nevertheless, far from guaranteed. Many youngsters leave the camps, with or without authorization, to go into town and find any kind of work with which to purchase food and other necessities. Older girls often disappear for days at a time into towns and villages to find ways to make money; some do not return. Incidents of human trafficking, survival sex, petty theft, and other crimes are reportedly on the rise in the southern towns and villages that surround the camps.

Accustomed to the amenities of urban life, many of the refugees felt that returning to danger was preferable to doing nothing. “There’s nothing here. No TV, no music, no way to advance my education, nothing ... Despite the risk I’d rather return home [to Bangui, CAR’s capital] if I can find anything to do there,” offered a despondent teen-aged male who had been forced to flee with his family before completing his last academic year in high school. Several male youth pointed out that there was money to be made by joining the Séléka militias, whose members receive a modest salary—a reality that was corroborated with alarm by Chadian security authorities and aid workers. Some of these young refugees admitted being attracted by the financial gains of joining armed groups, irrespective of ideological, political, or religious convictions.



As focus group discussions with religious leaders in Southern Chad confirm, religious identity is one of many factors framing the experience of displacement for Central African refugees.

In effect, study findings indicate that religion has played a less prominent role than is suggested in popular and media accounts of the CAR situation. In addition to the clashes between primarily Christian anti-Balaka and mostly Muslim Séléka militias, CAR’s rural areas have been the scene of a confrontation over land and cattle. Although religious massacres have indeed been perpetrated in CAR, reducing the conflict there to religious terms is a simplifying vision that hides other essential aspects of the problem; namely, competition over livelihoods and scarce resources. Anti-Balaka militias have generally viewed pastoralists as allies of their Séléka enemies.

Impoverished and alienated from traditional structures, some young Fulani (a nomadic pastoralist group) were lured by the Séléka, triggering a cycle of bloody reprisals and the stigmatization of the entire Fulani community. This popular perception has been strengthened by the fact that the Fulani are Muslims. Increasing cattle thefts, a deepening sense of uprootedness, and the enlistment bonus offered by armed groups have been compounded by the growing animosity between pastoralists and farmers in rural areas. Study participants confirmed that young Central African Fulani are leaving the camps in Chad to return to CAR and enlist in exchange for remuneration.

Prospects for Central African refugees are further constrained by the volatile security situation in Chad. Well before the most recent crisis, the southern and eastern regions of Chad were already engulfed in chronic poverty, underdevelopment, and instability as a result of intra-community conflicts and cross-border militia raids. In effect, one of UNHCR's main challenges in Chad is the recurrent incursion of armed rebel groups from CAR, which represents a serious threat for refugees. Some refugees complained of having been forced to surrender their arms even though they felt they needed them to defend themselves against the rebels.

CONCLUSIONS: DISPLACEMENT AND RADICALIZATION

A number of sources have signaled the potential link between forced displacement and radicalization. Concerns have been expressed that camps for refugees and internally displaced persons may become fertile recruitment grounds for violent extremism. Radicalization leading to violence within refugee camps has been reported, for instance, in Jordan, Pakistan, Somalia, and Yemen. A recent survey of refugee radicalization concluded that “[t]he risk of radicalisation can be higher if the receiving country is unable or unwilling to provide for the camps and surrounding area” (Sude et al. 2015: 3). Another similar study found that “[t]he temptation to join the fight rather than wait in despair is real for many young men, especially when refugees cannot obtain education or employment and are isolated in camps for years” (Martin-Rayó 2012: 84). These are the very conditions encountered by young Central African refugees in Chad, a country that has acquired a reputation as a leading African state in the fight against terrorism (Nickels and Shorey 2015). Responding to the perceived threat, Chad's government has recently increased border patrols and

tightened border security, creating in the process additional obstacles for legitimate refugees fleeing persecution.

The growing body of literature on refugee radicalization notwithstanding, establishing conclusive causal links between forced displacement and radicalization continues to present numerous challenges. These include the difficulty of defining the term “radicalization” in the first place. Whether an increased willingness (or a perceived need) to engage in violent behavior, and a propensity to join armed militias and rebel groups for instrumental as well as ideological reasons—as is the case among some young CAR refugees in Chad—can be considered radicalized behavior remains a matter of debate.

In Chad’s and CAR’s complex political, ethnic, and religious environment, the succession of intensified violence and subsequent waves of displacement defy simple, mono-causal links between forced migration and radicalized attitudes. Findings suggest that a combination of woefully limited resources and unsuitable policies is placing Central African refugees in an increasingly precarious situation. Incidents of crime are on the rise, as is acceptance of the use of violence as a political tool. The risk of radicalization can only be averted or mitigated if the main stakeholders adopt comprehensive policies that extend beyond immediate life-saving needs and address the long-term prospects of the displaced population, with a focus on the younger generations who are more likely to be negatively impacted and more vulnerable to radicalization.

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REFUGE IN AUSTRIA: THE CHECHEN CASE

Zaitceva Asya

I settled in Vienna, the Austrian capital, in February 2015, at the beginning of a so-called “refugee crisis.” The number of asylum applications in the country had tripled to 90,000 from less than 30,000 the previous year.¹ Most of the refugees originated from Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq, and words like *asyl* (the German analogue of asylum), “culture clash,” and “integration” fueled political debates that infused the Austrian media space. Austria is not new to helping refugees: the data for the period from 1999 to 2013 demonstrate an average annual number of 17,000 applications for protected status.² The source of recent increased tensions lay in the sudden and extreme increase in the number of people who were not only born and socialized in other societies, but also needed financial and moral support.

In this essay, I provide a general overview of the asylum system in Austria and how it was applied to the case of the Chechen refugees. Why do I draw attention to these particular people? There are several reasons. First, and most important, is what we Chechen have in common as a country of origin: the Russian Federation. I myself was born far away from Chechnya and like other Chechen share both a small-world reality with its core in the Chechnya region, but also a broader reality of the Russian language and Soviet-based symbols and traditions. Second, all the Chechen with whom I had an opportunity to talk, were met in a normal, everyday environment, such as workplaces, children’s playgrounds, universities, and hospital waiting-rooms. That enabled me to understand more directly how the Chechen live in Austria, what they do for a living, and how they feel about life in Austria. Third and finally, most Chechen—unlike new refugees from Syria—have lived in Vienna for at least ten years, enough time to find their place in the society, or to refuse to do so.

Not having had much experience with Chechen in Russia (Chechnya is situated far away from the European part and is hardly a popular travel destination), my interactions have been with Chechen in Vienna. My goal has been primarily of an anthropological character. I wanted to understand if it is possible for an adult with asylum status

to become a part of a host society, accept on a personal level its norms and values, and receive positive feedback from it.

I became acquainted with Malika, a Chechen woman of forty-five years, in May 2016 while working as a volunteer in the Umka kindergarten, one of the few places in Vienna that is regarded as a potential place of work for Russian-speaking migrants. Malika settled in Vienna fifteen years ago (in 2002), having fled from the Second Chechen war (1999–2009) between the Russian Federation and the local separatists, the so-called *boyeviki*. The Chechen fleeing that war became the only citizens of the Russian Federation (and of Russian-speakers in general) who have obtained protected status in Austria. The peak of asylum applications from the Russian Federation occurred in the periods from 2003 to 2004 and from 2007 to 2010. The number of Chechen in Austria has now reached 30,000.³

Despite an abolition of military activities and widely-spread propaganda emphasizing the image of a prosperous republic, the Chechnya region cannot be characterized as stable, safe, or tolerant. Persecution of LGBT citizens, for example, is common.⁴ Those conditions continue to force people to search for a better and safer life elsewhere.⁵ But Austrians have been slow to approve protected status for them. Of the 2,570 applications received from Russian citizens last year, only 30 percent obtained approval. The reasons can be found in the formal peace treaty by which Chechnya is no longer technically at war—unlike Syria where the escalation of civil war has brought thousands of refugees to the country.⁶

Most of the Chechen have thus been in Austria for a relatively long time. They have adjusted. Malika, for example, has been working as a cook for three years, since the kindergarten first opened its doors. She mastered a way to combine Austrian and Russian cuisine, creating boiled cereals on the one hand and local frittaten soup on the other. But the creation of a similar harmony on the cultural level was much more complicated not only in her case, but for most refugees regardless of origins, age, religious beliefs, or educational background.

What are the barriers on the way to mutual acceptance and coexistence? Generally speaking, the issue of refuge in Austria can be regarded from two main horizons, namely bureaucracy and stereotypes. Bureaucracy affects everybody regardless of a person's social, economic, political, or residential status, and often includes the element of luck. In most cases, interaction with local authorities is hardly

a pleasant experience, and it is one that requires time, patience, and money. After arriving in Austria—usually without official permission—a person can apply for protected status at one of three refugee reception centers, but the period of waiting for a decision is difficult and stressful. A feeling of safety comes with an approval. Refugees then have the same rights as local citizens: open access to the labor market, free access to the universities, rental subsidies, and the right to obtain material support for their children as well as themselves. For many outside observers, refugees are treated humanely in Austria, but that depends on who receives an approval. What happens during the waiting period or in the case of a negative decision? The refugees are accommodated in quarters, they get some money for a living; volunteers come to help, organize excursions, and engage in conversation in German. But disapproval revokes those benefits. Recently an Afghan boy received a rejection of protected status. In that case, the rejection triggered a local demonstration among Austrian volunteers who had worked with him and supported him. Maybe he is going to have one more chance; many others will not.

But an asylum approval is only the beginning of a long and difficult path. After a person gets over the first shock, caused by the war and fear for his or her own life, another type of shock emerges. The chances of finding a suitable, well-paid job are limited. In the case of a refugee, the first official opportunity to start working comes after the approval of protected status, which takes on average one year of waiting. But legal access to full-time work turns out to be a drop in the sea without reliable social contacts, a relevant educational profile (ideally obtained in Austria), and a perfect command of German. All these are decisive factors in getting a good job and refugees, as a matter of fact, usually lack all of them.

In the Chechen case, it is interesting to note that women who come to Austria as refugees appear to be more adaptive than men. They interact more often on issues regarding children, including talks with local teachers,⁷ doctors, and sports trainers, which provides additional motivation for them to become involved in Austrian everyday life and to learn the language, at least at a level of verbal communication. Unlike women, the Chechen men living in Austria come across more cultural and social conflicts: the man in a traditional sense is the breadwinner for the whole family, bringing upon himself all the responsibilities. Under the condition of a new status and the demands

of a new environment, that previous status quo is difficult, even impossible, to maintain. Moreover, the women take on the role of the family representative to the outside world, have fewer psychological difficulties in taking lower-level jobs, and are ready to invest time and energy into the educational courses that are provided free of charge by local organizations.

Cooking as a main source of income is frequently associated in Austria with a low-level occupation, which is taken by people without strong language skills and a good education. Yet Malika, who adores kitchens and cooking, can be considered lucky as she did not have to change her main working sphere. Unfortunately, her case is more an exception than a regularity: German language in combination with specifics of the Austrian labor market forces migrants in general, and refugees in particular, to give up their previous working experience and professional skills or, at least, delay them for an uncertain period in favor of lower-level jobs that do not require a good command of German. Fatima, another Chechen woman, also belongs to the lucky category: she works for Caritas, the most famous Austrian charity organization. Her job mostly deals with communication with Muslim refugees, especially the Chechen.

Despite such interactions with the broader society, women remain committed to the Chechen community. The choice of a marriage partner, for example, is strictly determined by ethnic affiliation, along with language and religion—which prescribes wearing a covering. Not all the Chechen women in Vienna follow the norms, but most do so as they are considered important for preserving social and cultural traditions regardless of the place of residence.

Another crucial barrier in refugee-host society interaction involves how differences deepen into fears, prejudices, and stereotypes. A refugee is often imagined (thanks to media) as a poor person without education even at a basic school level, who is not willing to work, who commits crimes, and who, at the same time, longs for money from tax-payers. The Chechen are considered to be one of the most aggressive and unintegrated groups of refugees in Austria, without social contacts except for Chechen-Chechen or family ties, and as involved in various conflicts, mostly of an interethnic character. They are stereotypically described as too impulsive and too proud—the motive for a fight can be found in a verbal insult. What is more, the Chechen tend to support, at a distance, the existing regime both in the republic

of origin and on the Russian federative level, which makes the cultural gap with most Austrians even deeper.

Furthermore, the unwillingness of the Chechen, especially those who came to the country long ago, to learn German and Austrian cultural patterns provides a fertile ground for conflicts and further separation. Malika speaks German at a modest verbal level, but even for her German has never been a high priority compared to preserving her own traditions and language. Another Chechen woman, Kometa, settled in Austria twelve years ago, but has used her resources to build a house in Chechnya for her two sons, in case they move back. She too communicates in German on children's issues but, despite having a reliable financial base and a subsidized apartment, feels more an alien in Austria than someone at home in a new country.

Chechen life in refuge in Austria is impossible to understand without cultural context, without taking stereotypes and media into consideration. Boulevard newspapers, which can be taken free of charge everywhere, often write about criminal incidents with refugees. It sometimes seems that the only criminals and unemployed are migrants, refugees in particular. Refugees, on the other hand, having been socialized in an absolutely different environment, do not understand and do not accept the reality and norms of the hosting country. Instead, they live in their own community world. This cultural clash creates barriers, conflicts, and mutual misunderstanding. Overcoming it is a long process that needs time and is one of the greatest challenges in maintaining refuge in the contemporary world.

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7. If children have difficulties in dealing with school tasks, they will get help from the Chechen teachers, hired by parents, and who explain the material at home.

SEEKING REFUGE IN MOROCCO AND SPAIN

Alexander Ryll

Globally, prospects for potential safe havens are narrowing as a result of xenophobic “othering” by the public and politicians. Anthropologists must assist in the re-conceptualization of the terms of migrant and refugee, examining and interpreting the intricate mechanics of refuge itself. I discuss in this essay the general questions of migration and refugee status in relation to the European Union (E.U.), focusing on the cases of Ceuta and Melilla. A caveat: sub-Saharan African populations—who were regularly marked as “other”—faced greater difficulties than many Arabic-speaking individuals from North Africa and the Middle East who had greater awareness of cultural practices and thus had an advantage when it came to negotiating migratory paths and moving through the refugee application process.



MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

Scholars regularly focus on the “push” and “pull” factors that motivate migration. Public health experts also consider “push” and “pull” factors to frame “decisional balances” as individuals choose whether to proceed (Holmes 2013:17). Migration scholars working within this dichotomous relationship assume differing motives between voluntary migrants and involuntary refugees. This logic is founded upon social and politico-legal protections afforded to involuntary refugees who cannot return to their country of origin. However, migrants lack

similar rights, due to the perceived voluntary nature of the migration process.

The United Nations defines the status of refugee as:

[An individual who] owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it. (UNHCR 1951: 14)

Thus, refugees are guaranteed rights under international legal frameworks that include the right not to be deported or returned into harm's way. Managing the complications of human displacement, since December 1950 the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has sought to shelter refugee seekers (Fresia 2013: 50). Despite international protections, the fate of refugees within member states varies, requiring examination on a case-by-case basis.

In this example, individuals seeking refugee status within Ceuta and Melilla initiate asylum proceedings within one month of entry. Applications for asylum should include personal information and supporting documentation. Once materials are submitted, applicants cannot leave until a decision is reached, and have access to legal and interpretative services. During this process applicants must cooperate with authorities, appearing upon request. Applicants who do not receive notification of rejection within one month (the mandated deadline), understand that their petitions have been tentatively accepted pending a final decision.

CEUTA, MELILLA, AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

The recent histories of Morocco and Spain offer a fascinating set of intertwined contrasts in refugee and migrant policy and reality. Ceuta and Melilla play a unique historic, geographic, and political role in the field of refugee and migrant studies. Ceuta, an 18.5-square-kilometer city of 84,519, is located on the northwest coast of Africa fourteen kilometers from the Spanish Province of Cádiz, separated by the Strait of Gibraltar. Melilla, further east along the north African coast, is a

12.3-square-kilometer Spanish city of 86,026 adjacent to the Alboran Sea, across from the Spanish Provinces of Granada and Almería.



Representing a longstanding colonial history, Ceuta and Melilla fell under Spanish control during 1415 and 1556, respectively. Each enclave remained a Spanish territory following Moroccan independence in 1956, attaining Spanish autonomous city status in 1995.¹ Both cities are incorporated into the European Union, falling under domestic and international commitments. Sitting along the only land routes from Africa to Spain, Ceuta and Melilla were secured by border fencing during the 1990s.

Additional security measures include the *Plan Sur* (Southern Plan), implemented during January 1998, devised to address “illegal” migration and trafficking, specifically in regard to smugglers and traffickers working in Andalucía, Ceuta, Melilla, and Murcia. The *Sistema Integrado de Vigilancia Exterior* (Integrated System of Exterior Surveillance, or SIVE), begun in 2002, operates in the Strait of Gibraltar as a high-tech surveillance system comprised of stationary and mobile cameras and radars which oversee the southern coast of Spain. These international border systems have seen recent staff increases to manage migration.

Recently, E.U. controls have shifted southwards as countries such as Morocco have been approached as partners to buffer migration

in exchange for government assistance. During the twentieth century, emigration occurred as Moroccan nationals sought economic opportunities in Europe (see McMurray 2001). However, new patterns emerged in the 1990s, with regard to irregular and transit migration. Wars and economic recessions in West African nations, as well as restrictions in Libyan migration policies in 2000, transformed Morocco into a transit as well as a destination country. Yet arrival numbers at Moroccan locations varied, with an increase one year, only to drop the next.

Intermittent pressures on preferential routes prompt travelers to select precarious alternatives. For example, as maritime controls restricted travel to the Canary Islands from 2006 through 2008, the central Mediterranean route to the island of Lampedusa conversely saw increased numbers (Schapendonk 2012: 29). With the longest stretch of open sea, this route is one of the most dangerous pathways to Europe. Weather conditions worsen in winter months, leading migration to follow seasonally defined patterns. Due to the hazardous journey, most border-control activities have become de facto search and rescue operations. Finally, in addressing the effectiveness of border controls, it is important to note that many irregular E.U. arrivals are those with lapsed visas or rejected asylum claims.



FROM FNIDEQ TO CEUTA AND MELILLA

In December of 2016 and January of 2017 I conducted fieldwork in Morocco, including time in the surroundings of Fnideq, which adjoins

the Spanish enclave of Ceuta. Fnideq is interesting as it channels migrants from the North African Arabic-speaking world as well as from the remainder of the African continent. In the hills surrounding the city of Fnideq are encampments inhabited by transitory individuals. It is in such spaces that I observed firsthand the complications of race and culture as social constructs.

In speaking with inhabitants, it became clear that the ease of integration is aided by familiarity with the country of origin and the nature of its relations to Morocco and Spain. Individuals with origins in Arabic-speaking North Africa and the Middle East, including Syrian refugees and Algerian migrants, faced a perceptibly less difficult integration due to openly expressed similarities in lifestyle and custom. Such unproblematic integration is not possible for sub-Saharan African migrants, in large part because the nature of the forces that drive their movement are too often sensationalized in Western and Arabic speaking North African media. Recurring media narratives consist of images of sub-Saharan migrants breaching E.U. borders through the depiction of spectacular moments in the journey. Scaled fences and bodies crammed into unseaworthy vessels or motor vehicles were the images underlying the public perception of these individuals. Messages tied to such images carry apocalyptic tones of an exodus, or an invasion. Production and circulation of sensationalist imagery obscures the complexities of migration in all forms.

My fieldwork showed that integration and successful refugee and migrant status is particularly difficult to achieve for many sub-Saharan Africans already in Morocco, and those planning to go there. As a result, the availability of education, employment, and health services is restricted. Quality of life, therefore, suffers. Voluntary encounters with the outside world are infrequent. As I spoke with inhabitants present at the time of my visit, an individual commented that the sole visitor within recent memory was a Dutch photographer. Involuntary encounters, conversely, frequently occur. Sweeps by the Moroccan Auxiliary Forces seek to disperse these makeshift encampments. During operations, documentation held by migrants is often destroyed, resulting in a legal limbo.

Crossings into the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla occur through several methods. Some migrants elect to climb the comprehensive system of fences surrounding the enclaves in attempts often involving numerous individuals. On January 1, 2017 while I conducted

fieldwork in Fnideq, 1,100 African migrants approached the border of Ceuta, with 100 subsequently remaining on top of the external fence for several hours. Of these, two managed to successfully cross. In contrast, others select maritime routes, swimming or travelling by boat. Swimming is a harrowing ordeal, despite the deceptively short distance. Rupert, an Algerian seeking economic opportunity, described six hours spent in the Mediterranean during a previous attempt. Lastly, some elect to travel through the border complex itself. Travel occurs with legitimate and illegitimate documentation.

Successful border crossers pass through the Centers for Temporary Immigrant Stay (CETI) in Ceuta and Melilla. These are public administration establishments, operating under the Ministry of Employment and Social Services. Designed as temporary reception facilities, each provides basic social care services to arriving immigrants and asylum seekers. However, designations of temporality are debatable, as an informant in Ceuta reported having spent more than three years at the center. An additional concern is operational capacity, as 1,400 migrants currently occupy a center designed for 512 (Bilefsky 2017; Ministry of Employment and Social Services n.d.).

Part of the process includes the issuing of identification cards in conjunction with these social care services. Such cards grant access to the CETI facilities as well as to additional services within the city itself. If card holders violate the law, this becomes a method of tracing individuals. Each card carries a photograph of the applicant as well as additional identifying information, and is issued to migrants prior to any further Spanish administrative decisions as to their future status. The regulation of temporary migration centers is found in articles 264 to 266 of the Regulation of Organic Law 4/2000, approved by Royal Decree 557/2011, of April 20 (Ministry of Employment and Social Services, n.d.). Ramifications of regulations like those above assert themselves in the lives of individuals, as circumstances intertwine mental and physical considerations.

Abdul, a young man from the Republic of the Gambia, travelled for more than a year to reach the border separating the city of Ceuta from Morocco. Having quit school due to lack of financial support, he sought socioeconomic opportunity abroad. Yet, when questioned as to his reasons for enduring physical risk to cross into Ceuta, he cited challenges in procuring employment in Morocco as well as racism directed towards sub-Saharan Africans. From tangible scars, to

expressions of exclusion, regulations form but one barrier to refuge in the nation-state.

CONCLUSION

Previous research into refuge as a field of study has emphasized motivations of those choosing to transition to new nation-states. However, the framework of voluntary versus involuntary, and migrant versus refugee, requires reexamination. Broad categorizations of motivation, through “push” and “pull” factors, fail to adequately address personal trials and tribulations, as well as multi-dimensional barriers to refuge. Lasting politico-legal implications result from the dichotomization of “push” versus “pull” factors, of involuntary versus voluntary migration.

The opposition of these factors has limited the practical application of the results of migration studies. In the attempt to clarify the social construct of race and its associated effects, however, we must not solely engage in shifts of mentality. An informed and pragmatic approach must be the goal, providing critical reflections of migration, neither denigrating nor glorifying the situation at hand. It is imperative to bear in mind all paths available to citizenship for migrants and refugees that drive movement of vulnerable populations.

ENDNOTE

1. Spanish autonomous cities are administrative units that retain a degree of self-governance from external authority. In this case, the two cities are geographically separate from the remainder of the nation.

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**“TO LOSE FRIENDS, LOSE SCHOOL, LOSE SECURITY”:
SALVADORAN REFUGEE YOUTH AND ACCESS TO EDUCATION
IN COSTA RICA**

Caitlin Fouratt and Chelsea Powell

Costa Rica is known as a country of refuge for displaced Central Americans fleeing persecution based on race, religion, gender, or membership in a particular social or political group. In the 1980s, Costa Rica received large numbers of refugees fleeing the civil war in El Salvador and the Contra war in Nicaragua. Following the end of the Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua in 1990 and the peace accords in El Salvador in 1992, flows of refugees slowed while economic immigration increased. Since the 1990s, economic migrants from Nicaragua have comprised the bulk of immigrants in Costa Rica. Today, about 10 percent of Costa Rica’s population of 4.8 million is foreign-born; 75 percent of those are Nicaraguans (INEC 2011).

Like the United States, Costa Rica has experienced a dramatic increase in asylum applications from people fleeing gang violence in the Northern Triangle countries of Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador in the past five years. This has challenged Costa Rica’s capacity to manage new refugee populations and ensure their human rights. In this short essay, we look at how delays in the asylum application process, inflexible bureaucracy, and differences between national education systems prevent the smooth integration of Salvadoran refugee youth into the Costa Rican education system.

National policies guarantee access to education for all children, regardless of immigration status. In practice, however, asylum seekers face major bureaucratic barriers to successful integration, meaning that Salvadoran refugee youth find it hard to gain access to and succeed in school, which compounds traumas and instability for young people fleeing violence.

This discussion is based on six weeks of fieldwork (July to August 2016) with refugee youth in San José, Costa Rica. We conducted participant observation at the office of an international organization that provides psychological and social support for asylum seekers. We interviewed four staff members, including the center’s psychologist

and the youth program coordinator. We also interviewed three individuals from other NGOs working with migrants and refugees, a high-level official in the Refugee Unit in the Migration Directorate of the Costa Rican government (DGME), and ten refugee youth. The young people were between the ages of fourteen and twenty, and two were young women. The disproportionate participation of young men in the interviews reflects group dynamics rather than rates of asylum applications in Costa Rica, which are roughly balanced between men and women.

