Refuge

Psychosocial Dimensions of the Refugee Experience

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Vulnerability, Resiliency, and Dignity: Psychosocial Dimensions of the Refugee Experience

Introduction

Arancha Garcia del Soto

Within the realm of refugee work, "psychosocial" approaches tend to be labeled "soft" when compared to legal, economic, and medical perspectives. The term "psychosocial" itself encompasses many different ways of applying psychology and other social science knowledge, ranging from a clinical focus on individuals to broad community strategies. Often, professionals with shared backgrounds, such as psychologists, hold divergent beliefs and adopt different roles when employing psychosocial approaches in their work with refugees and survivors of violence. As one participant explained it at a meeting of psychosocial workers from Colombia, Sri Lanka, and Uganda, "It is not everything, but it is in every program." But in an effort to avoid the mere tokenization of words like "psychosocial," "participation," and "process," there are growing calls in the field for new ways of relating to and caring for refugees and survivors, listening more closely to their voices, and recognizing the specificities of the refugee context.

One of the founding fathers of participatory action research (PAR), Orlando Fals-Borda, argues that the three primary "strategic tensions" shaping how we work with populations different from our own involve ongoing debates about (1) theory and praxis, (2) the subject versus the object in research or applied work, and (3) cosmovision and value systems. Also, it can be argued that there are three different groups of interest, each requiring a different "lens," that converge when doing general refugee work. First, there are the refugees and survivors who want to have their basic needs met, strive to rebuild their lives, and demand justice and visibility. Second, there are the researchers and workers who want to understand the dynamics of conflict and recovery, and to implement programs. And third, there are the elites and institutions in charge of the "transitional" phase, eager to leave the violent times behind and to move forward (while often denying the survivors' right to memory). Although these three collectives agree on the basic goal of ameliorating the impact of violence, they usually differ—often considerably—in their understanding of what dignifies, who should define the needs, and how best to implement the programs.

The rigor of the validity-reliability dyad, and of evidence-based approaches more generally, is difficult to find in the field of applied refugee research and work. The "soft approaches" to research more commonly found here are guided by the complexity of the contexts and by the participation of the refugees themselves. It seems that it is often hard for some university scholars to understand this, given the priorities of their laboratories and classrooms when compared to the realities of the field.

In this issue, we present a collection of articles that represent a shared effort exploring how to better understand and communicate with the actors in the field, especially the refugees themselves, while also reflecting on the different narratives and tools that possible to do so (e.g., words and interviews, images, media articles, data). Together, these articles help move us toward thinking about the psychosocial perspective as a transversal approach, an approach that is an indispensable component of many programs regardless of their explicit focus, and an approach that is crucial in order

to better grasp the culture, the values and priorities of the people, and the nuances of the refugee context.

Mike Wessells opens the conversation by acknowledging the critiques of the psychosocial approach for the absence of 'hard evidence,' and makes a clear and experience based plea for critical self-awareness, and for the specificity of action. He reminds us of the basics, which cannot be emphasized enough: local empowerment and the restoration of dignity, enhancing the importance of culture, and the need to avoid the imposition of outside approaches when working in refugee contexts.

In their contribution, clinical psychologists Roy Eidelson and Rebecca Horn focus on the individual and collective worldviews of Sudanese refugees in the setting of one of the largest refugee camps in East Africa, Kakuma Camp in Kenya, For over three years, Rebecca Horn was engaged in dedicated daily psychosocial work in the camp, while also collecting valuable data. Their article highlights the psychosocial crucial influences of context and culture in "meaning making." Along these lines, they explore the varying and profound meanings of 'home.'

Inmaculada Serrano bridges economic game theories approaches and the theory of emotions to formulate assessment tools that tap into the conceptions of displaced persons' decision to return to their places of origin in the areas of Zvornik and Vlasenica, in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Inmaculada is one of those young sociologists who has spent years in the field, and is able to combine an acute anthropological sensitivity with evidence-based approaches to research. The core sociological concept of her piece is 'microfoundations,' which is based on the material and emotional factors influencing decisions for and against return in this part of the Balkans.

Lakshmi Ramarajan represents the approach of organizational psychology. She analyzes the importance of human resources within the organizations implementing programs to assist refugees, specifically the role of a firm (an NGO) focused on working with refugees in Sierra Leone. The terms 'culture,' defining the institutional formal and not-so-formal regulations, and 'clients,' signifying the refugees, are central to her piece. Currently, conducts quantitative research, collecting data using identity questionnaires; she combines it with a deep understanding of applied work, coming from her several years of work with NGOs.

Laura Simich and her colleagues Lisa Andermann, Joanna Anneke Rummens, and Ted Lo, describe in their piece a clinical community workshop, held with members of the Toronto Tamil community following the Asian Tsunami. They emphasize the relevance of culture in the practice of 'disaster relief.' The authors highlight trust and mutual respect as the basic attitudinal messages; they also

recall some of Jack Saul's and Daya Somasundaram's work, specifically their focus on 'dignity' and on the importance of culturally-sensitive and community-based approaches. They include several practical recommendations to conduct similar workshops, and make a final plea for cooperation among practitioners, institutions and the community.

Bree Akersson's article reflects on pregnant women and past and future ideas of vulnerability. Using a program of the International Rescue Committee (IRC) in the Northern Caucasus (Chechnya and Ingushetia) as an example, she provides a theoretical understanding of three types of social support systems in complex emergencies: material, cognitive, and emotional. She writes about the essential connections between this program and other related ones, such as post-partum care, gender-based violence prevention, and addressing pregnancies resulting from rape, pointing, as such, toward more solid and comprehensive strategies.

Serena Chaudry links the arts with the psychosocial approach, presenting an example of work that she conducted with Liberians in two scenarios: the U.S. and Liberia ('back home'). She describes this truly participatory Photovoice project, and the resulting multi-media exhibit, which included local artists and others. The key terms she emphasizes are 'resiliency' and 'giving back,' focusing especially on the elderly refugees.

Rosemary Barbera presents the psychosocial impact on communities of some of the political repression techniques used by the Chilean dictatorship – internal exile, or 'relegacion.' She describes the impact on the affected families from a social and political understanding of the dynamics of community. To her own insights from her long-standing, committed research in Chilean Human Rights, she adds examples from literature. Central to Barbera's piece is the idea that the real accountability lies in the memories of the so called 'clients' or 'beneficiaries,' in this case, 'los relegados' and their families.

Bruce A. Collet analyzes the notable tension between object and subject, the us vs. them, or insider-outsider gap that comes up when doing research with diasporic communities. He emphasizes the importance of understanding the deep meaning of 'community-based,' as connected to the trust issues between the researchers and the communities with which we want to work, the theoretical and applied principles of Participatory Action Research, and the need for the 'democratization of knowledge.'

Finally, Harold Bauder examines the processes of Canadian national identity formation through the media lens, in reaction to humanitarian immigration policies. Drawing on Hegelian dialectics, he uses a discourse analysis of newspaper articles published over the course of five years, which offer a body of illustrative case descriptions. He reflects on

how the different social representations of refugees are connected to material and symbolic factors.

The majority of the authors have significant experience in this field, having had prolonged exposure to the various refugee populations worldwide. Some of the authors have years of field experience in the conflict zones of the world. They all encourage the adoption of a new "committed to the context" way of doing research and implementing programs, a way of working that basically "means/makes sense" to the so called 'beneficiaries.' They draw attention to the different generational, gender and vulnerable groups, in particular highlighting their resilience in the face of adversity (e.g. the strengths of the elderly or the pregnant women). The authors both listen to and reflect the voices of the refugees. Along the continuum between classic research and participation, they propose that the key issues should be addressed and resolved by incorporating the concepts and realities of the psychosocial aspects, to the current mainstream solutions being put forward.

Refugee populations worldwide experience pain, trauma and hardship. But also the resiliency required overcoming those and rebuilding life. Eradicating the injustices committed, and alleviating the sufferings of the refugees, is a common goal of both the refugees themselves, and the researchers and workers on refugee issues. Their shared commitment to this cause creates a bond between the two groups. Passion and suffering go together. Commitment and uncertainty is bond. We are still some steps away from achieving the goals of peace and dignity for all mankind, and the company of the survivors of the refugee experience will be essential in continuing this work. Their own voices, and the memories they will keep of our work when accompanying them in their hard march towards a more human life and freedom, represent the ultimate accountability, and the best possible testimony and evaluation of the importance of psychosocial processes.

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Her research and applied work on emergency and development issues, have focused on psychosocial interventions involving survivors of violence (mostly community and gender based violence programs). It spans four continents, from Europe and Africa to Latin America and Asia.

Do No Harm: Challenges in Organizing Psychosocial Support to Displaced People in Emergency Settings

Michael G. Wessells

Abstract

Psychosocial assistance in emergencies plays an important role in alleviating suffering and promoting well-being, but it is often a source of unintended harm. A prerequisite for ethically appropriate support is awareness of how psychosocial programs may cause harm. This paper underscores the importance of attending to issues of coordination, dependency, politicization of aid, assessment, short-term assistance, imposition of outsider approaches, protection, and impact evaluation. With regard to each of these issues, it suggests practical steps that may be taken to reduce harm and maximize the humanitarian value of psychosocial assistance.

Résumé

L'assistance psychosociale dans des situations d'urgences joue un rôle important dans le soulagement de la souffrance et la promotion du bien-être ; mais, souvent, elle est la source de préjudices non intentionnels. Une connaissance de la façon dont les programmes psychosociaux peuvent causer des préjudices est un préalable pour un support éthiquement convenable. Cet article souligne l'importance de la prise en considération des problèmes liés à la coordination, la dépendance, la politisation de l'aide, l'évaluation, l'assistance à court terme, l'imposition des approches par des personnes extérieures, la protection, et l'évaluation de l'impact. Il suggère des mesures pratiques qui peuvent être prises par rapport à chacun de ces problèmes pour réduire les préjudices et optimiser la valeur humanitaire de l'assistance psychosociale.L'assistance psychosociale dans des situations d'urgences joue

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For many years, psychosocial support to refugees and internally displaced people was viewed through the lens of Maslowian psychology[1] as a second-tier operation, something to be done after one had met people's basic survival needs in an emergency. More than any other single event, the December 2004 tsunami showed that the psychosocial effects of catastrophic events are not secondary but primary dimensions of the lived experience of emergencies. For a child who had hoped for a good life but who in a matter of minutes lost her home, family, village, belongings, and many friends, the psychosocial shocks were not secondary to her material losses or things to be dealt with later. This brief but catastrophic moment convinced the world that psychosocial support ought to occur at the same time one applies the most immediate life-saving measures in areas such as health, water and sanitation, shelter, and food aid.

This increased priority of psychosocial interventions is owed in part to the professionalization of the field of psychosocial assistance to displaced people. This trend is evident in three respects. First, there is a rapidly growing literature on the psychosocial impact of forced migration that spans multiple continents, age groups, and kinds of vulnerability and that increasingly takes into account issues of gender, class, and culture.[2] Second is an expanding array of promising practices in supporting displaced people[3] and increased attention to the importance of documenting the impact of psychosocial programs.[4] Third is the development of global, inter-agency guidance regarding psychosocial support. Following a mandate from the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), twenty-seven UN agencies and consortia of non-governmental agencies (NGOs) have recently constructed the first global guidance on the minimum response to mental health and psychosocial support needs in emergency settings.[5] This guidance simultaneously points practitioners in the directions that have proven most effective and cautions against harmful practices.

Despite the increased professionalization and legitimacy of the field of psychosocial assistance to displaced people, there are significant, ongoing concerns about respect for the humanitarian imperative "Do No Harm." In nearly every emergency, unnecessary harm is caused by the very humanitarian operations that are intended to support affected people.[6] One of the main factors that enables harm is the paucity of systemic evidence regarding which psychosocial interventions work or are most effective per dollar of investment. Although the field of psychosocial assistance shows increasing professionalization, it does not have the impressive array of proven interventions visible in humanitarian sectors such as health. In the absence of hard evidence, psychosocial interventions are often guided by preconceptions, personal preferences, and ideologies rather than by applied science that takes into account the unique historical, political, cultural, and social realities of the affected people and their situation. Too often, emergencies serve as a testing ground in which well-intentioned psychologists, including those who have little or no field experience, ply their latest tools, most of which have not been validated in the local context.

The likelihood of causing harm owes much to myriad factors such as the competitive structure of the humanitarian enterprise, uncertainties about its fundamental goals and orientation,[7] the power differential between outside agencies and local people,[8] the complexities of local culture and politics[9] not to mention the complexities of humanitarian politics,[10] and the lack of appropriate training for international psychosocial workers. Also, most professional codes of ethics and institutional review boards, nei-

ther of which were designed with large-scale emergencies and diverse cultures and situations in mind, offer scant guidance or oversight. For most humanitarian workers, the author included, the pressures of an emergency overwhelm the propensity for self-reflection. The sad irony is that without critical self-reflection, one is unlikely either to see the inadvertent harm one causes or to take the steps needed to correct and prevent harm.

This paper aims to identify some of the main ways in which psychosocial interventions cause harm and to offer concrete suggestions regarding how to prevent harm. It seeks to avoid denigrating the field of psychosocial support or paralyzing workers by suggesting that psychosocial programs inevitably do more harm than good. Rather, its goal is to offer constructive criticism that strengthens psychosocial work by helping to prevent unnecessary harm. My core assumption, derived largely from field experience, is that much harm can be prevented through a mixture of critical self-awareness and action. With this in mind, I will examine seven key issues, which are not exhaustive but which arise repeatedly and warrant immediate attention. For purposes of simplicity, each issue will be examined separately, though in practice some of the greatest harm occurs through their interaction. For each issue, I will identify practical steps that mitigate and prevent harm.

Coordination

It is axiomatic that large-scale emergencies present needs that are too great to be met by any single agency and that inter-agency collaboration and coordination are necessary.[11] Accordingly, UN agencies or satellite agencies organize coordination groups to enable effective collaboration, protect human rights, and achieve appropriate levels of quality and coverage in the humanitarian response.

Nevertheless, poor coordination continues to be the Achilles heel of nearly every emergency operation. Coordination problems arise largely from the structure of the humanitarian enterprise, in which agencies compete for the same limited funds and often seek to gain comparative advantage by not sharing information and not relinquishing their advantage through collaboration. That poor coordination causes harm is evident is the waste of scarce resources due to duplications of effort, the failures to share information and to learn from each other, the uneven coverage of geographic areas having significant humanitarian need, and failure to deliver comprehensive support.

Psychosocial workers contribute to these issues in myriad ways. In Timor Leste (former East Timor) following the 1999 attack of the Indonesian paramilitiaries, many agencies conducted psychosocial work to support the population that had suffered mass displacement and destruction

of homes and infrastructure. However, most humanitarian agencies stayed close to the capital city, Dili, where they had ready access to large numbers of people. The apparent motivations were to look good to donors by serving large numbers of people and to stay close to where the key resource allocation decisions were made rather than go to remote, rural areas that had enormous but unmet needs. Unfortunately, this tendency to maintain a prominent position in the centres of power limited geographic coverage and undermined the strategic allocation of resources that is at the heart of effective coordination. A similar pattern wherein agencies cluster near the capital is visible in most emergencies.

Significant coordination problems are also evident in failures to provide the diverse kinds of support needed to assist affected people. Most psychologists and psychiatrists accept the idea that in an emergency, supports should be organized according to the familiar intervention pyramid.[12] At the top of the pyramid is a minority of people, typically around 10 per cent, who are severely affected or who had pre-existing problems such as chronic mental illness and who need specialized supports such as psychiatric care. The middle layer of the pyramid is a larger group, usually around 40 per cent of the population, who are at risk due to issues such as gender-based violence, separation from families, recruitment by armed groups, stigmatization and isolation, and exploitation through dangerous labour. These at-risk people, who often include the elderly, women, children, and people with disabilities, often benefit from focused psychosocial supports that trained paraprofessionals implement at the community level. The largest group—the 50 per cent at the base of the pyramid—typically requires no specialized or focused support and will function well and without severe distress through the provision of appropriate education, health, shelter, livelihood, and other basic supports. Within this framework, effective coordination requires the establishment of supports at each level of the pyramid and of appropriate referral mechanisms.

In reality, however, it is the exception rather than the norm to observe in emergencies proportionate supports at all three levels. In most emergencies in resource-poor countries, the most severely affected people have few supports. In emergencies in places such as Angola and Chad, it is not uncommon to see people who are chronically mentally ill tied to trees or other objects to prevent them from wandering and encountering harm. In other emergencies, there is a shortage of holistic, community-based supports to assist people at the middle and bottom layers of the pyramid.

Even if proportionate supports exist, the division in the field of psychosocial assistance into clinically oriented work and more community oriented work may produce poor coordination across the layers. In most emergencies, psychiatrists working with the WHO and government health agencies organize clinical services for the most severely affected people. Typically, psychologists and social workers who are coordinated by agencies such as UNICEF and UNHCR organize holistic community-based supports. In Kosovo, this polarization resulted in the establishment of two separate coordination groups, one under WHO and the other under UNHCR. The existence of separate subgroups is not problematic in itself, but it becomes an impediment if there are no communications across the subgroups and no cross-group referral mechanisms. Sadly, a visiting group of US psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers learned that the two coordination groups neither collaborated with each other nor knew of each other's existence.

At present, this polarization of the field of psychosocial assistance poses significant challenges to the nascent Clusters system, in which the Health Cluster and the Protection Cluster share the coordination responsibilities for mental health and psychosocial support, working whenever possible with government partners. For example, soon after the 2006 earthquake in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, WHO, which plays a lead role in the Health Cluster, and the Indonesian Ministry of Health established a mental health coordination group. Independently, UNICEF, which plays a lead role in the Protection Cluster, established a child protection coordination group that included agencies conducting community-based psychosocial work. The problem was that initially the two groups did not attempt to coordinate. Although this situation was subsequently corrected, this example shows how the divisions in the field that antedated the Clusters approach can mitigate the effectiveness of the Clusters system. To address this problem, the new IASC Guidelines calls explicitly for the establishment of a single, overarching coordination structure. Psychosocial workers, too, can help to address the problem of poor coordination by doing their share to coordinate their work with others, participating in local coordination groups, and encouraging collaboration across different levels of the intervention pyramid.

Dependency

Two key parts of the foundation of humanitarian work are local empowerment and the restoration of dignity.[13] Active engagement in planning and action to build a better life is widely regarded as one of the best antidotes to the feelings of helplessness and being overwhelmed that are prevalent in emergencies and camps for displaced people. Also, people's sense of dignity, which is diminished by war, losses, and status changes associated with emergencies, increases mark-

edly as local people regain a sense of control and take active steps toward improving their lives. Whereas having a sense of agency bestows dignity and hope, feelings of dependency trample dignity and invite passivity and despair. Most community-based psychosocial programs aspire to mobilize and empower communities by activating local networks, encouraging participation, and building on the capacities that local people have.[14] This empowerment-oriented approach emphasizes community resilience and avoids regarding local people as passive victims.

It is an understatement to say that many emergency psychosocial responses fall short of this ideal. Following the December 2004 tsunami, for example, a door-to-door survey in a village of fifty families in northern Sri Lanka indicated that there were twenty-seven different NGOs there "providing help." According to one local resident, "We never had leaders here. Most people are relatives. When someone faced a problem, neighbours came to help. But now some people act as if they are leaders, to negotiate donations. Relatives do not help each other any more."[15] This example illustrates the harm that occurs when the emphasis is on providing external supports rather than on building on the resources and supportive practices that already existed. Done badly, humanitarian aid undermines local supports at the very moment they need to be strengthened.

One of the most common pathways into dependency is tokenistic participation. Participation, which is a core human right, is authentic when local people have ownership over programs, take part in key decisions, and guide program design, implementation, evaluation, and refinement. In the heat of emergencies, however, participation is often relegated to the sidelines due to the emphasis on saving lives by providing emergency services. Often, NGOs create these services with little consultation with government actors or community leaders and members. For example, expatriate psychiatrists often provide services via international NGOs that create what amounts to a parallel system to that of the government for caring for severely affected people. Sadly, these parallel systems tend to collapse when the emergency funding dries up. With local people dependent on outside services that are unsustainable, the withdrawal of the services leaves needy people unsupported and quite possibly worse off than they might have been otherwise. As colleagues in Sri Lanka put it, the greatest shock of the tsunami was the influx of external actors who showed greater interest in garnering large grants than in building local capacities and partnering at a deep level with local communities and government actors. Cynically, they called this phenomenon the "golden tsunami," an epithet that ought to awaken all humanitarians to their responsibilities.

To avoid these problems, psychosocial workers should put capacity building, empowerment, and community mobilization at the heart of their program approach. Although in emergencies one sometimes hears agencies excuse themselves by saying "There was no time for a fully participatory approach," it is time to recognize that a participatory approach is both essential and feasible in most contexts.

Aid as a Political Tool

Humanitarian ethics require close adherence to the principle of impartiality, which calls for humanitarian workers and agencies to deliver aid where it is needed, without prejudice to particular political, military, ethnic, gender, class, or religious orientations. Also, there is widespread attention to the principle of independence, which requires humanitarian agencies not to take sides in a conflict and to avoid making humanitarian aid an extension of military operations.

These principles, however, are easier to state than to obey in practice. In every affected group of people, there are discernible subgroups that vie for power and influence. Not uncommonly, local people appropriate aid to the benefit of some groups over others, even using it to continue the fighting that had caused mass displacement in the first place.[16] Following the 1994 Rwandan genocide, for example, Hutu genocidaires used food and other aid to purchase weapons and cement their own power, while denying food to their enemies.[17] A less horrific but equally objectionable case occurred in Tamil Nadu, India, where, following the tsunami, the Indian government and international agencies provided aid according to caste, as the "untouchables" received little aid and were denied their basic rights. In such cases, the way aid is delivered undermines people's psychosocial well-being.

It is important for psychosocial workers to avoid reified images of "community" which are hopelessly simplistic. All aid, including psychosocial support, enters a conflict system where it is appropriated and used by different groups having different agendas. Considerable on-the-ground experience and understanding of the local culture and situation are needed to map the local power structure, discern different subgroups, and build a nondiscriminatory process that includes all groups, including invisibles such as the poorest of the poor and people with disabilities. For this reason alone, it is ill-advised for psychosocial workers who have no international emergency experience and little understanding of the local culture and situation to enter a disaster zone with the idea that "we just wanted to help and had to do something." If this type of approach is a recipe for coordination problems, it is equally a problem for the development of politically and culturally sensitive pro-

grams. For these and other reasons, some professional psychology organizations discourage or prohibit their members from flooding into international disaster zones without affiliation with an appropriate aid structure or organization, relevant cultural competencies, and experience working in armed conflicts or natural disasters, whichever is appropriate in the situation.

Recent trends toward the politicization of aid and integrated military-humanitarian operations challenge the principles of independence and impartiality.[18] In fact, the US government has announced that its humanitarian assistance is an arm of its foreign policy, which is far from impartial, and USAID now sits under the US State Department. In countries such as Afghanistan, aid is increasingly funded through provincial reconstruction teams. The activities of these civil-military units blur the boundaries between military and humanitarian operations, shrink the humanitarian space, and reduce local people's trust of humanitarian workers. Lost trust is a profound issue for psychosocial workers since feelings of trust and security are essential for healing and other key psychosocial tasks. For this reason, psychosocial workers need to think carefully about whether and how to position themselves relative to military operations. These decisions go beyond the traditional questions such as whether it is appropriate to hire armed guards, which can support the militarization that fuels armed conflicts. Most psychology curricula offer little if any training on how to engage with these complex humanitarian ethical dilemmas.

Assessment Issues

An essential first step in addressing humanitarian needs is to conduct a careful situation assessment that examines not only the local needs but also the resources and assets of the affected group. For most humanitarian workers and agencies, assessments are means of collecting the data needed to guide effective programming and to inform proposals to donors. Unfortunately, the assessment process often raises local people's expectations that they will soon receive aid,[19] but delays of several months between the assessment and the start of the program commonly occur and frustrate local people who have urgent needs. As a cynical Kosovar elder said to me, "They [the NGOs] came with their fancy cars and their writing tablets and asked many questions. But what have they actually done?" This frustration is amplified by the poor coordination that enables duplicate assessments, assessment fatigue, and ongoing inaction.

Furthermore, most assessments include little real participation by local people, who are relegated to roles such as "beneficiaries" and "respondents" to prepackaged questions rather than partners in taking stock of the situation

and designing supports. Too often, assessments begin a process that quietly diminishes local people's agency at the moment when they most need to reassert control over their situation. Not a small side effect is the lost opportunity to learn about the culturally constructed understandings local people have about the emergency and its aftermath. As discussed below, this inattention to local cultural understandings serves to marginalize the local culture and meanings that themselves provide psychosocial support.

To avoid these problems, psychosocial workers should make participatory rapid assessments coupled with a rapid response that provides the tangible evidence of support that local people need to see. By continuing the assessment as the rapid response occurs, one circumvents the limitations of rapid assessments while avoiding long delays in response.

Short-term Assistance

In most emergencies, there is an influx of outside psychologists who, in the eyes of local people, seem to "parachute in, stay a short time, and leave." Short visits are valuable when they support and build the capacity of local teams and are in the context of an organization having a durable presence. However, this tidy picture often bears little resemblance to what actually happens. In Angola during its war of nearly forty years, some psychosocial workers flew in and spent a week or two conducting discussions intended to begin a process of support, expression, and healing. When they left, there was no one and no organization to follow up on the discussions, which had raised difficult issues and left some people feeling vulnerable. In such situations, the psychosocial interventions probably caused more harm than good and were ethically dubious at best.

A better role for outside psychologists is to build the capacity of local people and groups, leaving direct intervention to local people.[20] Here, too, short-term efforts are best regarded with caution. For example, in many emergencies, NGOs and governments train cadres of local people to be counsellors. Not uncommonly, the trainings last only several weeks, and subsequent clinical supervision and support is an afterthought. The risk is that people having serious problems, including suicidal inclinations, may be in the care of people who are poorly equipped to support them and who may unintentionally cause harm. Because significant amounts of time are required to build capacities for psychosocial support, long-term efforts are indicated.