WHY COSTA RICA?

According to DGME statistics, asylum applications from Central America have increased from 209 applications in 2012, to 1,627 in 2016. Costa Rica is a popular destination for refugees from El Salvador for several reasons: the relative ease and low cost of travel, connections with family or friends already there, and its overall security. It is less risky and cheaper to travel to Costa Rica than to the United States. Central Americans can pay more than \$7,000 dollars and spend weeks traveling to cross illegally into the United States (Vogt 2013). In contrast, for approximately \$200, they can purchase a bus ticket and enter Costa Rica legally on a tourist visa within twenty-four hours. This means that Salvadorans often arrive in Costa Rica as a family unit, rather than individually. Further, because Costa Rica received more than 20,000 refugees during El Salvador's civil war in the 1980s (Basok 1993), Salvadorans may already have family and social networks in Costa Rica to ease their transition.

Countless Central Americans are fleeing gang violence. NGO staff, migration officials, and all youth interviewed emphasized the role of the *mara salvatrucha* (MS) and *mara 18* in driving Salvadoran emigration. The Salvadoran refugees interviewed reported direct and indirect threats to themselves and their families, including being extorted and recruited by the gangs, as well constant gang presence in and around schools. Although neither of the two women interviewed reported threats of sexual assault, NGO and government officials indicate that young women are often a target of recruitment and sexual violence.

Salvadoran youth and their families perceive Costa Rica as safer than anywhere else in Central America. As Diego, age fourteen, notes, "The other countries are at the point of experiencing what is hap-

pening in El Salvador, and Costa Rica is ... the Central American country with the least violence.” Young people reported feeling freer to walk around their neighborhoods in Costa Rica, in direct contrast to their more cautious and restricted movements in El Salvador. However, their families often struggle to feel safe. One woman from a San Salvador neighborhood controlled by the *Mara 18* street gang expressed concern that Costa Rica was “far but not far enough” from the violence. As one of the NGO staff members explains, “it’s hard for [the adults] to let go of that fear and that insecurity.” The youth, in contrast, believe their parents are overprotective. Sara, sixteen, said that one “can travel at any hour” in Costa Rica and Emilia, twenty, noted that while in Costa Rica, “one can be dressed how they want,” but in El Salvador, one must be more conservative; a person cannot go out wearing “anything flashy.” Ironically, Costa Ricans often complain of increasing crime and insecurity in and around the San José area and often fear letting their children move around freely. Indeed, recently the media has played up fears that the *maras* will also begin to cross into their borders (Castillo 2016).

DELAYED APPLICATION PROCESSES

Despite the sense of safety Salvadoran youth find in Costa Rica, the process of adaptation is difficult. As one NGO staff member notes, “To lose friends, lose school, lose zones of trust and security—it’s all a very big change when they arrive here, without even talking about the geographic changes, the economic changes of all this that young people face.”

One of the major challenges Salvadoran asylum seekers face is the application process itself. On paper, the process provides broad rights to asylum seekers. Applicants are not routinely detained. Rather, they have the right to work, study, and move freely within Costa Rica while their applications are evaluated. Asylum seekers may apply at the central DGME offices any time after they have entered Costa Rica or at the border as they enter. Applicants undergo an intake interview and can then receive a work permit three months later. Application processing may include follow up interviews, and applicants have several opportunities to appeal decisions made by the National Commission that grants refugee status.

However, backlogs in the Refugee Unit in the DGME, caused by increased applications, have delayed initial interviews by months,

pushing back access to work permits and complicating asylum seekers' integration. As an official in the Refugee Unit notes, there are only five full-time staff members to complete intake, assessment, and decision-making for all asylum applications: "If five people in 2012 was not enough, [w]ell now the issue has overtaken us." The office has used temporary staff sponsored by the UNHCR (MGP 2016) and law student volunteers to clear some of the backlog, but the process is still long. Asylum seekers emphasize the delays and complications of multiple interviews and mountains of paperwork that create a general sense of limbo and uncertainty. For other groups with higher socioeconomic status, like Colombians, such delays may have less impact, but Salvadorans, who often flee without selling their property back home or gathering documents or money first, struggle as they wait for work permits. Many begin working without permits in the informal sector.

DIFFICULTIES WITH SCHOOLING

In Costa Rica, official legal status is often a requirement for accessing services, insurance, and schooling (Fouratt 2016). While Costa Rican education policy allows refugees to enroll in school immediately upon arrival, in practice, many are made to wait until they have additional paperwork. As with Sarah, sixteen, who waited just two weeks to obtain her certified transcripts and enrolled in classes within two months, parents' education level and familiarity with the Costa Rican system can smooth the transition for children. However, brothers David, nineteen, and Diego, fourteen, were unable to enroll despite arriving before the matriculation deadline for the following year. David stated that "the studies [in Costa Rica] are kind of limited ... at least for my brother. He lost a year." The brothers were neither able to finish out the year they had interrupted in El Salvador nor enroll for the upcoming year in Costa Rica. NGO staff explained that while schools "should not ask for [documentation] according to the regulations [of the Ministry of Education]," each school "retains its autonomy to decide up to what point they can comply with this requirement."

Salvadorans are also at a disadvantage when it comes to the course material itself. According to Sebastian, fifteen, in El Salvador "only the basics are covered" but, in Costa Rica, there are "a bunch" of classes. Sara, sixteen, reported feeling overwhelmed with the addi-

tional obligatory classes, many of which “are [not] given to us in El Salvador.”

Many Salvadoran youth have also faced barriers to their schooling in El Salvador before fleeing the country. According to David, nineteen, “in the public schools, [the gangs] have control.” Additionally, young people are threatened and face violence if they attend a school in a neighborhood controlled by a different gang than the one that controls their neighborhood. Crossing the invisible borders between gang territories becomes dangerous because “only for living in a certain zone ... they consider you an enemy, a dead enemy.” Enrique, fifteen, who attended private school, claimed that it was safer there than in public school, but that there is still “a lot [that] is related to the gangs. If you don’t join them, they kill you.” Recruitment takes place both outside and inside schools.

Thus, Salvadoran refugee youth experience double interruptions in their education: first, at the hands of gangs in El Salvador where they stay home to avoid recruitment and harassment or to avoid crossing the invisible borders of gang territories; and then again in Costa Rica, where they are unable to enroll for a period of anywhere from a few months to more than a year. These youth enter Costa Rica already at a disadvantage and continue to fall behind the longer they are kept out of school.

CONCLUSION

In principle, the asylum application process in Costa Rica grants broad rights and opportunities for integration to asylum seekers. There is almost no detention of asylum seekers. They have the right to a work permit and education while awaiting a decision on their case. Further, although many will have their claims ultimately rejected, Costa Rican law provides several ways to change immigration status through work, study, or family connections. This means that ultimately even those whose claims are denied are likely to remain in the country. However, even in this system, asylum seekers find their pathways to integration delayed. For young people, bureaucratic barriers that begin with the asylum application process block them from gaining access to education. The difficulty of navigating the Costa Rican education system, and a lack of flexibility among local school officials, serve to delay their enrollment further. Even once they receive refugee status, Salvadorans are continually marginalized, working low-wage jobs

and struggling to fill the educational and economic gaps between themselves and their Costa Rican peers.

Although the long-term consequences of these delays for Salvadoran youth are unknown, Costa Rica already struggles with high secondary school dropout rates. These refugee youth, who generally arrive already behind in their studies and with families who are struggling economically, may never return to the classroom after such delays. Further, current educational programs do little to address the traumas, interrupted studies, and cultural differences of Salvadoran youth. Even a system in which asylum seekers receive temporary legal status, work permits and other benefits can become exclusionary if bureaucratic obstacles create delays, gaps exist between asylum seekers' rights and their real access to services, and previous traumas and interruptions are not adequately addressed. In the end, refugee youth may escape gang violence but end up unable to attain an education, secure a stable job, or build a life in Costa Rica.

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PHOTO ESSAY:
LESVOS

LESVOS:

TRACING THE SPACE OF THE REFUGEE CRISIS

Raluca Bejan

The Mediterranean, therefore, is the center of world history. Greece lies here, the focal point of history. In [what is nominally] Syria there is Jerusalem, the center of Judaism and of Christianity. To the southeast are Mecca and Medina, the source of Islam. To the west are Delphi and Athens; and farther west there is Rome, with Alexandria and Carthage on the south side of the sea. Thus the Mediterranean is the heart of the Old World, that which conditions it and gives it its life. Without it we could not imagine world history—any more that we could think of Rome or Athens without the forum where all things converged. (Hegel 1988)

Hegel's quote takes on new dimensions today, as Europe was confronted, in the last years, with a massive influx of irregular migrants. The Eurocentric ideal is particularly significant in defining the "refugee crisis." Millions of refugees were already stranded in Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey for years, and yet the refugee crisis only became a "crisis" when people started to flock into Europe and were seen to contaminate the symbolism of what Europe constitutes. The actuality of the refugee "problem" is subsequently connected to how we name and choose to understand the idea(s) of Euro-centrism, of Europe, and its cultural supremacy on the world map. Starting in 2015, thousands of people coming from the Middle East and Africa disembarked on the shores of Italy and Greece in search of refuge. This essay traces the emotion conveyed by the island of Lesvos, as the space containing the refugee crisis, while it critically interrogates the current representational imagery of the crisis. The discrepancy between the everyday island life and the surreal problem of the "refugees," is metaphorically extrapolated here through a narrative account describing the space of the island.

TRAVELLING TO LESVOS

Στον Πειραιά, παρακαλώ (“To Piraeus, please”) we asked the cab driver in broken Greek, as we turned left from Loustinianou and Kallidromiou in Exarchia, walked down on Emmanouil Mpenaki, and waved the cab from across Café 67. Passing a traffic jam around Syntagma, within ten minutes we were on the highway, and in about half an hour we reached the port. “Which gate?” the driver asked. “E2” we responded. He pulled out a pen and an old receipt from a pile of papers stacked on the seat next to him. We wrote the gate number and passed the paper back. “Ah, epsilon dio!” he exclaimed. In a few minutes we were at the gate. The boat was the same one we took a year ago, in July 2016, when we first saw Lesvos. Operated by Hellenic Seaways, Ariadne is one of the two ferries that regularly sails the Piraeus-Mytilini (Lesvos’s port) route. Staff members were wearing red t-shirts. Ariadne’s uniform would be red, of course, as in Greek mythology the thread passed to Theseus to find his way out of the Cretan labyrinth was most likely red.



Ariadne has two decks. From the higher one up, the sea was difficult to see. From the one below, the view was much clearer. Two rescue coils were diametrically located at the opposite corners. On the left side corridor, a square white box hung above the water, with the words “In case of Emergency” written in red. Nine evacuation techniques (Operating Procedures of the Marine Chute Evacuation System) were presented in photos and accompanied by detailed text: how to turn the handle and the stopper at the seaside door at 90 degrees; how to disconnect the safety lever from the receiver; how to lower down the lever.

Lesvos currently hosts about 3,000 migrants, scattered among the camps of Pikpa, Moria, and Kara Tepe, the lowest number since the start of the refugee crisis in 2015 (Makris 2017). Following the deal between the European Union (E.U.) and Turkey, signed in March 2016, which allows Greece to “return” (i.e., as in to deport) irregular arrivals back to Turkey in exchange for E.U. resettlement assistance for the Syrian refugees located on Turkey’s soil, a visa removal promise for Turkish nationals, and a payment of six billion euros, the numbers of refugees on the Greek islands significantly decreased. Yet the absence of the refugees’ former presence continues to be felt.

LESVOS. APRIL 25, 2017.

Early morning. Eighteen degrees.

8:33. Distance to Moria Refugee Camp - seven kilometers. Estimated walking time: one hour and twenty-eight minutes.

8:33. Distance to Kara Tepe Refugee Camp - three kilometers. Estimated walking time: thirty-eight minutes.

8:37. Distance to Pikpa Lesvos Solidarity Camp - six kilometers. Estimated walking time: one hour and seventeen minutes.

9:56. Fourteen ships anchored in the Mytilini port:

Border patrol. Anchored with four strings. Yellow and black braided.



White ship. Dilapidated. Number 470 written in black paint. Anchored with two blue strings and a white thread.

White boat in better shape. Twice the size as the former one. Anchored with four dirty-white strings.



Two boats side by side:

Blue boat. An old man was cleaning it. Resembled a small tourist cruise. Anchored with white thread. Tied with one of the strings from the third white boat.

White, modern boat. Interior made out of wood. A table was visible inside, along with a small bar and a sink.

Oceanis 321. Anchored with black string in two spots. Small and white. A black bucket was out on the deck.

White boat. Small. Anchored with two white and blue dotted braided strings.

Jeanneau coRRente is written on the left. *Sun Odyssey 33.1* on the right.

Sarakina Mytilini 965. White and orange. Anchored with chains in two spots. Small.

Bavarian Yachts 350. White and blue. Two chains. One black. One white.

Nelli NM 1202. Grey strings.

N.M.1093. White.

Boat chained in two spots. Cherry color.

Border Patrol. “Please do not take photos of the ship. It is a *war scene*. It is forbidden.”

SKALA SIKAMINEAS

Located about forty-seven kilometers from Mytilini, Skala Sikamineas is easily reachable by bus. In April (still the winter season in Greece), scheduled trips were departing Mytilini at 1:00 p.m. and returning from Skala the next day at 6:45 a.m. On the way to Kaloni, close to Agia Paraskevi, reminders of a former refugee camp lay untouched. Mantamados camp was located within an empty terrain closed off by a wire fence. A jacket was hanging on the entrance door.



After the Byzantine Monastery of Archangel Michael in Mantamados, the serpentine road continued to Skala. Turkey was visible to the right. “Turkia,” the driver said. “Ten euros from Mytilini by boat. And migrants pay four thousand.” He told us stories of refugees on the road offering to pay as much as five hundred euros for a taxi ride to the port. People, however, were afraid to help. “Police will arrest,” the driver said. “For helping, yes.”

After talking with somebody from the Lesvos Legal Centre, we learned that oftentimes in Turkey smugglers assure migrants that a person will accompany them to operate the boat, yet they send people on their own; regularly, these passengers have no other choice but to (learn to) navigate. Landing on the Greek shores, the person sailing the boat, himself a migrant, is often arrested for smuggling people.

A camp seemed to have been located three kilometers away from Skala Sikamineas. It was enclosed by wire fence, and most of the white tents had the UNCHR emblem. A covered open-air sink stood outside the fenced perimeter. A table covered with a white tablecloth was propped between two barracks. Several pairs of shoes were placed on top of it. A sign with text in Greek, English, Arabic, and Farsi was fastened on the fence. “Welcome to the Greek island Lesbos,” it read. “You must first register with the authorities at the port of Mytilini. By bus it takes about ninety minutes. Walking takes two days.”



At Skala Sikamineas the water was clear, reflecting the rays of sun as they hit the rocky shores. The town looked small, quiet, and serene. Next to a dozen fisherman boats, there were two rescue ships from Proactiva Open Arms, an organization based in Barcelona, Spain. The few empty restaurants and coffee shops stood in marked contrast to the reality that hundreds of thousands of migrants have passed through Skala Sikamineas, with as many as eighty-eight boats per day reaching its shores (Owens 2016).

Evidence of this movement was visible at the Goji Café. One stone wall was covered by t-shirts, including a yellow lifeguard shirt from the ProActive Open Arms Rescue team, a red Hellas Lifeguard top, a white t-shirt from Médecins Sans Frontières, and another from Medics Bergen. Additionally there were photos of island residents and refugees together: Vasillis, Lotte, Marry, Joe, Ben, Max, Daisy, Pete, Ali, Naya, and Kristina were some of the names.



MYTHIMA AT EFTALOU

“Drive from Skala towards Molivos,” read our friend’s directions. “And just before Eftalou you can visit the life-jacket graveyard.” We turned east near Mythima, and followed the dirt road, now curved towards what looked like a junkyard. A few municipal workers were gathering items and burning them in the open, somewhat flat space between the hills. Several abandoned boats that formerly carried migrants were stored within a wire-fenced perimeter. The earth was dried up by the sun, though small trees had their shapes contoured on the horizon. The fence enclosing the boats had hundreds of clothing items, garbage bags, and orange vests stuck to it. In the middle of the hills, thousands of life-jackets were piled on the ground. Forming an ad hoc graveyard, the jackets had been brought to this space as debris cleaned up from beaches. Those that had been there for a long time had been discolored by the sun. Others looked fairly new. Despite the E.U.-Turkey deal, the piles will only grow bigger with time. A young woman was playing what sounded like a funeral song on the saxophone.

LESVOS. APRIL 26, 2017.

Early afternoon. Twenty-one degrees.

13:35. At Skala Sikamineas, a fisherman was cleaning his boat. Two lifeguards were having a coffee.

14:42. At Eftalou, a man wearing a black swimming suit was beating an octopus on the rocks.

14:50. At [Mythimna], thousands of orange life-vests were lying on the ground.

15:31. At Pikpa, someone was placing a green fruit box with oranges on a white bench. A woman wearing a blue headscarf was coming out of a tent to empty a pot full of cooking water.

17:09. Back in the Mytileni port, a small girl with a flower crown made of pink plastic flowers was pinching her father's right ear.

Lesvos. The space of everyday.



CONCLUDING COMMENTS

This photo-essay aimed to symbolically create a topography of the refugee crisis, as seen through the space containing the crisis. Public accounts on the European refugee predicament covered the issue by placing a particular individualizing gaze on the refugee subject (although the problem is structural in nature). The refugee in suffering, an experience witnessed by us all, as a spectacle, from a distance: images of crowded tents, boats carrying overflowing numbers of people, children dying on Mediterranean shores. This essay turned the gaze outwards, aiming to scrutinize the “spaces” of the crisis in which people seek refuge and to convey the emotions contained by these places.

On the one hand, there is the everyday of the “space.” The ordinary island life, with not much to do in the early hours of the day, some people anchoring their fishing boats, some going for a swim, some going for a stroll. A serene, pictorial, postcard-like place, which makes it difficult to imagine that thousands of people were arriving

daily, not that long ago, on the island's shores. The "presence" of the refugees, however, is no longer a *sine qua non* presence. The space of the island has symbolically changed, from hosting refugees' presence to hosting their absence. Ultimately, the physical markers of living on the island remain metaphorically the very same markers discursively used to talk about the refugees: the port, the stationed border patrols, the island's roads, the swimming vests.

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PART TWO:
NEW DILEMMAS

INTRODUCTION

The barriers to refuge discussed in Part One of the book have long existed. They have made life hard for most of those seeking refuge, and have made understanding refuge hard for those who provide it, whether gladly, hesitantly, uncertainly, or unwillingly. But recent events have created new versions of those barriers and some especially insidious ones. The essays in this section of the book illuminate some of those.

Madeleine Otis Campbell and Anita Fábos begin the discussion with their consideration of the way subcontracting defines a new way of providing refuge that, to simplify, makes the provision of refuge a matter of profit for companies. Their specific example is Germany, but the implications are far wider—indeed it is a global manifestation of neoliberal reasoning that, through its standardization, tends to be at odds with the contextual specificity needed in providing and managing refuge.

Gorkem Aydemir Kundakci then discusses a case in which the very border is in contention. Ethnic Georgians, who fled the *de facto* autonomous domain of Abkhazia into Georgia proper, must now consider who they are and whether their refuge in their ethnic homeland of Georgia is permanent or only a temporary measure until they can return to their true home in Abkhazia. In the interim, they must navigate a complex system of permits and passports that have different meanings on different sides of the border.

Tania Bulakh also discusses a case in which borders are unclear and the status of those seeking refuge likewise. Those who have fled from the eastern part of Ukraine are internally displaced persons (IDPs). They are not, after all, refugees as defined in international law, and do not consider themselves to be. They are citizens seeking refuge in their own country who face practical challenges, but also conceptual ones in how they define themselves.

Emma Martin-Diaz and Anastasia Bermudez consider the broader regional questions in Europe about who is actually

responsible for dealing with issues of refuge. The synchronization of the policies of individual countries with the European Union is itself a problem, but they note as well the way in which the management of refuge must bridge the regional and national, with the more local. In this essay, they highlight the role of cities.

Finally, Marnie Jane Thomson discusses how recent changes in U.S. refugee policy have played out in refugee camps in Africa. Her basic point is that the Trump Administration's initial bans had the desired effect even while their legality was being challenged. After all, processing ceased as the bans were analyzed and contested. More broadly, she notes how truly effective uncertainty can be in voiding the potential to get anything done.

If there is a central theme to this set of essays, it resembles that for Part One: refuge is complicated in its internal elements, and further complicated by political, cultural, and logistic contexts. What is also evident in these essays is the double-edged nature of the attack on refuge. One edge is simply greater and more vocal support for increasing the barriers to refuge by decreasing (or otherwise limiting) the numbers accepted for permanent refuge, and by decreasing (or otherwise limiting) the provision of more temporary forms of refuge—often in refugee camps closer to the sources of conflict. The other edge is the elaboration of uncertainty that itself limits the possibility, durability, and “success” of refuge. With massive sub-contracting, complex governmental systems (global, regional, national, state/province, and local), and an always difficult blend of the public and the private, the resulting complexity and uncertainty are easily elevated into dysfunction. That too can result in denial and rejection, whether of people crossing international borders or those dislocated within their own countries—whether with or without formal legal status.

**SUBCONTRACTING REFUGE: HUMANITARIAN
INFRASTRUCTURE, PRIVATIZATION, AND THE CHOICE TO
PROTECT**

Madeline Otis Campbell and Anita Fábos

Anyone visiting the emergency shelter at Berlin Tempelhof airport would find a shelter not designed for extended habitation, or perhaps habitation for any length of time. Tempelhof is an icon of Nazi architecture—its hangars laid out of the formation of Reichsadler, the imperial eagle—and a landmark of Berlin history. The airport sits in a large, forested park that Berliners voted in 2014 to keep as a public recreational space rather than hand over for the residential development of 4,700 apartments, despite the widely recognized housing shortage. The irony was not lost on local observers when, in 2015, the Berlin government identified Tempelhof as the site of the city’s largest, privately-administered refugee camp and then, in 2016, as the site for a container village of refugee “tempohomes” to address the need for housing alternatives for refugees who remained in the airport for long periods.

A private company named Tamaja administered the camp at Tempelhof airport, converting several of its airplane hangars into sleeping quarters and one hangar into an industrial-size kitchen. The sleeping hangars were minimally partitioned with low-hanging cubicle walls surrounding clusters of cots. There were no doors. Furniture was spartan throughout, leaving few places to sit apart from the cots. Tamaja had designated one corner of a hangar as a café with a menu to attract local Berliners to socialize with residents for “integration” purposes. Still, the spaces that residents preferred tended to be the ones they themselves claimed in their efforts to “make home.” Contrary to the private administrators’ expectations, residents often slept during the day and passed the time at night along the perimeter walls of the hangars (sometimes at the desks of 9:00 to 5:00 camp staff) in order to plug in their mobile phones. They also passed the time outside in a decommissioned shuttle bus near the runway that they converted into a smoking lounge.

The story that Tempelhof tells us is a story in which refugees struggle to make home in spaces of temporary, provisional, and sub-contracted refuge. At best, such formations of refuge represent an “efficient” solution to alleviate the suffering of migrant populations—a temporary immobilization. At worst, those formations reinforce a menu-based humanitarianism by which individuals and nation-states—and in a growing number of instances their surrogates, private corporations—determine which refugee lives are worth protecting, for how long, and in what dollar amount. This essay identifies the tension between the longer-term needs of people fleeing conflict and seeking refuge, and the global logics of humanitarianism that monetize and temporalize human protection, forging spaces of subcontracted refuge that are unstable both from the point of view of refugees and that of host communities.

REFUGE AS A UNIVERSAL TROPE

The idea of seeking refuge—along with uprooting, flight, and exile—is a major trope across a range of cultural traditions. Key foundation narratives such as the Bible, the Qur’an, and the Bhagavad Gita incorporate stories of trial and tribulation that link parables of providing sanctuary (often unknowingly) to deserving or holy individuals with theological concepts of finding refuge in a higher power. In the Greek myth of Baucis and Philemon, for example, the poor, elderly couple who offered the gods Zeus and Hermes succor and a place to stay for the night when all other doors were closed to them, provides a metaphor for the concept of sacred hospitality. Media representation very often emphasizes the timelessness of people’s experiences of flight and the dreadful existential conditions of exile. In-depth narratives analyze tensions between states excluding refugees and humanitarian asylum and protection policies without referencing the genesis of the humanitarian system or, indeed, the creation of state-based asylum. For example, numerous comparisons between the attempts of Captain Gustav Schröder to negotiate sanctuary for over nine hundred Jews leaving Germany on the steamer *St. Louis*,¹ and contemporary stories of European nations turning back Mediterranean ships transporting refugees, tend to idealize the notion of refuge and hold exclusionary nations morally accountable.²

Yet humanitarianism, despite its roots in both the moral teachings of world religions and its relationship with the twentieth century

project of universal human rights, is further shaped by the ideological frames and political discourse of the day. Contemporary humanitarian circumstances for refugees and other forced migrants, though still framed by the human rights architecture of the United Nations system and its state-based protection instruments (such as the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees), have been reshaped according to the prevailing neoliberal logic of a privatized infrastructure, decentralized responsibility, global branding, and evidence-based impact assessment. The state-based Responsibility to Protect (R2P or RtoP) principles, while noble in their goals of preventive international action against atrocities that lead to the forced displacement of citizens, have not been as effective in support for protection of people who become refugees. Instead, we have seen a transnational humanitarian system develop that offers care (sometimes at a bare minimum) but not meaningful refuge.

We argue that the current rhetoric of “refugee crisis” and its unidimensional “resolution” through national asylum mechanisms glosses over the stark neoliberal structures that have transformed refuge itself into a privatized resource. Even while humanitarian actors call global citizens to action through evoking refuge as a public good, drawing upon universal moral codes of hospitality to the stranger and the ahistorical ideal of sanctuary, refuge today is more likely to be produced by entrepreneurial actors responding to incentives in the private sector.

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF REFUGE

An increasingly sophisticated architecture of humanitarian care has emerged out of the same political-economic logic that has nudged service provision in an extraordinary range of fields away from state-supported institutions and towards private enterprise models not only in the United States, but in countries previously known as welfare states. From health care systems designed to respond to market signals to universities structured around branding, efficiency, competitiveness, and productivity, we are not surprised that the provision of sanctuary is increasingly offered through decentralized, privatized, and marketed/branded processes. Like the privatization of incarceration and detention through sub-contracts from states to national and transnational corporations such as the London-based G4S and the Swedish company Securitas, immigrant and refugee border entry, mobility management—border services, transportation, food, shelter, tempo-

rary housing, detention, and even resettlement—is provided either by private companies or by non-profits incentivized to develop efficient models of processing incoming “clients.” In some cases of privatized protection, incentive structures may foster momentary flashes of competition for state contracts—momentary given the emergent nature of “crisis.” In other cases, the conditions for winning a state contract are anything but competitive. Because a company or organization’s ability to rapidly respond to a “crisis” requires significant organizational capacity, entities already active in some aspect of “mobility management” activities are frequently at an advantage—however distant and distinct the humanitarian need.

SUBCONTRACTING REFUGE IN GERMANY

Germany has become home to the largest number of refugees in Europe since the sharp rise in migration to Europe in 2015.³ In response to unprecedented numbers of asylum applicants, the procedures for asylum have grown more exhaustive and the level of protection offered to asylees more limited. Most early asylum applicants received three years of asylum status; with it came state-subsidized housing, health-care, education, job training, and, most importantly, the right to petition for family members to join them in Germany. Though the state government of Berlin subsidizes asylees’ rent payments in affordable local apartments, to find and secure an affordable housing unit is a challenge for average refugee families. This is a function of Berlin’s limited housing stock as well as possible bias toward refugee tenants by landlords. Housing options for refugees on a day-to-day basis, on the other hand, have proliferated. Berlin offers fifty euros per person per night for short-term refugee accommodations, making such refugee housing arrangements financially enticing. Indeed, under this incentive structure, some four-star hotels have been entirely converted to emergency shelters, and private citizens can now advertise their flats on Airbnb-like startups tailored to refugees, such as Refugees Welcome International. Private corporations have temporarily converted athletic stadiums and airports like Tempelhof into short-term refugee housing in pursuit of the same financial incentives.

MENU-BASED HUMANITARIANISM

Tamaja, the private company that won the Tempelhof contract in Berlin, got its start in 2014 providing emergency relief to natural

disaster victims. As a result of the unique need for organizational capacity and “flexibility” to produce a rapid response, companies like Tamaja with their streamlined services are paradoxically less flexible in the type and quality of human protection offered from one kind of emergency to another. Human protection needs are assumed a priori rather than contextually. Measures to address any unique needs of a population—even the need for Arabic-speaking shelter staff—are presented as additional menu items to the basic list of services to be provided to clients. In this formulation, the refuge offered to the hundreds of thousands of people seeking safety is, at best, a form of temporary immobilization. As we argue, such privatized refuge is unstable from the perspective of refugees and host communities alike.

In this marketplace of sanctuary, property owners and mobility management corporations such as Tamaja are the real winners. During fieldwork in Berlin, one of us (Campbell) found that refugees themselves felt largely “stuck” in the Tempelhof shelter, where they were initially placed. Several individuals had moved out of the shelter to other short-term accommodations only to return to the shelter when the flat to which they had moved was no longer available. Bureaucratic procedures and limited housing stock prevented many individuals from attempting to find long-term leases. This model of temporary, subcontracted housing translated into a widespread zeitgeist of stuckness for hundreds of thousands of refugees.

Then, in late 2016 the model of subcontracted refuge appeared to change. Coinciding with local elections, a public initiative to move the masses of shelter residents into suitable long-term homes took hold. In Berlin, a local real estate developer, Berliner Immobilien Management (BIM), won the contract to design and build thirty-two modular “tempohome” container camps, to be operated by Tamaja with a temporary permit for two years. At the time of fieldwork in late 2016, residents met this news with some enthusiasm, but also caution. The promise of more privacy and hominess was meaningful only if they had some say over their home and, more importantly, who lived with them in a home. We suggest that, rather than restoring the universal idea of refuge as a safe place for forcibly displaced people to call home, the tempohomes model represents another iteration of precarious, subcontracted refuge. Though responsive and “flexible” from a market standpoint, these arrangements’ very temporariness vacates them of most substantive qualities of refuge: namely the agency and

ability to make home. Few of the benefits of market flexibility are conveyed to the refugees themselves, most of whom find themselves rather stuck with short-term housing, over which they appear to have little say.

“WE, THE RESIDENTS OF HANGAR 2”

In response to the next phase of privatized refuge, dozens of residents of Tempelhof voiced their expectations for precisely this agency and ability in a petition launched in April 2017. The petition, circulated by the non-profit Give Something Back to Berlin, begins: “We, the residents of Hangar 2 ... who are soon to be relocated to the Container Village ... kindly ask you to note the following concerns” with a list of requests that includes reuniting family members living across Germany, providing opportunities for employment in the Container Village, access to high speed Internet, and removal of signage the residents felt insulted them. In recognition of the danger of permanent temporariness, the petition ended with residents voicing their need to be part of conversations about long-term solutions to issues of refugee housing and integration.

Many native-born Berliners shared the Tempelhof residents’ concerns about “integration ... into the wider community.” Throughout the German media, and in interviews with one of the authors (Campbell), Berliners identify a lack of newcomer integration as a leading concern about the refugee influx. Economic, social, and cultural integration of newcomers is understood as vital to the long-term health of the city’s economy, urban life, and the endurance of German culture within it. The forms of subcontracted refuge that have ghettoized newcomer populations in peripheral urban spaces exacerbate the lack of integration and continuing instability for the host community.

CONCLUSION

Even where resources to shelter refugees in times of crisis are in fact public, as in Germany, refuge itself is no longer a public good to be imparted, but a contract between private parties. As the terms of asylum in Germany grow more provisional, opportunities for large corporations and small startups to capitalize on the short-term housing needs of refugees abound. Far from generating hardship, sacrifice, or loss, contemporary examples of “refuge” exhibit an armature of economic benefits and investment opportunities for its providers. The

worrying trend whereby market flexibility and return-on-investment, rather than a social contract to protect, shape refugee policy makes for a rather hollow conception of refuge. As is clear from this ethnographic snapshot, neither recently arrived refugees nor longer-term Berliners feel that subcontracting refuge addresses integration and social cohesion for a city with a proactive history of creating conditions for making home.

ENDNOTES

1. See, for example, the U.S. Holocaust Museum's digital encyclopedia entry about the Voyage of the *St. Louis* [<https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005267> accessed July 12, 2017]
2. *Time Magazine* ran a story comparing the two time periods in 2015. Ross, Ashley. "Why a History Lesson about WWI Refugees Went Viral." *Time Magazine*, November 2015. [<http://time.com/4118178/paris-attacks-jews-syrian-refugees-history/> accessed July 12, 2017]
3. Over one million people are estimated to have arrived in Germany in 2015, with approximately 890,000 officially applying for asylum in the country in 2015 according to the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF).

**CONSTRUCTING LIVES ON THE MOVE: DISPLACEMENT AND
RETURN IN THE DE FACTO GEORGIA-ABKHAZIA BORDERLAND**

Gorkem Aydemir Kundakci

On March 5, 2017, Abkhazia's government closed three of the five crossing points on its de facto border with Georgia.¹ Considered as an Administrative Border Line (ABL) by the Georgian government, the boundary line is far from being a "normal" international border. In 1992 and 1993, during the war between the post-Socialist Georgian state and Abkhaz forces supporting the independence of Abkhazia (which had been an autonomous republic within the Georgian SSR), Georgia lost control over the Abkhaz territory. The ceasefire line created in 1994 soon turned into a de facto border, and a stage where three polities—Abkhazia, Georgia, and Russia—perform their sovereignty projects in uncertain and opposing ways. The borderline in this contentious political space is still internationally "unrecognized" yet very much activated when transgressed or when its crossing points are closed, as is the case today in 2017.

The closure of the crossing points has aggravated the already perilous lives that the displaced people in the borderland have to navigate. During the Georgian-Abkhaz war, Georgian residents of Abkhazia were forced to flee into Georgia proper, constituting the majority of the more than 250,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the country today.² Soon after the war's end, spontaneous returns started, and around 47,000 displaced Georgians voluntarily returned to their homes in Gali, the southern borderland of the de facto state of Abkhazia, where ethnic Georgians constituted 96 percent of the pre-war population.³ But in this disputed space, return is never a simple or finite act. To this day, members of the displaced community in the borderland maintain their social and economic ties with both sides of the border by navigating multiple state projects that have opposing interests in their movement.



Map of Abkhazia and northwestern Georgia. Note the towns of Gali and Zugdidi across the border from each other at about the center of the map. (Photo courtesy of the UN Cartographic Section.)

The case of Georgian returnees constitutes one of the driving forces behind sovereignty projects of Georgia and Abkhazia to control territory and people. While the Georgian state encourages Georgian presence in Abkhazia to underwrite its claims to the lost lands, the Abkhaz authorities aim to limit the number of ethnic Georgians in the region through arbitrary barriers to their movement and rights. Under these conflicting state projects, mobility from both sides takes shape in convoluted and unexpected forms, primarily through registered and unregistered crossings across the administrative borderline. Displaced Georgians who do not have “proper” documents cross the border either on foot or by swimming across the Enguri river “illegally.” In fact, “legality” is under question in the region because of shifting regulations and arbitrary enforcement. Georgian residents of Gali have to possess passports of the “unrecognized” Abkhaz state, obtain identity documents known as Form N9, or validate their old Soviet passports with an Abkhaz stamp in order to “legally” cross the border. Abkhaz authorities consider the internal Abkhaz passport as a documentation of citizenship and require all residents to obtain passports as a condition for certain rights such as to vote, to buy property, and to commute freely across the administrative borderline. Ethnic Georgians in

Gali can obtain Abkhaz passports only through naturalization, and the procedure is discriminatory, arduous, and arbitrary. The process comes with the additional emotional burden of renouncing their Georgian citizenship, and doing so with a hand-written declaration that is considered invalid by the Georgian state.



The Enguri bridge

Nika is one of the displaced Georgians claiming lives and homes on both sides of the borderline. Crossing the border is much knottier for him as he lacks documents. I first got to know Nika in 2014 just after a nine-hour train trip to Zugdidi, a city in Georgia located seven miles from the de facto borderline with the breakaway Abkhazia. It was the first day of my fieldwork in Zugdidi. Before starting a long day, my friend Irma proposed we should rest for a while in her grandmother's house. It was only 6:00 in the morning, and we had just fallen asleep when I woke with a start from my nap to hear a loud Russian song coming from an old Mercedes in front of the house. It was Nika, Irma's cousin. He was a young man, in his early twenties, in dark blue swimming shorts and matching slippers. Upon Irma's call from the train the previous night, he had at once left his house in Gali, driven his car to the border, swum the Enguri river without getting caught by

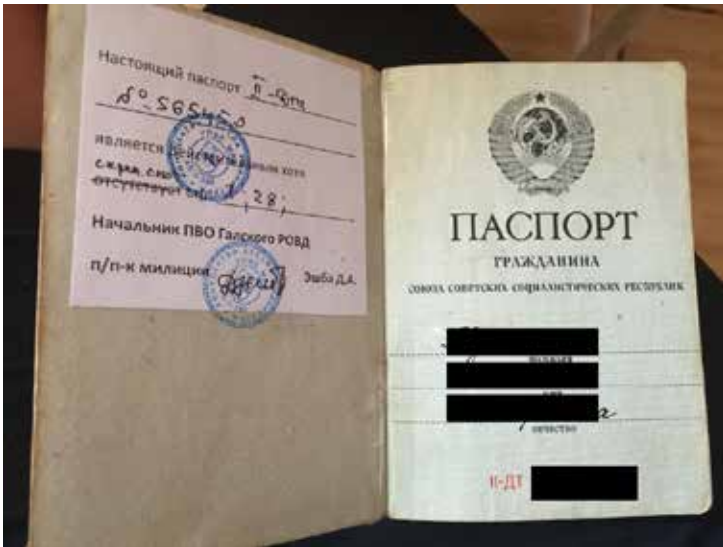
the Abkhaz or Russian border guards, jumped in his other car on the Georgian side of the border, and finally came to visit us in Zugdidi.

Nika did not even attempt to obtain an Abkhaz passport, since it would make him subject to compulsory military service in the Abkhaz army. Without documents, his social life in Gali is very limited since Russian military officers make random document checks in the streets.⁴ Although he has been caught (and even beaten) multiple times by the border guards, he frequently crosses the border and develops creative strategies to make the process easier and safer. Following labyrinthine routes and having a second car on the Georgian side are only two of them. Zugdidi is the place where he walks buoyantly, plays his favorite songs loud in his car. It is the place where he socializes and feels free, yet Gali remains his homeland, where he belongs. When I use the word “border” with him, Nika questions me, “Where is the border? I do not see any border.” By crossing it undauntedly and inserting his presence in both Zugdidi and Gali, Nika challenges the border, and claims both sides as his home.

Life is not straightforward even for those, unlike Nika, who have the “proper” documents. Neither obtaining these documents nor crossing with them is trouble-free. As the number of ethnic Georgians with Abkhaz passports increased, Abkhaz authorities adopted a resolution in 2012 to carry out a comprehensive inquiry into their passport offices in Gali to reveal any wrongdoings in distribution of passports, and stopped issuing them until a permanent solution could be found. As a result, displaced Georgians in the region had to either obtain the temporary identity document Form N9 (which will be replaced by residence permits according to the last changes in Abkhaz regulations, rendering Georgian returnees foreign citizens in their own homeland) or use their verified old Soviet passports at checkpoints (after documenting in local passport offices that they were born and lived in Abkhazia before the war).⁵ Meeting these requirements is difficult—reviving Soviet era documents like diplomas and birth certificates is often impossible since they were lost or damaged during the war.

Nino provides a different kind of example. She had not been to her village in Abkhazia for more than twenty years when she finally had her Soviet passport certified with an Abkhaz stamp and a new photograph in the winter of 2015. For all those years since the war, she could not cross the borderline unofficially although her husband and daughters did many times to visit their relatives in the lost home-

land. When I first met her in 2014, she had told me how angry she was with her husband because he put their daughters in danger by taking them to the other side across the river. She was terrified with the idea of getting caught by the Russian border guards who had been replacing “less strict” Abkhaz guards. But when she received the news of her mother-in-law’s death in Gali, she decided to show her love and respect to her mother-in-law and be with the loved ones in her last journey.



Soviet passport with an Abkhaz stamp

In the dawn of a cold February day, Nino tucked her “red passport” in her small bag and went to the border village, Koki, with her husband and two daughters. There they met a group of other displaced Georgians and started to wait for their guide who would help them cross the border in return for forty lari (around U.S twenty dollars) per person. After a couple of hours, the guide came and drove them to another village, Khurcha, which is still under Georgian control despite being on the other side of the borderline, and he told them to wait in the minibus until the “right moment” came. Their village, Otabaia, was only a few miles away but it had never felt that remote to her since she left Abkhazia. How was she going to run if they had to? When the guide finally opened the doors of the minibus, Nino was already

exhausted by fear and anxiety. Shortly after they started walking, she finally heard the word from the guide: “Run!” Nino does not remember clearly how long she ran, at what moment she started to cry, where she collapsed and wanted her family to leave her behind, and how her elder daughter convinced her to try again. But she remembers well that her fear and exhaustion yielded to wonder and relief the moment she arrived in her village.

Since then, Nino has visited Otabaia several times by “officially” crossing the main checkpoint as she had her old Soviet passport revived by an Abkhaz stamp. “I washed it once by mistake, but they accepted it!” she says with a mischievous smile on her face. She takes care of the passport now by keeping it in two plastic bags, and she is happy that her village is now a real place to her rather than a remembrance and yearning. But she does not know how long her Soviet passport can make the past home a part of her life. In her last visit to Otabaia, the Russian speaking voice behind the darkened windows of the checkpoint booth “made her blood run cold” by asking for an additional document that she did not even understand. Fortunately, they let her in; but “who knows what they will ask for next time?” she wondered. They may claim that her documents are fake, ask her to pay a bribe, throw her belongings into the river, or even shoot her to death as they did to Giga Othkhozoria in May 2016 following a quarrel with the border guards.⁶



Nino's Soviet toys

Nino's father, Valeri, complains about the recent closure of the checkpoints as he proudly poses for my camera in front of his books that he brought from Abkhazia to the Georgian side. Since the war's end, he and his wife Mzevinar carried books, photographs, toys, and even a piano to Senaki where Nino lives. They brought them gradually over the years, mostly on a neighbor's horse carriage or by squeezing them among fruits and vegetables. With the closures, the closest checkpoint, Enguri bridge, is around thirty miles from the villages in Abkhazia that are densely populated by displaced Georgians. The detour that they have to make to reach the remaining checkpoint has rendered crossings much harder and time consuming. "How can I go to the Enguri bridge kilometers away and wait in line for hours?" Valeri asks. "Things are getting worse. We do not plan to go to Abkhazia until the situation gets better."



Valeri's books

Nino and her parents consider themselves lucky since their house in Abkhazia remains almost intact and they have ties with their homeland. The majority of Georgians displaced from other regions of Abkhazia have not had the chance to go back to their homelands since the war; they could not save even a single photograph as a reminder of their lost past. Nino did not go back to Abkhazia for years, but she could reintegrate a bigger part of her past into her present life with

each object that her parents brought from Abkhazia. She elaborately placed those objects in her house and decorated them with lace doilies. Valeri is happy to be able to begin and end his days in a room alive with his parents' books, his daughter's piano, and the photographs of his loved ones. "It feels like home," he says. But then he adds, "almost." His life never feels "complete," but he preserves his hope for "total return."

Choosing the "right" words has been a big challenge during my ongoing research. My questions on certain concepts often generate questions directed at me rather than immediate answers: "Which 'home'?" "Where is the 'border'?" "Who says it is 'illegal'?" The intersection of conflicting frameworks and discourses creates ambiguities even in the colloquial meanings of many taken-for-granted concepts; and more importantly these ambiguities *impact* people's lives. People of Gali struggle with conflicting and ambivalent rights since they navigate multiple categories and statuses. For the UNHCR, they are "returnees," but not quite, as they still live in an "IDP-like situation." For the Georgian state, they are still registered as "IDPs" and categorically not different from thousands of other displaced people in the country with various needs and problems. For Abkhaz authorities, they are simply "ethnic Georgians" stripped of social and political rights. By constructing lives in this contested terrain and claiming homes on both sides of the border, displaced Georgians from Gali defy easy categorizations. At a time when issues of displacement gain broader visibility, the case of Gali underlines the need for a deeper reflection on existing categories of refuge, their ambivalence, and what these categories do to people in need of urgent help.

ENDNOTES

1. <http://oc-media.org/abkhazia-closes-all-but-one-gali-checkpoint/>
2. For exact numbers, please check the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation, and Refugees of Georgia at <http://www.mra.gov.ge/eng>
3. See HRW at <https://www.hrw.org/report/2011/07/15/living-limbo/rights-ethnic-georgians-returnees-gali-district-abkhazia>
4. Since the 2008 Russia-Georgia war, Russia's military presence in the region has increased considerably.
5. Abkhaz authorities allow Georgian citizens (who lack documents) to enter Abkhazia only with special crossing permits that are arbi-

trarily regulated. That is why many displaced Georgians cross the border unofficially to obtain/renew documents in Abkhazia.

6. On May 19, 2016, Georgian citizen Giga Othkhozoria was shot to death by an Abkhaz border guard on the Georgian controlled area at the crossing point. The incident led to a crisis between the two polities. Abkhaz authorities dropped the criminal case against the suspect in June 2017. See: <https://jam-news.net/?p=3545>

ALMOST HOME, ALMOST CITIZENS: FORCED MIGRATION
EXPERIENCES OF IDPs IN UKRAINE

Tania Bulakh

“They call us ‘*bizhentsi*,’ but we did not *run away*,” says Peter,¹ a sixty-two-year-old man who fled to the Kyiv area in 2014 to escape the conflict in Eastern Ukraine. He points to the etymology of the Ukrainian word for “refugee” (*bizhenets*), which derives from the verb “to run away, to flee” (*bihty*). Since internally displaced persons (IDPs) do not cross state borders, the label “refugee”—although commonly used in relation to them in Ukrainian media and public discourse—is a misnomer. Peter’s resistance to being called a “refugee” does not come from any animosity toward migrants who have settled in the country. Rather, as he clarifies, IDPs are citizens, and deserve to be respected as such. In his words, they should be recognized for their choice to leave their homes in the separatist-controlled regions of Donetsk and Luhansk but to remain in Ukraine. This decision to “not run *away*,” but rather to reaffirm his Ukrainian citizenship, provides the grounds for Peter’s claims to support from the state and understanding from fellow citizens. Many other IDPs echo Peter’s claims and convictions.

Though both refugees and IDPs are forced migrants, their status and experiences in hosting communities present divergent paths with different challenges. While Western Europe has faced an unprecedented influx of refugees over the past few years, Ukraine has struggled to integrate forced migrants from within its own borders. The conflict in the eastern region of Ukraine erupted in 2014. The Euromaidan rallies escalated into violent clashes between protesters and state law enforcement in February of that year. The situation culminated in the ousting of the pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovich. These developments were followed by the Russian annexation of Crimea and pro-Russian demonstrations throughout the southern and eastern parts of Ukraine. Ultimately, the upheavals led to an armed conflict between Ukrainian governmental forces and the Russian-backed separatists, after the latter proclaimed the Donetsk and Luhansk People’s Republics (DNR and LNR).



Map of Ukraine with Donetsk and Luhansk to the east and Crimea to the south. (Image from Wikimedia Commons, originally U.S. CIA World Factbook.)

Some interpretations of this conflict misleadingly reduce it to a confrontation between Ukrainians with different political perspectives: those who support a closer political affiliation with Russia and those who stand for closer ties to the European Union. The fact that the population of Donbass (which includes both Donetsk and Luhansk regions) has strong social and historical ties with Russia adds to the sharpening of the line that divides Eastern Ukrainians from pro-European populations. Indeed, during the reconstruction of the Donbass region after World War II and Soviet industrialization, many Russians arrived in Donbass for coal mining and heavy industry employment, which shaped the region's identity. These regional identities pose challenges for displaced people from the Donbass region, as they are labeled as “Russians” or “separatists” regardless of their political views.

Since 2014, heavy fighting in Eastern Ukraine has forced over 1.4 million people to leave their homes. Most of these people became self-settled urban dwellers and are not isolated in camps or confined to detention facilities. Even though Ukrainian IDPs seemingly enjoy freedom of movement and have fewer obvious obstacles to assimilation—for example, shared culture and language—the uncertainty of IDPs' civic standing and negative social perception of them affects their quality of life. My observations of how displaced people conceptualize and experience their status are based on on-going ethnographic research conducted in Kyiv, Kharkiv, and Mariupol since 2014. To

date, I have conducted over thirty in-depth interviews with displaced people and aid providers, aiming to grasp the nuances of their citizenship rights and status.

Unlike refugees, who are protected by international law, IDPs are not recognized as a separate legal category that would qualify for the same level of international protection. Accordingly, displaced people in Ukraine rely primarily on the Ukrainian state to secure their rights and meet their needs. Having lost their jobs, homes, and social networks, IDPs are marginalized populations arguably requiring *more* state protection than other citizens. However, in Ukraine, IDPs are often seen as *semi*-citizens whose rights are limited. For instance, IDPs in Ukraine cannot participate in elections because Ukrainian legislation requires people to vote according to their places of official registration. For IDPs, this often means registration in non-government-controlled territories. Furthermore, displaced people are seen as a high-risk group with unstable economic standing caused by displacement and questionable political stances. Therefore, they face discrimination in access to employment and housing, and overall social stigmatization.

The Ukrainian state occupies an ambivalent role in the lives of IDPs. It is simultaneously the guarantor of IDPs' rights, as well as a frequent violator. Not only is the state one of the actors in the conflict, it also failed to prevent the conflict and forced displacement in the first place. Ultimately, IDPs often find themselves in liminal conditions, set adrift not only by their physical displacement, but by legal uncertainties that leave them without the protection of the state as citizens or of the international system as refugees.