The need for long-term approaches stands in stark contrast with most donors' short funding cycles, which typically run only a year. In this respect, doing or supporting advocacy for long-term assistance is an essential part of responsible psychosocial work in emergencies.

Imposition of Outside Approaches

The structure of the humanitarian industry creates enormous potential for quiet abuses of power that are evident in neo-colonialist practices by NGOs and other outside agencies.[21] In many emergencies, NGOs rely on experts who use Western theory and practice, believe that their concepts and tools are universal and reflect good science, and analyze and offer possible solutions to the problem. In the process, local people take a secondary position and are made dependent on the outside experts, thereby sending a highly disempowering message that local people are unable to address local problems. In places such as sub-Saharan Africa, this message reinforces internalized beliefs about the inferiority of local people that centuries of colonialism had promulgated.

The problems inherent in this approach, however, extend well beyond issues of dependency and felt inferiority. In many emergencies, large numbers of psychologists arrive and set about measuring trauma prevalence, following the assumption that significant numbers of survivors will suffer clinical issues such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The tendency of psychosocial workers to rush in with a singular trauma focus itself has a number of harmful effects. Too often, the focus on trauma narrows the development of comprehensive services for people who face mental health issues, including chronic mental illnesses and neurological disorders that had antedated the emergency. Quite often, the emphasis on trauma stigmatizes local people by using labels regarded locally as denigrating and by portraying normal reactions to life-threatening experiences as a form of pathology.[22] Also, the power dynamics of the situation encourage the imposition of outsider concepts and tools that do not fit the local culture and that silence local people's own understandings about mental health and psychosocial well-being. Each culture has its own categories of life and death, illness and health through which people construct their understandings of their situation and what is required for recovery and well-being. The importance of culture is a prominent feature of many frameworks of psychosocial support.[23] When outside experts arrive, however, carrying predefined questionnaires and looking mainly for what their Western theories predict, they typically fail to ask about the aspects of experience or practices that local people regard as most important.

To illustrate, a team of Angolan social workers in Christian Children's Fund (CCF)/Angola worked to reduce trauma following the 1994 Lusaka Protocol that brought a temporary breathing space in the Angolan wars. Having been trained by Western psychologists, they measured prevalence of trauma symptoms and changes in prevalence as a result of a community-based program of nonformal education, which included expressive activities such as song, dance, and story-telling. They were quite convinced that trauma was the problem and a Westernized process of emotional expression and "working through" was the remedy. This tidy picture was challenged by the story of a young girl who said her village had been attacked and her parents killed, causing her to flee for her life. But her biggest self-reported stress was her failure to have conducted the locally appropriate burial rituals. Questioned about this, she explained to a university-educated, relatively colonialized staff that where she lived, people believed that the conduct of the burial rituals is necessary for the dead people's spirits to transition to the realm of the ancestors. Without the rituals, the spirits would be trapped and upset, leading them to cause problems of bad health and misfortune for family and community. In stark contrast to Western psychological theories, which are cultural products that embody Enlightenment values such as individualism, she viewed herself as having a spiritual affliction that was communal rather than individual. She said she needed to talk with a healer who knew how to help her conduct the appropriate burial ritual. Fortunately, the CCF/Angola team took her advice, and the conduct of the burial ritual helped her significantly. The team subsequently reoriented its program to include ethnographic research and a combination of Western and local resources for purposes of healing.

Unfortunately, this scenario of learning from local people, which ought to be the norm, is an exception in most emergencies. Outside experts and agencies wield so much power in emergencies that they readily impose their own views without challenge. Making matters worse, local people often silence themselves or willingly embrace the idea that "we are traumatized" because it seems to be their best hope of obtaining outside assistance. The quiet marginalization of local culture undermines or devalues local resources that could have been built upon and that ordinarily provide a source of meaning and continuity.[24] In this manner, outsiders privilege their own approaches while eroding or side-stepping valuable local sources of psychosocial support.

The best antidote to these problems of cultural imperialism is to learn as much as possible about the local cultural beliefs and practices before initiating even an assessment.[25] Quite often, local healers, elders, and religious and civic leaders are helpful cultural informants who can provide valuable insights into local culture. In beginning assessment and other phases of the program cycle, it is valuable to work through local people who have a thorough understanding of the situation and culture. The focus should be less on outsiders' preconceptions than on local people's understandings and resources for psychosocial support. Also, it is useful to reframe one's role from that of outside

expert, trainer, or program designer to that of facilitator in which one works in partnership with local people, learning together with them. Often, this approach leads to a constructive blending of local and outsider approaches that avoids sidelining local practices. Throughout, it is crucial for psychosocial workers to reflect critically on the power dynamics of the situation and what they have done or ought to do to respect and valorize local culture. Because some local practices are harmful, a key part of maintaining a critical perspective is to avoid the romanticization of local culture and to use international human rights standards as benchmarks for deciding which local practices are unsupportable.

Protection Issues

Protection is a profound issue for internally displaced people, many of whom live in very dangerous situations but do not enjoy the same standard of international protections extended to refugees. For example, the risks of child recruitment increase in situations of mass displacement. Although discussions of protection frequently focus on physical safety, protection also has to do with reducing emotional, social, and spiritual threats to well-being. Five key protection issues merit attention here.

First are breaches of confidentiality, which can increase physical and psychosocial vulnerability. Imagine, for example, a psychosocial worker interviewing a girl formerly associated with an armed group in order to learn how to most effectively support her reintegration. The interview, however, ignites much discussion in the village, and word spreads to a neighbouring village. Soon thereafter, the girl is reabducted by the armed group. This example, which resonates with actual events in the field, illustrates the difficulties of maintaining confidentiality in a small village in which life is highly collectivistic, norms of Western privacy and confidentiality are weak, and the arrival of an outsider is a major event. To prevent such problems, it is vital to exercise high levels of sensitivity and to learn from key local informants such as elder women what steps can be taken to protect confidentiality.

Second are issues of informed consent. Before interviewing war-affected people, most psychosocial workers seek to obtain their informed consent by explaining their purpose, asking their written permission to talk with them, and explaining their right to refuse the interview, to not answer particular questions, or to end the interview at any time. The idea of written permission is often problematic if most people are illiterate, though the use of thumbprints or related methods may be suitable substitutes. However, the deeper question is whether local people really feel free to say "No." People in collectivist societies view the group

good as trumping the individual good, and this may lead them to do things that cause individual discomfort or harm. In desperate circumstances, the power dynamics of the situation strongly mitigate against saying "No" because the villagers see the interviewer as a source of cash and badly needed assistance. To refuse an interview might not only violate cultural norms of hospitality but also be perceived as harming one's family and village. As a result a person who is highly vulnerable might agree to participate in an interview when she is ill equipped to cope with the difficult feelings it may evoke. Although there is no easy remedy for this problem, useful steps are to discuss power issues directly and to seek guidance on how to handle the issues from local leaders and local groups working on social protection issues.

Third, interviews and psychosocial interventions may cause harm by asking intrusive questions that trigger horrific memories or by probing sensitive issues at a moment when the participants feel quite vulnerable.[26] In Afghanistan, I encountered a young humanitarian worker who had limited psychosocial training but had learned that healing occurs through emotional expression. Each day he gathered groups of children and asked them to draw a picture of the worst thing that had happened to them during the war. Unfortunately, he had not learned the other side of that view, namely, that the expression needs to be coupled with safety and appropriate processing or "working through" under guidance by a trained psychologist or social worker and backed by careful supervision. Nor had he taken into account that serious psychological issues might not arise immediately but might surface one or several days later. Making matters even worse, he had made no provisions for follow-up support. Such ill constructed psychosocial work is likely to do more harm than good and constitutes a significant protection threat. To prevent such harm, it is useful to avoid aggressive questioning; to provide appropriate psychosocial support during and following interviews; to work with local helpers to identify who is not in a good position to participate in potentially troubling discussions; and to ensure that potentially invasive methods receive peer review by local protection experts and are backed by appropriate supervision.

Fourth is the problem of excessive targeting of at-risk groups. In many situations, psychosocial workers attempt to support at-risk people, such as children formerly associated with armed groups, by engaging them in community-based programs that intermix elements such as community mobilization, family reintegration, health, education, and livelihoods. A major priority is to reduce the stigma often attached to being a former child soldier, many of whom had belonged to groups that had attacked the villages they hope

to return to in the post-conflict environment. Although such holistic approaches have discernible benefits to the former child soldiers, they may also trigger jealousies and create reverse stigmatization. In countries such as Sierra Leone, villagers often asked, "Why are these people who had attacked us getting all this attention and wearing better clothes than everyone else in the village?" In Liberia, villagers often referred to the material benefits extended to former child soldiers but not to others as "blood money," a tacit reward for what they had done. Fortunately, such problems can be avoided through the use of integrated programs that offer support not only to a group such as former child soldiers but also to other children who are at risk due to issues such as separation, disability, forced early marriage, dangerous labour, and HIV/AIDS, among many others.[27]

Fifth is the lack of connection between work on healing and nonviolent handling of conflict, which ought to go hand in hand. In Kosovo, following the Serb onslaught, the mass displacement of Kosovar Albanians, and the return home, much psychosocial work conducted in a trauma-healing idiom entailed having groups of Kosovar Albanians tell their stories, expressing and "working through" their pain. Often, this work had no connection with nonviolent conflict management or resolution. Numerous participants in such group discussions said that as Kosovars told their horrific stories, people felt anger and desire for revenge since it was apparent who had caused their victimization and suffering. Some participants said they knew of people who had left the discussions in a rage and attacked Serbs, thereby increasing protection threats to the now minority group and deepening the social divisions that had fuelled much of the violence. To avoid such scenarios, it is vital to link expressive work on healing with work on nonviolent handling of inter-group conflict and on the social injustices in which armed conflict is rooted.

Conclusion

There are countless other ways in which psychosocial workers unintentionally cause harm. Harm sometimes occurs not through inappropriate psychosocial practices but through one's personal dress and demeanour. In Afghanistan, for example, female expatriates will give offense if they wear the sleeveless blouses and shorts that are appropriate everyday dress in places such as Europe and North America. Harm may result from the very structure of a large-scale humanitarian intervention. In Afghanistan, following the defeat of the Taliban in 2001, the influx of humanitarian workers from predominantly Christian countries fuelled local perceptions that the humanitarian effort was part of an organized effort to Christianize a fervently Muslim society. The

fact that even one's presence, dress, and demeanour in a war zone may cause harm serves as a poignant reminder of the overarching importance of issues such as culture and religion in the current global context.

These and other issues warrant much greater attention to the "Do No Harm" imperative in the field of psychosocial assistance. Although some useful steps and guidelines are offered by the nascent global guidance referred to earlier, the problems are systemic and require concerted awareness and action at multiple levels and among a diversity of actors. New kinds of training and preparation are needed to provide the next generation of humanitarian workers with the ethical awareness, cultural competencies, understanding of historical and social forces, and technical skills they will need to respond to emergencies in a productive, appropriate manner. This new training cannot be achieved in academic institutions alone since actual field experience is often the best source of learning on these issues. Professional organizations and humanitarian agencies also need to provide better guidance and oversight. All agencies need to strengthen the evidence base regarding effective practice, simultaneously encouraging the use of effective practices and preventing the use of practices that are harmful and violate human rights. Above all, there need to be stronger norms of self-reflection and critical thinking among humanitarian workers. Collectively, these and related steps may enrich and transform the field of psychosocial assistance, enabling it to achieve its full potential and to provide the most effective support to war- and disaster-affected people in their hour of greatest need.

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Who Wants to Return Home? A Survey of Sudanese Refugees in Kakuma, Kenya

Roy J. Eidelson and Rebecca Horn

Abstract

With the goal of better understanding some of the psychological factors related to refugees' desire to return home, surveys were administered to 235 South Sudanese refugees living in the Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya. Respondents were asked about how much they wanted to return to Sudan, their emotional reactions about returning, their views on the prospects for peace, their expectations regarding how they would be received upon return, and their concerns about specific challenges they might face. In addition, they completed an inventory measuring their personal beliefs about issues in five domains: vulnerability, injustice, distrust, superiority, and helplessness in regard to prospective returnees to Sudan. A large majority was very eager to repatriate. Individual differences in attitudes toward returning were significantly linked to the strength of their beliefs in the five domains. Stronger beliefs about vulnerability, injustice, distrust, and helplessness were associated with more negative perceptions of return, while a stronger belief about returnee superiority was correlated with a more favourable perspective on repatriation.

Résumé

Dans le but de mieux comprendre quelques-uns des facteurs psychologiques liés au désir des réfugiés de retourner chez eux, des enquêtes ont été conduites auprès de 235 réfugiés originaires du sud Soudan et vivant dans le camp de réfugiés de Kakuma, au Kenya. On posa aux répondants des questions sur l'intensité de leur désir de retourner au Soudan, leurs réactions émotionnelles par rapport à toute la question du retour, leur point de vue sur les perspectives pour la paix, leurs attentes quant à la façon dont ils seraient reçus au retour, et leurs préoccupations quant aux défis spécifiques qui pourraient les con-fronter. En plus, ils complétèrent aussi un inventaire de personnalité permettant d'évaluer leurs croyances personnelles sur des questions relatives à cinq domaines : la vulnérabilité, l'injustice, la méfiance, la supériorité, et le sentiment d'impuissance par rapport aux éventuels candidats au retour au Soudan. La grande majorité était très désireuse de rentrer au pays. Les différences individuelles dans les attitudes par rapport au retour étaient étroitement liées à l'intensité de leur croyance dans les cinq domaines. Une croyance plus forte dans la vulnérabilité, l'injustice, la méfiance, et le sentiment d'impuissance était associée à des perceptions plutôt négatives sur le retour, alors qu'une croyance plus forte quant à la supériorité du réfugié revenant chez lui était corrélée avec une perspective plus favorable sur le retour.

Introduction

The plight of refugees and other people displaced from their homes by uncontrolled violence or deliberate ethnic expulsion has been well documented and has received increasing attention from scholars, practitioners, and the international community over the past decade.[1] Millions of these refugees find shelter in large camps run by UNHCR and collaborating NGOs, where they may "temporarily" reside for years and sometimes for decades. From this distance, across their country's borders, refugees often dream of someday returning, in part because, despite the events that may have precipitated their flight, feeling "at home" is viewed as a comfort that only their homeland can provide.[2]

But numerous researchers have documented how repatriation often proves to be significantly less rewarding and far more disillusioning than the resilient refugees who return home had anticipated[3] – due to a variety of factors including resentment from stayees, being perceived as outsiders, disinterest in their stories, stressful economic circumstances, and unexpected changes during their time

away.[4] In short, as Harrell-Bond and Gatson have observed: "Because the return is so strongly associated in the minds of exiles with the end of a traumatic period, the unexpected differences and difficulties can make going 'home' even more painful than the original exile."[5]

A particular setting where many of these issues and dynamics are currently salient is the Kakuma camp in Kenya, temporary haven to thousands of refugees from southern Sudan. During 2004–2005, UNHCR developed a repatriation plan to assist those refugees who want to return home. With this opportunity on the horizon, in the fall of 2005 we surveyed a sample of these refugees in Kakuma to assess their desire to return to Sudan, their emotional reactions at the prospect, their view of the ongoing peace process, the reactions they anticipated from stayees in Sudan, and the logistical challenges they expected to encounter. In addition, we were especially interested in how certain beliefs might bear upon their preferences and their perceptions of the road that lay ahead. Before describing these beliefs, some background on the Kakuma Refugee Camp is warranted.

Kakuma Refugee Camp and Its South Sudanese Refugees

Kakuma refugee camp was originally established for the 12,000 Sudanese minors who arrived in 1992, and since that time they have been joined by refugees from other nationalities and by thousands more Sudanese. Some have been resettled to third countries, such as the United States, Australia, and Canada, but many have been living in Kakuma for more than ten years. Those who came as children have been educated and have grown to adulthood in Kakuma; many children have been born here and have never seen Sudan.

The opportunities for refugees in Kakuma to improve their lives are limited. Kenyan government policy dictates that refugees are not allowed to live freely, but must stay in one of two camps (Kakuma or Dadaab). In Kakuma, refugees are not allowed to keep animals, since this is likely to increase conflict between the refugees and the local Turkana people. The semi-arid environment is not conducive to growing crops. It is possible for refugees to start small businesses, if the capital is available (either through a loan from an NGO or with money sent by family abroad). However, the market is finite because Kakuma is in a very isolated area and the majority of customers are other refugees, a small number of NGO staff, and local Kenyans. All NGOs in the camp "employ" refugees, but due to Kenyan laws prohibiting employment of refugees, they are engaged on a voluntary basis and then paid an "incentive," which is far lower than a wage would be for a Kenyan in an equivalent job.

Life in Kakuma, therefore, is hard, and the Sudanese community in the camp has placed a great deal of hope in the Sudanese Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), which was signed on 9 January 2005. Many expect that this will enable them to leave Kakuma to return to a new and peaceful Sudan, where they will have opportunities to live more comfortable and fulfilling lives. Agencies such as UNHCR are also anticipating that most Sudanese refugees in Kakuma (as well as other parts of Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Central African Republic, and the Democratic Republic of Congo) will indeed return home. This process is not, however, expected to occur rapidly, because South Sudan currently lacks many basic facilities such as schools, hospitals, and roads, and much of the land is contaminated with mines.

UNHCR has developed a repatriation plan to assist those refugees who want to return. In addition to assisting returnees logistically (*e.g.*, providing transport), the plan includes providing information, non-food items (*e.g.*, cooking pots, blankets), and protection to those returning; registering, monitoring, and tracking returnees; and ensuring there is the capacity to respond to emergencies. The assisted voluntary repatriation process was anticipated to begin once the rainy season ended in Sudan (*i.e.*, from October 2005 onwards), and to continue until May 2006, when the rains begin again and transportation becomes impossible due to the lack of paved roads. In July 2004 UNHCR anticipated that 30,000 Sudanese refugees would return from Kakuma in the eighteen months after the signing of the CPA.[6] However, it appears that this was overly optimistic. UNHCR revised its estimate with the expectation of 10,000 refugees being repatriated by the time the rains were to begin in May 2006.

The downward revision in large measure reflects recent political changes in Sudan resulting from the untimely death of Dr. John Garang de Mabior, the charismatic and influential leader of the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA). Garang was killed in a helicopter crash on 30 July 2005, three weeks after being sworn in as the first vice-president of the new Sudan. As the leader of the SPLA, Garang led the rebellion against the Khartoum government for twenty-two years. He was an exceptional politician, and one of the few senior southerners who genuinely believed in the concept of a united Sudan. For many South Sudanese, hopes and aspirations for a peaceful and prosperous future for their country were very much bound up with the figure of John Garang. The resulting sense of uncertainty has apparently led to reluctance amongst many Sudanese in Kakuma to return home immediately; instead, they want to wait and see how things develop in their homeland before returning. In response to this uncertainty, UNHCR Kakuma organized "go-and-see" missions, in which groups of Sudanese community leaders from the camp were taken to South Sudan to see the situation for themselves, and were then brought back to

Kakuma, where they were expected to pass on the information to members of their communities. However, the news that the facilities in Sudan were minimal did little to reassure refugees that the time was right for them to return.

As a result of this combination of factors, the launch of the assisted repatriation process on 17 December 2005 saw only 131 refugees return, some by plane and some by bus, to Kapoeta, Chukudum, and Bor. According to UNHCR, 1,600 refugees have registered for return to Sudan as soon as possible, and they still expect to repatriate 10,000 from Kakuma by May 2006 and to have repatriated all Sudanese refugees within the next four years. However, it is worth noting that in the same week that 131 refugees were officially repatriated from Kakuma, over 200 were received from Sudan. South Sudanese refugees continue to come to Kakuma in significant numbers, primarily due to hunger but also due to militia attacks in the south. Kakuma also receives a number of refugees from Darfur.

The Role of Refugees' Core Beliefs in Deciding Whether to Return Home

Eidelson and Eidelson have proposed that certain beliefs are particularly influential because they operate simultaneously as core beliefs fundamental to the daily existential experiences of individuals and as collective worldviews pivotal to the central concerns and shared narratives of groups.[7] They identify five specific content domains that meet this dual standard: namely, beliefs about vulnerability, injustice, distrust, superiority, and helplessness. The extent to which these deeply held beliefs are healthy and functional depends in large measure on whether or not they are accurate reflections of institutional realities and other real-world conditions. Whether from the perspective of an individual or a group, each of the five domains represents a personal or collective arena where beliefs can often encourage the exaggeration or underestimation of the risks and burdens currently faced or lying ahead.

In our survey we were interested in determining whether this five-belief framework would be useful in understanding how the Sudanese refugees in Kakuma felt about the prospect of returning home and how they perceived the situation that would await them there. Since an extensive discussion of these five domains is available elsewhere,[8] here we provide only a brief summary of the central features of each, with a particular focus on its relevance for refugees at Kakuma (based in part on observations from the second author's work in the camp over the past three years). Clearly, exploring the potential impact of these beliefs can prove valuable only if they have meaning and relevance within the specific social and cultural context to which they are applied.[9]

Vulnerability

The vulnerability belief, whether applied to one's personal world or to the experience of one's group, is characterized by the conviction that the world is a dangerous and risky place, where safety and security are difficult to obtain and catastrophic loss lurks on the horizon.[10] It often includes a tendency to focus on the likelihood of dire outcomes, which at the group level may originate in perceptions of the in-group's history as one of misery and oppression. As such, current peril and an uncertain future would appear to be defining features of the experience of many refugees and the groups with which they identify. In the Kakuma context, Sudanese refugees regularly describe themselves as under attack, not only by the northern Sudanese government but also by other groups in South Sudan. For example, the Dinka and Nuer tribes have a long history of conflict, which has continued to some degree in the camp, and each group perceives the other as likely to harm them if an opportunity arises.

Injustice

The injustice belief is based on the individual's perceptions of being personally mistreated by others or the view that in-group members receive undeserved, substandard, and unjust outcomes, perhaps due to a biased or rigged system created by a more powerful outgroup.[11] Such beliefs typically heighten identification and allegiance toward the in-group,[12] and they can mobilize powerful and violent collective insurgencies.[13] The injustice mindset is frequently linked to a historical perspective that emphasizes past episodes or periods of abuse and exploitation at the hands of others, which again can be a very prominent element of the refugee experience. In the Kakuma context, this belief is held most strongly by South Sudanese refugees in relation to the northern Sudanese government, which they believe has oppressed and exploited them for decades. However, such convictions are also held by some South Sudanese groups about each other. For example, at the time of writing, Nuer, Dinka Bor, and Dinka Bar el-Ghazal leaders in South Sudan are negotiating to resolve a conflict stemming from the Nuer group's belief that they are being treated unjustly in terms of the number of ministerial posts given to members of their tribe compared with those given to the other two groups.

Distrust

The distrust belief focuses on the presumed hostility and malicious intent of other individuals or other groups. In reference to the personal world, this mindset may range from a predisposition toward suspicion and anticipated deceit to outright paranoia. At the group level, the conviction that outsiders harbour malevolent designs toward the

in-group is sufficiently widespread that "dishonest" and "untrustworthy" are considered to be central elements in the universal stereotype of outgroups.[14] Here too, refugees would seem to have a particularly strong basis for developing a distrust mindset. In regard to refugees in Kakuma, it is important to recall that there have been previous peace agreements in Sudan, all of which have been broken. Most notably, the 1972 Addis Ababa Accord was progressively breached by the northern government, which was intent on controlling the oil fields in the south. Their introduction of Sharia law and other steps towards Islamization of the south triggered the resumption of the war in 1983. For most South Sudanese, therefore, it is difficult to believe in the northern government's commitment to the peace agreement, and there is great distrust of the northern regime generally.[15]

Superiority

The superiority belief revolves around the conviction that the individual or the in-group is morally superior, chosen, entitled, or destined for greatness—and the corresponding view that others are contemptible, immoral, and inferior.[16] At the group level, this mindset can be used to explain, legitimize, and ruthlessly enforce in-group status advantages[17] – or to advance the claim that current deprivations are temporary and inappropriate. It is this latter perspective that may capture a potentially key aspect of some refugee groups' understanding of their circumstances. Anecdotally, among refugees at Kakuma negative perceptions of members of other groups were more evident than was a narcissistic view of their own group's worth. For example, Dinka and Nuer refugees often talk about the negative characteristics of the other group; they are also very critical about the Muslim religion and lifestyle of the northern Sudanese.

Helplessness

Finally, the helplessness belief refers to the conviction that the individual or the in-group is unable to favourably influence or control events and outcomes.[18] Even when it does not accurately represent objective reality, this belief tends to be self-perpetuating because it diminishes motivation.[19] At the group level, since an effective social movement is inherently risky and depends upon the promise of some reasonable likelihood of success, organized political mobilization is severely hampered when group members perceive their in-group to be helpless to alter its circumstances. Although one might imagine that refugees could be particularly prone to see themselves as helpless, anecdotally this does not seem to be the case in regard to Kakuma's South Sudanese refugees. Rather, most of them appear to take considerable pride in the groups to which they belong, whether a clan group, a tribal group, or the larger group of "south Sudanese," and

they believe that these groups have power and efficacy. Indeed, in many ways the helplessness belief appears to be antithetical to Sudanese culture.

The Personal Beliefs of Sudanese Refugees about Their Group

Eidelson and his colleagues have provided a further elaboration of this five-domain model.[20] Of particular relevance here, they have emphasized how individual differences in members' personal beliefs about their in-group can be potentially important factors in explaining variation in their preferences, choices, and perceptions of the group's collective circumstances. Applying this framework to the Kakuma setting, we hypothesized that differences among the Sudanese refugees in the extent to which they believed their group would be vulnerable, mistreated, in need of a distrustful posture, superior, or helpless *if* they returned home would predict how they would view the prospect of repatriating. In particular we expected that stronger beliefs about the group in the vulnerability, injustice, distrust, and helplessness domains would be associated with a diminished desire to return to Sudan and with less favourable assessments of what life in Sudan would be like, while stronger convictions of in-group superiority would be linked to greater eagerness to repatriate and a more positive outlook on what the future there might hold.