The concept of citizenship as a protection mechanism plays a key role in the overall status of forced migrants. The reshuffling of nation-states in the twentieth century accentuated the value of citizenship for human rights guarantees. As Hannah Arendt noted, human rights are hollow without citizenship (Arendt 1953). Since the state acts as one of the key regulators of social processes and social justice, stateless people are simply left out. Arendt described this contradiction in relation to national minorities, placing her focus on Jews and the tragedy of the Holocaust. In her strong words, people without citizenship are reduced to "human scum." Almost seventy years after Arendt's writing, her ideas are re-actualized in the discussions about refugees. The

latter are also categorized as stateless people, who have limited access to human rights and protection.

In public and political understandings, IDPs are often intuitively seen as relatively secure displaced populations. At the same time, the increase in the number of internally displaced persons in Ukraine reveals a dramatic gap between the state's abilities to protect IDPs and IDPs' own expectations and needs for protection and assistance. Ukraine's history with socialism—under which the state provided quite generous social support to its citizens—continues to inform people's ideas about the state and the scope of its responsibilities. The gap between state and IDP views is thus a prime indicator that the state is undergoing a major crisis.

Armed conflict in the eastern region also triggers the state's ability to withdraw certain rights and citizens' privileges under the excuse of a state of emergency. For example, the ban of Russian-based social media networks in Ukraine (Vkontakte and Odnoklassniki) was rationalized by way of national security reasons. For many IDPs, it resulted in the loss of established and reliable social contacts, since the Russian social media platforms are important communication networks for self-organized support and exchange among displaced communities. As one displaced man phrased it, these measures not only limited the freedom of media, but also signaled "further alienation of the state" (*otsranenie strany*) from displaced people in terms of understanding IDPs' needs and experiences.

Forced migrants are a new phenomenon in the history of an independent Ukraine. Since the state is actively involved in the conflict in the East, it is often seen as responsible for providing refuge and support to IDPs and people who are affected by the conflict. The absence of centralized and coordinated actions on behalf of the state authorities, however, stimulated civil initiatives. Not only various NGOs, but also ordinary people self-organized to volunteer and help IDPs, especially at the beginning of the conflict. Volunteers provided all sorts of assistance for displaced people including, but not limited to, material, financial, and medical aid. In this way, they have taken over the functions of the state. Many IDPs are bitter about the insufficient support from the state. In contrast, volunteer efforts are appreciated. Nadia, one of the volunteers who has been actively involved in helping IDPs in Kyiv for the past three years, says that "the absence of the state was the best thing that could have happened to our people" (personal

communication, February 2017). For her, the state's inability to take proper care of IDPs helped people organize their own efforts to provide assistance. Echoing her words, another volunteer explained that civil initiatives have to "poke the state in the eye" ("колим глаза"). In other words, they must demonstrate to the state that there are feasible and effective ways to help IDPs (personal interview, May 2017). Interestingly, citizenship here also plays a key role. Many volunteers explain their actions not only through the values of humanity and compassion to people in need, but also through solidarity with their "fellow citizens."

Whether volunteers, international organizations, or charity funds, for those assisting IDPs, one of the biggest challenges involves documents and identity verifications. Many IDPs have lost their IDs and now need to prove their citizenship status. The leader of a self-organized community center for IDPs, Yuriy, evacuated over sixty elderly people from the Donetsk region. Among the people that he helped to move to the Kyiv region were one with only an old Soviet passport and another who had only a medical record card as her document. Yuriy refers to them as "technically dead," since neither of them have documentation of any formal relationship with the state. The absence of valid ID documents presents a major challenge for obtaining pensions and IDP payments for these people. The fact is that many of them have been living in remote areas through household subsistence strategies and so, until displacement, their contacts with state agencies were minimal, if not entirely absent. Though these cases are not very common, they showcase the dramatic extreme of how formal relations with the state can structure people's experiences of displacement.

The absence of documents places people outside the citizenship protection system and most assistance mechanisms. However, the availability of official papers does not necessarily guarantee access to state social protection. Since February 2015, the armed conflict has moved to a less violent phase after the signing of the Minsk Agreements, which were aimed to halt the fighting in Donbass. Accordingly, the mobility of people back and forth from the conflict areas increased. To minimize a so-called "pension tourism"—in which people travel and claim benefits both from Ukraine and the de-facto authorities in the East—the state introduced verification procedures. As a result, IDPs need to confirm their identity regularly through registrations and check-ups in order to obtain social welfare and IDP entitlements.

They are also subject to unannounced visits from social inspectors. If people are not present at the time of inspection, their payments are frozen until the claim is submitted in person to a social welfare center. This significantly affects IDPs' mobility. Even though they are not separated in camps, their personal life is complicated by bureaucratic obstructions and the burden of registration.

Forced displacement pushes IDPs to the margins of the state, yet also keeps them tightly within the system of state control. Though IDPs maintain their status as citizens and cannot be considered stateless people, their rights are restricted and they are subject to social marginalization. The liminal situation of being almost citizens and being almost home reveals that the category of citizenship has its boundaries and might not be considered as an ultimate basis for human rights protection. Moreover, the complex positioning of IDPs raises the crucial question as to whether displaced people can find refuge in their own country in times of conflict and instability.

ENDNOTE

1. All names are changed to protect privacy.

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THE MULTILEVEL GOVERNANCE OF “REFUGEE”: BRINGING TOGETHER INSTITUTIONAL AND CIVIL SOCIETY RESPONSES IN EUROPE

Emma Martin-Diaz and Anastasia Bermudez

THE MIGRATION AND REFUGEE “CRISIS” IN EUROPE

According to the Comisión Española de Ayuda al Refugiado (CEAR 2017a, based on Eurostat), 1,259,955 people asked for international protection in 2016 within the twenty-eight countries that form the European Union. This represented a decrease from the previous year, but double the number registered in 2014. Most applicants came from conflict-torn countries, mainly Syria (339,265), Afghanistan (186,595), and Iraq (130,015). These three nationalities together make up almost half of all applications. Germany accounted for 59 percent of all claims (an unprecedented share), with Italy receiving almost 10 percent, France almost 7 percent, and Greece 4 percent. These countries, except for France, also registered the largest increases. By contrast, Spain received around 1 percent of claims, amounting to 15,755. This figure was up from 2015, and almost tripled from 2014.

The so-called migration and refugee crisis has become an important challenge for Europe’s Area of Freedom, Security and Justice. On the one hand, the E.U. Charter of Fundamental Rights is based on the core values of dignity, freedoms, equality, solidarity, citizens’ rights, and justice. On the other, the creation of this area calls for the articulation of measures to protect such values, including the development of common policies on asylum and immigration. This creates tensions between attempts to build a supra-state political space and the interests of the member states. In addition, the tightening of borders and policies against migrants and refugees has produced increased criticisms about the human and economic costs (Cosgrave et al. 2016).

The following analysis is the result of our double position as researchers and supporters of some of the initiatives that have emerged in this context in support of refugees. Through our “participant observation” it has been possible to immerse ourselves in the reality we are studying and, at the same time, separate from it to be able to explain it.

MULTILEVEL GOVERNANCE IN THE CONTEXT OF “SUPER-DIVERSITY”

Despite attempts at harmonizing policies on migration, asylum, and migrant integration within the European Union, scholars argue that the policies “have become increasingly dispersed over various levels of government” (Scholten and Penninx 2016: 91). The local level and especially large cities have become main actors, sometimes resulting in different policy approaches coexisting within the same country. It is in this context that scholars have proposed the concept of multilevel governance, which includes not only looking at the different levels of governance but also at the articulation between them.

Although we could argue that, within the European Union, migration and refugee and asylum policy has achieved a high degree of “Europeanization” (“centralist” model), the same cannot be said of integration, with nation-states and regional and local authorities maintaining or assuming a key role in this respect (“localist” model) (Geddes and Scholten 2015). According to Scholten and Penninx (2016), in the absence of dominance by any one model, we are moving closer to multilevel governance, with a progressive interrelation between nation-states and E.U. institutions in policy formulation. Regarding migrant integration, this would include regional and local governments, particularly in policy implementation, with some cities developing their own concept of “urban citizenship” (counteracting exclusionary national or E.U. policies) (Chauvin and Garcés-Mascreñas 2012; UNESCO 2016).

Scholten and Penninx (2016) argue that the horizontal exchange of knowledge and good practices has increased the entrepreneurship of cities to develop their own integration philosophies, sometimes in coordination with migrants’ cities of origin. Examples include several network initiatives emerging in recent years, such as the European Coalition of Cities Against Racism¹ (2004, 134 members), Cities for Local Integration Policies² (30 members) and Integrating Cities³ (140 members), both created in 2006, and Intercultural Cities⁴ (2008, 120 members). However, multilevel governance can also include NGOs and other actors and actions in the process. Thus in the next section we look at the interplay between institutional and civil society responses in asylum and refugee policy, and do so in the context of multilevel governance of European “super-diverse” cities (Meissner and Vertovec 2015). We use the concept of social innovation and focus on

the case of the Network of Refugee Cities (*Red de Ciudades Refugio*) in Spain.

“SOCIALY CREATIVE INITIATIVES” IN REFUGEE INTEGRATION

“Social innovation” as applied to citizen initiatives has to do with “processes of restructuring of State functions, which attribute growing recognition to the importance of the regional and urban spheres in decision-making, especially in relation to social policy” (Eizaguirre 2016: 35). This author cites other work to demonstrate the interest of public administrations in developing alliances with civil society, given the identification of network structures as fundamental in globalized societies. It is in this context that the notion of governance emerges and makes sense. According to Eizaguirre, “participative governance and social innovation are currently the two main areas of interest in the sphere of urban research,” especially in relation to diversity and inequality ((Eizaguirre 2016: 36). As a result, concepts such as citizen participation and social innovation have become the objects of fruitful, if controversial, debates. Regarding the latter, criticism has focused on how in a context of declining public spending, there is increased externalization of social policy. Eizaguirre (2016: 37) thus questions whether civil society organizations “are sufficiently autonomous and independent to address social challenges by themselves.” This is especially relevant in relation to refuge, given that civil society organizations, particularly actors from the third sector, have limited competence in asylum policy.

Applying this to the present situation in Europe, it is possible to see how the migration and refugee crisis has coincided with an economic crisis⁵ that, among other consequences, has meant a hardening of refugee and asylum policies. The European Union prioritized the control of flows and externalization of borders (de Lucas 2015; Naïr 2016), generating tensions in relation to both external and internal frontiers. One effect was the trapping of hundreds of thousands of people in countries like Greece, surviving in very precarious conditions.

In a context where security has become a greater priority than guaranteeing the rights of refugees, different responses have emerged ranging from those of large, consolidated NGOs working in humanitarian emergency and immigrant support, to the private actions of groups of volunteers originating from different spheres. An example of the latter is the Spanish NGO Proactiva Open Arms,⁶ created by maritime

rescue professionals and financed through crowdfunding, dedicated to rescuing people in the Aegean Sea and central Mediterranean. Another private initiative to emerge in Spain involving both citizen participation and social innovation is the Network of Refugee Cities created by the so-called City Councils for Change (*Ayuntamientos del Cambio*). It includes municipalities such as Madrid and Barcelona that are ruled by the new parties and coalitions emerging from Spain's 15M movement (the *indignados* or "outraged").

The Network was started by the mayoress of Barcelona, Ada Colau, in September 2015, and by 2016 over one hundred municipalities of various sizes were part of it. The initiative received the backing of the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP 2016), which argued for the need to coordinate local efforts and enter into dialogue with the central government since the latter has the responsibility to determine the number of refugees accepted.⁷ The Network's main activity has been to apply pressure on the current right-wing Spanish government, and together with other initiatives at the national and supra-national levels, on E.U. authorities as well, to welcome refugees, but also to coordinate political and civil society actions to aid the resettlement and integration of refugees (through donations, offers of housing, sharing of ideas and experiences).

In practical terms, such actions have had limited impact, since the central government is being very restrictive: out of the over 17,000 refugees Spain should have received (from Italy, Greece, and "third countries") as assigned by the European Union, only 1,304 had arrived by May 2017 (CEAR 2017b). However, the Network has assumed a relevant political and symbolic role. It has produced significant mobilization in favor of refugees at a time of growing xenophobia throughout Europe, bringing together a wide array of entities and NGOs integrated in various platforms dedicated to diverse activities at the local (refugee reception, campaigns, and mobilizations) and transnational levels (voluntary work in camps, denunciations of the situation at borders). Recently, one of their most significant actions was a demonstration organized in Barcelona (February 18, 2017), when between 15,000 and 500,000 people (depending on sources) demanded that the government comply with its E.U. compromise to receive more refugees.⁸ Data show that the number of people attended by the SAIER (municipal services for the attention of migrants and refugees) in Barcelona went up from 304 in 2012 (out of a total of 10,322 cases) to

1,374 in 2015 (out of a total 11,370).⁹ Thus refugees accounted for the increase between both years.

CONCLUSIONS

This brief analysis underlines the importance of socially creative entities in the multilevel governance of refuge. Socially creative entities can approach refugee reception along three basic dimensions: 1) generating redistributive mechanisms not guaranteed by the state or the market, through initiatives such as crowdfunding and the direct participation of civil society; 2) developing mechanisms for cultural empowerment so that subjects can overcome their role as victims, and in that way dismantle the humanitarianism present in the idea of refuge in response to “catastrophe” and not as a consequence of structural global conflict (Ticktin 2015); and 3) producing political changes in the public sphere related to power relations that have an incidence in social inequality, through the emergence of civil disobedience actions. In relation to the theme treated here, there is no single entity that can guarantee these three dimensions at the same time. We could even argue, following Swyngedouw (2005), that it is very probable that some of the initiatives put forward represent a transfer of responsibility from the state to the third sector. However, we cannot ignore either the potential of civil society responses, especially those initiatives such as the Network of Refugee Cities. The Spanish press recently reported that an extra 204 Syrian refugees arrived in Madrid in July 2017, with the government calculating that another 350 will arrive in September (Sancha 2017).

ENDNOTES

1. <http://www.eccar.info>
2. <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/clip-european-network-of-cities-for-local-integration-policies-for-migrants>
3. <http://www.integratingcities.eu>
4. <http://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities>
5. We do not have the space to delve into this, but we want to add that both crises generate social representations highlighting their temporary, and up to a point, inevitable character, while at the same time denying their structural nature and the specific responsibilities of institutions and social agents involved.
6. <https://www.proactivaopenarms.org/es>

7. It is important to highlight that contrary to what has happened in other European countries, in Spain there are no extreme-right political formations with open xenophobic and racist agendas and significant electoral support.

8 http://www.eldiario.es/catalunya/barcelona/Barcelona-manifestacion-grande-Europa-refugiados_0_613839018.html

9. <http://ciutatrefugi.barcelona/es/la-acogida>

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REVOKED: REFUGEE BANS IN EFFECT

Marnie Jane Thomson

REFUGEE BANS ARE WORKING

January 27: Travel ban signed.

January 28: Federal Judge suspends part of the ban.

January 29: Federal Judge temporarily suspends the whole ban.

March 6: Second travel ban issued.

March 15: Federal Judge temporarily suspends that.

May 25: Federal Appeals Court upholds the stay on the travel bans.

June 26: Supreme Court partially reinstates the second travel ban.



Screenshot of travel status update after the Federal Appeals Court ruling in May 2017. Refugees currently within the resettlement program can check their status on the Resettlement Support Center (RSC) website.

For some, the whiplash of the past six months' executive and court orders has not mattered much. The first ban did its damage. The Federal Court suspensions did little if anything to mitigate its effects, and the partial reinstatement by the Supreme Court just added another layer of uncertainty. In some ways, however, Donald J. Trump's travel bans have been working since the beginning. As one example, this essay considers the case of Congolese refugees living in Tanzania.



Screenshot of case status. Refugees in Nyarugusu camp who have passed all but the final interview continue to see this as their case status on the RSC website. USCIS has not been back to the camp since the first travel ban.

The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has not visited Tanzania since President Trump signed the first executive order. USCIS has the task of conducting final interviews in refugee-hosting countries to select which vetted candidates are to be admitted to the United States. This means that, since January 27, 2017, no new cases from Tanzania have been approved for resettlement in the United States, because USCIS has not been there to conduct interviews. This may be true for other refugee-hosting countries as well.

Moreover, refugee resettlement quotas have always been determined by executive order so there is no telling what this means for the future of refugee entry to the United States. What precedent do these travel bans set? At this point, it does not look promising for refugees. The future for refugee-hosting countries and international refugee organizations looks uncertain as well.

RESETTLEMENT PROMISES REVOKED

“Can you imagine? We had such happiness, joy, and excitement in our family when we found out we had been selected for resettlement in the United States. Our youngest even picked up on it and started saying, ‘America,’ when he was only fifteen months old!” a Congolese mother named Charlotte explained to me via email. Charlotte and her children live in Nyarugusu, a United Nations camp in Tanzania that is home to more than 135,000 refugees. I have conducted more than two years of fieldwork in Nyarugusu camp, and I stay in touch with many refugees, aid workers, and government officials there.

In Nyarugusu camp, an entire aid apparatus has been built around resettlement in the past three years. The U.S. government precipitated this by promising resettlement to Congolese refugees through two large resettlement schemes: 1) In 2013, ten countries agreed to participate in the “Enhanced Resettlement of Congolese Refugees” and, of this group, the United States was the only country not to specify an acceptance quota; 2) In 2015, the United States implemented a group resettlement scheme, pledging to accept approximately 30,000 Congolese refugees from Tanzania’s Nyarugusu camp.

In the past few years before the travel bans, Nyarugusu residents saw thousands of fellow refugees leave the camp for resettlement in the United States. The promises to resettle, especially in the United States, were, indeed, being met. In 2016, more refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) officially resettled in the United States than from any other country of origin. At 16,370, Congolese surpassed the second largest refugee group, Syrians, by almost 4,000. Resettlement to the United States was no longer a trickle of a few refugees here and there. It had gained momentum. It was happening. Charlotte explained:

Resettlement was happening so quickly. Stages that used to take years were only taking two months or so. I could not cultivate as normal because I had to be in Kigoma [the nearby

town where some of the interviews and medical checkups take place] so often. Which means I was not able to supplement the meager rations we receive. I could not make new bricks for my house or cut new grass for my roof, as we have to do every year [especially after the rainy seasons]. I did not expect we would have to put up with the disrepair for long.

Nyarugusu residents were pleased to learn that the travel bans were overturned but they never saw any evidence of the stays. In the six months after the first ban, no one was approved to join those who had already resettled in the United States. For refugees who have already made it through all but the final stages of resettlement and for those who hoped to qualify for resettlement, these executive orders play out as promises revoked. The refugees were stunned and saddened. The President sent a clear message with his order: refugees are no longer wanted or welcome in the United States.

“Now I have decided to sell some of my rations, even though we receive so little,” Charlotte said in June. “My children will be even more hungry.” Being unable to cultivate was only acceptable because she thought her family would be headed to the United States shortly. Now Charlotte finds herself back in the camp indefinitely, in need of money to repair her home before the rains come again. Nyarugusu residents had been talking about resettlement as a type of liberation for refugees (*ukombozi wa wakimbizi* in Swahili). Now many having been calling the travel bans *usumbufu juu ya usumbufu*: distress on top of distress, trouble on top of trouble, or trauma on top of trauma.

The bans took effect in the camp immediately and any suspension has yet to be seen. For now, these refugees continue the endless work of waiting (Lynch 2013: 92-130; Oka 2014; Thomson 2015: 387-391). They wait to see whether resettlement to the United States will resume, and what it will look like if it does.

MORE BURDEN TO SHOULDER

For refugee-hosting states such as Tanzania, the executive orders have become more burden to shoulder. It seems like a blatant disregard for not only international burden sharing but for the repercussions Tanzania has endured as a country of asylum for decades. To facilitate these large resettlement schemes, the Tanzanian government agreed to keep its only remaining U.N. refugee camp open. Tanzania, along with the U.N. refugee agency (UNHCR), had successfully closed all

ten other camps on their soil by the end of 2012. As many government officials told me: they would close Nyarugusu as well but for the sake of refugee resettlement and sharing the international responsibility for refugees, they would keep it open until these large resettlement schemes were completed. Such statements implied that Tanzania had shouldered far more than its fair share of the international responsibility toward refugees.

In 1995, after Tanzania experienced massive influxes of refugees from Burundi and Rwanda in 1993 and 1994 respectively, Tanzanian ministers made public speeches condemning the double standard whereby richer and stronger countries implore poorer and weaker countries of asylum to rise to their humanitarian obligations even as they do not have to assume the same obligations and associated national risks (Milner 2009: 120-121). Two decades later, the double standards have been exacerbated. Tanzanian government officials already note the differences in refugee policy between countries of asylum and resettlement. Tanzania receives pressure from the international community to accept, host, and provide for people who meet the U.N. definition of refugee, while resettlement countries such as the United States get to determine their own quotas and criteria for those whom they accept.

To renege on the commitment to resettle the more than 30,000 refugees is, to Tanzania, more than a broken promise. It is a power play. Whether overturned or partially reinstated, the refugee bans capitalize upon and widen this geopolitical divide between the resettlement states, in particular the United States, and refugee-hosting states, like Tanzania.

STATE-CENTERED IMPOTENCE

For the UNHCR, the executive orders reinforce its state-centered impotence. On the day that President Trump signed the first travel ban order, the UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) issued a joint statement that praised the U.S. resettlement program and pledged to continue to working with the U.S. government. This diplomatic response illustrates the UNHCR's position vis-à-vis nation-states.

As T. Alexander Aleinikoff (1995) argued well before he became the UNHCR Deputy High Commissioner in 2010, refugee law takes a state-centered approach that does not show much concern for the

experiences of refugees themselves. UNHCR representatives from the camps to the global headquarters and at various levels in between have echoed this in their comments to me. They lament the fact that their agency, despite its transnational reach, is at the mercy of sovereign states. This includes both refugee-hosting states and resettlement states. Although the UNHCR assumes responsibility for the majority of the resettlement process, it begins and ends with state determination. Not only do states have the final decision about which refugees they will admit, but they also determine their acceptance quotas every year. Only after the United States adopted the large resettlement schemes for Congolese refugees, and after Tanzania agreed to keep Nyarugusu camp open, could the UNHCR step in to make resettlement happen. The agency increased its staff, brought in additional partnering organizations, sought more donors, and built new buildings to create the infrastructure needed to execute this scale of resettlement.

Now the expanded resettlement team continues its job of initiating new cases and conducting interviews with refugees. They wait to see whether USCIS will return to finish the interview process and determine which refugees can resettle in the United States. They continue to do their part of the process while they await further instruction.

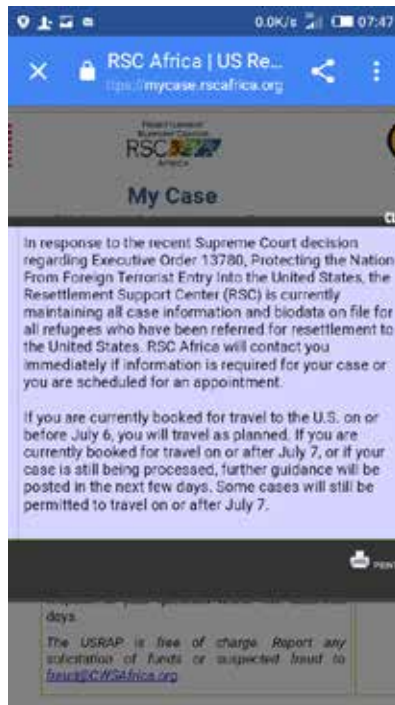
WHAT HAS CHANGED SINCE THE BANS?

In many ways, the travel bans have not changed much for people in Nyarugusu camp. Refugees are used to revoked promises and waiting. Tanzania is used to the burden of hosting refugees. The UNHCR is used to the state-centeredness of international humanitarianism. This is not new. President Trump's executive orders have only exacerbated these existing conditions.

Refugees are liminal subjects (Malkki 1995), accustomed to being caught betwixt and between (Turner 1967: 95-97)—already separated from society and not yet reincorporated (van Gennepe 1960[1909]: vii). In Tanzania, refugees' liminality has been amplified by contingency. The threat of repatriation loomed large for Nyarugusu residents as they watched and waited as the government and the UNHCR closed Tanzania's ten other camps from 2007 through 2012. The promise of refuge was always temporary, and could be revoked at any point. That is until the large resettlement schemes were realized and held the promise of permanence. They were slow to start, but more and more people began to qualify for resettlement and leave the camp to begin a

new life in the United States. It was working. Just as it was becoming believable, Trump's signature took it away.

Refugee-hosting states and the UNHCR also experience such contingency. Their actions, such as the decision to keep Nyarugusu open and build the infrastructure to support massive resettlement, depended on U.S. governmental decisions. Refugee assistance, despite UNHCR pleas for international responsibility and burden sharing, continues to be state-centered and therefore contingent. The contingency itself is nothing new.



The new update regarding resettlement case status on the RSC website.

What is new? Contingency is taking unprecedented forms. The awareness that fates of livelihoods and lives lie in the hands of U.S. officials is only becoming more acute. It sparks new questions. Why hadn't USCIS returned to Tanzania while the bans were suspended by Federal Courts? Will USCIS return to Tanzania this year? Ever? What does the Supreme Court's partial reinstatement of the ban mean for refugees? Does it mean that all refugees will have to prove that they

have “bona fide” relatives already in the United States? What makes a “bona fide” relationship and who decides on its legitimacy? Why was July 6 chosen as the date for preapproval for refugee travel?