Our interest in examining these specific hypothesized relationships and in evaluating the five-domain model more generally was motivated by the recognition that the psychological and informational bases upon which refugees make repatriation decisions can have very important implications for their welfare and future adjustment. Any framework that facilitates the identification of key issues and improves the process for prioritizing, organizing, and discussing available information about "home" (or other potential destinations) within the context of core concerns should be of value to the prospective returnees themselves and to the humanitarian aid workers striving to best assist and represent them.

Method

Participants

Participants ($N = 23$) were recruited from all areas of the Kakuma camp. All were Sudanese and Christian, and 68.1 per cent were male (although the gender balance was closer to 60 per cent male in the camp as a whole). The participants' ages ranged from sixteen to eighty-five ($M = 31.43$, $SD = 10.97$), with no significant age differences between the men and the women (for those sixteen and older, the respondents' age distribution closely mirrored that of the camp for the female participants, but the proportion of young males in the camp

was under-represented in the survey sample). Twenty-two tribes were represented, with the largest number of participants describing themselves as Dinka (62.1 per cent). Other significant groups were Nuer (8.5 per cent), Didinga (7.7 per cent), and Acholi (5.1 per cent). The other eighteen tribes comprise the remaining 16.6 per cent of the sample.

The refugees surveyed had been living in Kakuma for between one and fifteen years ($M = 9.31$, $SD = 3.54$), with males having spent more time in the camp than women [$t(233) = 2.09$, $p = .037$]. Of the participants, 90.6 per cent had at least one other relative also living in the camp ($M = 6.27$, $SD = 5.18$). The number of years' schooling ranged between zero and nineteen ($M = 8.64$, $SD = 4.65$), with 85.0 per cent of the respondents having had some level of formal education. On average the women had received significantly less schooling than the men [$t(232) = -8.78$, $p < .001$]. The majority (60.4 per cent) did not have paid employment. Of those who were employed, 88.2 per cent were male and almost all were working for NGOs in the camp, as would be expected. They were engaged in a range of work, including teaching, health-related work, and social work or counselling. Wages for those with paid employment ranged considerably, from 100 to 8,000 Kenyan shillings (approximately $1.40 to $110) per month ($M = 2,960$ KES, $SD = 945$). Most NGOs in Kakuma pay 3,000 KES per month to their non-supervisory staff, and two-thirds of the employed participants in the sample earned this amount.

Procedure

Participants were recruited by refugees working with the Jesuit Refugee Service's Community Counseling program, which is managed by the second author. Fifteen community counsellors volunteered to assist with the data collection, and they were trained by the second author in issues relating to informed consent, sampling procedures, and the completion of the survey. The counsellors took the number of surveys they thought it would be possible to have completed by people in their communities (this varied between three and twenty-five). Each counsellor lives and works in a different community and different groups of potential participants were thereby enlisted. The counsellors were asked to try to recruit a group of people representative of their community in terms of gender, age (although none less than sixteen years old), education, and employment status.

The educational level of older refugees in Kakuma, who have not attended school in the camp, tends to be low, especially amongst women. Counsellors were therefore also trained in how to assist those unable to read the survey. Since in some cases it would be necessary to read each question to the participant, and in many other cases people would read very slowly, it was necessary to keep the survey relatively short. For the same reason, the items needed to be worded very simply, to ensure that they would be understood by all potential participants.

Once the training was completed, counsellors were given two weeks (24 October to 7 November 2005) to recruit participants and have them complete the surveys. At the end of that period, they submitted the completed surveys to the second author. The surveys were then quality-checked, and any discrepancies or missing data discussed with the counsellor responsible and corrected if possible. Data entry was performed by the second author.

Survey Measures

Unless otherwise specified, all of the items assessing the refugees' attitudes about returning home to Sudan were measured using the jerry can image technique described below and then coded using a scale of *0* (*I do not agree*) to *3* (*I agree strongly*).

Personal Beliefs about the Sudanese Refugee Group in Kakuma. The Individual-Group Belief Inventory (IGBI) developed by the first author was adapted to measure the respondents' beliefs about their refugee group.[21] In its standard form, the IGBI measures each of the five belief domains – vulnerability, injustice, distrust, superiority, and helplessness—at each of three levels of analysis (personal beliefs about the personal world, personal beliefs about the in-group, and personal perceptions of the in-group's collective worldviews) – using a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from *Strongly Disagree* (*1*) to *Strongly Agree* (*5*). In this survey we focused on one level of analysis only: personal beliefs about the in-group.

Several content and format changes were made in order to make the IGBI appropriate for use in the Kakuma context. First, we decided to modify the items so that they focused on beliefs about returning home to Sudan rather than on current circumstances at the camp. Second, based on the guidance of the second author and camp counsellors, the original IGBI item content was changed where necessary so that the language and ideas were readily comprehensible by this refugee sample. A first draft of the survey was shared with eight Sudanese community counsellors. The second author discussed each item with this group of community counsellors and those items thought to be confusing or unclear were revised by the counsellors into a format which they felt would be understood by potential participants. Third, the standard answer format for the IGBI was modified significantly. The respondents were asked to answer each item on the equivalent of a four-point scale: *I do not agree*, *I agree slightly*, *I agree*, and *I agree strongly*. Answers were indicated by filling in different levels of a small jerry can image (an object very familiar to Kakuma refu-

gees), so that filling the jerry can higher represented greater agreement with the item; this approach was modelled after a similar strategy described by Annan *et al.* and used in Uganda.[22] This method necessitated eliminating the symmetrical bipolar continuum of the standard IGBI items because there was no way to represent conditions where there was less than no water in the jerry can ("I do not agree" corresponded to leaving the jerry can empty). The items used are listed in Table 1 (one of the three original helplessness items was not used because it was unexpectedly negatively correlated with the other two helplessness items).

Table 1. Individual-Group Belief Inventory (IGBI) Items

Vulnerability

- I believe that Kakuma refugees who return to Southern Sudan will not be secure.
- I believe that Kakuma refugees who return to Southern Sudan must be always alert for possible danger.
- I believe that Kakuma refugees who return to Southern Sudan will not be safe.

Injustice

- I believe other groups will often be unfair to Kakuma refugees who return to Southern Sudan.
- I believe Kakuma refugees who return to Southern Sudan will be blamed by other groups more than they should be.
- I believe that the good things done by Kakuma refugees who return to Southern Sudan will never be appreciated.

Distrust

- I believe Kakuma refugees who return to Southern Sudan should expect bad treatment from other groups.
- If given the chance, I believe that other groups will try to deceive Kakuma refugees who return to Southern Sudan.
- I believe Kakuma refugees who return to Southern Sudan generally should not trust other groups.

Superiority

- I believe Kakuma refugees who return to Southern Sudan will be better than other groups in their ways of doing things.
- I believe that Kakuma refugees who return to Southern Sudan will do better than other groups.
- I believe Kakuma refugees who return to Southern Sudan will contribute more to their communities than other groups.

Helplessness

- I believe that the future of Kakuma refugees who return to Southern Sudan will not be very good.
- I believe that what happens to Kakuma refugees who return to Southern Sudan will be in the hands of other groups.

Preference for Retuning Home, Resettlement, and Remaining in Kakuma. Three individual items each assessed the refugees' attitudes toward returning home to Sudan ("I want to return home to live in Sudan very much"), resettling elsewhere ("I want to be resettled in another country very much"), and staying in the Kakuma camp ("I want to remain and live in Kakuma very much").

Emotional Reactions to Returning Home. The respondents' comparative positive versus negative emotional reactions toward the prospect of returning home to Sudan were measured with four items: "When I think about returning to live in Sudan I feel happy," "When I think about returning to live in Sudan I feel frightened" (reverse-scored), "When I think about returning to live in Sudan I feel angry" (reverse-scored), and "When I think about returning to live in Sudan I feel sad" (reverse-scored).

Peace Prospects in Sudan. The respondents' view of the prospects for peace in Sudan was measured with four items: "I strongly support the current peace agreement in Sudan," "There will now be peace in Sudan for a very long time," "All the people of Sudan can learn to live together in peace," and "The people of Southern Sudan will prosper now that there is peace."

Hostile Treatment upon Return. The respondents' sense of whether they would be viewed and treated negatively upon their return to Sudan was measured with three items: "If I return to Sudan, I will be welcomed back by those in my family and tribe who stayed in Sudan during the conflict" (reverse-scored), "If I return to Sudan, those in my family and tribe who stayed in Sudan during the conflict will treat me unfairly," and "If I return to Sudan, I will be seen as an 'outsider' by those in my family and tribe who stayed in Sudan during the conflict."

Concerns over Returning Home to Sudan. The respondents' concerns over returning to Sudan were measured using six items: "When I think about returning to Sudan, I am very worried about security," "When I think about returning to Sudan, I am very worried about mines," "When I think about returning to Sudan, I am very worried about the roads and transportation," "When I think about returning to Sudan, I am very worried about education," "When I think about returning to Sudan, I am very worried about how I will support myself and my family," and "When I think about returning to Sudan, I am very worried about how I will get clean water." These are familiar areas of concern for refugees, and this specific list was drawn from a 2004 UNHCR report on repatriation to Sudan that identified them as primary concerns for returning refugees.[23]

Results

Table 2 presents the survey items related to returning home to Sudan, including some items that were not used in constructing the criterion measures described above. The percentage figures in the table represent the combined percentage of participants who responded "agree" or "strongly agree" to each item. Table 3 presents the means and standard deviations for the variables used in this study, as well as the Cronbach alphas for the composite measures.

Table 2. Combined Percentage of "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" Responses to Key Survey Items

Survey Item	% Agreement
I want to return home to live in Sudan very much.	73.6
I want to be resettled in another country very much.	37.0
I want to remain and live in Kakuma very much.	6.8
I have been following the news about Sudan very closely.	70.6
I strongly support the current peace agreement in Sudan.	77.4
There will now be peace in Sudan for a very long time.	43.8
All the people of Sudan can learn to live together in peace.	65.1
I am willing to forgive the people who have harmed me and my people.	63.0
The people of Southern Sudan will prosper now that there is peace.	60.4
The past years have been more difficult for Sudanese refugees than for those who stayed in Southern Sudan.	47.6
It is important to identify and punish the perpetrators involved in the Sudanese conflict.	51.5
I trust the new government in Sudan.	29.4
If I return to Sudan, I will be welcomed back by those in my family and tribe who stayed in Sudan during the conflict.	78.7
If I return to Sudan, those in my family and tribe who stayed in Sudan during the conflict will treat me unfairly.	19.6
If I return to Sudan, I will be seen as an "outsider" by those in my family and tribe who stayed in Sudan during the conflict.	29.5
I intend to return home to live in Sudan sometime within the next year.	41.3
When I think about returning to live in Sudan I feel happy.	73.2
When I think about returning to live in Sudan I feel frightened.	41.3
When I think about returning to live in Sudan I feel angry.	17.0
When I think about returning to live in Sudan I feel sad.	20.9
When I think about returning to Sudan, I am very worried about security.	77.0
When I think about returning to Sudan, I am very worried about mines.	87.2
When I think about returning to Sudan, I am very worried about the roads and transportation.	80.4
When I think about returning to Sudan, I am very worried about education.	80.9
When I think about returning to Sudan, I am very worried about how I will support myself and my family.	68.5
When I think about returning to Sudan, I am very worried about how I will get clean water.	70.6
It is safer for me to live in Kakuma than to live in Sudan.	33.2
I can earn a better living in Kakuma than in Sudan.	23.0
The schools are better in Kakuma than in Sudan.	85.5
Hospitals and medical care are better in Kakuma than in Sudan.	68.1
Women deserve greater freedom and rights than they now have in Sudan.	70.6
There are big problems in Sudan between the youth and the old.	48.9
I have a lot of contact with those refugees who have already returned to Sudan.	32.9
I know a lot about what is going on right now in Sudan.	53.8
I am very concerned about how the Northern Sudanese will react if I return to Southern Sudan.	62.6
I am very concerned about how fellow South Sudanese will react if I return to Southern Sudan.	40.9

Note. *N* = 235.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics and Cronbach Alphas

	M	SD	Alpha
Personal Beliefs about the Refugee Group			
Vulnerability	1.47	0.76	0.54
Injustice	1.26	0.75	0.57
Distrust	1.30	0.79	0.59
Superiority	2.40	0.66	0.64
lplessness	1.05	0.84	0.43
Attitudes about Returning Home			
I want to return home	2.15	1.08	–
I want to be resettled	1.19	1.25	–
Optimistic about peace in Sudan	1.82	0.73	0.75
Expects hostility upon returning home	0.77	0.77	0.84
More positive than negative emotions	2.15	0.85	0.65
Worried about problems upon return	2.18	0.67	0.78

Note. *N* = 235. All scales range from 0 (*I Do Not Agree*)
to 3 (*I Agree Strongly*).

Attitudes about Returning Home

The vast majority of respondents reported that they wanted to leave Kakuma. Only 6.8 per cent either agreed or strongly agreed that they wanted to stay in the camp. It is also clear that they much preferred to return home to Sudan than to be resettled in some unspecified other country. 73.6 per cent agreed or strongly agreed that they wanted to return home, whereas a substantially smaller 37.0 per cent expressed a comparable level of support for being resettled elsewhere. Moreover, in a direct comparison of these two departure options, 62.6 per cent preferred Sudan to resettlement elsewhere, 11.1 per cent were indifferent between the two choices, and 26.3 per cent preferred resettlement to repatriation. It should be noted, however, that the percentage who reported that they actually expected to return home sometime in the next year (41.3 per cent) was much smaller than the percentage who wanted to return (73.6 per cent).

Overall, the respondent group had a positive perspective in regard to Sudan's future and their own lives if given the opportunity to repatriate. A large majority of the respondents reported a predominance of positive over negative emotions when they anticipated returning home: happy (73.2 per cent), fearful (41.3 per cent), angry (17.0 per cent), and sad (20.9 per cent). This divergence was even more apparent among those refugees eager to return (*i.e.*, a response of "agree" or "strongly agree" on that item). A majority also had a favourable view of the prospects 7for

peace in Sudan despite the recent death of SPLA leader John Garang de Mabior: 60.9 per cent scored above the midpoint on the four-item peace prospects criterion measure (however, only 29.4 per cent expressed trust in the new Sudanese government). Similarly, only a small minority (18.7 per cent) scored above the midpoint on the three-item measure assessing whether the respondents expected a negative reception upon their return home. At the same time, large majorities did acknowledge worries in specific domains. Agreement or strong agreement over concerns about security, mines, roads, education, money, and water was reported by 77.0 per cent, 87.2 per cent, 80.4 per cent, 80.9 per cent, 68.5 per cent, and 70.6 per cent respectively. Based on these figures, it appears that the refugees were not naïve in their impressions of some of the challenges they would face upon returning to Sudan.

Beliefs about the Refugee Group and Attitudes about Returning Home

Table 4 presents the correlations among the key variables in the survey. It should be noted that all of the IGBI belief scales except for superiority were significantly correlated with each other, and that in general the criterion measures were correlated with each other as well. As the table indicates, at the level of zero-order correlations our hypotheses were consistently confirmed across all measures: stronger beliefs about group vulnerability, injustice, distrust, and helplessness were linked to a more negative outlook on repatriation, and a stronger group superiority belief was associated with a more positive perspective toward returning home. In addition, as one might expect, the five belief scales had exactly the reverse relationships to the respondents' desire to resettle elsewhere. It should be noted that desire to repatriate and desire to resettle were significantly negatively correlated with each other.

In light of these correlations, a separate regression analysis using the five IGBI scales as predictor variables was conducted for each of the repatriation-focused criterion measures in order to determine (1) how much explanatory power was provided by this combined set of beliefs and (2) whether each belief domain contributed uniquely to explaining individual differences in attitudes toward returning home. Table 5 presents the summary statistics for these models. Demographic variables were not included as covariates in these analyses; however, parallel regressions were performed including covariates and the results were comparable to those reported here.

The variable of primary interest was the single item assessing whether the respondents wanted to return home to Sudan. This regression model accounted for nearly one-third of the variance in the criterion measure, producing an

Table 4. Inter-Correlations among Key Survey Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Vulnerability Belief		.50	.40	−.05	.44	−.35	.32	−.43	−.15	.29	.46
2. Injustice Belief			.63	.06	.52	−.37	.29	−.47	−.26	.45	.34
3. Distrust Belief.				.08	.47	−.29	.22	−.43	−.29	.38	.27
4. Superiority Belief-					−.03	.34	.24	.36	.25	−.22	−.08
5. Helplessness Belief						−.27	.27	−.38	−.19	.36	.25
6. Want to Return Home							−.52	.67	.53	−.44	−.27
7. Want to be Resettled-								−.49	−.28	.39	.27
8. Primarily Positive Emotions									.54	−.56	−.34
9. Good Prospects for Peace-										−.34	−.10
10. Unfavourable Reception Likely											.30
11. Concerned about Problems											

Note: $N = 235$. For $|r| > .12$, $p < .05$; for $|r| > .17$, $p < .01$; for $|r| > .23$, $p < .001$.

Table 5. Regression Summary Statistics

	Criterion Measures				
	Desire to Return Home	*Positive Emotions*	*Optimism about Peace*	*Negative Reception*	*Anticipated Problems*
Vulnerability ß	-.17**	-.19**	.03	.01	.37***
Injustice ß	-.23**	-.23**	-.14	.30***	.14
Distrust ß	-.09	-.21**	-.22**	.15*	.04
Superiority ß	.36***	.38***	.28***	-.24***	-.07
Helplessness ß	-.02	-.07	-.02	.11	-.01
$F(5,229)$	19.46***	36.18***	9.41***	18.83***	13.86***
R^2	.30	.44	.17	.29	.23

Note. $N = 235$.
*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$.

$R^2 = .30$ [$F(5,229) = 19.46$, $p < .001$]. In this model both vulnerability and injustice beliefs in regard to their refugee group made significant unique contributions in predicting a diminished desire to return home, while a conviction about the group's superiority was significantly linked to a greater desire to repatriate.

A similar but even stronger pattern emerged in regard to the model predicting the respondents' emotional reactions to the prospect of returning home, yielding an $R^2 = .44$ [$F(5,229) = 36.18$, $p < .001$]. Beliefs about group vulnerability, injustice, and superiority again operated in the same manner as in the model predicting desire to return, but a belief that the group should be distrustful was also a significant predictor, associated with more negative emotional reactions when thinking about returning home.

Compared to the prediction of emotional reactions, beliefs about the in-group were significantly but less strongly linked to the refugees' view of the evolving peace process in Sudan: $R^2 = .17$ [$F(5,229) = 9.41$, $p < .001$]. In this model only two beliefs made significant independent contributions. A belief in the group's superiority was linked to greater optimism about the peace process while the distrust

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belief was associated with a less positive assessment of the prospects for peace.

The five-belief model also explained nearly one-third of the variance in the criterion measure assessing whether the respondents expected a negative reception upon returning home to Sudan: $R^2 = .29$ [$F(5,229) = 18.83$, $p < .001$]. In this model, the injustice belief made the largest unique contribution and, along with the distrust belief, was linked to greater expectations that the group would encounter hostility back home in Sudan. In contrast, the superiority belief was associated with a diminished expectation that the refugees would be faced with animosity or resentment upon their return.

The final criterion measure was the extent to which the refugees were concerned about encountering various problems upon their return home. The IGBI belief predictors produced an $R^2 = .23$ [$F(5,229) = 13.86$, $p < .001$], accounting for almost one-quarter of the variance in this measure. However, the vulnerability belief was the only one of the five that was significantly linked to these concerns, with those holding stronger vulnerability beliefs reporting greater worries.

Discussion

The vast majority of our respondents reported that they very much wanted to return home to Sudan, even though they simultaneously acknowledged that they would in all likelihood face significant challenges posed by inadequate security, mines, roads in disrepair, limited educational opportunities, likely financial difficulties, and limited access to potable water. This eagerness to repatriate, perhaps even more surprising following the death of John Garang, speaks to the strength and resiliency of these refugees and to the profound meaning of "home" and the powerful sentiments attached to it. By and large, our respondents were predominantly elated at the prospect of returning, they were hopeful that the peace process would move forward successfully, and they expected to be well-received by those they had left behind. At the same time, it should be noted that fewer than half of the respondents actually expected to return to Sudan over the next twelve months, and in fact the initial UNHCR program in December 2005 proved to be disappointing in the relative paucity of refugees who actually left Kakuma for Sudan.

Our investigation of whether the five belief domains highlighted by Eidelson and Eidelson are useful for understanding how refugees view repatriation yielded promising preliminary results.[24] As hypothesized, four of the core beliefs—about group vulnerability, injustice, distrust, and helplessness upon returning home—were linked to a diminished desire for repatriation, and to more negative assessments about the peace process and the reception they would receive in Sudan (and indeed these beliefs tended to instead support a preference for resettlement elsewhere). In contrast, across our survey measures a strong belief in their refugee group's superiority was consistently linked with respondents' greater desire to repatriate and a more optimistic perspective on how events would unfold once back home. Speculatively, this may suggest that these refugees were confident that their group could successfully stake its claims and emerge "on top" in the new Sudan, perhaps in part because of skills and experience obtained while at Kakuma. This positive image of their group may serve these prospective returnees well—in contrast, for example, to convictions of group helplessness—but in-group biases in other contexts have regularly been linked with derogation of outgroups and hostility toward them.[25] This potential "dark side" of superiority beliefs and group pride may warrant close attention as harbingers of renewed intergroup conflict following repatriation.

An important question should be raised here: Do the refugees' beliefs about their group reflect accurate assessments of the circumstances they will face in Sudan or are they subjective distortions involving either overestimates or underestimates of the challenges they will confront? Since there was significant variation among the respondents in their IGBI responses, it would be valuable to know whose convictions were more closely aligned with the "facts on the ground" in Sudan. Our survey measures were prospective in nature, and they do not provide an answer in this regard. However, what is clear is that the refugees' beliefs were strongly linked to individual differences among them in how they viewed the prospect of repatriation. Assessments of these beliefs in relation to "objective" information about circumstances awaiting refugees back home may therefore be a fruitful avenue for intervention by counsellors and others in positions of responsibility for repatriation programs. Group or individual discussions may provide opportunities to explore—and in some cases "correct" (in either direction)—refugees' important convictions about issues over group (or personal) vulnerability, injustice, distrust, superiority, and helplessness. It is also worth noting that the same five core beliefs may also be important *after* returning home in regard to how successfully the refugees reintegrate into the community they had left behind.

From a methodological perspective, the Individual-Group Belief Inventory was adapted for this survey to focus on the refugees' beliefs in regard to what it might be like for them—as a *group*—to return home. Time available for survey administration did not allow us to collect additional IGBI-related data, but it would have been interesting to also learn more about how the refugees viewed both the pros-

pect of resettlement elsewhere and their current situation in Kakuma in regard to issues of vulnerability, injustice, distrust, superiority, and helplessness. The strength of these beliefs could then have been compared with the beliefs about returning to Sudan to determine whether attitudes toward repatriation in part reflected an implicit cost-benefit analysis of the merits of going home along these five key dimensions. In addition, collecting IGBI data regarding the refugees' beliefs about their own personal worlds (*i.e.*, rather than their convictions about their group) might have been valuable. This would have allowed a comparison of whether beliefs about the self or the group were more important in determining the respondents' perspectives on repatriation.

Certain limitations of our study should be highlighted. First, our survey data were based entirely on self-report and are therefore subject to the concerns associated with this approach. In addition, the reliability coefficients for several of our measures were not as high as would be desirable. Similarly, our analyses are correlational in nature, and therefore issues of causality in regard to relationships among variables cannot be demonstrated. However, some relationships are more plausible than others, and it is our judgment that beliefs about vulnerability, injustice, distrust, helplessness, and superiority may indeed serve as causal influences on judgments about repatriation. At the same time, the limits of the survey include the fact that time and other considerations prevented collection of other data that might bear directly on the relationships found. For example, we did not gather information on why individual refugees had left Sudan or on the lives they had led before fleeing. Finally, it should be noted that women were underrepresented in our survey (women comprise approximately 50 per cent of the Kakuma population, but only 32 per cent of this sample). This may have occurred because all of the counsellors who volunteered to assist with this research were male, and it can be difficult for Sudanese men to approach Sudanese women. Most of the Kakuma counsellors are in fact male, because women tend to have a lower level of education (*e.g.*, counsellors are required to speak English) and they tend to have more outside-of-work commitments than the men (*e.g.*, taking care of the home and family).

Caution is also in order when considering generalization of our findings to other refugee settings. While not unique, the Kakuma camp has its distinctive features—as does every camp and every group of refugees. As one example, many of the refugees in Kakuma have been there for many years. Those minors who came in 1992 and who were not resettled in the United States have grown up in the camp, and in many cases they now have children of their own who have never set foot in Sudan. Their knowledge of Sudan, therefore, may be unrealistic and perhaps idealistic. However, the SPLA has had a significant presence and influence in the camp, so in some ways there has continued to be a strong connection between Kakuma and South Sudan. Since the CPA was signed, many of the SPLA commanders who were in Kakuma have been summoned back to Sudan to take up posts in the new government. Kakuma is very close to the Sudanese border, and there has been continual movement between the two; refugees might return to Sudan for a short period if a family member in Sudan is sick, or if there is a family problem that they have to deal with there. They then return to Kakuma. Finally, there are many cases of families, or occasionally unaccompanied children, coming to Kakuma so that the children could benefit from the education in the camp.

Taken as a whole, we think that the findings reported here merit serious attention and further research, including in other refugee contexts. At the same time, we are also cognizant of the constraints and challenges present in usefully applying psychological models in the realm of humanitarian assistance. In this regard, Ager and Loughry have identified two key issues of particular relevance to our work.[26] First, psychology is often perceived as primarily concerned with the internal states and behaviours of individuals, rather than with large populations and the environmental factors that impact them (the focus of most humanitarian relief efforts). Here we believe that our approach attempts to help bridge these gaps. Indeed, among the important beliefs that individuals hold are their convictions about those very groups to which they belong. These group-focused beliefs—in this specific instance, beliefs about the circumstances facing prospective returnees—can be quite broad in their influence, and they can affect both individual and collective responses to external events. Second, in its often quixotic search for "universal" principles of human behaviour, psychological analysis can fail to recognize the realities of "cultural specificity." Here we aim to confront this issue head-on, precisely by exploring whether beliefs about vulnerability, injustice, distrust, superiority, and helplessness—with local variations in salience and modes of expression—have cross-cultural applicability and relevance for humanitarian workers assisting refugees in diverse settings.