So far, Congolese refugees, Tanzanian government officials, and UNHCR representatives have all said they will wait to see what the future will hold. Congolese refugees do not know what to expect or even hope for. The Tanzanian government does not yet know what this means for the future of their country and the camps on its soil. The UNHCR does not know what this means for the future of resettlement and international responsibility for refugees. For now, refugee-hosting countries and the UNHCR join refugees in the uncertainty and ambiguity of contingency.

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PHOTO ESSAY
FLAGSTAFF AND CAPE TOWN

**MIGRANT LIVES AND LEADERSHIP: FOSTERING STUDENT
AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT THROUGH VISUAL
ANTHROPOLOGY**

Leah Mundell

**Photographs by Nicky Newman, J. Daniel Hud,
and Alan Viramontes**

CAPE TOWN AND FLAGSTAFF

Cape Town, South Africa, and Flagstaff, Arizona, might seem to have little in common. Yet both are international tourist destinations, with booming service economies that support a steady stream of low-income workers, often immigrants from neighboring countries. And both are located in countries that are the strongest economies in their regions of the world, creating a powerful attraction for migrants fleeing poverty and violence and looking for new opportunities. Conditions in these two countries are not easy for migrants. Arizona's "show me your papers" Senate Bill 1070 created an environment of fear that has now been renewed with President Trump's commitment to increased immigration enforcement. Outbreaks of xenophobic violence have plagued South Africa, especially since 2008, and increasingly restrictive immigration policies have left many international migrants undocumented and unable to work legally.

The project described here seeks to tell the stories of frustration and resilience that characterize migrant leaders in both countries. In 2016, a group of my Northern Arizona University undergraduate students collaborated with photojournalism students Alan Viramontes and J. Daniel Hud to interview and photograph migrant leaders in Flagstaff. These profiles and photos have been combined with photography by Nicky Newman, a Cape Town photographer, and interviews I conducted to document the Cape Town Women's Platform, a multi-national network of primarily immigrant women that supports personal development and financial sustainability to enhance integration into the broader South African community. The result is "Migrant Lives and Leadership," a bi-national examination of the immigrant experience that tells a story through visual images and quotes from

migrants themselves. This essay shares excerpts from that broader exhibit, turning first to migrant experiences in Flagstaff and then, focusing on the Women's Platform, to faces and voices from Cape Town.

MIGRANT LIVES AND LEADERSHIP: FLAGSTAFF, ARIZONA

The Flagstaff portion of the exhibit was produced by students in Northern Arizona University's Immigration Action Learning Team. Students identified key themes across their interviews including the obstacles migrants have overcome to find a way to provide for their families, their educational pursuits and goals, and their sources of inspiration in life.

Gerardo Alvarado

Gerardo works in construction. He is an artist, a founding member of Arizona Dreamers in Action, and a community activist with REPEAL Coalition and the Northern Arizona Interfaith Council.



I know about the Hispanic community, they say, “Oh this happened to us [because] we can’t ask for anything, we don’t have the rights to ask for anything.” So then I learn a little bit more and I realized we have rights, I should go and tell my friends we have rights, we should do something together, we should fight. We ran from our country, we didn’t fight there, but we can fight here, we can start to do something. Build

something, you know? Maybe it is hard to do it for the whole community, but we can start with our family. When you start with [your] family maybe you can go up.

I want to get to know the world and the people in it. I feel like I am just another regular, undocumented guy who is just trying to do something, even if it is little, something for my family or my community.

I may not be able to change the world, but maybe I can change my world.

María

María is a working member of the Flagstaff community, a mother and wife, a lay leader at San Francisco de Asis Catholic Church, and an active member of the Northern Arizona Interfaith Council.



In December, after I got sick, they announced that if you were a legal U.S. citizen and had siblings here you could file paperwork to also make your siblings legal U.S. citizens. So, my sister being a U.S. citizen, I took that as a sign. And we started that process almost immediately, but it has been sixteen years.

I've never felt the need to stay quiet about anything, so that's why I feel strongly about communicating with the community. When I started coming to meetings, I saw that the parents would cross their arms and sit back while their children,

who spoke English, would speak out for them. I felt that that wasn't necessary. They needed to have a voice for themselves. So I have been very adamant about telling them: "We are not here to burden this country. We do have voices."

Manuel Hernández

Manuel is the pastor of Iglesia Restauración en Cristo and works for a Flagstaff restaurant.



There is exploitation, but there are families, children who need to eat, people who need a house to live in. And so, by way of necessity, people are likely to be exploited to make money, to cover their expenses ... I see this day to day ... it especially plagues people who don't have documents ... because they are paid less, they are given more work, and they are expected to work very late.

[I became a minister] out of necessity in my personal life ... God gave me the desire to work for him. It's not easy to give

your life in service for the well-being of other people. It takes you from your children, your spouse, [and] yourself. And so we receive compensation from God, who gives us peace. This is the most important thing. What use is money if you do not have peace?

MIGRANT LIVES AND LEADERSHIP: CAPE TOWN

Launched in November 2014, the Women's Platform is an initiative of the Scalabrini Centre, a Cape Town refugee services organization. At the time this exhibit was developed, the network primarily brought together groups of women who participated through their communities of national origin. Since then, the importance of those national origin groups has diminished significantly, as the platform has shifted toward a more individual model of personal development, skills training, and small business courses, undertaken in mixed nationality groups. The exhibit, however, remains organized by nationality group. Here we share reflections from Congolese, Somali, and Malawian participants.

Democratic Republic of the Congo: Kwesu

Kwesu (Home) provides networking, training, and personal development opportunities for African immigrants to Cape Town, particularly Congolese women. Kwesu runs a sewing collective that offers sewing instruction to students at their two workshops, one primarily serving immigrants and the other mostly serving South Africans in a township with high unemployment. The quotations that appear below are from different members of the groups described. Participants have chosen to remain anonymous.

You think that the roads will be paved with gold. Then you realize that they are not. Who is paving them? It's you.

When I was in my country with my husband, he was doing everything for us. My children were in good schools, we had a good life, cars, and a big house. When we came here everything changed ... I'm working, but what I earn is not enough. We have to eat, I have to pay rent, children have to go to school and everything is depending on me now ... If I didn't join Kwesu, I wouldn't find this job. I would still be a domestic worker. I have a degree, but I had to clean someone's house. In my country I had a domestic in my house, but

when I came here I did the same job ... If I didn't join the group, I wouldn't find this job and my friend.



Most of the people in Kwesu are from DRC, coming from the same background. When you come to Women's Platform, it's another thing. You're meeting with women from a different background, different religion, different culture, you know ... That changes our way of seeing things. So, it's very, very inspiring meeting other women.

Somalia

The Somali women's group works with the Somali Association of South Africa to support immigrants in learning English, accessing health care, and integrating into the South African community. Their leaders often work as interpreters for Somali women in clinics and at the Department of Home Affairs. They have helped to develop an English school as well as a sewing training program, modeled on Kwesu's successful sewing schools.

[The police] say they are looking for illegal things, illegal firearms or fake goods. But crime is not only in Bellville. Why are the police running to Bellville? Because the foreigners are there.

The good jobs that pay well they don't give to foreigners. They say, "Bring your green [South African] ID." But I won't lose hope. I'll keep on trying.



Crime is very bad in South Africa, even for the locals, everybody. If you see crime, sometimes you will say oh, it's maybe because I'm a foreigner. But the crime doesn't choose anybody. You will see a South African come and rob a South African.

Our culture says that the women must stay at home and the men go work and bring food to the table. The women, you are supposed to look after the kids. That is why we came together, the women's group, and we want to change that mentality. Women, you have to stand for yourself, and you can at least achieve your goal as the men do.

Malawi

While some members of the Malawian group have found work as domestics, others have had difficulty finding steady employment. Instead, they have looked for opportunities to generate their own income. They sell baked goods at a shopping center on weekends and are saving their profits to buy supplies, so that they can begin catering in the city center. Members of the group have participated in bak-

ing training courses and a business management course through the Women's Platform.



My experience here in Cape Town is I cannot rely on work; I have to do something because when you are not working you want to do something, but you don't know where to start. South Africa is the right place for business and you just have to push your business forward.

Sometimes when it's month's end you become hungry. All you [earn goes] to pay rent. I also ... send the money for my child to my sister. Sometimes I fail; sometimes my sister is shouting, "You must take your child." I say, "What I can do?"

VISUAL ANTHROPOLOGY AS AN ORGANIZING TOOL

At the opening celebration for "Migrant Lives and Leadership," held at a Flagstaff community center, local immigrant leaders profiled in the exhibit participated in a panel discussion about their experiences, speaking to over one hundred students and community members in the audience. The panel closed with María's plea for citizens to vote—since she could not—with the interests of undocumented community members in mind. Since then, the exhibit has traveled to three more Flagstaff venues, where the Immigration Action Learning Team and the Northern Arizona Interfaith Council have facilitated discussion with local immigrant leaders. The goal is for the exhibit to be a spring-

board for organizing across and within institutions that are struggling to build consensus despite political differences.

Rather than perpetuating the narrative of migrants and refugees as victims, “Migrant Lives and Leadership” highlights the ways that migrants themselves are working to assert their own basic human rights. Yet the experiences of migrants in both the United States and South Africa point to the growing international dominance of policies that impede migrants’ abilities to contribute to their new communities. Efforts to restrict the rights of migrants will not stop migration, but they are chipping away at the spirit and determination of people whose strength and resilience could be of such benefit to our communities.

ENDNOTE

To see the full exhibit online and learn more about organizing efforts, please visit Northern Arizona Interfaith Council at <https://naicl.org/get-involved/migrant-lives-and-leadership-photo-exhibit/>.

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PART THREE:
MAINTAINING REFUGE

INTRODUCTION

Whether barriers are old or new, action to maintain refuge remains vital. As refuge is diminished in many places, that primacy of action may need even more emphasis. While there are some positive elements in how refuge is provided in the world today, they seem relatively few. Canada has shown enormous commitment, many European countries show great proportional acceptance than the United States, and countries of first asylum—like the Tanzanian government described by Marnie Thomson—shoulder heavy burdens. But those positive flashes seem fewer than they were even a few short years ago. Even what have been the enormously supportive Nordic countries, for example, seem to have reached their own limits. The sharp reduction in refugee numbers in the United States is especially disturbing since the size of the country makes its footprint on global refuge very large.

The essays in Part Three address these more practical issues of maintaining refuge in restrictive and often hostile times.

Ivan Senock begins the discussion by providing a reminder that refuge is an active process of people themselves. From his time in Morocco, he provides two personal examples of how particular migrants formulated their own understanding of refuge—to themselves and to others—through stories. That is a fair reminder that refugees have some control over their own journeys, and that control is practical, conceptual, emotional, and often spiritual.

ChorSwang Ngin, Luz Borjon, and Joann Yeh discuss a U.S. university-based resource center for undocumented students (the “Dreamers”) for whom the DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) program has provided refuge of a kind. Again, the issue of uncertainty has its own effects. They note, for example, the sequential arrests of a student’s mother, and then the student herself. In an essay that becomes all the more poignant in light of recent governmental action, they ask how advocates can negotiate such possibilities.

Ryan Kober and Alicia Re Cruz discuss the problems of obtaining legal asylum status in Texas. Here too the goal is a primal one, of helping people avoid deportation so that they can

pursue legal status in the United States. Without that respite, there can be no effective asylum claim, and thus no hope of durable refuge. This has long been a problem in aiding those along the border, but the current circumstances make the process more forbidding.

Jessica Goodkind and Julia Meredith Hess, also drawing from a U.S. university context, discuss a program that aims at the longer-range integration of refugees. By pairing refugees with non-refugees, the program supports mutual learning and also the practical tasks that refugees face. Theirs is a reminder that maintaining refuge is about more than the initial task of establishing legal status. Refuge must have a future as well as a past.

Finally, Natalie Cox returns to the issue of the diminishing options for asylum-seekers. She stresses, in particular, the increasing uncertainties about their daily lives. They no longer know what to expect from government authorities. Refuge may or may not ultimately be denied them, but the destabilization of expectations breeds a wariness—even paranoia—that, in turn, undermines that longer version of refuge: refuge for a better future, not merely refuge from the past.

If there is a common theme in the papers in Part Three, it is probably the increasingly strained relationship between hope and fear. Perhaps the signature reflection on this new age of restriction and rejection is the fragmentation and multiplication of both hope and fear: hopes are now limited to lower levels and for more transitory refuge; fear is now both for lack of refuge in general but also for a destabilized human relationship to the contexts of refuge in host countries. How do refugees themselves make sense of all this? How can they live with and live in these ever more convoluted and destabilized worlds of refuge that seem governed as much by phantom as fact, as much by despair as hope, as much by nightmare as dream.

**POLYMORPHIC NARRATIVES OF TRANSNATIONALS IN
NORTHERN MOROCCO**

Ivan Senock

Stories can help us recount events and, in varied forms, express our perspectives. They can also provide refuge from suffering in our lives. When considering stories as narratives with audiences, the stories can connect both speaker and listener to deeply emotional spaces of the human condition. These narratives can have many forms, and are thus polymorphic, with multiple structures and styles used to create and encompass both their creators and their audience in an ideated space of refuge.

This essay examines polymorphic narratives in the context of Morocco. Across the Mediterranean Sea is the southern coast of Spain, which is separated from Morocco by eight miles of chaotic water. As the only physical land connection between Europe and Africa at the two Spanish enclaves Ceuta and Melilla, Morocco provides a unique focus point when discussing migration routes and individuals. This historical avenue has been maintained as a route from Africa to the European continent from the advent of agriculture into the present. Using this nexus of unique geography and diversity, the polymorphic narratives that individuals create can be clearly seen. Transnational individuals are refugees and migrants that cross international borders in forced or chosen movement from their countries of origin. Predominantly the narratives of transnational individuals focus on travels and journeys of refugees, migrants, and others. Transnationals diverge into two separate groups here; one path of narratives are individuals seeking to travel and use Morocco as an end destination, while others use Morocco as a stopping place along the way to a further destination.

Through resistance and articulation, individuals tell stories that frame their lives and journeys and provide a zone of refuge. This refuge is self-generated through the act and performance of telling their polymorphic narratives about travels to and from Morocco. This paper does not fully reveal the stigmas placed on transnational individuals,

but it attempts to show how creation of refuge by people is achieved through stories they tell.

TRANSNATIONAL NARRATIVES

In Morocco I went for a walk on the beach one bright and sunny day with two young men I had met at a local church in Tangier. Christophe, an international relations student who had come to learn about Morocco, was shorter than myself but thicker, wearing a camel hair woven sweater with a jean vest over it. The other was Sam, a refugee who had traveled for a year to reach the north coast of Africa. He was taller than me with his dark skin shining from sweat that had gathered during our walk. Sam and I were discussing the dangerous nature of his travels as we walked, with Christophe and another colleague close behind us.

Using his arms in large sweeping motions, Sam began to describe his experience of a year of migration and became animated by some fond memories. When it had come to the part of his story that was not as uplifting, his arms fell limply to his sides. His eyes glazed over and he stared out over the beach that lay before us. Sam had spent three months in a Moroccan prison with others he had been traveling with; all were seeking a better life. Pain and horror were felt within the cell walls and his only hope for a better future seeming to have been stripped from his hands. He wore the experience as if it was painted on his face. But that was in the past. I could sense that he understood this as he snapped back to our time on the beach and half smiled. “[The incarceration] was painful, but I am here. My place [Canada] will make it all worth it.”

It is not uncommon to hear of time spent in prisons along various migration paths. Like Sam, many people travel hundreds of miles—sometimes thousands of miles—for a multitude of reasons, including war, starvation, disease, or to search for better social realms and economic situations. Traumatic events are the suffering that the polymorphic narratives of migrants help to alleviate as people seek to heal and move onward. Sam’s narrative drew on the excitement of traveling to a new place, meeting new people, and anticipating the prospect of a better home where the troubles of his origin would not exist.

While Sam’s destination lay beyond Morocco, other migrants come to Morocco to stay and are simply unable to move on. In either case, Morocco has advantages over their places of origin. Benefits

commonly attributed to Morocco include economic mobility, social stability, modernity of industry, and lack of violence. Zane is an example of such migrants. He is a man of stoic facial expressions with a tall and lanky body standing firm and steady, mirroring those facial expressions. We were walking one day together looking for ingredients for what he called Liberian fried greens that he planned to serve for dinner that night. As we walked down the narrow paths between the shady stalls, he spoke of his dream of owning restaurants that served Liberian food and other spices. As he put it, "People here have never had the spice of West Africa." He described in detail the layout of those future restaurants as if he had been working in them for years. He noted the design of the tables and chairs he envisioned, the wide entryway, and, most importantly, the kitchen prepped and ready to serve future customers.

As we walked, he would stop and chat with local vendors carefully picking through the available produce. He would show a joyous grin when he found a spice or item he needed to make the meal. While shopping in a local fish market he explained about his past. "I came to work, and there are jobs and opportunities here. In Liberia there is no jobs, no money. I could not live. Here there is a chance to make something, better." Zane had traveled nine months to reach Morocco to work and send money home to his family. Like Sam and many others, Zane expressed views of how the journey had been rough with setbacks that could befall migrants, whether migrating legally or illegally. But along with troubles were the triumphs of lives changing and dreams projecting into the future.

Through the telling of narratives, both Sam and Zane had followed a progression through events and emotions, linking the audience—in this case me—to the story. As such stories are told, they engulf the narrator and anyone listening in the goals, emotions, and perspectives of a journey. The self-generated refuge created from the destination and tangible goals flow through the narration to the audience. Individuals like Sam and Zane, who have experienced calamity in their lives, have doubtlessly told these stories to themselves countless times while attempting to improve their lives. Thoughts and hopes for a better life soothe the suffering by carving out a space of refuge if only in the form of a story. Story telling is thus a method through which refuge is created and maintained, and in which healing can occur. Taken as a lived experience, the narration binds individuals

with the stories and the result is a concise image built from the goals of migration and socioeconomic mobility. Through polymorphic narratives transnational individuals convey clarity and understanding of why they are traveling. The experiences shape the narrative in different forms but the learned insight drawn from them paves the way for the ideated space of refuge.

RESISTANCE AND NARRATIVES

Resistance from major influences is another way to create a space of refuge for individuals. Takeyuki Tsuda's work, for example, reveals the struggle against conforming to the dominant culture in Japan by Brazilian-Japanese, illustrating the broader issue of resistance exercised by ethnic minorities. This is similar to transnational migrants in Morocco creating their own communities to combat the social exclusion they confront. "Autonomous resistance of new immigrant groups involves the analysis of independent cultural patterns which are not simply counter-reactions to dominant cultural forms but exist in their own right." (Tsuda 2000: 58). Individuals are creating a kind of refuge through resistance, not only in their social engagements but also in their own minds as they construct this space of refuge internally. Through a development of identity and autonomous resistance they produce a response to trauma and suffering. Tsuda's "autonomous resistance" provides a lens of interpretation of how transnational experiences are actively articulated or silenced. That resistance finds a parallel in the discussion here of polymorphic narratives.

As another example, Michel Trouillot, in *Silencing the Past*, describes the ways in which bio-power expresses itself in historical narratives. Information transmitted across the Internet about transnational events is subject to infinite review and silencing no matter what version of the event is told. The individuals involved in the creation of these narratives and definitions of transnational movement can be placed, according to Trouillot, into three classifications: 1) *agents*, or occupants of structural positions; 2) *actors* in constant interface with a context; and 3) *subjects*, that is, voices aware of their vocality." (Trouillot 1995: 23). In the Moroccan case, *actors* are the individuals actually living there whether as migrants or residents; they are in direct contact with the phenomenon. The *agents* are individuals in places of authority, such as governmental positions, and the *subjects* are the voices of people talking about transnational movements

of people. In northern Morocco, physical reality is a more prevailing factor for individuals living in the midst of the phenomenon and influencing public perceptions. Transnational individuals as *actors* express more power over the narrative at the point of the event's occurrence than the agents and subjects. The potency of their reality is often lost by the *subjects* and *agents*, who introduce elements of ambiguity and power. When the ambiguity and power caused by *agents* and *subjects* is removed—as it is in the polymorphic narratives discussed here—there is the possibility of a glimpse into the lives of actual people unmarred by often simplistic public conceptualization and discourse.

REFUGE IN THE STORIES

The suffering faced by transnational individuals on a daily basis reveals barriers that are physical, social, cognitive, and emotional: difficulty of migration, loss of community, and misplaced identity, for example. Negative stigmas and social marginalization of sub-Saharan individuals are especially effective in creating limits and institutionalized rejection. Yet the lived experience of these people as actors gives them primary influence over the development of narratives on the ground level. Those barriers and limits are included in the stories, but so also is the tenacity to continually push for a better life.

Through the self-generation of refuge in stories, transnational individuals overcome barriers and limits. Through destinations and imagined futures they create refuge and, as actors creating narratives on the ground, they demonstrate a continued resistance to surrounding pressures. The act of creating, telling, and retelling polymorphic narratives creates a space of relief through which people can approach difficult or traumatic situations. The stories address the effects of negative stigmas, violence, trauma, and the harshness of lived experiences. Despite the fact that emotions, hardships, and problems of reality are not ever completely removed when the stories of these individuals are formed and conveyed, they still serve a purpose. Their narration of personal experiences to any audience, including themselves, not only gives a tangible goal for a better life but likely some feelings of fulfillment, if only fleeting. The stories, both with positive and negative tones, can provide individuals a calming dose of hope and relief by being able to communicate and account for the frequent suffering induced by transnational migration. In polymorphic narratives lies the potential

for release and refuge—although incomplete and transitory—from the suffering and trauma migrants often face.

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**A PRECARIOUS REFUGE: A DREAMERS RESOURCE CENTER IN
LOS ANGELES**

ChorSwang Ngin, Luz Borjon, and Joann Yeh

“Dreamers,” “AB 540,” and “DACA students” are names given to undocumented college students on California campuses who were brought to the United States as young children by their parents, but without legal authorization. Because of state and local political action and legislation, these students are eligible for similar benefits as students with legal status. The term “Dreamers” derives from the DREAM Act, (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act) which was introduced to the U.S. House and Senate several times since 2001 without success. “Dreamer” has since become the moniker for beneficiaries of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy promulgated by President Obama to prevent deportation of people brought to the United States as minors without authorization. AB540 is a California state law that, among other things, allows undocumented students to attend college in California and qualify for in-state tuition.

A DREAMERS RESOURCE CENTER

On the campus of California State University, Los Angeles, the Erika J. Glazer Family Dreamers Resource Center (DRC) was established in 2014 with a private endowment of \$1.6 million, becoming one of only two Dreamers Centers with private funding—the other center is at the University of California, Berkeley and is funded by the Haas Family. The mission of the Dreamers Resource Center, with which all three of us have been involved, is to create a supportive environment for undocumented students to promote their academic success and persistence to graduation. On a campus of 28,000 students, the nonresident alien population is 8 percent, or about 2,240, which includes both AB 540 and DACA students (Institutional Research data). In 2016, the Dreamers Resource Center, as a place of refuge for the Dreamers, attracted the anthropological investigation of one of us (ChorSwang Ngin) and her students, in partnership with another one of us, Luz Borjon, the Dreamers Resource Center Director. Our

study, with Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, was based on two Listening Sessions and a “Stepping Out of the Shadows” event held in the Spring of 2016. Our data reveal the students’ struggles with their “illegal” status. On campus, they are frustrated with a general lack of awareness of their presence and, particularly, the lack of trained staff familiar with the intricate financial aid programs under which they qualify. The Dreamers’ story is one of young people who, despite uncertainty in their legal status, are able to pursue their dreams of going to college and beyond. Despite many challenges, they are grateful for the opportunities and emphasize the importance of giving back and helping those unfamiliar with the benefits made available by DACA. As a result, many Dreamers have become activists. For mutual support, they created SURGE (Students United to Reach Goals in Education), with the DRC as their home away from home.

The relative safety of Dreamers on a university campus and the promise of immigration reform were shattered under the new Trump Administration. This had implications on how we have presented our data. Initially, based on IRB recommendation that the Dreamers are a vulnerable population, we kept their identities anonymous. However, at the public “Stepping Out of the Shadows” event, the undocumented students “came out” by revealing their names and identities. To respect their wishes, we then included their names in our report. However, when their relative safety came in doubt under the Trump Administration, we again removed their names. Fearful of unwanted attention to the Dreamers on campus, we even removed the data on the overall number of undocumented students on campus.

UNFOLDING EVENTS IN EARLY 2017

As a commuter university situated in the nation’s metropolitan area with the largest Latino population, California State University Los Angeles (CSULA) has long attracted students from mixed-status families, with some members—often children—who are U.S. citizens, and some residing in the country without documentation—also often children. With President Trump’s new immigration policies rolling out like the aftershocks of an earthquake, fear and uncertainty were palpable among immigrant students, especially in early February 2017 when a student reported to the Dreamers Resource Center that ICE (Immigration Control and Enforcement) came for her during the night. As other high profile arrests of DACA students began to permeate the

national news, the most pointed questions on campus were: What if ICE came to campus? Would DACA students be deported?