Notes

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Understanding the Dynamics of Return: The Importance of Microfoundations

Inmaculada Serrano

Abstract

Displaced persons are relevant actors in determining not only some of their life options but also some of the final results of violent conflict and policies addressing such conflict. Patterns of relocation and return are a key part of those results, especially ethnic-related conflicts. An introductory model to the micro foundations of return (and relocation) is presented here. This model is intended to provide tools for a better understanding of the way violence affects individuals, and more concretely of the way individuals react and cope with it. Particular emphasis is given here to the role played by security concerns (originating in the conflict) in the decision-making process.

Résumé

Les personnes déplacées devraient être considérées comme 'acteurs qualifiés' pour décider non seulement de certains des choix qui s'offrent à elles dans la vie, mais également lorsqu'il s'agit de certains résultats finaux découlant des conflits violents et des politiques en matière de gestion des conflits. Les courants et tendances en matière de réinstallation et de retour représentent un élément essentiel de tels résultats eu égard à beaucoup de conflits contemporains, plus particulièrement les conflits d'ordre ethniques. Un modèle préliminaire sur les micro-fondements du retour (et de la réinstallation) est proposé ici, dans le but de fournir des outils pour une meilleure compréhension des effets de la violence sur les individus, et plus concrètement la manière dont les individus y réagissent et y font face. L'emphase est particulièrement mise sur le rôle que jouent les préoccupations liées à la sécurité (ayant leurs origines dans le conflit) dans le processus décisionnel.

Introduction

When talking about refugees and persons who are displaced as a result of violent conflict, we are implying a double disruption in people's lives. On the one hand, violence has erupted into their lives and it has become a major force shaping them. On the other hand, they have been forced to leave their homes, which in many cases means they are no longer able to lead the kind of life they led before.

Refugees[1] have had their lives affected in a most dramatic way by "politics by other means."[2] And they continue to have it, as long as their available life options continue to be conditioned by the scenarios of conflict settlement and resolution, the actual peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding strategies and interventions, the available humanitarian assistance and the international and local refugee regimes.

Having this in mind should lead to a profound reflection about the hierarchy of concerns present in the policies addressing "politics by other means." Are the rights and lives of 30 million persons the primary concern?[3] Do questions of political interests, political pragmatism, or political idealism come first? Must they?

Apart from such reflections, the recognition of refugees as persons whose life options have been overwhelmed by political designs and developments should also draw attention to the way these persons not only are affected by these developments, but also to the way they react to them and cope with their situation. In doing so, they become (and should be considered) relevant actors in determining not only some of their life options, but also some of the final results of "politics by other means" and policies addressing them. It is relevant, then, not only from a humanitarian point of view, to interrogate ourselves about the way violence (and the threat of violence) impacts individuals and groups. And, more specifically, to interrogate ourselves about the way individuals and groups cope with it and react to it.

Looking at Return from the Micro Level

There is no doubt that the relocation process unchained by the conflict is the one aspect in which refugees are probably most conditioned and limited by the both policies and "politics by other means. Not only because of the original forced movement, but also regarding where and how they (may) end up, either temporarily or on a more permanent basis. Freedom of movement is usually hampered for most refugees and displaced persons, either in a formalized way or in an effective way, subject to different asylum regimes, refugee centres' regulations, rampant insecurity, or a stark lack of resources and livelihood alternatives as a result of war and displacement.[4] Obviously, policies and "politics by other means" have a major say as well in preventing, facilitating, or pushing the reversal of the original move. However, not all the variation found in the patterns of return and relocation can be explained through such macro factors. Otherwise it would be hard to explain the variable rates and patterns of return between locations most similar in their background and structural features, such as the municipalities of Zvornik and Vlasenica in Bosnia-Herzegovina, for instance.[5] In order to understand what is involved in such a process, we need to look at the micro level and understand the social processes and mechanisms unchained by political violence.

Micro Foundations for Return

We tend to assume the return to the place of origin, from which people were forced to leave, as a natural move. And there are sound reasons for this.[6] Firstly, there are the illegitimacy of the reason that pushed the fleeing, the brutality and violation of human rights involved, and the injustices generated in the process.[7] The restoration of the situation, reversing what was done, is therefore perceived as a matter of *justice* and *rightness.* Secondly, it may be assumed that when fleeing, the individual was forced to leave behind *assets*, *investments,* and *livelihood* in which her welfare was sustained, including house, land, and businesses. For many, the repossession of such assets and investments may remain crucial, given that the scenario of displacement is often a scenario of impoverishment and helplessness.[8] And in many cases the repossession makes no economic sense if not moving back (*e.g.* given difficulties of selling the property and getting an appropriate revenue from it). Lastly, but not less importantly, it remains the recognition of a deep *intimate and unique connection* with the place of origin, that is, with the place which is considered to be "home."

However, the case is more complex than that, and all the latter assumptions must be carefully considered. Regarding the restoration or the reversal of the wrong done, the case is often not as simple as "moving back." Both the current situation and also the original one may be far from ideal, and moving back may do little (or even work contrary) to the interest of justice and restoration of rightness.[9] The movement of return may not be a *solution* by itself to those issues.

Also, the case of assets and investments is not clear, as they may not exist or may not be relevant enough. They may also have been destroyed or taken away. Or there may be too many obstacles in the way to repossess them (and/or to exploit them), such as property issues, widespread discrimination, overcharges in taxes or fees, etc. Furthermore, the individual may have developed opportunities, obtained assets, or realized investments when in displacement. The very scenario of displacement may be relatively more advantageous in terms of economic and *welfare* opportunities.

Finally, the utter strength of the link between the displaced person and her place of origin should also be considered more carefully. In the first place, such a connection may have not existed (as ideally imagined) to begin with,[10] apart from the individual cases of those who for some reason disliked or repudiated their particular places, or just felt unhappy or uprooted there,[11] as well as those who did not have clear roots or did have multiple ones (*i.e.* because of changing places during childhood and/or adulthood). This can amount also to a cultural or collective issue, as showed in in-depth field research conducted in the Horn of Africa.[12] Such research revealed that these peoples, with a history of displacement and geographical mobility, did not perceive themselves as bound to a particular place. Cases are not uncommon either in which violent conflict itself and the transformations of the place of origin have *estranged* it from the individual: "How can it be assumed that refugees are returning 'home' when the very reason they left were that they did not feel 'at home' anymore? […] This is particularly true in the context of civil wars, ethnic and religious conflicts."[13] There are many cases in which displaced persons have "no reason to return" and they do not return even when security concerns no longer exist.[14] Furthermore, the individual may have developed new connections during displacement with the place and the people there[15] that might compete with the old ones, especially if the latter were weak or have been severed, as just mentioned. This could be expected especially in the case of long-term displacements, mostly in those cases with a highly entrenched conflict (thus leaving few expectations for return and pushing people into a new direction due to the virtual elimination of such possibility).[16] And also for those living under the most normalized circumstances instead of being circumscribed, for instance, to a highly restrictive environment, as it is the case in many refugee camps and collective centres or under certain asylum regimes.[17]

The End of Violence

There is furthermore one more crucial issue that renders return a complex, far from straightforward, option. And that is the very same reason why people left in the first place: the *risk assumed* by being there. Obviously, the case is clear-cut when the violence is still going on, but it applies to other cases as well. Even when peace may appear stable (for instance, after the signing of a peace agreement, after the deployment of peacekeeping troops or after the occurrence of a disarmament process[18]), *still there are chances in most scenarios* that instability may regain momentum and violence may recur.[19] In general, even for experts, it is hard to assess and assert the end of violence in a definite way.[20] Thus, it is not only violence, but the threat of violence and the shadow that sheds over people which matters. As a matter of fact, there is always room for thinking that, if not in the short term, violence can eventually resume in the middle or longer term. The consideration of such a risk seems the more compelling since we are dealing with people who have undergone the experience of violence. Given such experience we could expect that *credibility* of peace as a dominant situation in the state of the world and credibility of commitments to peace by other actors have been severed. Indeed, if these people fled, it was because the bond of *trust* between them and their place of origin was broken at a certain point.[21] What matters the most in this case is the *individual's perception* of such threat.

The intriguing and complex nature of return (in terms of security) can be best observed through the lenses of rational choice. It is difficult to question the *rationality* of the decision to flee in order to secure one's survival and physical integrity.[22] The decision to return is precisely the one that does not look so rational *a priori*. For a better grasp of this idea, it is useful to assume the most simplified scenario possible, where the individual has fled an unsafe area and has reached a *safe one*.[23] If this is the case, there is no benefit to be expected (in terms of security) from moving back. This is even the case when the threat has been also removed in the place of origin, as there is no relative advantage to be derived from it.

Ongoing Research Project

The four elements mentioned so far as the pillars for the assessment and understanding of return (and no return), namely, *justice, welfare, roots*, and *security*, are part of a doctoral research project currently being undertaken in Bosnia-Herzegovina.[24] While considering the importance and relevant roles of all of them, my personal and academic interests lay specifically in the latter two: firstly, the extended shadow left by violence in the form of continued threat, the perception of such threat and the concern about it; and not less importantly, the analysis and understanding of the connection with the place considered "home" (what might be called "pulling effect of the home origin"),[25] and the way such a connection is affected by the strain of violence. =I will devote the remaining part of this article to the security component.

The research question trying to be answered is, put simply: *why do individuals move back after being displaced* because of a serious threat of violence? First of all, why do some persons (under similar conditions) return and others do not? But secondly, and most interestingly, as following the security puzzle: why do the former return at all, given that they are displaced within a safe area in which their security is not under strain, as it was in their place of origin?[26] Why (and under what conditions) do individuals who have demonstrated their aversion to the threat of violence take the step of coming back?

The Security Component

As already noted, threat is a matter of perception (belief), as well as a matter of analysis. And as such it is a cornerstone issue for return. However, little is known of the way threat is evaluated and incorporated into the decision-making process. Two basic considerations must be taken into account: the fact that displaced persons have already been subject to a serious threat of violence (if not to serious violence itself), and the circumstance that they are away from the scenario which is being evaluated.[27] The questions following this proposal are two: firstly, how do persons who have experienced the effects of violence measure and perceive the current and future threat of similar violence (without even being present in the actual scenario)? And secondly, how does it affect the decision of return?

1. Perception and Measurement of the Threat

There are three key elements to take into account. The first obvious element is the *actual threat*. The nature and shape of the threat (that is, the nature of conflict and the shape of violence) logically determine the way in which it is to be evaluated: what factors are to be considered, whether it is more or less feasible to monitor them, etc.[28] The second element is *imperfect information*, which is the more accentuated having taken into account the distance between the person and the object of evaluation. In most cases such evaluation will be highly mediated by different sources of information, which may introduce further biases. The third element is *emotions*, with special attention given to fear.

The perceived threat will likely emphasize some aspects of the "objective scenario" over others; it may also neglect some or clearly depart from others. Those aspects that differ clearly and most regularly are likely to be the result of imperfect information and of the intervention of emotions.

29

Figure 1. Perceived Threat

Real threat * imperfect information * emotions = perceived threat

The following categorization of the different kinds of (real) possible threats has been derived from the empirical observation of the universe of cases producing or maintaining IDPs during the year 2002.

The sources of threat causing displacement (and being evaluated upon return) have been categorized as follows:

A. Foreign political-military force (*i.e.* border conflict). Individuals fled conventional "interstate" warfare (between armies) *affecting* civilians. The situation may remain unstable or the foreign power may be in control of the area. The threat may include communal violence.

B. Crossfire between Government Troops and Armed Groups (*i.e.* factions, rebel groups). Individuals fled generalized

Table 1. Nature of the threat

(in conflicts generating or maintaining IDPs in 2002)
Features proposed as having implications for the evaluation of the threat

SOURCE	Foreign Power	Armed Groups	Gov. and armed groups	Gov. and armed groups in separatist/ minority area	Communal Violence
NATURE OF THE SOURCE	Organised actors				Dispersed
TARGET†	*Not civilians, still affected*	*Civilians targetted*		*Ascriptive groups targetted*	
	Eritrea-Ethiopia Armenia-Azerbaijan Cyprus Israel Lebanon Syria (Golan Heights)	Algeria Angola DRCongo* Liberia SLeone G-Bissau Colombia Peru Philippines**	*G-Conakry* Uganda (east) Iraqi Kurdistan	*Homogeneous area* Burma Sri Lanka Turkish Kurdistan *Majority group in a mixed area* SenegalCasamance Bangladesh CHT India Kashmir Indonesia Aceh Georgia Abkhazia Russia Chechnya Moldova Transdniestrian *Minority group in a mixed area* SenegalCasamance Bangladesh CHT India Kashmir Indonesia Aceh Georgia Abkhazia Russia Chechnya Moldova Transdniestrian	Kenya Nigeria India (Gujarati) Indonesia (Malukus, Kalimatan) Solomon Islands Georgia (Ossetia) Russia (Ossetia) *Armed groups significant* India (north-east) Indonesia (Sulawesi) Bosnia Croatia Serbia (Kosovo)
	Ethnicity underlying Burundi RCongo Sudan Guatemala Mexico Afghanistan Serbia South Macedonia		*Ethnicity underlying* Uganda (north, west) Rwanda Somalia		

† Matching between source and target categories corresponds to the empirical observations of the cases considered. No necessary or exhaustive connections are implied here.

*Also displacement for ethnic-violence

**Also separatist component

Sources: Global IDP Project, World Refugee Survey, International Crisis Group

violence *targeting* all civilians in the country or region. The threat arises from each of the sides (also the government).

(2) *with ethnic cleavages underlying.* They fled generalised violence *targeting* all civilians, but the threat of violence increases (to varying degrees) with ethnic ascription.

C. Fire from Armed Groups. They fled violence *targeting* all civilians. The threat arises from armed groups acting against the government and/or the population, or fighting each other (*i.e.* government is weak or non-existent).

(2) *with ethnic cleavages underlying.* They fled violence *trapping/targeting* all civilians, but the threat of violence increases (to varying degrees) with ethnic ascription.

D. *Crossfire between Government Troops and Armed Groups in Separatist/Minority Areas.*

(1) *Homogenous area*. They fled violence targeting their ethnic group by the government, and more generally violence trapping all civilians (also by the armed groups).

(2) *Majority in the area*. They fled violence targeting their ethnic group by the government, and more generally violence trapping all civilians (also by armed groups). It may include communal violence from the minority group in the area.

(3) *Minority in the area*. They fled violence targeting their ethnic group by armed groups, and it may include communal violence.

E. *Communal Violence*. They fled violence targeting their ethnic group. The threat arises from members of different ethnic groups. The threat usually includes armed groups.

The evaluation (and hence the perception) of the threat is a function of the different factors implied in the nature of threat. If we understand the perception of the threat as the *perceived odds of being hit by violence*,[29] the components of that calculation in each case are likely to be the following:

A. *Foreign political-military force* (border conflict).

F (intensity conflict + communal violence)

B. Crossfire between government troops and armed groups (factions, rebel groups).

F (intensity conflict + intensity abuses government* personal saliency[30]
+ intensity abuses armed groups*personal saliency)
(2) with ethnic cleavages underlying
F (intensity conflict + intensity abuses government* ethnic ascription**p.saliency + intensity abuses armed groups*ethnic ascription*p.saliency)*

C. Fire from armed groups

F (intensity abuses armed groups*personal saliency)

(2) with ethnic cleavages underlying.
*F (intensity abuses armed groups**ethnic ascription***personal saliency)*

D. Crossfire between government troops and armed groups in separatist/minority areas.

(1) Homogenous area.
F (intensity conflict + intensity abuses government *personal saliency
+ intensity abuses armed group*personal saliency)
(2) Majority in the area.
F (intensity conflict + intensity abuses government *personal saliency
+ intensity abuses armed group*personal saliency
+ communal violence)
(3) Minority in the area.
F (intensity conflict + intensity abuses armed group*personal saliency
+ communal violence)

E. Communal violence.

F (communal violence + intensity abuse armed groups*personal saliency)

Naturally, other factors affecting security assessment, though not that dependent on the particularities of the threat, are missing in this analysis and should be taken into account.[31]

Each kind of threat and each factor within it can be broken down and conceptualized in a systematic manner, and subsequently translated into indicators adequate for each country and conflict. The appraisal of all these factors by the individual, nonetheless, will, it is expected, be mediated by the intervention of emotions and the absence of perfect information. Such mechanisms must be detailed and introduced in the model as well.

For instance, *in all the cases, except those of communal violence*, the threat arises from concrete (organized) actors. The removal of such source of threat is relatively easy to identify through the defeat, disappearance, or agreement of the actors in conflict, and relatively easy to assess and monitor (whether it is present in the area or not, its relative strength, etc.).[32] The sides of the conflict may either have disappeared: rebels may have been annihilated or jailed, or they may have fled, governments may be deposed. Or they may be diluted in the post-conflict society: rebels may be disarmed or reintegrated,[33] and governments may undergo reforms and political agreements.[34] Even when these actors, which were the source of the threat, *remain* (more or less diluted) in the society, their direct position as a source of threat is put somewhat under strain, as some organizational or political developments should be expected for them to resume such position.

On the contrary, in cases of *communal violence*, where the threat arises from ethnic ascription, the source of the threat is dispersed. It is difficult to identify and to monitor, what means that mistrust and fear are generally extended to a complete category of individuals, whether it is personally reasonable or not. The specific ways in which individuals measure and assess such a threat remain intriguing and deserve special attention. The main mechanisms I propose for the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina are based on the perception of the distribution of hard-liners in the area of return and the amount of resources (including political ones) that they command, as well as on the numbers and characteristics of returnees in the area (safety in numbers argument) and the actual occurrence of episodes of violence. The perception of all these factors is mediated, on the one hand, by the information (and opinions) provided by social contacts from the place of origin (both earlier returnees and other displaced people visiting the area or discussing the issue). And their perception is mediated as well, on the other hand, by the presence of different emotions, with a special relevance given to fear. Emotions are incorporated into the model as an exogenous input consisting of a specific kind of information (*i.e.* they provide the individual with information about her preferences and her relation to the world and its changing stimuli).[35]

2. Incorporation of the Threat into Decision Making

My claim is that all factors and mechanisms related to the security component are *enabling* factors of the decision to return. They do not constitute *explaining* factors of return.

As already noted, once the individual is *in a safe area*, the removal of the threat is not a motive to return *per se*, as it does not provide any comparative advantage. It only constitutes the removal of the main impediment to move back. What must explain return are pulling factors in the home origin (and pushing factors in displacement), which in some cases are strong enough as to overcome the persistence of threat, or the existence of other pulling factors in displacement. I already mentioned the three main factors: justice, welfare, and roots.

Figure 2 offers a graphic summary of the components of the decision to return. There are factors related to justice, welfare, and roots that tie to the place of origin, but there may be others as well, in all the three dimensions, working just on the contrary direction. The same happens with the location of displacement. The consideration of all these factors is conditioned, however, to the barrier of insecurity to be broken. This remains a matter of grade, given that the assessment of violence (and future violence) is somehow elusive. The minimum level of security that is required in order to pass that barrier will depend on the relative

Figure 2. Enabling Factors and Explaining Factors of Return (and No Return)
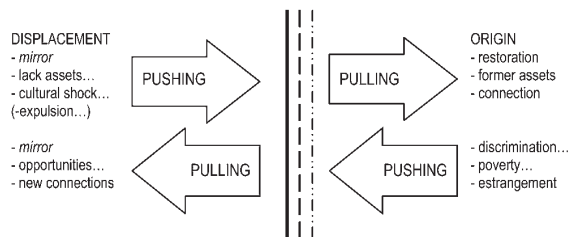
strength of the pulling effect of the home origin, as well as the factors pushing to abandon displacement.

"Happy dilemmas" are the very rare cases in which the pulling factors dominate for both return and relocation. These are people who have found a new promising life in displacement, but still have plenty of reasons (and emotional drive) for longing for their home origin. Much more common, unfortunately, are the cases where the pushing factors dominate, that is, where people seem to have no place to stay and no place to go back to. Elderly people are the ones usually having both arrows pointing to return: they cannot adapt that easily or find a place for themselves in the new reality, and they have a whole life of investments (both material and emotional) back in their place of origin. Youngsters tend to present just the contrary case, especially when they have moved from a rural to an urban area.

Notes

1. I will use interchangeably the terms "refugees" and "displaced persons" and I will be referring to the whole category of persons who have been forced out of their homes because of a violent conflict, no matter whether they have crossed an international border or not, or whether they fit into the Convention definition.

2. This is Clausewitz's well-known definition of war. Karl von Clausewitz, *On War* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1873).

3. UNHCR recognizes 12.7 million refugees under the Convention definition (including Palestinian numbers) and around 1.2 million asylum seekers and other persons of concern (not counting stateless persons); see *2005 Global Refugee Trends*. The Global IDP Project of the Norwegian Refugee Council estimates 23.7 millions of internally displaced persons (IDPs); see the latest data and statistics in http://www.IDPProject.org. The *World Refugee Survey 2006* of the US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants records 12 million refugees and 21 million internally displaced people. the survey is available at <http://www.refugees.org>.

4. In the year 2005 there were 7.89 million refugees who had been already warehoused for five years or more. US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, *World Refugee Survey 2006*, <http://www.refugees.org/data/wrs/06/docs/key_statistics.pdf> (accessed September 30, 2006).

5. Located in the eastern part of the Republic of Srpska, in Bosnia-Herzegovina, both of them were Muslim-majority areas (above 50 per cent of the population) before the war, with very similar social and economic structures. Both suffered a fierce campaign during 1992 and remained under Serb control until the end of the war. Both municipalities received a massive influx of Serb refugees and both have been dominated after the war by hard-line nationalists. However, Zvornik has registered some of the earliest movements of minority returns (1996) and the highest rates of total returns in the whole country. Vlasenica, on the other hand, has been the last municipality opening the process of return (2000) and it has registered the lowest rates of total minority returns so far. These data have been gathered and confirmed through the fieldwork conducted in the last year in the region and they form part of my forthcoming doctoral dissertation project. For the absolute numbers of minority returns in each municipality, see UNHCR, *Map Total Minority Returns*, available at <http://www.unhcr.ba/return/pdf%202006/SP_07_2006.pdf> (accessed April 9, 2008).

6. Since the 1980s, voluntary repatriation has been promoted by governments and UN agencies as the desirable and ultimate solution to refugees. However it seems clear that strategic considerations are likely to be behind such policy. See Tania Ghanem, "When Forced Migrants Return 'Home': The Psychosocial Difficulties Returnees Encounter in the Reintegration Process," (RSC Working Paper No. 16, Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford, 2003).

7. "Not only do most African refugees perceive their involuntary displacement as temporary but also return is considered as a great success. Return to the place one has been violently uprooted from is an overriding preoccupation, bordering obsession, of most refugee populations in Africa. This is not only true in Africa." Gaim Kibreab, "Revisiting the Debate on People, Place, Identity and Displacement," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 12 (1999): 384–410.

8. See for instance Awa M. Abdi, "In Limbo: Dependency, Insecurity, and Identity amongst Somali Refugees in Dadaab Camps," *Refuge* 22, no. 2 (2005): 6–14.

9. For instance, in many places in Bosnia-Herzegovina the scenario of return is not a welcoming one. This is so because of episodes of harassment, which were frequent and often life-threatening at the beginning of the process, generalized discrimination, and lack of infrastructure in many of the return areas. In such a situation, it turns out that the ones returning are often the least advantaged, who return as a result of lack of alternatives. And they are left facing a situation of marginalization and mistreatment.

10. Madawi Al-Rasheed, "The Myth of Return: Iraqi Arab and Assyrian Refugees in London," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 7, no. 2–3 (1999):199–219.

11. Ghanem.

12. UNRISD symposia, quoted in Ghanem.

13. *Íbid.*, 21–22.

14. See Global IDP Project, *Internally Displaced People: A Global Survey*, (London: Earthscan, 2002).

15. For instance, by forming a family and upbringing the children in the new context. See Ghanem.

16. There are cases, like the Palestinians, which clearly challenge this hypothesis.

17. See *Refuge* 22, no.2 (2005).

18. For an analysis of the credibility and effectiveness of peace agreements see William Long and Peter Brecke, *War and Reconciliation: Reason and Emotion in Conflict Resolution* (Cambridge, MA: Massachussetts Institute of Technology Press, 2003).

19. The defeat of one side or the signing of an effective peace agreement may occur, but violence may be later resumed or some other faction may take it up, as in the cases of Mindanao (Philippines), or Burundi. Violence may be recurrent (especially in cases of communal violence as riots) or even cyclical, as exemplified by conflict in the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville), in separatist Aceh (Indonesia), or Casamance (Senegal). Some conflicts have a "chronic" character of generalized violence, as in Colombia. As in Angola, violence may decrease during some periods or in specific areas without the conflict and violence being ended or solved. There are cases in which the ending of violence may be quite clear, but some more or less sporadic violence may still occur, as in the cases of Bosnia, Sri Lanka, or the Transdniestrian region in Moldova.

20. The huge literature on conflict management, conflict resolution, and early warning systems is testimony of that.

21. Ghanem.

22. Indeed, this is one of the most recurrent arguments by those who defend the functionality and "covered" rationality of emotions: fear makes you take the right decisions in the right moment, normally fighting back or fleeing. See Antonio Damasio, *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* (New York: Putnam, 1994).

23. The assumption that the context of displacement is safe and that security is not under strain (to the same extent and in the same manner as it was in the place of origin) does not apply in many cases, especially for internally displaced people or people displaced into neighbouring countries, who often find themselves in a situation of vulnerability and exposure. For instance, IDP camps and "protected villages" have constituted for years the most regular targets for the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) attacks in Uganda's Ruwenzori Mountains. See Global IDP Survey 2002. In a recent document elaborated by different international NGOs and incorporated into the *World Refugee Survey 2006*, special attention is reclaimed for warehoused refugee women, denouncing a "myriad of human rights violations against displaced women and girls during all

stages of displacement," including sexual exploitation and involuntary recruitment into militia and armed forces, abduction and trafficking, as well as lack of access to humanitarian assistance.

24. Many of the reflections, examples, and details presented in this article are derived from that work and from the experience of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

25. This means digging into the question of the sources of (deeply rooted) local attachments, which are at the base of nationalisms, regionalisms, and localisms, and which lie at the heart of the exile nostalgia and other like phenomena.

26. By "safe area" I understand an area where violence is not a *pervasive* threat for the individual. As I already noted, this is not usually the case. So far, I have just focused on cases fulfilling such a condition, simplifying the puzzle as much a possible for clarity, with the number of factors intervening kept as low as possible. However, research should continue in this direction.

27. Though cases vary in the possibility, frequency, and intensity of visits and stays in the area.

28. The nature of the threat will have major consequences for the process of return, not only in this regard, but also when considering the kind of conflict they are linked to (either warlords' factions, communal ethnic violence, conventional interstate warfare, etc.) and the kind of marks left upon society (level and targets of destruction, number and characteristics of human losses, etc.).

29. This implies a certain homogenization of violence, as far as aversion to violence is concerned.

30. This should be defined by the usual and logical targets of the source of violence. The characteristics which may raise the saliency of individuals as a target range from social, professional, or ideological visibility (*e.g.* local leaders, journalists) to personal characteristics which render them more vulnerable or more attractive as a target (*e.g.* women, children used as soldiers, wealthy persons abducted).

31. Like the presence of landmines, the availability of an effective exit option (*i.e.* distance to the border), the visibility of the return area (*i.e.* remote rural areas), the presence of international forces, and so.

32. For instance, in April 2000 Chechen fighters were reported to have withdrawn from the lowlands to consolidate in the mountains. Then, some return movements occurred. See Global IDP Survey 2002. See also Long and Brecke for an analysis of the credibility and effectiveness of peace agreements.

33. Forty-five thousand former fighters in Sierra Leone had handed in their weapons by January 2002, marking a substantial improvement in the security situation in the country. In Angola, UNITA soldiers and their families congregated at more than forty sites throughout the country in 2002 to disarm and begin the process of demobilization. The government army accepted 5,000 UNITA soldiers into its own ranks. Observers expressed concern that thousands of UNITA weapons might remain hidden, but a general climate of optimism prevailed (World Refugee Survey 2002).

34. As in Burundi (2001), Macedonia (2001), or Bangladesh (1997).

35. See Damasio; Roger Petersen, *Resistance and Rebellion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Yaniv Hanoch, "Emotions as a Mechanism for Boundedly Rational Agents," communication at the *IV Winter Workshop on Economics and Philosophy: Psychological Foundations of the Theory of Choice in Economics* (Madrid: UNED, 2003).

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In the Space between Employees and Clients: The Impact of Organizational Context on a Refugee Program in Sierra Leone

Lakshmi Ramarajan

Abstract

This paper uses a case-study approach to describe how organizational characteristics may influence program outcomes in humanitarian aid situations. Organizational structure and human resource management are discussed as organizational factors that influence the vulnerabilities of clients and employees. Interview and archival data from a program on reintegrating refugee and internally displaced women and girl survivors of sexual violence in Sierra Leone and observations based on the author's experience with the organization provides a relevant basis for isolating the firm as an important context within which refugee programs are embedded.

Résumé

Cet article utilise une approche d'étude de cas pour décrire comment les caractéristiques organisationnelles peuvent influencer les résultats de programmes dans des situations d'aide humanitaire. La structure organisationnelle et la gestion des ressources humaines sont examinées en tant que facteurs organisationnels ayant un impact sur les vulnérabilités des clients et des employés. Des informations provenant d'entrevues, ainsi que des données de documents d'archives, le tout faisant partie d'un programme du Sierra Leone pour la réintégration de femmes réfugiées et déplacées à l'intérieur des frontières et de filles rescapées de violences sexuelles, ajoutées aux observations issues de l'expérience de l'auteure au sein de l'organisation, fournissent un fondement pertinent pour désigner l'organisation comme contexte important où sont ancrés des programmes pour réfugiés.

From naïve (though dedicated) individuals committed only to "doing good," international humanitarian aid workers have evolved into sophisticated thinkers embracing the adjoining principle as well: "do no harm."[1] However, the complexities of humanitarian aid ensure that "doing no harm" is not a simple, linear principle that merely needs to be implemented by individuals "on the ground." Both aid workers and clients are embedded in a web of organizations such as donors, competitors, governments, and collaborators that influence the vulnerabilities of clients both positively and negatively. The critical actor in the web of organizations is the actual NGO in which the aid worker is employed: the organization which is developing and administering the program for the clients. From a practical perspective, those who work in development organizations are aware of both the opportunities and limitations that working in their specific NGOs can provide. However, from a theoretical perspective, the actual role of the organization in influencing outcomes that both practitioners and theorists care about is not well understood. Becoming more aware of specific characteristics of NGOs doing humanitarian aid work is important because of the impact of these factors on the vulnerabilities of both aid workers and clients.

Research on NGOs in conflict currently tends to examine NGOs as group. Thus, Anderson's[2] exhortation to "Do No Harm" targeted all NGOs operating in conflict and attempted to explain how NGOs *in general* could unintentionally affect conflict processes. Likewise, Aall[3] and Last[4] discuss NGOs as a group of players active in international conflict situations. More recently, Berinstain[5] described the pros and cons of NGOs in humanitarian aid and development, again focusing on NGOs as a group of organizational players in the field of humanitarian aid. This emphasis on group-level characteristics and influence was important in

the 1980s and 1990s as we observed the astonishing growth in NGOs as a class of organizations.[6] However, it may now be opportune to turn attention, in both theory and practice, towards specific characteristics within the group of NGOs that can have important implications for workers and clients. Although most practitioners and researchers would acknowledge important differences among NGOs and accept that NGOs rarely act in concert and rarely have similar capacities and resources, there is little theory or empirical research on the particular characteristics of NGOs that might help explain project outcomes or their impact on peace.

This paper focuses on a single program within one organization to describe how organizational characteristics, specifically organizational structure and human resource management, interacted to influence the outcomes of a program to reintegrate women and girl survivors of sexual violence in Sierra Leone. The first section of the paper provides a brief background on the Sierra Leone conflict. The second section provides an introduction to the organization and the organization's program, which was targeted towards refugees and internally displaced women and girls. The third section reviews the data utilized to analyze program outcomes. Based on the data, it is argued that both organizational structure and human resource management issues are implicated in the implementation of the program. The implications of this case study are relevant to donors, NGO managers, and workers in humanitarian aid situations; organizational management can be a critical risk factor influencing clients' psychosocial outcomes and should be closely monitored and improved. The study also emphasizes the need for researchers on NGOs in conflict to begin examining organizational-level variables, such as structure, culture, and human resource management.

Sexual Violence in the Sierra Leone Conflict: A Brief Summary

The war in Sierra Leone lasted from about 1991 to 2002, with various coups and times of stability in those eleven years. In all, the war is thought to have resulted in about 50,000 dead. However, the number of refugees is about 400,000 and internally displaced persons (IDPs) anywhere from 300,000 (registered) to 1 million (unregistered).[7] The number of IDP women suffering from war-related sexual assault is about 50,000 to 64,000 women; if one counts both war and non-war related sexual assault, the estimates are over 200,000 women survivors.[8] According to the same study, the prevalence rate of war-related sexual assault committed by combatants in Sierra Leone is 8 to 9 per cent.[9]

Carolyn McAskie, former United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator, reported in April 2000 that team members of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) deployed to the northern region of Sierra Leone were finding a higher incidence of women raped there than in Bosnia, where rape has been considered a war crime and where just recently sexual slavery was recognized as torture. In Sierra Leone, countless young girls and women were taken by combatants as sex slaves or "soldier's wives" and raped repeatedly for months or even years; these women have been subjected to astounding levels of sexual violence. In 2001, Human Rights Watch interviewed six women who had been raped and numerous more who were either held or taken away to rebel bases, for a time span varying from a few hours to several weeks.[10] The pattern of gender violence has continued in the post-war situation as well. Returning combatants and other males highly traumatized by the years of constant exposure to violence and violent behaviour resort to sexual abuse and violence on the domestic front.

Organizational Background: Training International

Training International (TI)[11] is a US-based capacity building and sustainable development organization. Founded in 1970 by a leader in the civil rights movement, TI's mission is in the arena of human resource development, including skills training in vocational skills and agriculture as well as skills particular to the context of each country in which it works. TI is organized with a US-based headquarters and country affiliates. Unlike many other organizations, TI's country affiliates are independent, locally managed non-profit organizations. In the last decade, due to the needs of TI affiliates in conflict-ridden countries, TI headquarters has provided assistance in conflict resolution, demobilization, and reintegration of ex-combatants, psychosocial counselling, and microcredit for those affected by war.

Traditionally, the local affiliates were the conduits for project management. People in the local communities knew of their TI chapter as a local skills training organization, not necessarily as the branch of an international organization. The staff and management of the local TI affiliate were long-term employees of the organization and local projects would be run by the local TI affiliate. International projects always came through the TI headquarters but were channelled through the local TI affiliate. The affiliates thus provided the access, knowledge, and manpower to implement the projects, while TI headquarters provided the international legitimacy and management so both the headquarters and the affiliate were able to access international aid money.

The affiliate in Sierra Leone, Sierra Leone Training International (TI-SL), has been established since the late

1970s and currently has four training centres in different parts of the country. Traditionally, TI-SL offered training in skills such as carpentry, masonry, agricultural production, tailoring, and secretarial skills. In the early nineties, due to the outbreak of civil conflict in Sierra Leone and neighbouring Liberia, TI-SL with the assistance of TI has conducted demobilization, reintegration, and resettlement programs for ex-combatants, child soldiers, and war widows. From 1996, TI-SL began conducting training workshops to help prepare lay counsellors to assist persons severely affected by war in rebuilding their emotional and psychological health and their home communities. TI-SL has also emphasized agricultural and entrepreneurial training so individuals could learn to survive in the non-formal economy. In early 2000 TI-SL started offering shorter courses and extension services specifically for women and other vulnerable, displaced, and impoverished community members in rural areas.

The Program: Reintegration of Women and Girl Survivors of Gender-Based Violence in Sierra Leone

The program under study was initiated in 2003 by Training International, and funding was received from two US-based donor organizations. The program was intended to be a reintegration program for refugee and internally displaced women and girl survivors of gender-based violence in Sierra Leone. The design followed current best practices in offering psychosocial as well as economic assistance for refugees and the internally displaced. The program design consisted of three main components – skills training, business development training, and psychosocial counseling. The program was intended to run for one year with approximately six months of skills training and six months of business development assistance. Counselling would continue throughout the length of the program.[12]

The program took place in three locations, Bo, Mattru Jong, and Makeni. The participants were recruited through local organizations, using TI-SL's regular practices. There were seventy-five participants and in addition a training-of-trainers workshop was held for thirteen female counsellors from local organizations working with survivors of sexual violence. Four counsellors were also appointed to the program. These counsellors were all Sierra Leonean women themselves and had considerable experience working with women and children who survived the war.

The general patterns of sexual violence and abuse discussed above were also reflected in the women who participated in this program. Of the seventy-five women who participated, twenty-five of the women, all from Mattru Jong, were forced to stay in rebel camps, from nine months

to four years. Two-thirds of the Bo women stayed in camps, most from one to two years. For the Mattru Jong group, they experienced sexual abuse anywhere from several months to over a year. For the Bo group, abuse typically lasted several weeks, while for the Makeni group, abuse lasted over a year for most, but less than one week for some. Nearly all the women reported being either raped or gang-raped, while molestation and sexual slavery were reported by about half of the women.[13]

Program Outcomes

This paper uses a single case study approach to understand the particular organizational influences in the organization on the program described above. The time period under study is from late 2002 to 2004. During this time period, the program under study was initially proposed and launched. Data sources consisted of organizational documents related to the project including reports and correspondence sent to the donors, internal project evaluations that formed some of the source material for donor reports, internal correspondence regarding the project, and the original project proposal. Personal observations based on the author's experience with the organization and interviews with employees were also used to supplement this data. Given the sensitive nature of the data, and to protect confidentiality, all names of individuals and the organization have been altered.

The goal of this paper is not to use detailed and case-based information to generate theory. For that a much "thicker" description would be necessary. As a case study, the paper has the aim of generating discussion for practitioners and theorists about the importance of organizational-level factors in understanding humanitarian aid work. Examining closely the potential factors at an organizational level that may impede rather than enhance attempts at refugee assistance may be applicable to other organizations as well.

The major theme that emerged from the data regarding program outcomes was the extent to which the negative effects of the program were centred upon program management and administration rather than training or counselling. Overall, the outcomes of the program were largely seen as mixed; some positive but many negative impressions were conveyed by clients. The program had three sets of clients. First, TI-SL was a client of TI; second, the refugees and internally displaced women were the clients for TI-SL; and third, the counsellors for the women were also clients of TI-SL during an initial training program, before a few of them became employees.

The positive remarks noted about the program had to do with the actual training and counselling received. For example, during interviews with the refugee and internally

displaced women in August 2003, the author found that many of the women were extremely positive about the opportunity to participate in the program.[14] In a report to the donors:

> None of the clients interviewed said they had any problems from the training or counseling. There was near unanimous agreement that counselors were helpful, trustworthy and extremely caring and supportive. In interview after interview clients expressed their appreciation for either the counselors or the training program itself. There was high satisfaction with the materials, curriculum and teaching method. Evidence of the women's grasp of their technical or life skills knowledge was reflected in several ways: (i) They wrote their names, knitted or told me of the basic execution of building a house in response; (ii) Many of the women interviewed directly made the connection between the counseling and their ability to learn and feel confident about taking control of their lives; and (iii) Many saw changes in their own confidence and abilities reflected in changes in the people around them, especially better treatment from their communities and families.[15]

For instance, in Bo, one participant mentioned that a few ex-combatants (who were also in the training centre) helped them out with lunch money[16].

The counsellors who were interviewed also noted that they felt positively about their training and ability to work with women. Hawa, one of the counsellors, gave an example in the mid-term interviews of how she had been able to extend her work in her neighbourhood and help local couples where there is domestic abuse. Another counsellor gave the example of two women who felt that they could testify before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission after joining the program and talking to the counsellors. The counsellor counted this as a testament to the program's ability to help these women.[17]

However, the negative remarks all centred upon the financial obligation of the program to the clients. As many who work with refugees in situations of conflict understand, meeting basic needs is of primary importance in any program. Furthermore, keeping trust and meeting expectations lays the groundwork for the effectiveness of any program. However, as the excerpts below show, the lack of follow-through on the financial obligations to clients had a devastating effect on the program:

In August of that year:

> The clients' major complaints were regarding financial support to help meet basic health needs; graduation ceremony expenses; and reintegration kits.[18]

Finally, the women all had questions regarding their reintegration kits. It was decided that these will be disbursed before the end of October. With these packages, the women can begin their self-employment activities, the final phase of this project.[19]

However, this last issue regarding the reintegration kits came up again later in the documents, at the end of October 2003 from the president of TI-SL.

> This is a personal note requesting information on the Project. I sincerely wish to know what has happened or is happening that we cannot get the funds. … At the moment I am under a lot of pressure from all concerned, Trainees, Counselors and staff. I have run out of excuses to a point that I am even afraid and ashamed of going to the centres. [At] our last Board meeting … the Trainees embarrassed me in the presence of Board Members that *we have lied to them about resettlement kits*. …. The problem I have now is the unavailability of funds. Please, please treat this urgently [emphasis added].[20]

And from the final report to donors:

> Among the negative findings of the evaluation was the judgment that the project suffered from delays in fund transfers to TI-SL, and this was a shared managerial lapse both of TI-SL and of TI. In fact the lateness of reports from TI-SL meant that the last wire transfer to them occurred after the project's end date of September 30, 2003, despite the fact that project activities were ongoing. TI had known as early as February that the implementation schedule was behind, and requested a no-cost extension … in July 30, 2003.[21]

As is apparent from the above quotes, two sets of clients, TI-SL and the program's participants, felt a severe impact based on the program management. For survivors of sexual abuse, violence, and war, trust is a critical issue. Prior work on conflict management is most emphatic on the importance of trust between aid workers and clients[22] and the importance of this trust for conflict transformation. If participants felt they were deceived by the organization, this would erode the fragile trust between employees and clients, impeding the work of the organization and the positive impact of the program for the client. Second, the bond of trust and shared goals between TI-SL and TI is also impaired. Again, prior research on partnerships between Northern and Southern NGOs points to the importance of power and trust in the asymmetrical relationships between partners.[23]

Organizational Characteristics: Structure and Human Resource Management

The program evaluations above point towards two potentially important organizational variables at TI that could have influenced program implementation and outcomes in Sierra Leone. The first is TI's organizational structure. As is apparent from the quotes from the TI-SL president and the final report to the donors, TI-SL was dependent upon TI for program finances. This dependence on TI was a function of TI's organizational structure. Second, the sequence of escalating complaints about the finances from the no-cost extension in July 2003 to the president's humiliation and urgent request in October 2003 indicates TI's lack of managerial responsiveness to its clients. Both factors are further discussed below.

TI's Organizational Structure

The relationship between TI and the affiliate had an impact on the outcomes discussed above. Specifically, three related components of TI's relationship with the affiliate are relevant: (a) the size of the grant, (b) the absence of an expatriate, and (c) financial dependence of TI-SL.

TI's founding father was an icon in the civil rights movement and notions of partnership, justice, and equality were originally built into the movement organizations. This is why the affiliate structure was created and why the affiliates are independently run and managed organizations. That affiliates are TI's backbone has attained the status of myth. According to the myth, affiliate TIs were started only upon a request from local individuals, who had to gather an interest group representative of the community that wanted a local TI. Once the interest group was formed, TI and the interest group would both search for funding. The interest group was slowly developed into a board, which hired management and was independent of the TI board and management. TI would offer technical training and assistance to the local affiliate for a number of years and, once sufficiently institutionalized, the local TI affiliate would be a "graduate." Thus, TI affiliates and TI were meant to be partners in a common cause. However, over time this partnership came to mean different things to TI and the affiliates[24] and it also came to be practiced in different ways depending on the particular country affiliate and the specific programs being implemented.

One major defining structural factor was the size of the grant. Typically, large-scale programs, involving multi-million dollar, multiple year programs were funded by government aid organizations and other large donors. With large grant budgets came frequent travel and large vested interest in terms of TI's own survival and responsiveness to donor pressures to engage in frequent communications with the affiliate. A second related feature was the presence of an expatriate TI international employee. Typically, TI international advisors were in-country for large-scale programs. When affiliate programs had expatriate advisors and large budgets, communication, travel between TI and the host country, and TI leadership attention were usually greater in frequency and quality and were also more likely to be sustained over time. On the other hand, communications, travel, and attention to programs in countries without the expatriate advisor and concomitant resources were usually not as well maintained. In the case of the TI-SL program for sexual violence survivors, this was a relatively small program in the overall budget of the organization (under US$200,000). Thus, TI headquarters' resources, time, and leadership attention were rarely focused on the program. The third major feature of the program that was embedded in TI's organizational structure was the combination of managerial independence and financial dependence given to TI-SL. Given TI and TI-SL's history, TI-SL was an independent organization, even though TI still controlled the financial resources needed for implementation of the program. Strong separation of communication and managerial power between TI and TI-SL meant that communication between various functions (such as finance in the affiliate and finance at TI) and decision-making collaboration were not routinized. For example, the lack of communication paths between the affiliate TI-SL and TI can be noted in the need for a personal communication from the president of TI-SL. However, financially, TI exerted control over TI-SL's ability to implement the program.

On the one hand, expatriate managers come with their own set of problems in international humanitarian work.[25] On the other hand, expatriate managers may have advantages in terms of their networks and understanding of parent organizations that allow affiliate programs to operate more effectively. Acknowledging and understanding some of the trade-offs that may come with affiliate programs and expatriate managers is necessary for organizations such as TI and its affiliates. It may be necessary to consider how to align the managerial and financial aspects of a program in order to improve effectiveness. For instance, when affiliates are not sufficiently independent in terms of managing their resources but are expected to be independent in terms of running their programs, this may result in tying affiliates' hands behind their backs and could impact the effectiveness of programs. Furthermore, the erosion of trust and imbalance of power between the local affiliate and headquarters could negatively influence future work by the parent organization and the self-efficacy of the affiliate.

TI's Human Resource Management

The second aspect of the organizational context that may have influenced TI's diminished capacity to respond to its clients is its human resource practices. In humanitarian aid as well as other types of social service or non-profit work, recent research suggests that human resource management factors such as the lack of respect[26] and justice[27] employees feel they receive from their managers within the organization influence both employee burnout and client satisfaction.[28] In a similar fashion, the reference above in the final report to donors to the "shared managerial lapse" may point to human resource management within TI that could have resulted in negatively affecting clients. Specifically, high turnover and leadership within the organization may have played a role in the organization's lack of responsiveness to clients.

During the time of the program (2002–2004), there were severe human resource management issues within the organization. Of the seventeen people employed by the organization in that time-frame, nine employees voluntarily resigned. That is a large exodus for a small organization to experience. Seven of the employees who left had been in program management, and two of them were senior executives. In addition, during this time, there were also numerous meetings and communications concerning employee dissatisfaction with management.[29]

The human resource management issues could have been the result of internal organizational changes. First, the founder of the organization has passed away in 2001. As research on organizational transitions shows[30] the death of a founder has a profound effect on the organization. In the case of NGOs, research indicates that many NGOs rely on the presence of a charismatic founder-leader,[31] and this may result in organizational failure once the charismatic founder is no longer present.[32] Second, the organization itself was divided between a subgroup of newly hired "outsiders" in whom the history of the organization and its founder had not been inculcated and a subgroup of long-serving "insiders" who had been part of the original movement and founding of the organization. For the latter, the cult of the charismatic leader and the routinization of charisma through rites, ceremonies, oral and written traditions engendered strong loyalty and identification with the founder and through that the organization[33]. For the former, it is likely that identification lay more with the profession of being an "aid" or "development" worker, rather than TI *per se.*

In the case of TI's more long-serving employees, the emphasis on loyalty to the leader could be due to the circumstances in which the movement and TI emerged. Lewis[34] notes that the context surrounding the formation of British and Swedish labour unions led to differences in the values that took hold in the organizations. British unions, forged in an environment of threat and distrust, valued insiders over outsiders, while Swedish unions were part of the national polity and were therefore more bureaucratic and professional. In a similar fashion, it is possible that the context of TI's founding affected the current values espoused within TI by the longer-serving group. The context could be important in several ways. First, given the civil rights movement and the atmosphere of social revolution that pervaded black organizations and communities, it is possible that loyalty in the guise of race became a primary value.[35] Over time, although race was no longer so critical in the day-to-day development work of TI, the emphasis on loyalty was retained. Second, the founder's charismatic leadership when directly experienced results in the personal identification of followers with the leader.[36] The direct experience of charismatic leadership is quite different from the experience created by the routinization of charisma because charismatic leadership typically induces reverence.[37] One implication of this is that for the longer-serving members of the organization who revered and identified with the founder, personal loyalty to the leader could clearly have been part of the founding imprint of TI. Using the perspective of organizational blueprints, decisions made early in the life of the organization influence its later trajectory.[38] When taken together, loyalty to the leader becomes taken as shorthand for loyalty to the cause as perceived by the individuals themselves.

On the other hand, as the organization expanded and hired individuals who had not been through its founding times or experienced the charisma of the founder directly, the balance of employees with loyalty to the leader within the organization changed. DiMaggio and Powell[39] speak of professionalization and professional norms as causing isomorphism among organizations in an organizational field. That is, increasing professionalization, measured by hiring of individuals with academic credentials or positions in professional networks where organizational models are diffused, results in an organization resembling others in its field. The influx of new individuals who had worked in other organizations (and therefore belonged to a professional network) resulted in normative pressures on TI to change isomorphically regarding standards and norms of professional conduct. However, although DiMaggio and Powell[40] state that professionalization may override the variations in tradition and control that shape organizational behaviour, the process of overriding itself could result in conflict. Similarly, if we consider the role of subcultures in an organization[41] rather than organizational culture as one "shared meaning," we can see cul-

tural conflict at TI between two subcultures: one promoting a professional organization and another promoting a loyalty-based system. Where loyalty and exchange built on loyalty shaped organizational and individual outcomes in the past, once professionalization began, organizational and individual outcomes were expected to occur based on professional norms. The transition in the organization and the conflicting expectations of both old and new employees may be partially responsible for TI's human resource management issues. As one former employee stated:

> TI is on the brink of collapse due to the loss of program staff… we are struggling with program development, support and contractual needs as ONLY the three program VPs are [left]… the staff whom we lost had years of in-house learning together with investment in their training through other opportunities.[42]

Both of these factors, the structural impediments to clear communication with and independence of the affiliate and the human resource management constraints, meant that programs, such as TI-SL's, suffered. The erosion of trust, both between TI-SL and the women and girl survivors of sexual violence in Sierra Leone and between TI and TI-SL, is likely to have left both sets of TI's clients in a more vulnerable position regarding recovery.

Conclusions: An Opportunity for Learning

This paper has tried to show through a case-study approach that both issues of organizational structure surrounding affiliate programming and issues of human resource management can influence program outcomes. The vulnerabilities of clients and employees in aid work are tied to the organizational contexts in which they are embedded. International programs are less able to be effective and clients are more likely to be disaffected when they are embedded in organizations with structural and managerial factors that act as impediments to effective program implementation.

Of course, one could ask whether it is not the responsibility of donor organizations to evaluate the extent to which NGOs have capabilities to execute successful programs. But as Church and Shouldice[43] point out, the positive bias in evaluation occurs at all levels of conflict resolution programs. NGOs have a reason to put a positive spin on activities because of dependence on donor funding; program managers in the donor agencies have a reason to positively evaluate programs because they are judged based on grant performance; and donor agencies as a whole have a reason to put a positive spin on activities because they need to justify their funding from government sources to the public. The strength of the negative outcomes, as highlighted in this paper, would

only be accessible from examining organizational records. Many authors on NGO performance argue that rather than project-based criteria for evaluations, learning should be the goal of project evaluation.[44] This paper is not meant to be a project evaluation, but in the spirit of Edwards ane Hulme,[45] it does point to opportunities for learning for both practitioners and theorists.