In response, University President William Covino instructed the campus community to contact the campus police in the Department of Public Safety in the event that ICE did come to campus. Quite certain that that was not a viable plan of action, a group of concerned faculty wrote a letter and requested a meeting with President Covino to explain to him why the Department of Public Safety would not be an appropriate liaison between the campus and ICE, because of a past history in the minority communities of police raids, mass deportation, and collaboration between the police and ICE. The faculty met with the President but found him unwilling to engage on the issue.

Under the leadership of a new Vice Provost for Diversity and Engaged Learning and the existing Vice Provost for Student Life, the university then created a “Dreamers Task Force” comprising faculty, staff, the director of the DRC (Borjon), and representatives from the Faculty Academic Senate and Student Health Services. The Task Force presented a series of faculty-led lectures on “Democracy in Action,” including the impact of the presidential executive orders, federal immigration policies in general, and the proliferation of “fake news.” The Task Force also hosted “A Conversation with Erwin Chemerinsky,” Dean and Professor of the law school at the University of California, Irvine. Two faculty members also brought *pro bono* attorneys to campus to inform students of their rights. In the meetings regarding the Dreamers and their privacy rights, one of us (again Borjon) emerged as the person to coordinate information to and among the President’s Leadership Team, the Chief of Police, the Registrar, the faculty, and staff.

However, these policies and lectures working through the university structure failed to meet the Dreamers’ more urgent need for information and resources. As a result, about a dozen Dreamers and their supporters created their own “off-the-grid” group. The students’ “off-the-grid” group invited the participation of sympathetic staff and faculty, many of them with scholarly expertise and long-standing experience with community activism. They also invited local activist groups to provide information on non-violent direct action and civil disobedience, and on rapid response and refuge if a raid should happen on campus. Some members created a guerilla food pantry while others started a clothing drive. One of the most immediate concerns

was deciding how to respond to an ICE raid on campus. Another of us (Yeh), an immigration attorney, reaffirmed the students' dubiousness regarding the police with this advice: "Don't call the police—they have no jurisdiction to protect you. Call a lawyer, the ACLU, or the LA Times."

With heightened awareness of their vulnerability and their rights, Dreamer students became even more active and organized. They demanded the Dreamers Task Force include SURGE students, questioned the use of private donations to the DRC, and wondered whether President Covino really cared about their predicament.

TWO ARRESTS

In the early morning hours of April 25, 2017 news spread through social media that the mother of a CSULA Dreamer student had been arrested during the night. "Immigrant Youth Coalition"—a community activist group—immediately took up the cause and organized a fundraiser and protests outside City Hall and at the detention center near the border in San Diego where she was being held. On campus, the Dreamers Task Force and the Vice Provost for Diversity met immediately but it became apparent that the administration at CSULA was impotent in dealing with the student's mother's arrest.

On the heels of this student fighting her mother's arrest by ICE came a different kind of incident. At the annual Pat Brown Awards at the Hotel Biltmore in downtown Los Angeles, on a Thursday evening in April, President Covino ad libbed a joke linking the high costs at the Hotel Biltmore to supporting sanctuary cities. It did not go over well. Some Dreamers attending the dinner were frustrated by the lack of support from the university president and walked out in protest. A student ally wrote on Facebook that it was a "cruel commentary against undocumented people" and that President Covino's comment was "like a stab in the back" and questioned "how can the CSULA community expect to build trust with someone who so callously throws vulnerable populations under the bus like that?" The following Monday, news appeared in the student newspaper with the headline: "Pat Brown Dinner Marred By Covino Comment." The President apologized in an email to the university community for his "inarticulate" comment.

Less than a month later, there was another arrest. Claudia Rueda, the CSULA student whose mother had been arrested, was herself

also arrested. The news sent outrage and heartbreak to many during the celebration of Commencement Weekend. President Covino announced he was contacting government officials on the matter. In the past, undocumented immigrants could at least rely on the protection provided by the law and by the fact that the federal government would feel an obligation to adhere to current law, court orders, and regulations. Most importantly, there was an assumption that due process would be followed. Therefore, immigration agents could be expected to act only when they had warrants, subpoenas, or, at the very least, probable cause. Under the Trump Administration, however, the law has become something that can be ignored at will. In fact, the Trump White House has boasted of “taking the shackles off” ICE agents so that they are no longer restricted by regulations enforced by the Obama administration.¹ Claudia Rueda’s arrest soon after her mother’s arrest sparked claims that she was targeted for retaliation for protesting the arrest of her mother.²

FINAL THOUGHTS

In the crisis confronted by the Dreamers, could the university have done more? The university, through its traditional administrative structures and mechanisms of procedures and meetings, attempted to help by forming a Dreamers Task Force, creating a lecture series, and building a website. But, when compared to sister universities, the students have expressed concern. Where is the legal representation for DACA students that is available to students at the University of California, Irvine, according to the dean of its law school? Where are the university’s fundraising efforts for the kind of legal defense fund that is available for Dreamer students at other universities? And where is even a visit from President Covino to the Dreamers Resource Center to show his concern and support? The university has also failed when compared to the Los Angeles Unified School District, which has sent a strong and clear message to its students and families, as well as to ICE, that they are on the side of the students.³ Among the safeguards in their guidelines: no immigration officers will be allowed on campus without clearance from the superintendent of schools, who will consult with district lawyers, even if ICE has subpoenas or warrants.

So, despite the valiant efforts of its director, SURGE students, and many others, the Dreamers Resource Center remains an inadequate refuge for the undocumented students. With enhanced student con-

cerns focused on safety and security, adopting more progressive and compassionate positions on behalf of the Dreamer students is only one part of maintaining solidarity with them in this highly-charged, unstable, and chaotic political atmosphere. But all is not necessarily lost. During Claudia Rueda's initial detention and bail hearing, the judge was persuaded by the letters of support from President Covino, Chancellor White, and many others to release her on her own recognition. In the face of uncertainties, compassion still has a place, and any space of refuge must be protected.

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**FLUID VULNERABILITIES OF THE LIVING BORDER: CENTRAL
AMERICAN ASYLUM SEEKERS IN TEXAS**

Ryan Kober and Alicia Re Cruz

Ana Maria¹ is a twenty-five-year-old single mother from San Pedro Sula, Honduras, currently one of the most violent cities in the world. While there, she lived in a neighborhood controlled by the *Mara Salvatrucha*, one of the largest criminal gangs in Central America. In 2014, this gang began demanding that Ana Maria pay them an extortion fee each month, or else they would rape her and kill her family. When Ana Maria reported the threats, the police told her that she would have to pay the money because they could not protect her. When she was unable to pay, two members of the gang forced their way into her home and, as her four-year-old daughter watched, cut off her arm in retribution. Soon after, Ana Maria fled Honduras with her daughter hoping to find asylum in the United States.

**INTRODUCING THE VULNERABILITY OF CENTRAL AMERICAN
ASYLUM SEEKERS**

Ana Maria's story is just one of the many we have witnessed through our work with Central American asylum seekers at the Pro Se Asylum Clinic in Dallas, Texas and the Detention Visitation Program conducted at immigration detention centers throughout Texas. Our research began in the summer of 2014 when an unprecedented increase of unaccompanied minors and parents with minor children began crossing the U.S.-Mexico border into Texas. The Migration Policy Center reported a total of 137,000 unaccompanied minors and family units for the 2014 fiscal year (Rosenblum 2015). For the most part, these children and families presented themselves to the first Border Patrol agent they encountered rather than purposefully crossing the border to avoid detection, suggesting they crossed the border to escape violence and not to seek economic opportunities. The Obama Administration responded not with humanitarian aid, but by expanding and strengthening law enforcement resources at the border, re-opening family detention centers, and allocating funding and resources in collabora-

tion with Mexico to discourage and prevent these Central American asylum seekers from crossing the southern Mexican border.

Our research has become even more imperative since the majority of Central American asylum claims are being denied in Dallas courts, leaving people like Ana Maria without protection and at risk of deportation. One of the main reasons these applicants are denied asylum is because they lack access to legal representation. Unlike U.S. citizens who are appointed legal counsel when they cannot afford it, non-citizens are not granted this same aid in immigration cases. Other asylum seekers are cut off from legal aid because they are imprisoned in one of the many remote Texas detention centers that are difficult for lawyers to reach. Through our work at the Pro Se Asylum Clinic and the Detention Visitation Program, we seek to bridge the gap that often exists between asylum seekers and legal representation. Additionally, we address the human aspect of displacement, from the ways migrants and asylum seekers are perceived as criminals and terrorist threats to the ways their personal stories invoke the *sufrimiento* (suffering) in their everyday lives, their harrowing experiences reaching and crossing the border, and their daily encounters with criminalization and deportability.

THE PRO SE ASYLUM CLINIC

The Pro Se Asylum clinic in Dallas began in the summer of 2014 to meet the legal needs of the large number of asylum seekers crossing the U.S.-Mexico border into Texas. The asylum seekers who come to this clinic are mainly women and children released from detention centers on bonds and who are unable to afford an immigration lawyer. Lawyers often charge upwards of four thousand dollars. For this reason, the Pro Se Asylum Clinic is one of the few affordable and reputable legal resources for Central American asylum seekers in the Dallas area.

At the monthly clinic, bilingual volunteers and volunteer attorneys aid asylum seekers in filling out their I-589 asylum applications. The court requires all applications be submitted in English. However, not all asylum seekers speak English, making the transcription service that this clinic offers a necessity. Additionally, volunteers and attorneys extensively review the applications before submitting them. As the immigration attorney in charge of the clinic often states: every mistake on an application is considered a lie in court. Therefore, these

legal reviews ensure that the Central American asylum seekers are turning in the most complete and accurate documents possible.

As a part of research with the clinic, one of us (Kober) took on the responsibility of creating a digital archive of supporting documents (newspaper articles, scholarly articles, NGO reports, and government reports) to help substantiate asylum seekers' claims and provide evidence for their narratives. The project goal was to create country specific document packets and then make all of the packets accessible online so that individuals unable to come to the clinic could still benefit from these free legal resources.

With the changing status of immigration policy under President Trump, the greatest obstacle the clinic faces is the possibility that all asylum seekers will remain in detention centers until their hearings, and thus will not be able to visit the clinic. Volunteers have discussed making the clinic mobile, either conducting a version of the clinic at each detention center, or offering it online. Increased detention also makes it even more imperative for asylum seekers to have access to the supporting documents archive online. As Central American asylum seekers begin to face even more challenges, those who advocate for them continue to fight for their rights and evolve to meet their changing needs.

COMMODIFICATION AND PRIVATIZATION OF PAIN

Many of the participants with whom we work remain in immigration detention centers. The surveillance practices once found only along the borderlands have moved further into the interior as detention centers are built throughout the United States. Some asylum seekers, like those who attend the Pro Se Asylum clinic in Dallas, are granted a bond to leave detention while awaiting their court date. The bond payment, sometimes reaching ten thousand dollars, does not exempt them from electronic monitors, called *grilletes* or shackles by the clinic participants forced to wear them. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) argues that to release the detainees without the monitors would be a risk to national security and, furthermore, would encourage other migrants to cross the border. Walter discusses the "disaggregation of border function away from the border," which creates a space where the power of the state becomes more fluid and, we would argue, more present within everyday life (Walter 2006: 189). Even the asylum seekers who have been released from detention carry the border with

them, reinforcing the threat of deportability. The use of new technologies of control brings Foucault's theory of surveillance into the digital age. Asylum seekers are labeled as "illegal" and are tracked with increasingly new technology that moves outside of the space of the prison and into everyday life. The state then imposes generalized stereotypes that describe "Mexican and Central Americans as abject, alien, criminal, parasitic, and pathogenic ... another body for whom the state should fear as a drain on the system" (McKinnon 2011: 191). Those stereotypes make asylum seekers more vulnerable to racial profiling and criminalization outside of detention centers.

The power of this fear-based control system is outsourced and commodified as private corporations profit from the detention and monitoring of asylum seekers. The state is operating both as a government institution, and as a business that profits from the criminalization and monitoring of migrant bodies in detention centers (Kober 2017). In these spaces, asylum seekers have very few rights. One woman with whom we spoke discussed her time in a detention center saying, "They take *everything*. All my clothing, everything, and then they didn't give me a blanket or anything and it's freezing in there." Some asylum seekers are transported from one detention center to another without being told where they are going. Because they are unfamiliar with the geography of Texas and often cannot speak English, some create their own nicknames—like *el frio* (the cold)—to refer to the detention centers. In these spaces, the disciplinary power of the state continues to dehumanize and control what to it are threatening, mobile, migrant populations.

DETENTION VISITATION PROGRAM

The other of us (Re Cruz) works with detained women as a volunteer in a Visitation Program at different immigration detention centers throughout Texas. This program began in 2014 after President Obama called for the re-opening of family detention centers. The Detention Visitation Program depends upon volunteers, a human kaleidoscope of professional retirees, students, teachers, counselors, psychologists, anthropologists, and others. The women they visit are identified by their detainee number and met in a special reception room, where the guards supervise the visit. The aim is for the visitor to listen, and for the visited to talk—a chance for the detained women to unburden herself. Through the conversations these women can find their own

humanity, which is alienated at the detention center. Conversation themes include: family, food, anecdotes about the center, abuses, and so on. The Detention Visitation Program also works with a pro bono attorney; the volunteers try to visit women who are her clients and learn, through the conversations and questions, the information that the attorney needs to use to defend the cases. These visits also provide opportunities to identify human rights abuses at the detention centers.

There are three major immigration detention centers for women in Texas: Hutto, Karnes, and Dilley. Hutto, located twenty-five miles northeast of Austin, is just for female detainees, and it is operated by the CCA (Corrections Corporation of America), a for-profit prison corporation. The largest immigration detention center, with a capacity to hold 2,400 asylum-seeking woman and children, was opened in 2015 in remote Dilley, about an hour and a half north of the Mexican border. Karnes, located one hour south of San Antonio, is another family detention center for mothers and their children. Dilley, like Hutto, is operated by CCA and Karnes is run by the GEO Group. CCA and GEO are both multi-billion dollar companies, who receive around \$150 per detainee per day.²

Participating in the visitation programs has also yielded stark witness to the physical and psychological deterioration of mothers who cannot stand the internment, solitude, and lack of freedom. Both mothers and children complain of headaches, vomiting, and, particularly in Karnes, of nose bleeding, the stench in the air, the powerful smell and taste of chlorine in the water, and eruptions on their skin—all indications of the possible effects of the fracking site located close by. Women express concerns when witnessing other mothers becoming so depressed, withdrawn, and numb that they can no longer tend to their own babies and children.

Incarceration and detention are undoubtedly profitable for the prison industrial complex. Privatization has become a common trend of neoliberalism. The re-opening and increased use of family detention centers raises serious concerns as these euphemistically called “residencies” are filled with vulnerable women and children who have already been traumatized by experiences in their home countries—as stories like Ana Maria’s reveal. These stories, colored by violence, abuse, trauma, detention, and discrimination, are testimonies of how neoliberalism in the shape of immigration policies dehumanizes the human experience, transforming human beings into disposable bodies.

CONCLUSION

As the border becomes more fluid, we must make our services more fluid. We must continue to identify and meet asylum seekers where they are, even as the state isolates, imprisons, and deports them. Through our work we have done this and hope that the discussion can encourage other organizations and anthropologists to do the same. While this type of mobile volunteer work is necessary to meet the immediate needs of asylum seekers, anthropologists and activists must also strive to combat the larger structural issues embedded within the process of seeking refuge, such as the commodification and privatization of detention, obstructions to fair and equal trials for asylum seekers, and human rights abuses within detention centers. Through our work we hope to provoke policy change by increasing social awareness of the injustices that many Central American asylum seekers face on a daily basis. By exposing these painful truths, we hope to push the boundaries and force policy makers to recognize and be inclusive of the unique needs of those currently seeking refuge in the United States.

ENDNOTES

1. Name and small details of Ana Maria's story have been changed to ensure anonymity.
2. Furthermore, it is important to point out the discriminatory, marginal, and ghettoized meaning of the places where these detention centers are located. As such, Karnes is just a few meters away from a major fracking site, and Dilley is just a few miles away from the site of a World War II Japanese American family internment camp. See Re Cruz (2017) for a further analysis of the immigration detention center location in Texas.

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**REFUGEE WELL-BEING PROJECT: A MODEL FOR CREATING
AND MAINTAINING COMMUNITIES OF REFUGE IN THE UNITED
STATES**

Jessica R. Goodkind and Julia Meredith Hess

Since signing the Refugee Convention of 1951, the United States has been the world's leader in third-country resettlement. However, the Trump Administration's Executive Order 13769 suspended the U.S. Refugee Assistance Program (USRAP) for 120 days, drastically reduced the number of refugees to be resettled in 2017, and attempted to disallow entry of foreign nationals from seven countries (Iran, Iraq,¹ Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen). This order and other Trump Administration actions have begun to derail third-country resettlement to the United States.² While many attorneys, scholars, policymakers, and activists are resisting these orders, we must also continue to develop ways to maintain refuge for people already resettled in the United States who fear what these changes might mean for them.

This essay focuses on the Refugee Well-Being Project (RWP), which provides a model for how the United States can maintain its status as a country of refuge, even in a hostile political and social climate. The RWP was first established in Michigan in 2000 by the first author (Goodkind) as part of her dissertation research and has been operating in New Mexico since 2006. The project model builds on foundational ideas of mutual learning and respect for others' cultural values, recognition of refugee strengths, and increasing refugees' access to resources. The RWP connects the resources of universities to the communities in which they are situated by bringing together newly resettled refugees and college students to work together for six months through two main components: *learning circles* and *advocacy*.

The learning circles have their theoretical foundation in the principles of popular education and transformative learning (Freire 2006). Refugees need skills and knowledge of their new environment, such as English proficiency, literacy, and social/economic processes. This is instrumental learning and it empowers individuals by enabling them to acquire skills and knowledge they need to participate in their communities (Zimmerman 1995). Learning can further empower disen-

franchised people by increasing their understanding of the structural forces affecting them and providing means to work collectively for social justice (Cunningham 1992).

The learning circles occur once per week for six months. Each meeting is two hours and includes two parts: cultural exchange and one-on-one learning. *Cultural exchange* occurs for the first hour and is facilitated by one student and one refugee who together choose the topic. To enable all participants to share in the discussion, interpreters are present. Cultural exchange provides a forum for refugees and students to learn from each other, share ideas, develop plans for collective action, and realize their capacity for important contributions. Topics often include the Bill of Rights and a comparison of rights in newcomers' home countries, child rearing, health beliefs, accessing health care, and racism/discrimination. The second component of the learning circles is *one-on-one learning*. For the second hour, refugees and students work in pairs. Each refugee works with the same student to foster comfort and trust. During this time, refugees choose what they will focus on with their student partners (e.g. English, job applications).

The advocacy component of the RWP is based on the Community Advocacy model (Davidson et al. 1987; Sullivan and Bybee 1999). Refugees face barriers to accessing resources, including language, cultural differences, and limited knowledge of institutional structures and processes. Advocacy begins after the first two weeks of the learning circles. For the remaining five and a half months, students spend an additional four to six hours each week (outside of the learning circles) with their refugee partners to engage in advocacy together around any issues the refugees would like to address. Refugees, like all newcomers, face multiple challenges in resettlement. They include: learning a new language and culture, navigating unfamiliar social institutions, facing racism and discrimination, and healing from various losses and traumatic experiences they have had prior to their arrival including war, violence, and family separation. The RWP employs a holistic approach that integrates advocacy and learning to address multiple needs of newcomers (i.e., English proficiency, access to resources, understanding of their environment, social support, valued social roles). However, rather than emphasizing only what refugees need to learn to survive in the United States, the RWP focuses on *mutual learning*, through which refugees both learn from and teach

Americans. Thus, refugees' cultures, experiences, and knowledge are valued, while also providing them with opportunities to acquire necessary new skills and knowledge.

College students make a two-semester commitment to the RWP and receive course credit. The course instructs students on refugee issues, non-western perspectives on mental health, and social inequities related to mental health, and provides students with "hands-on" advocacy, empathy, English-as-a-second-language, and values clarification skills. Rather than guiding refugees in particular directions, students are trained to be non-judgmental and facilitate refugee selection of goals and resources. The goal is to transfer skills so that at the end of the program refugees are better able to access resources on their own. For example, rather than making health appointments for refugees, students discuss the process with their partners and may do role plays to practice these skills, and then support their partners to make calls.

Although participation criteria for refugees in the RWP have varied over time, currently we invite all refugees who have resettled in the United States within the past three years and who are from regions of the RWP's language capacity (Arabic speakers from Iraq and Syria, Dari and Pashto speakers from Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran, and Swahili, Kirundi and French speakers from Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Rwanda) to join. RWP staff from these countries meet with all refugee families to explain the project in the prospective participants' native languages.

RWP participants from Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Africa have experienced decreased psychological distress and increased quality of life, access to resources, social support, and English proficiency (Goodkind, Hang, and Yang 2004; Goodkind 2005; Goodkind et al. 2014). Qualitative data supported these findings and demonstrated that refugee participants felt their culture and knowledge were valued, gained environmental mastery, felt safe and welcome in the United States, and perceived less racism and discrimination (Goodkind 2006). We have also found that the RWP experience is transformational for college students in many ways, including their understanding of social inequities and the need to work towards social change (Goodkind 2006; Hess et al. 2014). Thus, the RWP helps fulfill the promise of refuge and, we suggest, maintain it in these troubled and precarious times in at least four ways:

1) *Increasing access to resources.* RWP students work with individual families to assess needs on a case-by-case basis. For example, participants with no or low literacy who worked in the informal economy of a refugee camp have different skills and abilities than participants who hold graduate degrees and worked as engineers. Students then work with resettlement agency staff in order to extend, not duplicate, existing support. In addition, the focus on respect for refugees' cultural values means that student support is often perceived as being more aligned with refugee cultural values and cognizant of the variable pace at which cultural change in new social contexts occurs. In the words of a Burundian participant:

... there are many things that I would not have been able to do if I had not been in the program. I got a lot of help especially trying to get food for the children. There was one time that they cut my food stamps and the people in this project really helped me get back my food stamps. I had very little English but now I have increased that, and it's because of this project.

2) *Building understanding, respect, and trust among refugees and Americans.* Data collected from refugees and students speak to the transformative power of personal relationships. Refugees have related how their preconceptions of Americans were shattered upon building a relationship with students. A student described the trajectory of learning about refugees:

In the beginning, I had no idea what a refugee was. After learning about them, I know now that they're forced to flee—they don't just flee because they want to, but they're forced to flee, whether that's because of political conflict or other things of that nature. After working with them, I don't really consider them refugees because I feel like that term makes people feel sorry for them. I mean, they're probably some of the most hardworking people I've ever met.

Similarly, an Iraqi participant explained:

Definitely we learn a lot during this program. We learn about the U.S. cultures and traditions and believe they learned the same things about our culture. I believe we can say that this program helped us to build trust all together. We feel we are much, much more comfortable now when they approach us and we feel we are no longer lost.

Another student shared how her participation in the program changed her ideas and behavior. Prior to the program, when she saw women wearing the hijab, she wondered why they would submit to a practice that she saw as demeaning to women and would never initiate contact with someone wearing a hijab. After being paired with an Afghan woman who wears a hijab and developing a close personal relationship with her, she now feels a connection to women wearing the hijab and will greet them. Further, participants often express that they have become family to each other. Some students and refugees have ties that endure years beyond the end of the program.

3) *Addressing discrimination.* Refugees face discrimination based on many different intersecting aspects of their identity: race, nationality, religion, gender, and class. Learning circles serve as a venue for discussing the history of racial politics and segregation in the United States, as well as how it affects participants in the present. For example, the learning circle that occurs near the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday is devoted to learning about African American civil rights and provides a forum to discuss experiences participants have had with racism and discrimination. Discussion generally involves ways to respond to racism in public spaces or in institutions such as school or the workplace. As one student participant explained:

I came to learn that this program is a prime example of active nonviolence. We the students are engaged in a battle against structural violence. Refugees in this country are often ignored, neglected, or abused by people who do not want them here. This is one of the most heartbreaking forms of structural violence. Refugees have been through a great deal of trauma. When they finally reach a destination that can be construed as safe, they are still victimized. This has been the most amazing thing I've done academically at the University of New Mexico.

4) *Creating welcoming and responsive communities.* In addition to its impact on individuals, the RWP has impacts at the community level. Students raise awareness of refugee issues to friends, family, and community organizations by sharing what they have learned in the course, and through introducing their partners to friends and family members. Through their advocacy work, students and refugees create awareness among service providers, teachers, employers, and others of refugee needs, as well as their strengths and capabilities. These individuals

can then be more responsive to the needs of the refugees they meet. In addition, change has occurred on a systemic and policy level through several initiatives that have been outgrowths of the RWP. One of the most important ways the RWP helps to create welcoming communities is described by a Burundian participant:

When I was leaving Africa some of our friends were like, “Well, you’re going to a foreign country, you’re going to live in your house, nobody is going to come say hello, there are no black people there from Africa, you’ll live all by yourself.” ... As refugees, we receive so much food and clothing and shoes, but then would these white people, are they going to accept food and water from us? And so you guys came in and you were eating with us and hanging out with us, and we were completely in shock, and we were so amazed that a whole group of white people would come to our house. Our friends in Tanzania are asking, “So the American people, do they really come up and say hello to you, do they greet you and hang out with you?” And we say, “Oh yeah, they do! And they’re our friends.” And they’re like, “Well then America is a good country.”