A vulnerabilities framework suggests that the organizational context, not just the program, country, or client factors should be included in an assessment of program impact. Future research that examines the role of NGOs on client outcomes in humanitarian aid and conflict situations should be cognizant of variables such as organizational structure, culture, and human resource management among others that may impact the vulnerabilities of clients. From a practitioner's perspective, NGO managers and employees may need to think carefully about their responsibilities to clients in terms of their own specific capacities for implementing programs. Understanding the structural and cultural context in which programs are embedded will help program managers and employees in NGOs figure out where the roadblocks and opportunities are within their organizations to improve their work with their clients.

Figure 1. Organizational Context Influences on Client Outcomes
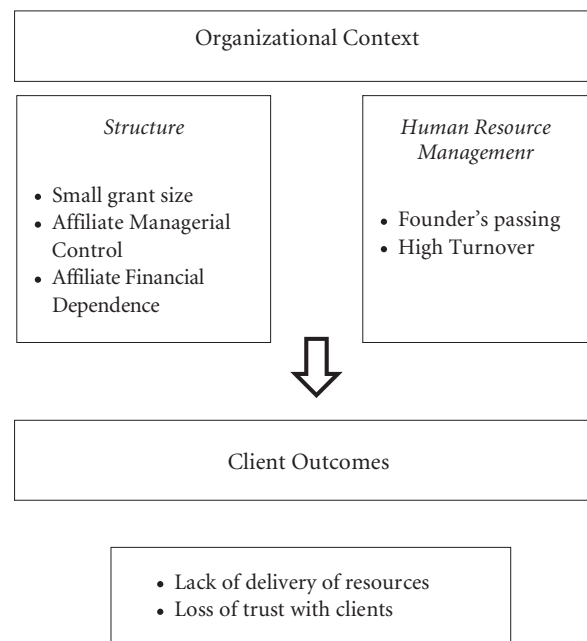
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Post-Disaster Mental Distress Relief: Health Promotion and Knowledge Exchange in Partnership with a Refugee Diaspora Community

Laura Simich, Lisa Andermann, Joanna Anneke Rummens, and Ted Lo

Abstract

After the 2004 Asian tsunami, a group of concerned scientists, physicians, and community service providers united to form a Local Distress Relief Network (LDRN) to provide information, referral, and care to affected members of the large Sri Lankan Tamil community in Toronto. The LDRN organized a workshop that brought together community-based organizations and international and local experts in mental health and disaster response to review existing knowledge on disaster response and to share community knowledge and experience. This article summarizes the development of the network, the workshop proceedings and joint recommendations for community-based, culturally appropriate mental distress relief.

Résumé

Après le tsunami survenu en Asie en 2004, un groupe concerné de scientifiques, médecins, et fournisseurs de services communautaires se sont unis pour former un réseau local de soulagement de la détresse (Local Distress Relief Network - LDRN) dans le but de fournir des renseignements, de référer, et de prodiguer des soins aux membres affectés de l'importante communauté tamoule sri lankais à Toronto. Le LDRN a organisé un atelier de travail qui a rassemblé des organisations communautaires ainsi que des experts internationaux et locaux dans le domaine de la santé mentale et d'intervention en cas de désastres pour passer en revue les connaissances existantes en matière de réponses aux désastres et partager le savoir et l'expérience de la communauté. Cet article résume le développement du réseau, les délibérations de l'atelier de travail et les recommandations communes pour le soulagement de la détresse mentale adapté à la communauté et culturellement approprié.

Introduction

In response to the devastating effects of the December 26, 2004, tsunami in Asia, a group of concerned scientists, physicians, and community service providers came together in Toronto to form a Local Distress Relief Network (LDRN). The goal of the Network was to provide a locally targeted, responsive system of information, referral, and care to assist affected members of the Sri Lankan Tamil community in Toronto (population 200,000)[1] – the largest Tamil diaspora in the world – which was deeply and directly affected by the disaster. This was not the first time the Tamil community had suffered. The Tamil population in Canada originated as refugees fleeing war and persecution in Sri Lanka, and thus had endured previous dislocation, psychosocial trauma, and resettlement stress.[2] Even before the tsunami inundated the homeland, appropriate mental and other health services had not been available to meet Tamil community mental health needs. In a multicultural society such as Canada's, where numerous diaspora communities bind us all to world events, a vision for culturally appropriate and effective mental health services during and after emergencies was (and remains) critical.

The ongoing controversy in mental health over trauma counseling and appropriate responses to disaster, whether focused on mental health treatment or social interventions, has produced principles for training[3] and public health responses,[4] which commonly and clearly express the importance of community-based interventions to aid recovery for affected populations. However, a "community" may be conceptualized as transnational, or defined by a "type of consciousness," thus having psychosocial as well as political and economic ties.[5] Not only are survivors of natural disasters or conflict in resource-poor countries directly affected and at risk of mental distress, but also affected are members of those societies living in the diaspora in refugee resettlement countries, particularly families of those injured or killed.[6]

To date, little attention has been devoted to understanding the mental health effects of far-flung diasasters or to devising an appropriate public and mental health response to support affected diaspora populations whose psychological ties to the homeland may be strong. Psychiatric epidemiology and studies of the effects of disasters have noted heightened vulnerability for women, children,[7] and ethnic minorities with prior exposure to community violence and disparities in the availability and accessibility of mental health care.[8] They have concluded that community-based interventions are most effective. Experts have also confirmed that psychosocial support interventions following disasters are best provided by understanding cultural context and how cultural factors can shape social responses and healing strategies.[9]

Our own participant observation in the LDRN initiative, begun as a way of addressing the psychosocial needs of the Sri Lankan Tamil community in Toronto after the tsunami, confirms that culturally appropriate and community-based distress relief can be successful when such initiatives support communities and unite the strengths of many actors. This article briefly describes the development the LDRN, and then describes the content of a joint workshop that was organized to exchange knowledge about distress relief models and practices that can promote recovery in both local and transnational contexts.

Background

Canada is one of the leading refugee resettlement countries in the world today, and Sri Lanka one of the world's leading refugee producing countries. Toronto is North America's most diverse city, with nearly half of its population born outside of Canada. Yet, despite a well-deserved reputation for multiculturalism and universal health care policies, Canada has not yet done enough to ensure that mental health care is accessible to its diverse newcomer populations. Needs for culturally appropriate mental health promotion, prevention, and care outstrip the available mental health services even in normal times. This is one reason that Toronto Tamil individuals and community organizations had approached Dr. Morton Beiser in the Culture, Community and Health Studies Program at the University of Toronto in 1999 to propose conducting a mental health survey in the Toronto Tamil community. The Community in Distress study was proposed, funded by the Canadian Institutes for Health Research, and carried out from 2000 to 2004 in partnership with several Tamil community groups.[10]

Social conditions in Canada, as well as pre-migration experiences, influence refugee community mental health. Some challenges facing the Tamil community are similar to those in other immigrant and refugee groups, and include experiences of displacement and exposure to traumatic events; limited comfort, especially among women, with using English; underemployment and discrimination in Canada; difficulties for seniors in terms of loss of freedom and social status; and lower than average household incomes during the early years in Canada. Nonetheless, Toronto Tamils form an increasingly well-educated community with a great deal of social capital. Most feel that they have good social relations and support among family and friends. Though nearly half of those interviewed in the study were forced to seek asylum in Canada, 65 per cent are now Canadian citizens.[11] There is also a marked increase in prosperity after ten to fifteen years in Canada. This trajectory suggests that the Toronto Tamil community rises to challenges, as also is proven by the community's response to the tsunami.

The Local Distress Relief Network originated in the commitment of the Tamil study's research team to community collaboration and socially relevant research. When the tsunami struck, the team sought ways to translate this commitment into support for the Tamil disapora community of Toronto. While much of the public attention was focused on disaster relief efforts overseas, it was clear that there were also unmet needs for distress relief locally, for affected community members with worries or grief for loved ones back home, returnees from the region, and emergency disaster workers. The goal of the network became linking people and resources to facilitate knowledge exchange.

LDRN activities included information and networking meetings; preparation of a culturally competent flyer in Tamil that outlined common symptoms of distress and ways to address them and provided contact information for Tamil-speaking mental health care workers; distribution of this flyer at a public vigil for tsunami victims and via the Internet; preparation of an information letter concerning the impact of disasters on children and families for teachers

and parents to be distributed in the school system; translation of a photo-novella on post-traumatic stress disorder into Tamil; and establishing a Tamil Mental Health Resource Group to promote and sustain referrals.

The LDRN succeeded because it was based on an established working relationship between researchers and community members that was rooted in trust and mutual respect. This made it possible to identify pressing needs and to focus on feasible tasks. It was important to let those affected within the community tell those willing to assist what they felt was most needed, and to support the community's own initiatives as much as possible. It was also important to share responsibilities to ensure efficiency, and to ensure response capacity before proceeding in order to meet heightened expectations. Although the network was started by a handful of colleagues, it belonged to everyone. The network thus strove to become a "coalition of leaders." Individual efforts and expertise contributed to a whole that was greater than the sum of its parts.

The LDRN was only a small part of the Toronto Tamil community's overall response to the tsunami, which preceded and extended well beyond the reach of the LDRN. As just one example, the Tamil Emergency Medical Services (TEMS), a registered non-profit, non-governmental organization based in Canada whose mandate is to enrich the lives of people affected by war through rehabilitation and development, filled pressing medical needs in the north and east of Sri Lanka by bringing together healthcare professionals, students, and community leaders. TEMS's tsunami-related projects included a locally organized medical supplies relief effort, a baby items drive, and support for Ponambalam Hospital and for health workers' training. In addition, members of the Tamil Service Providers' Coalition in Toronto provided support services to families after the tsunami and were also trained by Toronto Public Health to provide grief counselling. Tamil media organizations assisted by fundraising for immediate relief efforts and providing opportunities for individuals to talk about their suffering and comfort each other through call-in talk shows. Tamil places of worship also organized special prayer services throughout Toronto. To offset the fact that international disaster aid was not always delivered to the areas most in need, Tamil health professionals and other community members visited disaster-affected areas in the homeland to deliver medical, material, and emotional support directly. This massive community-led aid effort likely helped to assuage feelings of helplessness and loss and promoted rehabilitation and mental health in the larger community.

Organization of the Workshop "Mental Health in Public Health Policy and Practice: Providing Culturally Appropriate Services in Acute and Post-emergency Situations"

The desire to provide distress relief after the tsunami raised questions such as these: What should be the role of trauma counselling in good mental health practice after emergencies? What does this approach entail for diaspora and ethnocultural communities in Canada? What are the implications for public health, hospital, and community mental health practice in acute and post-emergency phases?

To address these issues, the authors organized a one-day workshop that brought together international, national, and local experts in health and disaster relief and community-based organizations to review existing literature, share practical experience and community knowledge, and discuss the implications for distress relief initiatives for affected ethnocultural populations.[12] The workshop, entitled Mental Health in Public Health Policy and Practice: Providing Culturally Appropriate Services in Acute and Post-emergency Situations, was designed to build on existing international and local expertise and to explore implications for Canadian public health policy and practice. Key tasks were to: (1) consider existing mental distress relief models and culturally appropriate public health practices, (2) explore implications for Canadian health research, policy, and service delivery, and (3) develop initial guidelines through consensus.

Held on May 26, 2005, at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health in Toronto, the workshop benefited from the combined expertise and energy of participants from several sectors, including academic, community mental health care, and policy. Of the twenty-nine participants, four were mental health experts invited from outside of Canada. Local expert participants were drawn from Tamil and non-Tamil community health services, hospitals, and settlement service agencies, as well as municipal, provincial, and federal government agencies. The morning workshop program was devoted to presentations of distress relief models. The ensuing group discussions also incorporated "front-line" reports of local lessons and best practices by all workshop participants. The goal was to provide participants with an opportunity to exchange information, experience and ideas. In the afternoon, small working groups aimed at developing policy, practice, and research recommendations. This was followed by a full group discussion that pooled the recommendations, which were subsequently circulated to all participants to ensure consensus. Relevant background readings, summarized below, were distributed in advance of the workshop to help frame the planned group discussion.

Summary of Workshop Readings on Culturally Appropriate Models of Mental Distress Relief

The tsunami of December 26, 2004, dealt a heavy blow to the already overburdened Tamil population in Toronto. The Community in Distress study completed just prior to the tsunami was the first survey of psychiatric epidemiology in this community and provided much needed background into the mental health needs of this population.[13] Survey findings showed that approximately one-third of 1,600 Tamil respondents had experienced traumatic events including assault, rape, or witnessing combat. Of those who had experienced trauma, 36.2 per cent met criteria for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and the overall prevalence in the community was 12 per cent. Less than 10 per cent had received any specific psychological treatment. While 70 per cent of people had seen a general practitioner for various reasons, less than 1 per cent had seen a mental health worker or psychiatrist. This "poor fit" is observed between mental health needs and services and is associated with many barriers encountered including language, lack of information, stigma, and preferences for traditional healing.

The World Health Organization (WHO) statement "Mental and social health during and after acute emergencies: Emerging consensus?" summarized the opinions of world experts in a field which has been controversial.[14] The authors provide a useful table of social and mental health intervention strategies and a discussion about emergency responses in a stepwise and multilevel manner. They describe eight basic principles of mental health in emergencies: (1) contingency planning, (2) assessment, (3) long-term perspective, (4) collaboration, (5) integration into primary health care, (6) access to service for all, (7) thorough training and supervision, and (8) monitoring. Much of the workshop discussion was based on these principles, with added emphasis on the diaspora situation.

In the Round Table discussion by Silove[15] and Summerfield[16] following the WHO consensus statement, Silove argues that "the best immediate therapy for acute stress is social," and that this would include providing safety, family reunification, effective justice systems, returning to productive roles in work or study, and "re-establishing systems of meaning and cohesion – religious, political, social and cultural."[17] When psychiatric disorders do occur and help is needed, he supports the use of community mental health programs integrated within primary care; however, he cautions that in resource-poor situations, some external resources and specialized training may be needed. Summerfield critiques the use of the PTSD concept in non-western populations, and is concerned that "psychosocial programs" imported to treat trauma in developing countries have tended to focus more on the psychological than the social.[18] In fact, he believes this to be a false distinction of western thought promoting the dichotomy between mind and body, which is foreign in many other parts of the world. He writes:

> Lack of coherence is bad for people: if there is such a thing as a core fact about human response to disasters and violent upheavals, it is that survivors do well (or not) in relation to their capacity to re-establish social networks and a viable way of life. Western mental health models have always paid too little attention on the role of social agency, including work, in promoting stable well-being and mental health.[19]

A survey of international experts conducted by Weiss and colleagues was also reviewed.[20] Issues addressed include the nature and diversity of disasters, the validity of the PTSD diagnosis and the classification of traumatic stress responses, and goals and approaches for mental health policy and future directions for research. Of relevance to the tsunami, general opinion held that it was less important to differentiate between man-made and natural disasters than to develop different approaches for single event *versus* enduring trauma. Addressing sociocultural and community context was primary, including culturally sensitive needs assessment, using local expertise and recruiting local relief workers, and sustaining interventions over time. In addition, clinical and community interventions must be balanced, with mental health services being incorporated into primary health care. Development of stand-alone trauma services is not advised. Specifically, "aid programs should refrain from applying blanket trauma-focused clinical interventions to a large population, solely because the community as a whole has been exposed to disaster."[21]

Training issues were thoroughly addressed by the consensus guidelines developed by the Task Force on International Training of the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies (ISTSS).[22] These guidelines focus on four main issues: (1) values underlying international training; (2) contextual challenges in societies during or after conflicts; (3) core curricular elements of training; and (4) monitoring and evaluation. Training must be culturally sensitive, as well as feasible and sustainable in the local setting, with some access to supervision. Self-care of mental health workers must be addressed. In addition, attention needs to be paid to monitoring, evaluation, and outcomes.

Although there is much written about cultural understanding of trauma and depression, one study by Eisenbruch on "cultural bereavement" in Southeast Asian refugees in the United States seemed particularly relevant for workshop participants in understanding possible re-

sponses to the tsunami among Toronto Tamils, many of whom have already had direct experiences with trauma prior to coming to Canada.[23] Cultural bereavement is described as "the experience of the uprooted person- or group-resulting from loss of social structures, cultural values and self identity… not of itself a disease, but an understandable response to the catastrophic loss of social structure and culture."[24] Using semi-structured interviews and clinical vignettes to conduct an in-depth study of this syndrome, Eisenbruch suggested that disabling psychological symptoms may mimic post-traumatic stress disorder, but in fact will not respond to biomedical treatments or western psychotherapy alone. Cultural bereavement is an issue which goes beyond the symptoms of an individual. He adopts a wider perspective by asking:

> If some of the people in this community come to a mental health resource with complaints such as sleeplessness or flashbacks or some other hallmarks of post-traumatic stress disorder, how are we really to treat them? Treating the symptoms can be counterproductive, because the patient returns to a community that is in itself in a state of collective grief and the patient becomes more estranged from the parent culture."[25]

He provides an answer emphasizing cultural meaning to achieve a truer understanding of the sufferer's experience, rather than symptoms to be medicated.

Furthering knowledge of community approaches, the work of Jack Saul describes strengths-based approaches to trauma that are grounded in the study of resilience.[26] Saul conducted interviews with traumatized elderly Albanian Kosovars as "solution-oriented conversations" rather than standard psychological assessments in order to decrease their isolation and increase a sense of hope and problem solving. He writes, "by focusing on an individual's strengths and solutions, his or her problems are not denied but rather set in an atmosphere in which the individual can examine problems from a perspective of enhanced dignity and a sense of agency."[27] He also addresses the importance of community structure, acknowledging that "many of the strengths that enable people to cope with massive loss and trauma are embedded in a community's collective memory, culture and religions," and that "when drawing on these resources, the community is able to tap the symbols, rituals and maps that have traditionally enabled it to navigate through very difficult like events and transitions."[28] Cultures each have their own "repertoire of healing mechanisms" and reconnecting people to these hidden or forgotten routes will enable them to overcome their traumatic experiences.

Landau and Saul describe working with a community resilience model in post-9/11 New York and Buenos Aires, Argentina, following a period of political and economic instability.[29] The family is seen as the basic unit of "community," but the focus of intervention is broadened to the wider group. They identify four themes for community recovery, including: (1) social connectedness as foundation for recovery, (2) collective storytelling, (3) re-establishing daily routines and collective healing rituals, and (4) developing positive visions for the future. Community mapping is described as a first step in problem solving, and this brings the focus away from interventions on an individual level. Community members are approached as "natural change agents," allowing the success of the project to belong to the community.

Another contribution to existing knowledge comes from VIVO (Victim's Voice), an NGO that has been developing a short-term psychological intervention for post-traumatic stress disorder called Narrative Exposure Therapy (NET),[30] which has also been researched in children.[31] While mindful of the importance of community approaches, their expertise is in the area of treating individuals who are disabled by post-traumatic stress disorder and therefore unable to function. While other brief treatments for PTSD exist, NET is unique in that it has been shown to be effective in post-conflict environments such as Uganda and Sri Lanka, can be done in the field with minimal resources, and most importantly, builds local competency through the use of trained laypersons. NET is taught to selected community members, such as the residents of a refugee camp, in a short period of time. They in turn treat others, with ongoing supervision and evaluation. Outcomes have been comparable to treatment by experienced NET therapists. This transition from "survivor" to "agent of change" and community healer is of great importance for local capacity building.

Workshop participants also reviewed a collection of first-hand reports and documents related to health and emergency measures and post-tsunami reconstruction in Sri Lanka,[32] which emphasized listening to the concerns and preferences of the affected and reminded the international community of their responsibility to follow through on their commitments for assistance.

Workshop Presentations: Expert Commentary on Existing Models of Distress Relief

With the readings as shared background, guest speakers opened the workshop by presenting commentary and examples of good distress relief practices. Dr. Jose Bertolote, representing the WHO in Geneva, placed the day's issues in a global context. He noted that WHO received "unprece-

dented" requests for mental health assistance following the tsunami. Making mental health a public priority would not have happened a mere five years before. Nevertheless, he noted that most emergency mental health responses remain ill-prepared. In the organization's experience, the most important lesson is that local realities necessarily shape local *and* external interventions. He advised against promoting new mental health services that are external to existing health services in emergency situations. However, he recommended promoting social interventions that are outside conventional mental health services. He supported offering basic psychological support, or what we have called "distress relief," both inside and outside the existing health system.

Bertolote acknowledged that the selective focus on PTSD in emergency mental health has been problematic, as has been the vertical organization of trauma services, the tendency to "parachute in" foreign trainers and clinicians and attempting to make a distinction between "mental health" and "psychosocial" services. Another problem has been the lack of baseline data on the impact of emergencies on mental health, although some assumptions can be made based on world surveys and disaster studies. Highly recommended responses at national and subnational levels include developing community-based mental health services, integrating these services into primary health care, and training personnel in all sectors to identify mental health issues and make appropriate referrals. He further emphasized that, unless cultural understanding is reached beforehand, emergency responses will only exacerbate the impact of the disaster.

Dr. Daya Somasundaram, Department of Psychiatry, University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka, contributed his ideas on community-level interventions, which are grounded in years of first-hand professional practice in the affected areas. He noted that most mental distress does not emerge as mental illness *per se*. Because mental distress does not arise as a medical problem, it should not be treated in a medical setting, but rather in the community. He described the effects of the December 2004 tsunami at several levels of society in northern Sri Lanka. At the individual and family levels, distressing experiences included loss of cohesiveness and unity; deaths, which created "vacuums"; family separations; disturbances in family dynamics; and family role change due to deaths of females. At the community level, experiences included widespread destruction of "organic roots" and breaks in the biological connections to the home; loss of support systems, networks, traditions, structures, and institutions; and loss of communality. He also described "collective trauma," which was characterized by an increased sense of dependency; deterioration in morals and values; poor leadership; adoption of superficial and

short-term goals; prevalent mistrust and suspicion; and social deterioration exemplified by general resignation, loss of work ethic, and increasing alcoholism.

Somasundaram suggested that the goal of responses should be psychosocial well-being as defined by the WHO, that is, health as "a state of complete physical, mental, (familial), social and (spiritual) well-being, and not merely an absence of disease or infirmity." He recommended several effective therapeutic interventions for disaster survivors, including crisis intervention, psychotherapy, behavioural-cognitive methods, pharmacotherapy, relaxation techniques (western principles and traditional practices), massage, and group therapy (small groups with similar problems and support groups for caretakers). He stated that family therapy could work to promote unity, cohesiveness, and sharing of burdens and responsibilities; increase mutual understanding, communications and interactions; fulfill roles and the need for respect; and create positive family dynamics and extended family support. He also stressed the utility of expressive methods, such as art, drama, writing and storytelling, and therapeutic play, which promote individual and social healing, recovery, and reintegration.

Somasundaram emphasized the primacy of respecting the local population's wishes and needs and their active participation in useful tasks such as vocational training, agro-therapy, non-partisan cultural healing, and symbolic expression in media and public mourning. Linked with these family and community-based interventions, he observed, should be a referral system for mental health care and treatment. He highlighted the significance of indigenous coping strategies, including rituals and ceremonies such as funerals and festivals, and described the important role of traditional healers. Traditional methods are based on disaster survivors' cultural and religious beliefs, and are therefore less stigmatizing, more culturally acceptable and popular.

Four additional speakers addressed the workshop: two international experts, whose work was described in the literature reviewed, and two contributors from Toronto. Patience Onyut, a psychologist at the University of Konstanz, Germany, Refugee Outpatient Clinic, works with the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka, and VIVO, which treats patients and victims of violence and disaster who do not get better on their own. She presented applied research among children in northern and northeastern Sri Lanka, which demonstrates the potentially traumatic experiences of Tamil children from war, witnessing unexpected or violent death, threat with a weapon, witness of torture, harassment by armed personnel, and sexual abuse, with consequences of PTSD including somatic symptoms, suicidality, and im-

paired school performance and memory. Onyut also described a second epidemiological study of children in Sri Lanka in January 2005, which showed a relatively high prevalence of PTSD three weeks after the tsunami. Predictors of PTSD included war experiences, domestic violence, and the severity of the tsunami itself, with a cumulative effect. Most relevant to culturally appropriate distress relief practices, Onyut described the successful use of the Cascade Model in which over 120 master counsellors supervise counsellors in Tamil schools, as well as 1,000 "befrienders" in all Tamil districts. The counsellors provide Narrative Exposure Therapy that has been shown to be effective for children using techniques such as drawing lifelines and other representations, acting, and body awareness.

Jack Saul, director of the International Trauma Studies Program, Columbia University, New York, spoke about facilitating community resilience following war and terrorism. Saul described his ten years of work with torture survivors in refugee communities and in post-9/11 downtown Manhattan.[33] Saul defined resilience as "the capacity to rebound from adversity, strengthened and more resourceful. It is an active process of endurance, self-righting, and growth in response to crisis and challenge." The principles of the community resilience approach include the process of invitation; attaining authority, permission, and commitment from the community; the engagement of the entire community, including subgroups and all economic strata, the natural helping system; identification of scripts and themes across generations and community history; helping the community to map out its resources; turning goals into realistic tasks, and those tasks into practical projects; encouraging community members (natural "change agents") to become leaders; and finally, attributing success to the community.

Raymond Chung, executive director of Hong Fook Mental Health Association, Toronto, presented the Association's model of culturally appropriate care. Hong Fook is a community-based mental health organization which advocates "equal access" to achieve "mental health for all." Hong Fook has a notable history offering culturally appropriate mental health services in Toronto. The Association began early in the 1980s helping refugees and immigrants from war-torn Vietnam, and later Cambodia, adopting a Consultation Liaison Model by training bilingual/bicultural mental health workers to work with mainstream treatment facilities. Today, Hong Fook has forty-seven staff members working with newcomers from Cambodia, China, Hong Kong, Korea, Taiwan, and Vietnam. The guiding principles focus on empowerment, self help, mutual support, and capacity building. Chung outlined principles and assumptions used in working with distressed individuals and com-

munities: migration is understood to be a stressful experience; migration and mental health are linked in the framework of social determinants of health; stigma attached to mental illness is a barrier to be overcome before any form of treatment or supportive strategies can be effective; and each individual and each diaspora or ethnoracial community is unique, yet continually changing. Service providers, Chung stated, have to "walk alongside the individuals and grow with the communities" to discover the strengths within each. Furthermore, he noted that prevention is better than treatment and that there are many alternative treatments to consider.

Dr. Clare Pain, director, Mount Sinai Hospital Psychological Trauma Assessment Clinic, Toronto, summarized the key themes. She pointed to a model of culturally appropriate distress relief that emphasizes the quality of relationships, specifically respectful, collaborative relationships among health care practitioners, service providers, policy makers, and communities. Pain observed that the most effective distress relief depends upon pre-existing relationships and knowledge. All too often a disaster or crisis occurs, chaos ensues, and the question only then arises, what interventions are appropriate? She noted that the wish to help confers strength, but also does possible harm. To avoid doing harm, it is important not to rush in to the situation, but to *listen* to requests first, then identify needs. She acknowledged that there are known vulnerable groups: children, elderly, and psychiatric patients in particular. Most people caught in crisis, however, are ordinary people, not patients (though some may not be able to function well for a while following a crisis). Pain also suggested that an underlying theme was the notion of the collective experience of distress, which is not necessarily caused by a single traumatic "event," but rather ongoing and extraordinary disruptions of normal life. Therefore, a reorientation in thinking is needed: going beyond the contemporary focus on PTSD, an individual disorder, to an analysis of collective trauma and ways to promote community healing. This new orientation might be thought of as a "bio-psychosocial-cultural orientation."

Perspectives from the Front Lines in Toronto: Workshop Participants' Experiences

In the ensuing discussion by workshop participants, several specific challenges of providing distress relief were highlighted. Most service providers, who had first-hand experience dealing with the tsunami-affected Tamil population in Toronto, observed that the tsunami disaster had brought to the surface many long-standing problems and stresses associated with migration and settlement in Canada that had accumulated through the years. A few noted that disaster aid

efforts also brought out feelings of anger and disappointment because of the inadequacies of the political response and inability of the Canadian government to follow through on promises made to deliver aid to tsunami-affected areas. Another source of frustration was misinformation about the government's intentions to fast-track affected family members through the immigration process. More positively, service providers noted that the community-based supportive programs that they were able to offer, particularly those in group settings that offered time and space for sharing emotional responses among clients and community members, appeared to be effective in alleviating mental distress for many people.

At an organizational level, workshop participants noted that the tsunami disaster response revealed problems such as jurisdictional barriers; the need for prior networking among agencies, professionals, and community workers; and the lack of response from mainstream institutions where mental health services are normally delivered. They observed that many institutions were unprepared to deal with disaster response and were uncertain about how to proceed to deal with intercultural communication. For example, in Toronto's schools, which were central gathering points for disaster-affected families and communities, people were generally not found to be receptive to available counselling literature about ways of dealing with psychosocial trauma. Furthermore, the political "hype" surrounding the tsunami disaster relief that motivated some institutional and government responses created skepticism in the end, because in immediately planning for "worst case" scenarios, some institutions and agencies requested or allocated resources for needs that did not materialize. Raising expectations thus hurt community members and may inhibit effective institutional responses in the future. Participants reiterated the importance of working with community organizations, securing commitments from mainstream institutions, and recognizing that linkages among families and the homeland may remain strong.

Joint Recommendations for Culturally Competent Mental Distress Relief

Based on their personal expertise and working group discussions, workshop participants developed recommendations for the provision of culturally appropriate policy, service provision, and research on distress relief. The recommendations are summarized below according to eight principles taken from background readings and two principles – Relations with other cultural communities and society, and Transnational ties – added to better acknowledge diaspora community experiences. Brief explanatory statements para-

phrased from the WHO consensus document[34] precede the recommendations.

Contingency Planning and Assessment

Before an emergency, national-level *contingency planning* should include interagency coordination, designing mental health response plans, and training general health care personnel in general mental health care and psychological first aid. *Assessment* should cover the sociocultural context (setting, culture, history, perceptions of illness, ways of coping), available services, resources, and needs.

- Identify different, relevant agencies and their scope of practice in advance.
- Involve communities in planning and assessment to ensure cultural/linguistic competence.
- Increase interaction between agencies and levels of government, horizontally and vertically.
- Determine who does what, and use this to determine responsibilities during disaster response.
- Develop clear lines of communication so that everyone is informed.
- Consult with and learn from the experiences of others. Identify and work with ethnocultural communities to learn from past experiences of dealing with trauma and disasters.
- Focus on needs identified by communities when developing a contingency plan, and on what is feasible in the current environment.
- Undertake distress relief initiatives in partnership with community leaders and organizations currently serving the community.
- Ensure that focus of action remains on community capacity building.
- Ensure ongoing review of contingency planning.
- Assess individuals in terms of ability or inability to perform daily functions.
- Consider the help-seeking behaviors of communities and impact on service delivery.

Long-term Perspective and Collaboration

Affected populations are helped most by a focus on *medium- and long-term development of mental health services*, although the needs are highest during or immediately after acute emergencies. Strong *collaboration* among agencies avoids waste and duplication. Continuous involvement of government, universities, and community agencies is essential for sustainability.

- Develop solutions that are long-term and sustainable.
- Ensure that policies and legislation (*e.g.* refugee legislation) are responsive to community needs, particularly during acute emergencies.

- Be aware of the "social disconnectedness" experienced by refugee communities and seek to counter this during times of need.
- Engage in community and institutional capacity building (*i.e.* in hospitals and government).
- Facilitate collaboration among mental health organizations under the "public health" umbrella.
- Ensure that collaboration among service providers, health professionals, policy makers, community members, and researchers is mutually beneficial.
- Some communities may be hesitant to collaborate due to negative past experiences. Elicit the support of other communities in order to reach out to these communities.
- Remember that different partnerships (research, service provision, policy development) at different levels (local, intergovernmental, international) each have important roles to play.
- Ensure clarity with regards to roles, responsibilities, expectations, and contributions.
- Specifically charge individuals with the responsibility of coordinating collaborations.

Integration into Primary Healthcare and Access to Service for All

To ensure access to non-stigmatizing services for the largest number of people, mental health services should be made available within the *primary health care* sector. Setting up separate, vertical mental health care services is discouraged. At the same time, *outreach* is crucial to ensure treatment of *vulnerable* groups within general health and social services.

- Build services directly into existing structures to promote sustainability, increase the efficiency of the services, and better utilize resources.
- Shift away from compartmentalized care to a decentralized process that integrates mental health care into primary health care.
- Move distress-relief services from a health practitioner-centred model to a multidisciplinary model involving multiple sectors (*e.g.* schools, drop-in centres).
- Focus services on health promotion/prevention rather than treatment/reaction.
- Use a community-based approach to address mental health issues to reach the larger population and address collective trauma at the social level.
- Find ways to strengthen existing organizations that provide distress relief (*e.g.* the Settlement Workers in the Schools program of Citizenship and Immigration Canada).

- Ensure that services can respond to anticipated needs (*e.g.* post-traumatic stress, alcohol abuse).
- Increase the cultural competency of institutions to better respond to multicultural needs.
- Provide training for health professionals and others around gender and cultural sensitivity.
- Facilitate acceptance and incorporation of community-identified traditional healing.
- Provide communities with culturally appropriate avenues for coping

Training, Supervision, and Monitoring

Training and supervision should be carried out by mental health specialists, or under their guidance, for a substantial period of time in order to ensure lasting effects of training and care. *Monitoring* indicators should be determined before starting activities and should include resources (including available and pre-existing), processes, and outcomes.

- Base program and training initiatives on prior community needs assessments.
- Identify both immediate and long-term needs and incorporate both into training materials.
- Ensure that there is a collective decision-making body of experts and key stakeholders to develop guidelines and procedures for training and supervision.
- Involve organizations both within and outside of affected communities.
- Identify training resources within the relevant communities to build on existing expertise.
- Ensure "core readiness" by compiling in advance a list of relevant specialists and experts.
- Provide cultural competency training to researchers, policy makers, and service providers.
- Provide awareness training to community members about the mental health impact of acute emergencies and effective coping strategies.
- Use a "cascade" model of training, in which leaders are trained to train others.
- Maintain effective communication to facilitate information flow and collaboration.
- Develop indicators of training and programmatic success.

Relationships with the Larger Society, Other Cultural Communities, and Transnational Ties

These additional recommendations were made in recognition of the special situation of diaspora communities.

- Build better partnerships to reduce competition for resources among cultural communities.
- Keep in mind that mass media can be helpful, but caution is needed to ensure that representations of

communities are accurate and that their best interests remain paramount.

- Encourage awareness of the fact that some newcomers, especially refugees, may be vulnerable due to prior trauma experience. However, many immigrants share similar settlement stresses.
- Recognize that attitudes about the homeland can differ among diaspora communities. These depend on many factors, including length of stay and sense of belonging in the new society.
- Involvement of foreign-trained health professionals in culturally competent health service delivery might be helpful in distress relief initiatives, but they may have left countries where there is also a great need for their services.
- Pursue and support collaboration with institutions in the homeland, as many communities have transnational linkages and resources. For example, culturally competent program manuals regarding disaster and/or distress relief or alternative therapies developed in the homeland may provide very helpful insights in Canada.

Participants also offered several recommendations as strategic research priorities. Above all, they recommended that research initiatives be responsive to community needs and that communities be directly and meaningfully involved in any research, service, and policy-making initiatives that concern them. To enable collaborative research, they suggested grounding research in the principles of community development and providing funding and guidelines to support academic/community partnerships. They also recommended increasing cultural competence by developing culturally appropriate assessment tools, undertaking social intervention research in the area of cultural competence and mental health, conducting more evaluation-based research of distress relief initiatives, and ensuring that research findings are translated into concrete products and services that can be used to address existing community needs. Directions included researching specific issues within both diaspora and homeland communities to provide comparative data, for example, researching mental illnesses (*e.g.* PTSD) in Canada and in the country of origin (*e.g.* Sri Lanka).

In sum, the key message distilled from the Local Distress Relief Network and the workshop experience is that providing effective distress relief must involve meaningful collaboration between mental health practitioners, social institutions, and diaspora communities. They provide cultural expertise and social resources for recovery and resilience where it often matters most, on the community level. The positive outcomes of the workshop described demon-

strate that refugee communities can and do provide leadership and vision, and that the ideas and organizational lessons shared here hold promise for promoting refugee mental health in the diaspora.

Notes

1. The LDRN did not exclude Sinhalese Sri Lankans and Indonesians who were also affected by the tsunami, but these populations in Toronto are comparatively small, at 8,000 and less than 1,000, respectively.

2. Morton Beiser, Laura Simich, and Nalini Pandalangat, "Community in Distress: Mental Health Needs and Help-seeking in the Tamil Community in Toronto," *International Migration* 41, no. 5 (2003): 233–245; Zachary Steel, Derrick Silove, Kevin Bird, Patraick McGorry, and P. Mohan, "Pathways from War Trauma to Posttraumatic Stress Symptoms among Tamil Asylum Seekers, Refugees and Immigrants," *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 12, no. 3 (1999): 421–435.

3. Steven Weine, Yael Danieli, Derrick Silove, Mark Van Ommeren, John A. Fairbank, and Jack Saul, "Guidelines for International Training in Mental Health and Psychosocial Interventions for Trauma Exposed Populations in Clinical and Community Settings," *Psychiatry* 65, no. 2 (2002): 156–164.

4. Mark Van Ommeren, Shekhar Saxena, and Benedetto Saraceno, "Mental and Social Health during and after Acute Emergencies: Emerging Consensus?" *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* 83, no. 1 (2005):75–76; Mitchell G. Weiss, Benedetto Saraceno, Shekhar Saxena, and Mark Van Ommeren, "Mental Health in the Aftermath of Disasters: Consensus and Controversy," *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease* 191, no. 9 (2003): 611–615; World Health Organization, *Mental Health in Emergencies: Mental and Social Aspects of Health of Population Exposed to Extreme Stressors* (Geneva: WHO Department of Mental Health and Substance Dependence, 2003).

5. See pages 488–455 in Steven Vertovec, "Conceiving and Researching Transnationalism," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 22, no. 2 (1999): 447–462.

6. Krishanthy Shu, *A Report on Developing Grief Counselling and Mental Health Services* (Toronto: Vasantham, A Tamil Seniors Wellness Centre, 2005).

7. Daya Somasundaram and Willem A.C.M. van de Put, "Management of Trauma in Special Populations after a Disaster," *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry* 67 (2006), Supplement 2: 64–73.

8. Fran Norris and Margarita Alegria, "Mental Health Care for Ethnic Minority Individuals and Communities in the Aftermath of Disasters and Mass Violence," *CNS Spectrums* 10, no. 2 (2005): 132–140.

9. Dinesh Bughra and Mark Van Ommeren, "Mental Health, Psychosocial Support and the Tsunami," *International Review of Psychiatry* 18, no. 3 (2006): 213–216.

10. The study was led by Dr. Morton Beiser (principle investigator). Research team members were Laura Simich, Anneke Rummens (co-investigators), Nalini Pandalangat and Abi-

manyu Singam (project coordinators). Project partners included the Family Service Association of Toronto, the South Asian Women's Centre, the Society for the Aid of Ceylon Minorities (SACEM), and the Senior Tamils' Centre. The project Community Advisory Board also included representatives from Vasantham, A Tamil Seniors Wellness Centre; St. Joseph's Hospital Women's Health Centre; Mount Sinai Hospital, Ethnocultural ACT Team; Providence Centre, the Tamil Caregiver Project; and Community Resource Consultants of Toronto.

11. Beiser, Simich, and Pandalangat.
12. We thank the Institute for Health Services and Policy Research (IHSPR), Canadian Institutes for Health Research, for providing workshop funding and the Department of Psychiatry, University of Toronto, for in-kind support. We would also like to express gratitude to many members of the Toronto Tamil community who led the way.
13. Beiser, Simich, and Pandalangat.
14. Van Ommeren, Saxena, and Saraceno.
15. Derrick Silove, "The Best Immediate Therapy for Acute Stress Is Social," *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* 83, no. 1 (2005): 75–76.
16. Derek Summerfield, "What Exactly Is Emergency or Disaster 'Mental Health'?" *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* 83, no. 1 (2005): 76–77.
17. Silove, 75.
18. Summerfield, 76.
19. *Ibid.*
20. Weiss *et al.*
21. *Ibid.*, 614.
22. Weine *et al.*
23. Maurice Eisenbruch, "From Post-traumatic Stress Disorder to Cultural Bereavement: Diagnosis of Southeast Asian Refugees," *Social Science and Medicine* 33, no. 6 (1991): 673–680.
24. *Ibid.*, 674.
25. *Ibid.*, 678.
26. Jack Saul (with Shquipe Ukshini, Afrim Blyta, and Shukrie Statovci), "Strengths-based Approaches to Trauma in the Aging," in *Living Beyond Loss: Death in the Family*, ed. F. Walsh and M. McGoldrick (New York: W.W. Norton, 2004).
27. *Ibid.*, 300.
28. *Ibid.*
29. Judith Landau and Jack Saul, "Facilitating Community Resilience in Response to Major Disaster," in *Living Beyond Loss: Death in the Family*. ed. F. Walsh and M. McGoldrick, (New York: W.W. Norton, 2004).
30. Lamaro Patience Onyut, Frack Neuner, Elizabeth Schauer, Verena Ertl, Michael Odenwald, Maggie Schauer, and Thomas Elbert, "The Nakivale Camp Mental Health Project: Building Local Competency for Psychological Assistance to Traumatized Refugees," *Intervention* 2, no. 2 (2004): 90–107.
31. Lamaro Patience Onyut, Frack Neuner, E. Schauer, V. Ertl, M. Odenwald, Margaret Schauer, and Thomas Elbert, "Narrative Exposure Therapy as a Treatment for Child War Survivors with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder: Two Case Reports and a Pilot Study in an African Refugee Settlement," *BMC Psychiatry* 5, no. 7 (2005), <http://www.biomedcentral.com/147–24X/5/7>.
32. R. Balakumar, A. Barath, G. Chanda, A. Kulan, G. Namanan, and D. Ravindran, eds., *Resilience and Resurgence: Rehabilitation and Reconstruction after the Tsunami Disaster in Sri Lanka* (Toronto: Caldwell, 2005).
33. More information on these programs can be accessed at <http://www.itspnyc.org> and <http://www.communityresilience.org/nyc>.
34. Van Ommeren *et al.*

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Addressing the Psychosocial Needs of Pregnant Women Affected by War: Program Approaches and Program Gaps

Bree Akesson

Abstract

Today's female refugee and internally displaced population faces the increasing risk of adverse birth outcomes associated with stress related to conflict, flight, and displacement. Programs addressing the specific psychosocial needs of pregnant women in situations of war are scarce, and there is little consensus regarding best practices. Initiatives have recently emerged, including psychosocial groups, safe motherhood training, and social support systems, all which aim to alleviate the psychosocial stress experienced by this cohort. However, there remain existing program gaps, such as the absence of specific quality research, the use of a deficits-based vernacular concentrated on vulnerabilities, no focus on postpartum care, and little development of gender-based violence prevention initiatives addressing pregnancies resulting from rape. It is clear that more needs to be done to provide and support comprehensive quality psychosocial services for this population.

Résumé

De nos jours les femmes réfugiées et les populations déplacées à l'intérieur des frontières font face à un risque croissant d'accouchements à problèmes résultant du stress lié aux conflits, à la fuite, et au déplacement. Les programmes pour satisfaire les besoins psychosociaux spécifiques de femmes enceintes dans les situations de guerre sont rares, et il y a peu de consensus en matière de meilleures pratiques. Des initiatives sont apparues récemment, y compris l'émergence de groupes psychosociaux, de la formation pour une maternité sans risque, et des systèmes de support sociaux, qui visent tous à alléger le stress psychosocial éprouvé par toutes celles concernées. Cependant ces programmes comportent encore des lacunes, telles que l'absence de recherche spécifique de bonne qualité, l'utilisation d'un vernaculaire fondé sur les déficiences et se concentrant sur les vulnérabilités, le manque de considération pour les soins suivant l'accouchement, et peu de développement dans les initiatives concernant la prévention de la violence liée au sexe et traitant des grossesses résultant du viol. Il est clair que davantage doit être fait pour fournir et soutenir des services psychosociaux complets et de qualité pour cette population.

Traditionally, relief efforts during complex emergencies have focused on the provision of food, water, shelter, and health care, with the overarching goal of reducing morbidity and mortality. Gender-specific needs of women are often compromised during wartime, especially the mental health needs of pregnant women. This article focuses on the current program approaches and gaps that exist in addressing pregnant women's mental health needs during times of war and suggests hopeful theoretical methods for the development and improvement of future programs.

Individuals affected by war experience fluctuations in violence, displacement to unfamiliar surroundings, disruption of family and community structures, and lack of access to basic needs. Although many war-affected individuals may experience physical and emotional stress associated with conflict, flight, and displacement, pregnant women may suffer from this stress differently, as they find themselves struggling to meet their families' survival needs while attempting to meet their own physical needs. For the

trauma of war is not related just to the exposure to violence, but also to the hardships associated with increased poverty, loss of place, and disintegration of social structures.

Of the estimated 9.2 million refugees and 25 million internally displaced people in the world today, 80 per cent are women or children.[1] Among refugee populations, approximately 25 per cent are women of reproductive age, with one in five of these women likely to become pregnant at any time during the course of conflict, flight, or displacement.[2] Fifteen per cent of pregnant women will experience complications during pregnancy or delivery which require emergency obstetric care.[3] Globally, complications from pregnancy and childbirth are the leading cause of death and disability for women aged fifteen to forty-nine in most developing countries.[4] During conflict, flight, and displacement, childbirth may occur at any place and at any time, without adequate preparation for the culturally salient practices that are often intrinsic pieces of traditional childbirth processes. For example, with approximately 200,000 Sudanese refugees crossing the Sudan-Chad border since early 2004, women have been forced to give birth while in transit to camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) or refugees without the presence of a skilled birth attendant, without access to the basic items for a safe and clean delivery, and with the unfortunate consequence of an unnecessarily high maternal morbidity rate.[5] In developing countries, only 53 percent of deliveries are attended by a skilled health care worker, with emergency conditions allowing access to skilled attendants and safe delivery kits even less likely.[6]

The psychosocial implications for pregnant women in situations of complex emergencies are extremely important, as numerous studies depict this association between maternal mental health and birth outcomes. Researchers in Belgium cite evidence that anxiety experienced by pregnant women between weeks 12 and 22 of pregnancy had a significant effect on certain childhood behavioural problems manifested in their offspring.[7] According to the United National Population Fund (UNFPA), stress from war leads to an increased number of miscarriages among pregnant women.[8] A study in Chile looking at the relationship between pregnancy complications and protracted sociopolitical violence in Santiago from 1985 to 1986 found that female residents from Santiago's urban neighbourhoods with high levels of violence were five times more likely to experience pregnancy complications than those who lived in neighbourhoods with low levels of violence.[9]

It is pertinent to consider rape as a means whereby women may become pregnant in situations of war. Although most instances of pregnancy are likely to be the result of a consensual sexual act, rape during wartime is also a reality. It is difficult to quantify the magnitude of wartime rape, since accurate statistics are difficult to obtain using traditional public health methodologies. However, it is known that wartime rape is often widespread, used as a means to disable a population by humiliating, dominating, or disrupting the social ties of family and community.[10] In certain conflicts such as Bosnia, Rwanda, and Sudan, certain ethnic populations have been targeted for sexual violence. Specifically, in the former Yugoslavia, rape was used as a means of "ethnic cleansing through impregnation."[11] Rape survivors do not just face the physical manifestations of the act, but may also face social exclusion and isolation from their families and communities. And since pregnancy may result from rape, mental health issues such as anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, and depression should specifically be addressed among this cohort of pregnant women.

Program Approaches

As noted above, psychosocial programs specifically for pregnant women in situations of complex emergencies are scarce. Thus, there is little experience and few lessons on which to base best practices. The following highlights some approaches which have been undertaken in the field of humanitarian aid. Threaded throughout as a contextual example of an existing and evolving initiative that addresses the psychosocial needs of pregnant women is the International Rescue Committee's public health program in the Northern Caucasus. Since the war in the Northern Caucasus is considered more protracted than acute in nature, it should be noted that these programs may be easier to do in this context. Therefore we know even less about how to actually implement these activities in acute crisis settings.

Psychosocial Groups

The premise of psychosocial groups is to provide a forum for pregnant women to give and receive support with the end goal of improving mental health. Psychosocial groups can be informational, educating the pregnant women about pregnancy, or they can address psychological issues that are especially important within the stress of war. Pregnancy is an opportune time for psychosocial intervention, because the woman is receptive to learning how to care for herself and her baby. This is also a time when the community may be more willing to devote resources to the pregnant woman, because the community may believe it is an investment in both the woman and child. Since pregnancy can often be a stressful period, with significant physiological and social changes, any program that can reduce this stress is helpful for the mother and child.

The International Rescue Committee's public health program in the Northern Caucasus conducts psychosocial

groups for pregnant women in war-torn Chechnya and the neighbouring Republic of Ingushetia. Each participant receives two hours of group counselling and education about psychosocial disturbances and the effects on the fetus and infant, as well as on the mother's overall health. Participants in the program found these groups to be especially helpful in the context of the Chechen conflict, as they offered a safe and consistent forum within which to discuss mental health issues.

Safe Motherhood Training

Safe motherhood means ensuring that women receive the care and assistance they need to be safe and healthy throughout pregnancy and childbirth. The utilization of safe motherhood kits (*i.e.*, sterile delivery kits, hygiene promotion kits) is an essential component of a safe delivery. Furthermore, traditional birth attendants and midwives often have an important role in the promotion of maternal mental well-being. Most importantly, for programs to be effective, pregnant women must have access to safe motherhood services, including adequate supplies, transportation to facilities, and contact with trained staff who can address emergency obstetric care.

In the Northern Caucasus, the International Rescue Committee's Safe Motherhood Program involves 576 young and pregnant mothers in schools in the Chechen capital of Grozny. Pregnant women meet in groups of twelve every week for one month to learn and discuss safe motherhood issues with local medical professionals, who facilitate the trainings. Participants receive medical information and safe motherhood kits, which they say help alleviate the stress of pregnancy. Participants in the program have said that preparing for childbirth is an anxiety-relieving activity, and that the knowledge they have gained from participation in the group helps to allay fears that may already be heightened as a result of the Chechen conflict.

Social Support Systems

War does not occur in isolation; rather it compounds the difficulties that the war-affected individuals normally face and overloads existing resources. As war becomes protracted, both the individual and the community have fewer resources to draw upon.[12] In this context, support systems become especially important as social capital. Furthermore, there is general consensus that social supports moderate stress and its negative health consequences.[13]

Dalianis-Karambatzakis describes the support systems that were available for pregnant women during the Greek Civil War in the late 1940s.[14] Many of the women documented in the study were imprisoned and the support programs were self-devised. They included sharing child care, tutoring illiterate mothers, and redistributing limited food supplies to those mothers and infants who were most needy. Almedon *et al.*'s study of maternal psychosocial well-being notes the elaborate support systems established in Eritrea, where pregnant women are provided special care and support during pregnancy, childbirth, and beyond.[15] Many ethnic groups in Eritrea still uphold the practice of postpartum seclusion and rest for mothers who have just given birth and exempt them from any work other than breastfeeding. The community comes forward to help with domestic tasks, ensuring that the new mother is well taken care of. War, however, limits these women's ability to partake in particular customs because of a lack of resources and a disruption of community.

The idea of social support can also be exemplified from the wider macrosystems perspective with many governmental and non-governmental agencies' efforts at relocation and resettlement. In complex emergencies, transportation is often provided primarily for the vulnerable (*i.e.*, pregnant and nursing women, children, the sick, and elderly), while able people leave on foot. Efforts have been made to maintain pre-existing social ties, especially in regard to pregnant women, who need the support of their families and communities. For example, in Eritrea, humanitarian agencies made efforts to allow villages to remain together as community structures, rather than being separated into categories of perceived vulnerability.[16] In this way, anxiety was relieved, as existing social supports were preserved throughout the displacement and resettlement process.