ENDNOTES

1. In a revised Executive Order, President Trump removed Iraq from the list.
2. At the time of publication, some of the provisions of the Executive Order have been implemented (e.g., only allowing people from these six countries with a “credible claim of a bona fide relationship with a person or entity in the United States” to enter and reducing the number of refugees admitted to the United States in 2017 by more than half).

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**NO SAFE PLACE FOR SOMEONE LIKE ME: AFRICAN MUSLIM
ASYLUM SEEKERS REACT TO TRUMP**

Natalie Cox

The day after Donald Trump won the electoral college in the 2016 U.S. presidential election, the phone lines rang so often at the African Advocacy Network (AAN) that the voice mailbox filled to capacity overnight. The calls to this San Francisco-based, African-led legal services provider ranged from anxious clients seeking assurance about their pending cases, to fearful undocumented immigrants wanting to explore all possible avenues to legal status. In the months since the election, the AAN continues to be inundated with hundreds of queries from the Bay Area African immigrant communities they serve. Both AAN staff and their clients are trying to navigate the shifting terrain of immigration policy, as President Trump's Executive Orders were decreed, then challenged in federal court, then partially upheld by the Supreme Court while their hearing is pending (Hurley 2017; Levine 2017). These are tumultuous times for immigrants, particularly those with uncertain legal status, and also challenging times for those who work as their advocates, lawyers, paralegals, and service providers.

As a researcher and longtime volunteer for the AAN, I bear witness to the ripple effects of these executive orders on immigration within the AAN community of clients, all of whom seek assistance deciphering the intensely bureaucratic procedures of immigration and resettlement. The paperwork and procedures are now even more stressful due to the unpredictability of the White House, heightening anxiety among AAN clients whose cases are still in process. At the AAN, African Muslim asylum seekers feel particularly threatened by the new regime. Between the Muslim travel ban and the 120-day delay of refugee resettlement as outlined in the rewritten March 6, 2017 executive order (Hurley 2017), and against the social backdrop of ongoing police violence against unarmed Black Americans (Kelly et al. 2016), the sense of precarity within the AAN community has palpably increased.

This essay explores the effects of President Trump's executive orders and campaign promises from the perspective of two Muslim

immigrants seeking refuge in the United States, who say they now feel feared and hated by a nation they once hoped would be their haven. Despite California's renewed commitment to sanctuary cities like San Francisco (Ulloa 2017), and an increase in emergency funding for immigration services in the Bay Area (Aparton 2017), their experiences demonstrate how Trump's rhetoric effectively functions to produce fear and uncertainty in those he targets, whether or not his executive orders on immigration are ever fully ratified.

It was during one of these extremely high-volume call days at the AAN when I first met with Fatima (all names in this essay are pseudonyms), a West African woman in the process of adjusting her legal status after she divorced her abusive husband. As the spouse of an H-1B visa recipient, her legal status was directly tied to his. The only way she could remain in the country with her American-born children was to apply for a U-visa, a special protection granted to victims of domestic violence, human trafficking, or sexual assault (USCIS 2016). She knew her domestic violence charges against him would never make it to court if she left the country, and she feared that if she returned home, her husband's family might try to take custody of their children. However, only 10,000 U-visas are distributed annually, there is a massive processing backlog, and the visa itself represents a temporary measure: it does not grant legal permanent residency (USCIS 2016). But, as Fatima said in our meeting, "It is better than having no papers at all, especially now that he [Trump] is in power."

Fatima was incredibly patient with me stepping away to transfer calls and take messages as the AAN office phone rang incessantly throughout our meeting. Her patience is hard-earned; she has been waiting for her U-visa case to be heard by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for almost a year now. Worse still, she has waited for her work permit for more than two years, a process disrupted by her divorce and subsequent status adjustment petition. At the time of our meeting, the USCIS indicated she should receive her employment authorization document within six months. So, she came to me for help with her preliminary job search. She wanted to explore the Bay Area job market, and also to look for any and all possible sources of support, such as paid research studies. She ran out of savings several months ago, and now lives with her children in a homeless shelter, so as she told me, "anything helps."

Fatima is certainly not the first person with pending status to navigate the liminal (but increasingly common) spaces of the casual labor market and other sources of temporary, quasi-legal compensation. But in the Trump era, the risks associated with obtaining any under-the-table cash, however marginal, seem ever more amplified (as does my complicity in assisting people in similar predicaments with their survival strategies). Nevertheless, Fatima and I combed through online ads together, looking for day labor housekeeping jobs, temporary personal assistant positions, and focus groups or other market research which provided compensation. Some of the ads were obvious scams, but some seemed like potentially promising ways to earn petty cash.

“How about this one?” I asked, pointing to an ad for someone needing help cleaning and organizing their home office. Fatima considered it, but then asked, “Is it true that ICE [Immigration and Customs Enforcement] is now posting fake ads on Craigslist in order to catch people with no papers? I fear to give anyone my information because of that.” I did not know how to reply, but her concerns seemed totally rational to me. After all, if ICE felt empowered to arrest an undocumented transgender woman at a courthouse in El Paso, Texas, while she filed a criminal case against her abusive ex-partner (Blitzer 2017), it seemed entirely plausible that Craigslist could be used by ICE as a tool of entrapment.

Then Fatima went on to say, “Honestly, I don’t know why I bother. Maybe no one will hire me, not even when I get my papers. Because they see this (she pointed to her hijab), and they are afraid. And there is so much racism too.” A media-savvy young woman, Fatima told me that she knew of the undercurrents of anti-Black racism, Islamophobia, and anti-immigrant politics in the United States and, to her, the election of Donald Trump signified the political legitimization and social dominance of such bigotry. After three years living in the Bay Area, she was used to people staring at her headscarf, but now she was fearful of being targeted by ICE because of it. Moreover, she had no confidence that her papers would protect her from racial, religious, and gender discrimination. Like many other AAN clients, Fatima felt the Trump Administration meant that even the ostensibly immigrant-friendly and politically-liberal San Francisco Bay Area was no longer a “safe place for a woman like her.”

Jamal, another post-election AAN client, was also painfully aware of his own sociopolitical and structural vulnerability. Like Fatima, I

met him through an employment assistance appointment at AAN, and although he already had his work permit, his situation was even more complex and precarious, in part because he is from Sudan, one of the countries included in the travel ban (Hurley 2017). Yet the travel ban is just the latest hurdle in Jamal's resettlement journey. He fled Sudan in 2016 and came to the United States to claim asylum, traveling with the aid of human traffickers from South America. When he arrived at the U.S.-Mexico border, he turned himself in to the Customs and Border Patrol (CBP), hoping to submit his asylum claim. Instead, he was detained for nine months, as a consequence of losing his passport somewhere along the journey (CBP states that they took this time to perform a criminal background check and to verify his identity).

Jamal described his time in the U.S. detention center as "inhuman." The degrading treatment continued even after he was released, as ICE declared him a "flight risk," and ordered him to wear a GPS ankle bracelet for six months. Until his hearing later this year, when he will receive a future asylum court date, he is also "under supervision" by ICE, meaning that he has to regularly check in by phone, just as ex-convicts are required to check in with their parole officers (USCIS 2005). Jamal observed these parallels in his own treatment and, as he said in our intake meeting, "I am not a criminal! So why do they make me wear this [GPS device]? It is painful, humiliates me ... I escaped to this country for safety after they [the Sudanese government] threw me in jail, but then the Border Patrol put me in jail also. It is inhuman!"

Jamal entered detention while President Obama was in office, but was discharged in a political climate dominated by President Trump's anti-immigrant rhetoric, which he said was "a shock." The conditions of his asylum experience with CBP may not have been any more lenient under the previous administration, but Jamal was devastated to learn upon his release that anyone of his nationality could be subjected to a travel ban. After all he suffered through to get here, and all he suffered after his arrival, he was very upset to think his asylum case might now be delayed or denied because of his country of origin and his religion. Even though CBP already performed his credible fear interview,¹ and he submitted his asylum application before President Trump took office, Jamal said he was extremely anxious about his case, and he felt as if he was constantly being watched.

Jamal's fears of making any kind of mistake while being tracked by ICE were what brought him to the AAN for help finding a job. He wanted reassurance that his newly acquired Employment Authorization Document (EAD) really did entitle him to work, and he wanted to know if there were any restrictions or limits on the kinds of jobs he could have. He said that he needed to make sure he followed all the rules and did not jeopardize his case, because in his words, "Trump thinks all Sudanese are terrorists." He also asked me if it would be harder for him to find work "because of race." His experience of detention and surveillance after his release, layered over the traumas incurred before and during his flight, disciplined him to constantly second-guess his own rights and actions.

Jamal and Fatima's social and structural vulnerability as African Muslim immigrants were drawn into sharper relief through the election of Donald Trump. Today, the constant calls to the AAN are from clients who now feel unwelcomed, unwanted, and scared about their future prospects. The AAN and other immigration assistance service providers work hard to support their individual clients through these uncertain times: they continue to build coalitions and alliances; they advocate for deportation defense and noncooperation with ICE; and they organize social and political actions. However, it also takes committed and continuous community outreach to undo the emboldening and entrenchment of racism, xenophobia, and Islamophobia that the election of Trump represents to immigrants and their allies. Since the inauguration, AAN staff have increasingly participated in African church services, festivals, community association meetings—even broadcasting on local African radio programming in order to circulate the most up-to-date immigration policy information and to maintain a space of refuge for the community. Immigration scholars would do well to follow the lead of these service providers by partnering with community-based organizations, and spending more time "in the field" sharing their knowledge and expertise, connecting people to services, and documenting immigrant, refugee, and asylee struggles.

ENDNOTE

1. A credible fear interview is the process by which an asylum applicant is interviewed by Customs and Border Patrol or a USCIS asylum officer in order to determine whether or not they have credible fear of persecution (or previous incidence of persecution), which pre-

vents them from being deported to their country of origin (American Immigration Council 2016: 2).

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PART FOUR
REFUGEES WRITE BACK

INTRODUCTION

Saida Hodžić

World attention spikes like blood sugar. Disasters and deaths are made visible and then disappear from the public eye. Anthropologists try to do better by showing that being a refugee entails more than crossing deadly borders, and by contesting political discourses that sort displaced people into undeserving masses of economic migrants versus deserving refugee families and individuals. But somewhere along the way, refugees are constructed as voices of experience, not as voices of analysis. Their experiences are reduced to visceral suffering over which the histories of war and violence cast a long shadow.

As anthropologists who were themselves refugees or were treated as such, the three of us in this section make a different claim: for many refugees, the real and unexpected struggles begin after arrival in host countries. This point is particularly pertinent today, when the xenophobic and decidedly illiberal machinations of the Trump Administration make prior administrations appear benevolent. Earlier, more liberal regimes were already inhospitable, although they admitted refugees in greater numbers. Thus we testify to the production of historical amnesia about structural violence within liberal democracies. We want to illuminate how refugees have long experienced struggles within refuge, from bureaucratic inhospitality and hostility in spaces of governance (such as checkpoints and state offices) to the more subtle violence of patronizing liberal tolerance, including academia's own myopia.

The three autoethnographic essays that follow shed light on experiences of resettlement and protracted unsettlement that have governed our lives. All three of us now reside in North America (Canada and the United States). We arrived from Bosnia in the late 1990s, in the wake of the Bosnian war. Commonly understood as a war among three ethnically conceived communities (Bosnian Croats, Bosnian Serbs, and Bosnian Muslims or Bosniaks), the Bosnian war was a piece of a larger archipelago of political transformations that shook up Europe and changed the course of global history, officially ending the Cold War. Beginning in 1989, Central and Eastern European communist parties began to lose power, foreshadowing the end of

state socialism and the dissolution of the Eastern Bloc. The Berlin wall fell, the Soviet Union was dissolved, Czechoslovakia split into two countries, and Yugoslavia into five. The war in Bosnia began in April 1992, one month after the country voted for independence from Yugoslavia. It officially ended on December 14, 1995, with the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement, brokered by the United States. Over one hundred thousand people were killed in the war, and two million (more than half of the country's population) were displaced.

The three of us are now professors of anthropology and the stories of our lives can be, and often are, told as success stories. Few would recognize us as refugees because we have little in common with the notion of a typical "refugee"—the *homo sacer* who is the destitute figure of statelessness and the test case for human rights and international law. Underneath this shallow figure of "the refugee" is a rich tapestry of complex human experience. Our stories are a part of that experience, and we want to illuminate it from the spaces of intimate encounters with refugeeness and its lingering effects.

Each essay carefully delineates the structural conditions of possibility that made our lives different from the more common experience of Bosnians in the United States. Aware of the moral and political implications of the claim to have been a refugee, Kurtović and Hromadžić (who lived through the war in Bosnia and left after it ended) address this quandary directly while I point to it by writing about my experiences of having only partly shared the fate of Bosnian refugees who were resettled from Germany to the United States. Our point is simple: refugee lives are less governed by the trauma of war and destitution than by policies and practices, both liberal and xenophobic, within the countries of resettlement. These policies withhold practical support from resettled refugees and refuse them the legitimacy enjoyed by the country's citizens whose identity is never in question.

Each essay is also an experiment in saying something previously left unsaid. Silence is a vital strategy of passing and survival; it is, as Adrienne Rich puts it, not a mere absence, but a blueprint to life. Having survived, we are together exploring what can be said about silence within anthropology.

THE THIRD AND FINAL COUNTRY: PROTRACTED
UNSETTLEMENT IN NEOLIBERAL STATES

Saida Hodžić

“Yes, we want you,” said the woman’s voice on the other end of the line. I was huddled in the old phone booth in Barrows Hall at the University of California, Berkeley campus, at the end of my study abroad year. The International Rescue Committee (IRC) in San Francisco and Oakland needed interns, I wanted to spend the summer in the United States on an internship, it seemed like a match. “Don’t you want to interview me first?” I asked, thinking that they might want to hear about my prior experiences of working with refugees. “No, you’re a Bosnian, right?” she asked, as if that explained everything. My native language made me a suitable intern, but I soon learned that it was my offer of free labor that figured me as an exceptional refugee, one who did not need to be screened. Other Bosnians, IRC workers would tell me, wanted things and felt, as one case worker explained, “that the world owed them something.” I too thought that the world owed Bosnians something but knew to keep quiet.

The year was 1999 and the IRC was one of the main agencies managing the resettlement of Bosnian refugees in the United States. For many, this was their second or third country of refuge and dozens of thousands were resettled from Germany alone. They did not want to come to the United States but had to because Germany does not automatically grant refugees legal recognition or a path toward legal residence. I too had come from Germany, but was not forced to move and did not anticipate that I would eventually make my life in the United States. At the IRC, they said that the refugees who came from Germany were the worst, for they had become used to not working, used to receiving handouts from the state. When it came to refugees, liberals also adopted the right-wing critique of the social safety net. In actuality, Bosnian refugees moved from one state that treated them as expendable labor to another.

Refuge sounds like a place of shelter and peace, a reprieve from turmoil, uncertainty, and the struggle for life and living. It may have the potential to be just that for those refugees who are legally recog-

nized as such. But most are not: they were not then, and are not today. For many, refugee status is a sort of a holding area, where we sit and wait for our names to be called.

In the 1990s, Germany housed half a million refugees from the former Yugoslavia who were understood as *Flüchtlinge* (refugees, literally: those who fled) in everyday language. However, the state did not grant us the legal status of refugees but merely a temporary stay of deportation called *Duldung* (literally: toleration or sufferance), a condition that was stamped in our passports. Each stamp was valid for only half a year, and it was clear that the watchful state would begin deportations as soon as the war ended. Renewing the stamp meant repeatedly encountering the state and facing the terror of visiting the inhospitable basement offices of the *Ausländeramt* (office for foreigners). In these austere and poorly lit offices, a small town clerk called Herr Fiedeler acted as a sovereign and seemingly presided over our fates. His meanness and rudeness appeared at the time an intentional expression of the state's policies, and larger ruling spirit, of bare toleration.

Being refugees without recognition meant that we were welcome to wait out the war, but not enabled to make a life. People nevertheless did, despite not having work permits, access to language classes, or decent housing. They made friends, learned German, got together, helped each other, gossiped. We told each other our stories—of violence and suffering in the war and in refuge, the struggle with getting “papers,” broken family ties, and the pressures of being the ones who had made it out. Few sought to leave Germany until they absolutely had to, and it was only when the war ended that many applied for resettlement in the United States and Canada. We did not live lives in the six-month intervals of our legal status despite the instabilities we faced. The waiting room that was our refuge was also a space of vivid sociality and affective intensity.

Most refugees in our town were packed into state-provided *Asylantenheimen* (homes for asylees), grey cement buildings that smelled of dampness and bleach. Each family—whether parents with small children or several adults—had one room in which to cook, eat, do homework, play, listen to news, talk, receive visitors, argue, have sex (or not), and sleep. For these families, life was carried out in fifteen cramped square meters. My family was lucky in that my father had a work permit and we lived in a rented apartment of our own.

Refugees who received state support found themselves stuck, and only two families I knew managed to get out of the *Asylantenheim* in several years of refuge. Although the system was not closed, it was well fortified by Kafkaesque laws and policies that de incentivized refugees' efforts at more stable lives. In order for refugees to move out of the *Asylantenheim*, they had to demonstrate that they worked at least part time and could obtain a private apartment. The devil was in the details: the apartment had to be cheap enough for the state's contribution to cover its share and at the same time large enough to meet the spatial and privacy requirements that the state deemed befitting a family of such and such size, including having separate rooms for adults and children. Such questions were never raised about living conditions in *Asylantenheimen*.

Similarly, refugees could apply for work permits and some were able to obtain them. But work permits were restricted by being tied to a specific employer, which made refugees vulnerable to exploitation. In addition, refugees' skills were devalued, as Bosnian degrees had little purchase in Germany, and as speaking less than perfect German was seen as an index of inferior ability and professional—and at times, human—unworthiness. As a result, refugees have had much more access to the informal labor market than to secure jobs with benefits. As in France, where working illegally is easy but having a work permit means facing joblessness (Ticktin 2011), Germany had plenty of jobs for refugees if they were willing to work under the table. So Bosnian women cleaned houses and the men worked in construction, sending money to relatives in war and saving some for the anticipated return home at the end of the war.

Access to decent education was equally difficult, and refugees experienced the same kinds of barriers to upward mobility that other immigrants face. Refugee children were sent to the lowest tier schools, the *Hauptschule*, which prepped them, alongside the children of other non-citizens and lower-class Germans, for blue-collar jobs. When my parents tried to enroll me in a *Gymnasium* (the highest tier school with academic tracks), I was sent away; higher tiered schools were off limits to all who did not speak German. *Hauptschule* was the only type of school offering German language classes, which fortified the xenophobic but common association between German language skills and innate intelligence.

I was fortunate to have landed in a town with an integrated school (*Gesamtschule*) with many leftist, devoted, and innovative teachers. The school did not offer language classes, but many teachers went out of their way to help me when I arrived without speaking a word of German. I found refuge at this school, in classrooms of people who tried to make me feel at home. A school campus can indeed be a sanctuary and it was that for me, even though education as an institution reinforces social hierarchies as much as it breaks them. At integrated schools, students can, in theory, move up the tiered ladder. Yet the number of non-Germans declined heavily as we approached graduation and I was one of only two non-citizens in my class who completed the university track.

I wanted to go to university, the acceptance to which was also my ticket for extending my stay in Germany for the duration of my studies. So I found myself in a double bind: wishing for the war to end while needing to finish high school before it did. “Why not skip the 11th grade,” the principal suggested and I did. The pressure was intense. It seemed at the time like I would have either everything or nothing; this of course was not true, as I would have built a life in Bosnia had I been forced to return. My academic success figured me as a model immigrant; upon seeing my transcript, the astonished Frau Stauch in the *Ausländeramt* looked up and said “All foreigners should follow your example.” Why shouldn’t the Germans, I wondered, but did not say it—I was applying for a residence permit and did not want her to turn against me. The permanent residence I eventually acquired was granted to me by way of two sovereign exceptions: a labor exception for my father and a humanitarian one for me. My family was among the one fifth of Bosnian refugees who were not deported or resettled when the war ended.

Bosnians who had found refuge in Germany were not the first to experience refuge not as resettlement but as protracted unsettlement. As the only country in the global North that has accepted over a million (and counting) refugees in recent years, Germany has been heralded for its handling of the political crisis provoked by the E.U. tension between its Fortress Europe politics and its self-understanding as a safeguard of human rights. However, the legal structure of refugee incorporation in Germany provides a secure refuge and path to legal asylum only for select groups. Like Bosnians, many contemporary refugees from countries with ongoing violence are denied legal

recognition and live in temporary and fleeting refuge. Over two hundred thousand Afghan, Iraqi, Somali, and other refugees currently in Germany are slated to be deported and have only *Duldung*. Others have yet another temporary status with diminished rights called *subsidiärer Schutz* (subsidiary protection) that, among other things, prohibits family reunification for two years. Syrians appeared to be an exception. The state offered those who arrived in 2015 a direct path toward permanent residence and family reunification, as well as work permits and free language classes. However, by 2016 Syrians had joined the ranks of refugees who were not immediately recognized as such; nearly half were denied full rights as refugees, receiving only a lesser tiered status. The German political discourse about the refugees' alleged failure at integration obfuscates that most refugees (as well as labor migrants who have lived there for decades) were never meant to belong.

Refugees resettled in the United States find themselves with secure papers but as expendable as ever. Bosnian refugees resettled in the San Francisco Bay Area joined other underclasses once more. The IRC found them housing in the Tenderloin and in East Oakland, impoverished African American and immigrant communities, respectively, exposed to both crime and police violence. These refugees escaped the insecurity of war and its aftermath to find themselves sharing the insecurity of U.S. inner city life.

Bosnians arrived in the United States shortly after President Bill Clinton had signed the welfare reform bill that capped benefits at five years over a lifetime and further entrenched the notion that welfare is not a right but something granted to deserving (read: white, non-foreign) subjects alone. The resettlement of Bosnians was governed by these politics of welfare reform. While the IRC boasted about providing language classes as well as professional training for at least three months after the refugees' arrival, the workers counseled the arrivals to accept a job—any job—as soon as possible. “You won’t be able to live on Social Security forever,” they were told, and were offered minimum wage jobs. Goodwill employed them for six dollars an hour, yet they paid San Francisco rents. The IRC workers were upset when the refugees complained; their desire for better jobs and opportunities looked to the IRC like entitlement. The discourse of the bad, spoiled refugee turned troubled people into trouble.

The photographs in the IRC office featured good volunteers (a white American woman who took “her” Bosnian family to the Golden Gate Bridge), and I heard stories about good donors (a rich woman who regularly donated her clothes and lunched with the IRC staff member). But there were no stories of good refugees being told. Most IRC workers did not support the political structures of U.S. welfare reform that left refugees with few and diminished options, but rather than discussing and critiquing these policies, many IRC workers criticized the refugees themselves. By offering free labor, I was assumed to have transcended my native disposition. Of course, volunteering only makes sense when one’s labor and life are already understood as valuable. Even those refugees who find a secure refuge find themselves having to prove their worth time and again, and are subject to laws and policies that halt them in their tracks.

IRC workers complained about the Kosovo Albanians, who had just arrived but wanted to return home. They disparaged Bosnians who moved away from the Bay Area, after they learned about better jobs and affordable housing in the Midwest: “Now they work in meat-packing factories!” A few refugees had found jobs at the IRC itself and hoped to create comfortable lives, but they too were ridiculed. “Adin drives a limousine at night, working as a chauffeur,” another staff member told me, and added with an arched brow, “He wanted a house with a pool in the suburbs.” Refugee mobility was somehow unsettling. Bosnian and other former Yugoslav refugees employed in the office did not agree with the discourse of bad refugees, but neither did they contest it; they too had learned to be quiet.

Refugee affect was the source of the most deeply felt frustration. “I have to drink two glasses of wine each evening when I get home so I can calm down,” one case worker told me. Bosnians told her stories of violence and suffering but refused to go to therapists, citing their non-craziness. Bosnians talked about pain in spaces deemed inappropriate: refugees should not talk about difficult experiences at the IRC or during home visits, but in the professional offices of a therapist. One innovative solution would have been to reconceptualize what counts as an appropriate therapeutic space—why shouldn’t trained social workers consider home visits a space for therapy? At the same time, it is important to pause and reexamine what is trauma in need of intervention and what may be sociality. After all, telling one’s war story is for many refugees a way of fostering a deeper human connection and

offering friendship. Instead, the IRC worker described herself as suffering from what she perceived as uncontained and excessive Bosnian pain told in inappropriate times and spaces.

Anthropologists sometimes uncritically adopt such discourses of secondary trauma. The discourse of secondary trauma illuminates the suffering to humanitarian workers themselves, and in doing so, foregrounds the feelings of the helpers. The problem with such an approach is that it uses separate analytical and narrative tools for the suffering experienced by refugees and humanitarians: it makes the suffering of humanitarians ethnographically comprehensible while conceptualizing the suffering of refugees in the language of medical pathology. For refugees, war trauma is made hypervisible, while the violence of life in refuge is elided.

And this is why I write this story. While anthropology contests discourses that explicitly devalue refugees, our analytical categories are often complicit with more insidious forms of pathologization. One way for anthropology to contest pathologization of refugees is to illuminate the everyday violence of refuge and resettlement, and to shed light on what it takes to foster survival and thriving.

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**ON BEING A NON-REFUGEE: ENCOUNTERS WITH
PROFESSORS, BORDERS, AND DONUTS**

Azra Hromadžić

At the end of the twentieth century, when refugees from Bosnia started to “pour out” of the Balkans into Western Europe and the United States, some lucky and privileged individuals, including the author of this essay, entered the United States not as refugees but as students on F-1 student visas. These persons were therefore “out of place”: seen as exotic, knowledgeable, and interesting in some settings, but targets of surveillance, discipline, and suspicion in other encounters.

This essay aims at encounters that reveal the disjunction between being a non-refugee but being from a refugee-producing place, Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereafter Bosnia). I especially focus on moments of simultaneous inclusion and exclusion that illuminate the opportunities and limits of belonging, citizenship, intellectual sovereignty, and “flexible citizenship” (Ong 1999). I capture these moments as they unfold in mundane, everyday situations and languages—at “home,” in classrooms, and at border crossings. What materializes from these encounters is ambivalence: On the one hand, I was invited into spaces of privilege, such as the best American classrooms, study abroad trips, and popular tourist destinations. On the other hand, in the process I was often separated, examined, disciplined, and perceived as a refugee. It is within these slippages and ambivalences that visible and invisible violences and privileges are revealed.

ON NOT BEING RAPED

In 1996, I came to the United States at the age of twenty. After the Bosnian war (1992–1995) ended, I received one of the scholarships given to selected Bosnian youth to study at American colleges and universities. Two main organizations—the Fellowship of Reconciliation in Nyack, New York and the Community of Bosnia in Haverford, Pennsylvania—were in charge of this project. The hope was that most of us would return to Bosnia upon graduation (most of us did not) in order to help rebuild and reconstruct our devastated homeland. This experience of coming to study in the United States alone, without fam-

ily/community to offer support, is in contrast to the common experience of Bosnian refugees; the majority of these individuals resettled in the United States with families, usually surrounded by other Bosnian families, forming communities, learning the language, navigating bureaucracy, pursuing jobs, raising children, and intensely longing for home while assimilating into U.S. society.¹ The predicament of these refugees, who came to the United States with an intent and promise to stay in the country, was different from the experiences of those of us who arrived on student visas and whose mission was to get the best education possible and then return home.

In addition to full scholarships at some of the best colleges and universities in the United States, we were given American host families who provided emotional and financial support. Having the support of top American universities and families gave us, the Bosnian non-refugees, access to many things American that were not available to “proper” refugees, nor, for that matter, to the majority of less-privileged Americans. In these spaces of privilege, we often felt special: we were invited to dinners where our stories were told and repeated; we were interviewed by local and regional newspapers; our experiences were listened to and consumed with interest, amazement, shock, care, and worry. We had a special voice which demanded and received respect, but which also painted us as “anomalies”—Bosnian non-refugees, war survivors with scholarships to prestigious universities. We were elevated and admired, but categorized as different and consumed as “matter out of place” (Douglas 1966).

This tension became palpable once I entered the graduate program in anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania. In this caring and inspiring environment, and especially in its intellectually intense yet friendly graduate seminars, we often discussed the hot topics of the times in social sciences, especially ethnicity and nationalism. In these moments, I felt privileged: I was often invited to speak and thus recognized as the “knower.” My words were listened to and recycled by my professors as instances of how ethnicity works through people, and my unforeseen “self-discovery as a Bosniak during the war” was used to support the thesis about the constructed and contingent nature of ethnic identity. On the one hand, I was at the epicenter of knowledge-production, basking in the privilege of studying anthropology which was teaching me how to be in the world ethically and how to respectfully approach “others” (those I studied) who are differently posi-

tioned in relation to power. On the other hand, in these spaces I was also being “studied,” observed, approached as an informant, and at times described as someone who was importantly yet problematically “too close to *it*.” The effects of this tension became especially tangible after my dissertation proposal defense. One of my dissertation committee members told the rest of the committee (who did not share his view) that I would probably become a future president of Bosnia but that I would never finish my Ph.D. degree because I was too close to the subject matter. While being well-accepted and well-supported in the department, I was also at times evaluated as being too close, too passionate, too emotional.²

The climax of this incongruity and incompatibility happened when I told one of my professors that for my master’s thesis I did not want to pursue the then popular topic of Bosnian war rapes³ as we had originally agreed. I told him that I found the topic suffocating. The professor paused, looked at me, and said quietly: “I understand.” I saw in his eyes that he assumed that I *also* was raped, and that this experience of, to use the popular yet problematic psychosocial term, “trauma,” was suffocating me. I did not know how to correct the professor I admired, how to explain that, fortunately—due to my geopolitical location within Bosnia and pure luck—I was not raped. Rather, I was *intellectually* exhausted by the contemporary studies of ethnic nationalism, including the topic of war rapes. I understood and felt my professor’s concern and discomfort; however, I also felt silenced, categorized, and reduced by his caring assumptions. The profound and uncomfortable silence which emerged between the two of us did not materialize in a vacuum. We were caught in complicated scripts and discourses—including academic, ethnic, and gendered—which positioned us differently in relation to power. Equipped with words but lacking common grammar, professor and student were reduced, via care and concern, to sitting uncomfortably in an office, together but worlds apart.

ON NOT RESPECTING BORDERS

The effects of this “impossibility”—of being a white, thus privileged, Ivy League Bosnian student in the United States on the one side, and being from Bosnia but not a proper refugee on the other—materialized every time I left the United States and traveled beyond its boundaries. As I progressed through my graduate studies, I absorbed the

idea that a good anthropologist and committed global citizen ought to respectfully engage, explore, discover, relate, listen, record, translate, share, and, if possible, empower. This flexible citizenship was different from how “proper” (Bosnian) refugees in the United States ought to behave. Once resettled, they are expected to stay put. To settle down. To assimilate. To contribute to the “melting pot.” To follow the logic of “metaphysical sedentarism” (Malkki 1992). My non-refugee status and my anthropological career-in-making habitually challenged these ideologies and scripts.

I was regularly stopped at borders and crossings, my movement interrupted, my possessions and body searched, my ethnic and national identity reinserted, my Bosnian passport examined and, if I was lucky, stamped. For example, in 1997 I was pulled off a Greyhound bus and searched at the U.S.-Canadian border because of my Bosnian passport, while the rest of the people on the bus watched. In another instance, in 2001 I was waiting in a line in front of the Hungarian Embassy in Washington, D.C., hoping to get a visa to study at the Central European University in Budapest that summer. While waiting—where waiting is a necessary ingredient of the visa-regime ritual by which some bodies are separated, made liminal, disciplined, suspended, and othered—I was also reading Habermas’s (1998) article about the promise of postnational constellations. I stood there, intellectually stimulated, while my body and soul were meticulously examined and disciplined, humiliated, and left to the mercy of governmental and national powers.

I also recollect how in the summer of 2000, I was not allowed to join my American host parents on a plane from Philadelphia to Guatemala City, because my valid Guatemalan visa—which together with nine other countries’ visas made my Bosnian passport colorful and interesting to some people—was not accompanied with a letter that the American Airlines staff said Bosnians needed to have in order to enter Guatemala. Since we were on a 6:00 a.m. flight and the Guatemalan Embassy did not open until 9:00 a.m., my American host family, upon my insistence, boarded the plane, while I was given a food voucher as I waited for the Guatemalan Embassy to open and for the airline staff to call them. After five hours of waiting, 160 pages into uncannily familiar Hardt and Negri’s *Empire* (2000), and with four empty coffee cups decorating my waiting area, I was informed that the letter was not needed anymore, and that the Guatemalan Embassy’s

website needed to be updated to reflect this change. Ten hours after my American host family boarded their plane, I left for Guatemala.

I also vividly remember my excitement, when as a junior at the University of Pennsylvania, I decided to spend a semester abroad in the Middle East, despite the fact that I was, as I was jokingly reminded, *already abroad*. In January 2000, I joined the School for International Training's program in the Middle East. There I, a Bosnian non-refugee and University of Pennsylvania anthropology undergraduate, "united" with thirteen American students from all over the United States to spend five months in Israel, Jordan, and Palestine. My union with the rest of the group was cemented during our first week of bonding at an intense team-building camp at an Israeli kibbutz. Our unity was challenged soon after when I was forced to wait for hours at the Israeli-Jordanian border to cross into Jordan. The rest of my classmates waited in solidarity with me, outraged, reminded of and unsettled by their own privilege. (Later that day two of my male friends from this group offered to marry me to avoid "such problems" in the future.) At this border, caught in the intricacies and unpredictability of the no-man's land, my educated, anthropological, Ivy League self was in a tender disjuncture from my Bosnian, non-refugee self who, in the hot Middle Eastern sun, was profusely sweating inequality at the border.

ON NON-REFUGEES AND DONUTS

I decided to end this essay with an instance of resistance where, in a playful yet semi-tragic and jarring tone, Bosnian non-refugees "struck back." During the first few years of our studying in the United States, the organizations that brought us to the land of promise organized a student retreat. We gathered somewhere in New Jersey for a weekend to relax, reflect, cry, laugh, and sing. These moments were charged with hope, nostalgia, happiness, mutual understanding, and sadness. We were welcomed at the house by a group of wonderful and dedicated social psychologists and therapists, many of whom were committed to us and to the program, and some of whom were also our host families. Their intensions were genuine and we appreciated their concern and worry, born out of ethics and love. And yet, we felt observed, evaluated, and carefully listened to for the signs of trauma and PTSD. For example, after I said to one of the friends/therapists in a casual conversation that I like to take two and sometimes even three showers

a day, she carefully and tactically recommended that I see “someone” because I was probably “feeling dirty” from the war.

Without talking much about the shared burden of being both cared for and constantly monitored, we, the privileged Bosnian non-refugees, agreed to eat up to ten donuts each, to see how our caretakers would react to our “eating disorder.” What we wanted was to create a rupture, to disturb and shatter the trauma discourse that homogenized and flattened our diverse experiences. This was both playful and possibly a bit malicious on our side, but it was one way in which we could have our guardians pause and think about the effects of their caring techniques and assumptions. We had no grammar, but we had our bodies, a mountain of donuts, and a good appetite. In this way we hoped to illuminate the absurdity of the situation. “We” ate—and ate—and “they” watched in disbelief. Then we all laughed, and cried a bit, and laughed some more. And this laughing together released something, both heavy and light, into the air.

CONCLUSION

This essay depicts the unexpected struggles of inclusion and exclusion that I, a Bosnian non-refugee, encountered after arriving in the United States on a student visa in the late 1990s. Here, the experiences of governmental scrutiny, visa regimes, border humiliation, and academic interpositions powerfully converged with numerous instances of genuine care, selfless academic support and commitment, tender love, and a sincere need to help. Together, these contrasting experiences shaped my non-refugee predicament and my coming of age in the United States.

It is not the “confusion” between non-refugee and refugee status that makes many of the events portrayed in this essay distasteful. It is not that that these moments were heavy and problematic because I was not a refugee and was not raped, but was “read” as such by professors, border guards, and psychosocial experts. Rather, it is because I had a unique and privileged opportunity, which I still cherish, to enter spaces where, the logic goes, homogenizing, essentializing, and totalizing approaches would be questioned and rejected, and a more complicated story of displacement, individual subjectivity, and group identity would be offered and developed. However, what happened in these encounters is the opposite: my experience, while in very important ways different from the typical predicaments of being a refugee,

has nevertheless been remade to be similar to those predicaments. And in this space of disjuncture between being and not being a refugee, there is both violence and a glimmer of hope—in this instance via laughing together.

ENDNOTES

1. These Bosnian refugees, together with other refugee groups from the former Yugoslavia, formed one of the five largest refugee groups that resettled in the United States during the last twenty years; their number is close to 170,000. <http://america.aljazeera.com/watch/shows/america-tonight/america-tonight-blog/2013/10/13/the-5-biggest-refugeegroupsofthelast20years.html>

2. Saida Hodžić, whose essay is also included in this volume, experienced this on numerous occasions as well. She remarks:

In high school, after I carefully prepared a comprehensive presentation about the Bosnian war, the teacher introduced me by saying “You don’t have to believe everything she says,” and then winked at me, as if to soften his words. Years later, in a graduate course, my objection to a farfetched argument about Bosnian war rape as an instrument of heterosexualization was dismissed in personal terms “You are reproducing the nationalist narrative,” I was told. From lessons learned since, I know that many anthropologists who do not belong to the most powerful social groups have their ability, authority, and choice of fieldsite questioned more often than others. (Personal exchange, June 2017)

3. Gender-based violence and especially war rapes have been at the forefront of the media, political, and academic discourses about the Bosnian war. It is estimated that anywhere between 12,000 and 50,000 women were raped, often systemically, in Bosnia between 1992 and 1995.

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THE RIGHT KIND OF REFUGEE

Larisa Kurtović

If there is one issue that both opponents and supporters of refugee resettlement agree on amidst the current heated debates in the United States, it is that candidates for these programs must be carefully vetted in order to ensure that those coming into the country do not pose a security risk and at the same time are—or have the potential to be—people whose values, comportment, and politics align with American ideals. Americans, it is said, can only accept the right kind of people: true refugees. Yet such a demand for moral compatibility—made on a terrain already marked by profound political and ideological polarization, and long and horrid homegrown histories of racialization—produces its own contradictions and ambiguities.

In March 1996, my family left Bosnia, having survived, miraculously intact and relatively unharmed, the nearly four-year long siege of the capital city, Sarajevo. The siege was one of the defining events of the Bosnian war, which took place from 1992 to 1995 during the decade-long violent dismantling of socialist Yugoslavia. The war in Bosnia displaced two million people—practically, one half of the country’s population—contributing to one of the largest post World War II refugee crises. Some of those fleeing the nationalist conflict remained internally displaced, while others dispersed to neighboring Croatia and Serbia, Western Europe, Scandinavia, and North America. These populations would eventually form a postwar Bosnian diaspora.

Like many other Sarajevans who left the city after, rather than during, the war, my family did not quite recognize the December 1995 signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement as the definitive end of the war that proved to be the defining event of our lives. In the absence of military parades and celebrations in the street, the war’s formal conclusion passed us by as a quintessential non-event, whose meaning we would not come to appreciate until many years later. Forced out by uncertainty about the future, and not by guns or paramilitary troops that “ethnically cleansed” other parts of Bosnia, my family was a privileged one that had actually made *a decision* to leave. I still recall the moment my father sat me down to ask whether I wanted

to go to America—and the lifelong ambivalence that my (positive) answer engendered about whether or not I could ever claim to be “a proper refugee.”

Upon our arrival in the city of Split, located on the coast of neighboring Croatia, we made our petition to enter the U.S. refugee resettlement program, in hopes of joining some of our extended family who were already living in Chicago. My parents knew that acceptance into this program was in no way guaranteed, so the specter of an unhappy return to war-torn Sarajevo loomed large in our imaginations. Having made the decision to leave, we feared “failure” and agonized about its possible consequences. In an effort to improve our chances, like many other refugees in Split, we sought information from local organizations and experts about how to achieve success in the U.S. resettlement program. During a visit to one such organization, despite being nearly fourteen years old (a budding teenager!), I received as a gift a stuffed tiger, probably a humanitarian donation intended for refugee children. I promptly named him “Mr. America.” I often stared at Mr. America during those four months we spent in a small room in a coastal town outside of Split, sharing a kitchen and a bathroom with other refugee families from Bosnia, as we wondered whether we would actually make it to America.

My parents knew that their civilian status, educational and professional backgrounds, and U.S.-based kin made them attractive candidates for resettlement. But there were also questions: some standard and expected (about the war and the nature of our involvement in it); some were less so. Most of those questions were not about things that matter most now, like whether we were Muslim and what kind of Muslims we were—after all, our white skin and Caucasian features made us seem non-threatening by default. In a pre-9/11 setting, the suspicion came under a different guise. In filling out application materials, my parents discovered that the U.S. Department of State, whose officials would subsequently interview them, wanted to know about their deeper political past, including whether or not they had ever been members of the Communist party.

Coming from a former communist state, where party membership was ubiquitous (especially among professional and managerial classes), my parents were indeed former party members. Unsettled, they once again sought advice from local information brokers in order to decide on the best course of action. Ultimately, they made a choice

to both declare their past membership and also explain it (away) as a choice they made as students in order to secure access to education and employment opportunities. Their explanation worked; in “coming clean” about their potentially problematic political histories, as well as putting the correct narrative spin onto it, they earned the mark of approval of the American agents who interviewed them. I will never know whether the agents read my parents’ past affiliations as an effect of totalitarian coercion or historical inevitability, or whether they perhaps interpreted their explanation as a sign of inherent ambition, pragmatism, and entrepreneurialism—traits that might be imagined as assets among resettlement candidates. What mattered was that after our second interview, we found ourselves holders of a privileged refugee visa that placed us on the highway to permanent residency and a fast track to naturalization. In an ironic twist of fate, we received U.S. passports much sooner than members of our family who had come to the United States as asylum seekers several years before.

I would find myself rehearsing a similar experience some twenty years later when I was, in another ironic twist of fate, offered a tenure-track job at the University of Ottawa. My unexpected fortunes on the notoriously difficult academic labor market (in which I had wallowed for over three years) generated a series of new administrative encounters that made me feel as if I had once again become a refugee—only this time, an economic one. The strangeness of my new circumstances had many dimensions. For example, I found myself uttering “I am an American” to Canadian border officers, governmental officials, and administrators who were trying to put me in the right box—something for which my alienated, and decidedly “ethnic” sixteen-year-old self, growing up in suburban Chicago would have probably never forgiven me. A year later, the (un)expected results of the 2016 U.S. presidential election generated even more irony, for they made it appear as if I had in fact enacted a fantasy of many American liberals by actually running away to Canada.

Now a holder of a special class work visa, on the account of which the Canadian state sees me as a landed immigrant on a fast track towards naturalization, I cross the North American borders effortlessly, despite the harsh new measures to which others are subjected. Both Canadian and U.S. border agents treat me with a welcome indifference—one recently reacted to my erroneous attempt to scan my electronic boarding pass on a fingerprinting device with the words:

“Oh no, that is not for you.” I debated for a second whether or not to mischievously ask him “So who *is* it for?” but ultimately decided against it.

In contrast to the experience of millions of refugees in this world, my paperwork and the way I look inoculate me these days from certain kinds of suspicion. Yet I am, in fact, the full expression of the right-wing’s image of a state enemy: a Muslim, a refugee, an immigrant (and an upwardly mobile one at that, who managed to snatch “a good job”), a leftie (of a proper communist pedigree, no less!), a woman (and a feminist), an academic and a university professor. And yet none of this registers because of my phenotypical features and privileged papers, which make possible for me a mobility that is nowadays denied to many others.

A few months after I came to Canada, the lifeless body of Alan Kurdi, washed up on a Turkish beach. As the full extent of the catastrophe that we are now deeming “the refugee crisis” became known to me during my first semester of teaching at the University of Ottawa, I too had to reckon with the kinds of privilege that have been bestowed upon me. Privilege is not a word that one often hears uttered in relation to refugees—after all, refugees are imagined and supposed to be disempowered, pathetic, and worthy of sympathy by default. They often endure struggles that native-born citizens do not. Yet in an historical moment when millions are seeking refuge in a desperate claim for *a life*—a successful entry into a resettlement program is precisely that. Such a privilege is secured not just by historically and politically created opportunities (for there are always favorites among the refugee populations deemed more desirable than others) or strategic action, but frequently also by the capacity to demonstrate certain kinds of sensibilities.

My parents—a doctor and an engineer in pursuit of better lives for their children, if not for themselves as it turned out—said the right things and checked the right boxes, and even found a way to disclose potentially compromising information about themselves in a way that convinced decision makers that we were indeed *the right kind of refugees*. The apparent academic successes of their children can now offer fodder to the national fantasies of growing inclusion and the resilience of the American dream, just as they purposefully obscure the fact that children of doctors and engineers, regardless of their racial or ethnic background, statistically always do much better. But behind the scenes,

the life of a refugee family is full of disquiet, disillusionment, alienation, worry about the future, and long and hard night shifts working difficult and at times dangerous jobs. My parents' sensibilities—as well as those of their children—exist in a perpetual state of affective and ideological arrhythmia that makes it impossible for us not only to be American, but to be the kind of grateful, morally obedient subjects envisioned as the end point of the resettlement program.

That idealized grateful refugee subject is an effect of particular kinds of depoliticized fantasies that deny, as Malkki (1996) once observed, that refugees are real people with a history and an historical consciousness. They must instead represent an idealized humanity in its most pure, untainted state. But states are actually far more cynical in the way they view moral potential. It was only recently, in the context of the dramatic airport protests following the so called “Muslim ban,” that I learned that questionable political pedigrees (like the ones my parents had to explain away), remain a legal ground not only for the denial of immigration petitions but for revoking already secured rights, including those gained through the process of naturalization. Yet my own family's experience, as well as the experience of many other Bosnians, indicates that *the fact of such membership* is not in fact a ground for exclusion, provided that other criteria line up. It is often failure to disclose, rather than the content of one's disclosure that provokes action by relevant agencies. One must put the right narrative spin, so to speak, to one's political past (after all, there is nothing that Americans love more than a good story of personal redemption). Nevertheless, the legal infrastructure created during the hyper-politicized period of the Cold War remains in place and “on the books” so that it might be activated for those deemed troublesome, risky, or unworthy. One must start to wonder, given the current administration's animosity toward movements like Black Lives Matter or Antifa, how might this Cold War legislation someday affect non-citizens participating in them.

It is not just political action that places one at risk of being deemed unworthy. Being convicted of a crime—itself a sign of a “defective moral character”—routinely leads to stripping away of rights. In late 1990s Chicago, some of the recently arrived Bosnian refugees found this out the hard way, when a number of young people who, instead of becoming doctors and professors, had turned to drug use and drug sale, were simply sent back and their immigration status revoked. Their

troubled and tragic trajectories could be integrated neither into the narrative of a “grateful refugee” nor that of the American Dream. States that provide refuge, it turns out, are not at all forgiving when people fail to live up to their moral potential, even when those failures are in many ways a product of structural issues, such as post-Fordist configurations of the labor market, poverty, exclusion, or even something more elusive like PTSD. The refugee is supposed to rise above both personal and historical experience.

Those of us that seem to have done so are scrutinized in a different way, for our odd manner and body language, slight or more pronounced accents, lack of mastery over definite and indefinite articles, struggles with American measurements, inability to smile on cue, and our critical edge, which often registers as bitterness . . . or worse. When I was a young instructor years ago, a student described me as anti-American in my course evaluations—and I could not even remember what was it that I had said or done to invite such criticism. To this day I wonder why I could not simply pass as “a biased liberal,” the usual description conservative students use for their largely progressive professoriate. I suspect it might have had something to do with the fact I did not—and could not—enact the figure of the grateful refugee. Perhaps s/he had even caught onto my profound, unmistakable skepticism of national projects and nationalist ideologies—an important, though not inevitable, effect of my lived experience.

The said evaluation carried little consequence in my life or professional career—after all, academia is a refuge of many outspoken and not-easily-categorizable people, whose job is paradoxically to be both skeptical and take very seriously deeply held ideals. But even academics can be a tough crowd. There is a limit to drawing from intimate political histories; affect is good in moderation, but it must be tempered, rendered less threatening, and kept in control. Over the years I learned to hold my tongue even among the most critically oriented crowd because, as the other two other essays in this section testify, there is inevitably something to be lost in translation between one set of historically rooted political sensibilities and another. Straddling two worlds and two political histories in fact makes one both more cognizant of and less certain about cherished ideals, political narratives, and conceptions of goodness and morality in which people find refuge in times of crisis. This inability to grow attachments to precisely those ideological signposts that make one American—even to

pass as an American liberal (whatever that might mean)—testifies of limits and cracks in the projects of self-fashioning and re-fashioning so often required of refugees and immigrants. The truth is, no matter how attuned and how clever one is, convincing others of one's deservedness and moral compatibility is never a finished process. The settings change, the audiences evolve, but the scrutiny and possibilities of failure—of being outed, so to speak—always remain.

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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

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Natalie Cox (MA, PhD) teaches anthropology at San Francisco City College, and also teaches for the Center for Writing and Scholarship at the California Institute of Integral Studies. Her research focuses on the immigration and resettlement challenges faced by African immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers in the Bay Area.

Marisa O. Ensor is an applied political anthropologist and human rights scholar and practitioner currently based at Georgetown University's Institute for the Study of International Migration and Justice and Peace Studies Program. Her recent publications include *Children and Forced Migration* (2016), *African Childhoods* (2012), and *Children and Migration* (2010).

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Joann Yeh Litt received her BS from MIT where a course in Asian American studies inspired her to take up law. She received her JD from the University of Pennsylvania Law School and was the Law Review's executive editor. She is currently with the law firm of John Johannes in Los Angeles.

This volume reflects the breadth of the anthropological vision of refuge, and the application of that breadth to understanding the many barriers that are created against refuge—whether for people meeting the formal legal standards of being refugees or for those many others for whom only durable refuge can bring a viable and meaningful human future.

About the editors:

David Haines is co-president of the Association for the Anthropology of Policy (ASAP); Jayne Howell is president of the Society for Urban, National, and Transnational/Global Anthropology (SUNTA); and Fethi Keles is interim chair of the Committee on Refugees and Immigrants (CORI).

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