Program Gaps

Research

Relief agencies' response to refugees' needs have been hampered by a dearth of research and program experience. There is a great need for studies pointing to best practices for psychosocial programs, as well as research regarding the mental health needs of specific cohorts of refugees, especially pregnant women. Though there is evidence that stress during pregnancy leads to an increase in pregnancy complications, studies examining this relationship in the context of war are necessary.

Strengths-based Vernacular

There is an emphasis on deficits-focused vernacular rather than a strengths-based approach. For example, pregnant women are often categorized as "vulnerable," whereas many of them possess individual and collective resilience, resourcefulness, and strength, especially in the face of war. In the instance of young mothers among fighting forces, young women are often perceived as victims of sexual violence and abuse. However, there has been evidence that, in many cases,

girls have made choices to become pregnant in the face of other more dangerous options such as being forced to have multiple sexual partners or to fight in conflict.[17] In other words, these women's "choice," albeit a survival mechanism, was made as a means of self-preservation. One must not disregard agency and perseverance as concepts at work amongst populations such as this.

Equal Emphasis on Postpartum Period

There is evidence that postnatal depression affects child outcomes. The World Health Organization reports that worldwide incidence of severe postpartum depression is about 6 per cent.[18] Studies indicate that the postnatal environment is an important predictor of infant development, with infants who interact with depressed mothers at greater risk for later behavioural problems.[19] Another study from India shows that a mother's depression negatively impacts infant development.[20] When applying this evidence to the complex emergency model, the impact of maternal mental health may be even greater during times of war when there may be additional stress factors influencing the mother. It is clear that maternal psychosocial well-being is an important determinant of infant health in situations of war. Effective programs must address the postnatal period to assess for maternal mental health and its impact on existing children.

Awareness of Pregnancies Resulting from Rape

During situations of complex emergencies, rape survivors do not always receive medical attention due to a lack of attention to gender-based violence and limited gender-based violence programs.[21] The field of humanitarian assistance needs an increase in awareness about gender-based violence in complex emergencies, the creating and enforcement of established protocols for treating individuals affected by gender-based violence, and the fortification of programs across all sectors to prevent and respond to future acts of gender-based violence. For, in order to address pregnancies resulting from rape, there must be adequate program attention.

Future Programs

While most programs in complex emergencies focus on concrete and direct ways to reduce morbidity and mortality (*i.e.*, water and sanitation, immunizations, nutrition, etc.), the field of humanitarian aid must carve out a place for mental health interventions, acknowledging that the alleviation of psychological suffering should also be attended to in the early stages of emergencies. Jacobson notes that the presence of social support curbs stress and anxiety and their resulting health consequences.[22] Per Jacobson, there are three types of social support, which fit into the context of meeting pregnant women's needs in complex emergencies: emotional support, cognitive support, and materials support.[23]

Emotional support is "behavior that fosters feelings of comfort and leads an individual to believe that…others are available to provide caring and security."[24] Oftentimes, a pregnant woman relies on her family and community for this kind of emotional support. In Eritrea, many believed that being connected to their own community and the country as a whole served as a protective factor against *chinquet* (mental oppression).[25] From this perspective, programs must include a family systems approach, including all members of the family in the care of the pregnant woman.

Jacobson defines cognitive support as "information, knowledge, and/or advice that helps the individual to understand his or her world and to adjust to changes within it."[26] Material support includes "the goods and services that help to solve practical problems."[27] The implementation of psychosocial groups, with the provision of safe motherhood kits, allows for the development of a stable environment in an otherwise unstable world. However, cognitive support should continue through the postpartum period, with the provision of information such as caring for the newborn and recognizing signs of postpartum depression. Program developers should remember that the mental well-being and morale of mothers with infants and young children and their families needs to be attended to throughout complex emergencies.

In situations of war, programs often need to be implemented quickly in order to mitigate war's negative consequences effectively. With conditions oftentimes deteriorating, research is often difficult to carry out. Large amounts of money are spent on aid programs, and for economical as well as ethical reasons, it is important to know what works best, when, and for whom. In spite of the many obstacles confronted in war situations, analyzing experiences and data to determine best practices is needed. To carry out this work, consultation with those familiar with the health needs, the local culture, and the security situation is necessary to approach the research from a multidisciplinary perspective and to enable the effective facilitation of this work.[28]

Psychosocial programs must include a comprehensive strategy for addressing the needs of pregnant women in complex emergencies. Service providers must strive to create an environment of support as well as access to adequate safe motherhood information to assuage stress in an already stressful environment. With the support of donors, the international community may be able to take a more significant role in addressing the needs of this population. However, because of the general dearth of research and few programs that address psychosocial needs in situations of war, it is clear

that much more needs to be done to provide and support comprehensive quality psychosocial services. For the failure to address the needs of populations affected by crisis undermines the stability of nations and stalls prospects of post-conflict resolution, restoration, and development.

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Coming Home: Connecting Older Liberians in the Diaspora with the Family and Friends at Home

Serena Chaudhry

Abstract

Coming Home is an arts initiative that uses photography and film to connect older Liberians in the Diaspora with friends and family at home. A group of elders in Staten Island came together to create messages for the author to carry to friends and family in Liberia. The author delivered the messages, filmed responses, and returned them to the Staten Island community. The project will culminate in a multimedia exhibit featuring the stories, photos, and films. The author used components of Photovoice, a participatory action research strategy, and Social Network Theory as well a resilience framework to guide the arts initiative. In this article the author describes the process of developing and implementing this project with Liberian elders in the New York Diaspora and discusses the ways in which its methodological approaches amplify the voices of community elders, address their culture and values, and raise public awareness about their special needs.

Résumé

"Coming Home" ('Retour au bercail'), est une initiative artistique qui utilise la photographie et le film pour faire le pont entre des aînés libériens de la diaspora et leurs amis et familles au pays. Un groupe d'aînés de Staten Island se sont regroupés pour créer des messages que l'auteure a portés à leurs amis et familles au Libéria. L'auteure a livré les messages, filmé les réponses et les réactions, et les a ramenées à la communauté de Staten Island. Le projet va culminer dans une exposition multimédia présentant les narrations, les photos, et les films. L'auteure a utilisé des éléments de Photovoice, une straté-gie participative de recherche active, et s'est laissé guider par la "Social Network Theory" – la théorie des réseaux sociaux – ainsi qu'un cadre de " résilience " pour cette l'initiative artistique. Dans cet article l'auteure décrit le processus de développement et de mise à exécution de ce projet avec l'aide des aînés libériens de la diaspora de New York et discute comment les approches méthodologiques du projet amplifient les voix des aînés de la communauté, mettent en exergue leur culture et leurs valeurs, et sensibilisent le public quant à leurs besoins spécifiques.

Coming Home is a project offered in a support group setting for older Liberians who live alone and are interested in exploring, through photography and film, their experiences and strategies for surviving in the United States. The project has three phases: self-exploration and reflection; reaching out and reconnecting; and education, public awareness, and social action. The project emerged out of my work as a public health social worker with a program for survivors of torture and war trauma. Working with the West African community over several years, I found that many older Liberians live alone in subsidized housing with minimal support. The literature on refugee elders is limited. When I talked to project participants it was very clear that isolation is a common thread that exacerbates physical and mental well-being and socioeconomic vulnerability. My primary intention in piloting the Coming Home project was to enhance the social networks and social support of older refugees on Staten Island. My secondary intention was to give something back to a community that has shown and taught me so much about resilience.

Project Overview

The Coming Home project is a therapeutic tool and a community education and action strategy for older refugees to explore their experiences fleeing from civil war. Coming Home is also a means of educating the masses about these experiences and generating resources to support displaced communities. The project is centred on Liberian elders' photographic representations and associated narratives of migration and their strategies for survival and safekeeping. The project has three separate but interrelated components: (a) participant-generated photographs and participant-focused films from the Diaspora, (b) participant-generated photographs and participant-focused films from Liberia, and (c) a multimedia exhibit. The program uses a progressive participatory action strategy. Elders participated to the extent that they could. A common goal of all three sections is to empower people to share their stories and in so doing provide support for others in similar situations. This paper offers some preliminary reflections on the value of this alternative methodology for enhancing social support and social networks in displaced communities.

Project Goals and Objectives

1. To enhance the social connections of and support for older Liberians in the Diaspora
   1.1 Mobilize a group of elders in the Liberian community to explore indicvidual and collective challenges and the potential of the Coming Home project to address some of the identified challenges
   1.2 Use different mediums such as photography, film, and letter writing to reconnect older refugees with families and friends from whom they have been estranged during more than a decade of civil war
   1.3 Establish a means for members of the Diaspora to remain connected with friends and family in the community and in the old country
2. To allow local service providers a better understanding of the context from which the Liberians on Staten Island fled
   2.1 Send a Staten Island service provider to Liberia
   2.2 Create a means for the service provider to share details of visit with and further educate the Consortium of African Community Service Providers
3. To address the culture and values of older Liberians in the Diaspora
   3.1 Use photography and/or film to help older refugees and asylees connect with their homes, land, and other places of cultural significance that they have not visited or seen since they fled from Liberia
   3.2 Facilitate the exchange of donations between older refugees in the Diaspora and friends and family in Liberia
   3.3 Identify potential ways for older members of the Diaspora to play an active role in rebuilding the country and preserving culture under the new democratically elected female president
4. To raise public awareness and funding to address the special needs of Liberian elders
   4.1 Curate an exhibit, including photos, films, and correspondence, which will illustrate participant's stories and challenges
   4.2 Invite local service providers and policy makers to the exhibit
   4.3 Disseminate educational materials on the Liberian civil war, the recent elections, remittances, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Theory

Photovoice, a participatory action research strategy, the Social Network Theory, and a resilience model inform this project.

Photovoice

Photovoice, a participatory action research strategy, operates at the grassroots level to put cameras in the hands of people who are typically the subjects of photographs and allows them to photograph the world as they see and experience it. Created by Caroline Wang, PhD, and Mary Ann Burris, Photovoice projects have documented the lives of many ranging from rural women in China to the homeless in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Wang and Burris created Photovoice from the theoretical bedrocks of critical consciousness, feminist theory, and the community-based approach to documentary photography.[1] Photovoice operates on three main goals that allow people: (1) to record and reflect upon personal and community strengths, (2) to engage in dialogue about personal and community issues, (3) to reach policy makers effectively.[2] Highly flexible in nature, Photovoice is adaptable to different communities and diverse public health issues.

Participant-generated images provide an opportunity for traditionally silenced populations to document their lives and the environments they live in.[3] Kids can use photography to express what they think and feel, even on difficult subjects such as racial stereotypes.[4] Though this approach has been used in various settings with diverse groups of participants, it has been used little if at all with elders. The potential of such a project is great when you consider the power of photography and film to recreate narratives compromised by war. There is significant poten-

tial for fixed images to lead to dynamic discourse[5] and dynamic films to lead to new imagery for wartorn countries.

One of the most unique and effective components of Coming Home are the connections among art, research, and resources. This diverges from traditional practices in psychology, anthropology, and sociology which are somewhat confined by counselling and psychotherapy.

Social Networks and Social Support

Barnes and Bott created the concept of social networks to better understand relationships beyond kinship.[6] Social networks are defined as social ties and connections and social support as the functional consequences of those ties.[7] The level of impact differentiates between social support and social networks. Short-term outcomes are more sensitive to social support and long-term outcomes are more sensitive to social networks. Thus, social support can serve as a buffer in high-risk populations such as displaced people.

Social support is perceived to play an important role in immigrant settlement and to have a positive impact on immigrant health.[8] People who get less social and emotional support from others are more likely to experience less well-being and more depression. Social cohesion –defined as the quality of social relationships and the existence of trust, mutual obligations, and respect in communities or in the wider society – helps to protect people and their health.[9]

In the early 1990s, Joan R. Bloom challenged the research community to develop a cumulative body of knowledge on the relationship between social support and health. The research community has risen to the occasion – in part. Research has demonstrated the importance of social support in determining mental health outcomes; however, there remain significant unexplained variations in the types and timing of support and characteristics of individuals who may benefit.[10] What we do know is that lack of meaningful and supportive relationships adversely affects refugees' health and well-being.[11] We need to better understand how people define and perceive social support across cultures and generations. This will be the first step in better understanding its protective factors.

Resilience

Resiliency is a positive adaptive trait.[12] More specifically, it is the ability to regain one's energy. This resonates well with patterns of migration. Migration necessitates adaptivity. Through the migration process, refugees demonstrate their resilience. A shift in focus from refugee pathology to refugee health and resilience can provide "exits from the reductionism of medicine and from the medicalization of problems of living in society."[13]

Community resilience is built in a process of creating and strengthening personal, familial, social, organizational and economic systems to resist and cope effectively in times of stress, threats, crisis and emergencies. Building community resilience is a long and constant process that is tested in times of crisis and stress.[14]

The community resilience model is useful in understanding how communities negotiate major changes. Community resilience often strengthens during migration.[15]

Background

Liberia

The roots of the Liberian civil upheaval date back to the formation of the American Colonization Society (ACS), a Christian philanthropic organization established to facilitate the repatriation of freed African slaves. In 1820, the ACS sent eighty-six former US slaves to Africa. For the following 133 years the minority, the "Americo-Liberians," controlled the republic.[16]

By the 1970s, the "Americo-Liberian" power structure began to crumble, culminating in a coup led by an indigenous Liberian, Master Sergeant Samuel Doe.[17] In December 1989, a small group of armed rebels led by an Americo-Liberian, Charles Taylor, invaded Nimba County with the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL). By 1990, the NPFL had reclaimed Liberia and taken over most military positions except for the capital city, Monrovia. Fourteen years of brutal civil war ensued, claiming the lives of more than 150,000 people and displacing 850,000 more across West Africa and around the world.[18] After several interim governments and failed national elections, the war finally ended. In August of 2003 rebel groups and the former Liberian government signed a peace agreement treaty. In the fall of 2005, the country elected the first African, female president and on January 16, 2006, inaugurated her into office.[19]

Liberian Diaspora in New York

The Liberian community in Staten Island is one of the fastest-growing immigrant communities in New York City. The vast majority of Liberian refugees and political asylees who arrived in New York City from 1990 to the present are resettled in Staten Island, in the Parkhill and Stapleton communities, resource-poor neighbourhoods with high incidences of drugs and violent crimes. Youth make up a large percentage of the Liberian community in Staten Island. While exact numbers for this community are difficult to come by, amongst local service providers, the working estimate of Liberians on Staten Island is approximately 8,000.

Since 1996, approximately 2,200 Liberian refugees and political asylees have been resettled in Richmond County.[20]

The 8,000-member Liberian community on Staten Island is diverse, including Liberian immigrants who have become naturalized US citizens, Liberian refugees resettled by the US government, child soldiers who made their way to the US with foster families, and individuals under Temporary Protective Status (TPS). Individuals with TPS remain here legally but *temporarily*, and are relegated to limited job opportunities and public benefits.

As is true with many immigrant and refugee communities, migration shifts the power structure.[21] In Liberia, the elders and men possessed the substantial power and women and children lived under their rule. The elders were the nucleus of the decision-making bodies. They lived with their extended families and played an active role in the community. Once elders arrive, families caught in survival mode are unable to give parents and grandparents the attention and support they need. Without reason to acculturate and the skills, education, or stamina to work, the elderly tumble from the top of the societal hierarchy. On Staten Island, many older Liberians live alone, isolated, hungry, and depressed. Compounded by US culture and negligence for its own elders, older Liberians become orphans in their own community and in US society at large.

Child soldiers struggle to simultaneously redefine and reintegrate themselves into their own community and American society. The elderly live independently, with minimal support, separated from their extended families. There is a significant gap in services for elderly in the Diaspora. Many live alone in subsidized housing and are forced to rely on their religious communities for support. Access to medical care, food, and adequate shelter pose challenges for the majority. Though their lives are full of courage, many live in the US depressed, isolated, and ashamed.

Project

Given the demonstrated complexities and needs of older refugees, the author implemented an arts initiative aimed at improving the social support for older Liberians living on Staten Island, many of whom may never be able to return to Liberia.

To launch this project, the author collaborated with Africa Refuge and the Consortium of African Community Service Providers to identify a group of eight older refugees on Staten Island. Potential participants mobilized for an informational meeting about the project. The author fielded questions from and posed question to the community. The group then discussed the specifics of participation and brainstormed how participants could best connect with their friends and family in Liberia through multimedia techniques.

Partner Organizations

Consortium of African Community Service Providers. The Consortium of African Community Service Providers on Staten Island (CACSP) began in the spring of 2003 to help find answers to the growing needs of West African immigrants, refugees, and asylees on Staten Island. Recognizing the needs of other immigrant, refugee, and asylee populations, the consortium redirected its focus to provide services to the greater African immigrant community on Staten Island. The mission of this consortium is to build a cohesive, seamless system of service delivery that promotes individual and family support and helps immigrant, refugee, and asylee communities acculturate into mainstream society.

African Refuge. African Refuge is a program of the International Trauma Studies Program (ITSP). It serves as a drop-in centre that promotes and develops crucial linkages between the African community and social service providers in Staten Island. Through community outreach, information, and referral services, and through family and youth support programs, African Refuge identifies and serves the needs of refugees and immigrants.

Phase 1: Staten Island

A group of Liberian elders met regularly at the African Refuge office over light refreshments for an hour and a half, every Wednesday for two months. The first two meetings were facilitated as focus groups where participants attempted to answer the following questions: What are some of the differences between life here and in Liberia? What are some of the similarities between life here and in Liberia? What roles did you play in your community here? What roles did you play in Liberia? What are some of the positive aspects of life in the United States? What are some of the challenges of living in the United States? What do you consider to be your greatest resources? What are your greatest needs?

The conversation that ensued was rich. When asked about the differences between the US and Liberia, participants responded, "The air in Liberia is fresh. So is the food. Family is everywhere. You can walk where you need to."

As discussed previously, elders are the nucleus of the familial unit in Liberia. They live with their extended family and play an active role in the community. Once in the US they are caught in survival mode. To this point the group responded:

> When you are sick in Liberia you get support…. it is difficult being old here. Elders aren't respected in the U.S. If you are old here, your children lock you up and go. You can't blame them.

In Liberia you are not lonesome at home… there are grandchildren around you, they ask you what you want.

Though the majority of Liberians in the US fled a brutal civil war in search of refuge, many didn't find the peace that they had hoped for. A significant percentage of the Liberian community on Staten Island lives in government-subsidized housing. As in many low income-housing complexes, the interconnected issues of racial and economic justice are obvious and poverty rates are high. Tensions between the African and African-American communities are palpable in Park Hill. When asked about their new community, one participant said, "When there is peace there are no guns. In our neighborhood [Park Hill] there are gangs and guns."

All of the participants came to the US by themselves. They came as refugees, filed for political asylum upon arrival in the United States, or were sponsored by a family member to come to the US. Once in the US it is possible for refugees to file for family reunification; however, the process is arduous, as bureaucratic systems are difficult to negotiate across cultures and nation-states. Once families are reunited, challenges persist:

> The Diaspora community on Staten Island is not united. We can't unite. Governments have turned our culture upside down. This is where the disunity begins – in our families. This is not family reunification – it is family destruction. Families and marriages are being destroyed.

Despite disunity the group was able to recognize community resources that help them on a daily basis; Liberian owned and operated businesses, African churches, and a small group of people who pull their money on a monthly basis and give it to those in need.

Some attendees dropped after the focus group and others joined; after two weeks, the group solidified. The final cohort of participants included four men and four women ranging in age from sixty to seventy-eight, transcending tribes and regions of Liberia, from Lofa to Robertsport, Mandingo to Basso, refugee to asylum seeker.

Because the Staten Island community is concentrated, many of the group members either knew or recognized each other. Two were friends from Liberia, two from Staten Island. The time participants have spent in the US ranges from sixteen months to six years.

Subsequent meetings were spent exploring needs identified during the focus group. Two local service providers presented on transportation, senior centres, and case management. As the group met, several referrals were made for case management, employment counselling, and legal help regarding green card application.

After one month of "needs based" meetings, the author introduced cameras to the group, gave a tutorial on digital cameras, and made one-on-one appointments to work with participants on an individual basis to help them document their lives. The group then explored the details of the Coming Home project, including remaining family in Liberia, which friend and family participants are interested in reconnecting with, and why. Participants looked at the map of Liberia and identified where families live, or used to live.

In addition to taking self-portraits and documenting their apartments on Park Hill, the elders filmed messages for their families and friends in Liberia. For some, these messages were the first communications with friends and family since the peace agreement after the war ended. For others, the film messages complemented cellphone conversations that participants have with friends and family on a regular basis.

Francis learning to use the digital camera.

Phase 2: Liberia

On the ground in Liberia, the author worked with a cultural mediator to contact family and friends in and around Monrovia. Within a two-week period the author and mediator met with the family and friends of seven of the eight participants, spending three to six hours with each family – visiting their homes, listening to their stories-and documenting post war Liberia for the group on Staten Island.

Francis. The first visit took us to Clay Street in Monrovia where we visited Francis's home. We sat in Francis's old room and sat at the window where Francis used to sew clothes for the children in the hospital. Via video, Francis "met" her great-grandchildren for the first time. Her thirteen-year-old great grandson talked about his school and how he hopes to show it to Francis someday.

We also visited the church where Francis worshiped for decades. During the Palm Sunday celebration we shared Francis's message with the congregation and delivered to them her donation and love. The church was filled with sighs and smiles as we shared stories of Francis's life in the US. People were impressed and touched that Francis remembered them.

Morris. A Mandingo family mobilized members from near and far for a sacrifice in honour of the their son, brother, and father – Morris. As the goat was being slaughtered a cellphone rang. It was Morris checking in. "Is everyone there?" he asked.

Morris's sister giggled like a child when she saw a picture of him driving his bright red car on Staten Island. On film his cousin, in response to the war and forced migration, said, "A family tree doesn't break, it bends." Part of the family fled north, others fled to Guinea and the Ivory Coast.

We also visited VOA, an area named after the Voice of America Radio, which was once stationed there. VOA will be Morris's new neighbourhood if he makes it back to Liberia. With monthly remittances and the help of his son, he is building a home for himself and his family. A camp for internally displaced persons (IDPs) with people from the interior surrounds VOA. There was obvious tension regarding their continued presence. The taxi driver complained. Morris's son responded with a question, "If your house was burned during the war would you go back? Why would you go back? Could $5 USD per day sustain you and your family?"

Morris has one acre on which he is building what appears to be a mansion. His land is designated by cornerstones with his initials on them. There are concrete blocks and sand on the land – some of which has been slashed and burned in preparation for the building.

Morris's cornerstone

David. Nancee, David's daughter, met us at a restaurant outside of Doula. She is studying computers in school. She sat shyly while we ate and helped us to hire a car to her Caldwell home beyond the coffee plantation. On the drive Nancee told us that she hadn't seen her dad since she was seven years old – she is now twenty-eight. We drove down a dirt road into lush greenery in front of Nancee's home where they were selling candy and condensed milk. Three small kids and Nancee's mother greeted us with smiles. Nancee showed us all the things that her father sent her over the years – a sewing machine, generator, blanket, watch, and mortar mould. She expressed her gratitude but through tears admitted that these things meant nothing and that what she wants is to see him again. She wants him to meet his grandkids.

Morris's son was with us at Nancee's house. This allowed for a beautiful synergy to evolve. Morris and David are friends on Staten Island. Now, their kids are connected. To celebrate, we shared the sacrifice that Morris's family made earlier in the morning.

Jumah. We picked up Gladys and Victor at their home and loaded the car with dry rice and mangos for the drive. Gladys and Victor took us to Kenemah, the town where Jumah grew up. The head of the village greeted us as did Jumah's older brothers. Kenemeh is a close-knit community. While happily reminiscing about Jumah and enthusiastically watching her video message, the village leaders did not miss the opportunity to present their needs: "Our needs in order of priority are clinics, schools, houses, water."

Kenemeh village watching Jumah's video

Prof. We visited the house that Prof lived in while he was Associate Justice and the house he kept while Interim President. His sons continue to live there today; one of them shed tears when he saw his dad's pictures. Family and

friends fled from church services and work to hear news of Prof. Photos spanning Prof's lifetime covered the walls of his home while fond stories about him were shared.

Jacob and Mary. A large group gathered on Dupor Road including Jacob's brother, his three wives and their children, Mary's brother, and his son. While touring the family home someone pulled an old newspaper clipping from the wall. The faded, tattered paper featured a group of kids with Kalashnikovs in their hands – child soldiers. The woman confessed that one of the boys in the picture was her son. She proudly boasted that he is now studying agriculture and mechanics in a vocational program.

Jacob's grandson looked angry upon seeing his grand-father's photos. His grandmother confessed that Jacob was one of the few people his grandson looked up to after his parents were killed in the war.

Mary's son guided us out of town to see the foundation of the house that Jacob and Mary are slowly building with the remittances they send back monthly.

Sarah Beth. We travelled to the Old Coca Cola factory to search for Sarah Beth's daughter and grandson who were rumoured to live near there. Upon entering the area we met Junior, who took us to the only two-storey building across from the factory. No one in the building had heard of either person but recommended we talk to their neighbours. We walked for hours talking to anyone who knew anything about Sara Beth or her daughter. We found another woman whose life story was remarkably similar to that of Sara Beth's daughter but when we showed her Sara Beth's picture she didn't recognize it.

The Party. In the end we threw a party for all family heads. Six of the eight families were represented. We taped the gift exchange to show folks back in the States. The group

The Old Ma at the party.

discussed next steps – returning photos and videos to Liberia, attempting to set up a computer and a Web cam to connect Monrovia and the multimedia exhibit. People ate, laughed, and reminisced over chicken and plantain. They spoke of life before the war and shared dreams about what the future might look like. They exchanged phone numbers. As the music faded, Jumah's eighty-three-year-old mother, the Old Ma, got up and danced. With tears in her eyes, she waved goodbye.

Phase 3: The Exhibition

The multimedia exhibit will be twofold. The first part will be an exhibit on Staten Island consisting of storyboards detailing the lives of the eight Staten Island elders, still photos of each of the elders and their families in Liberia, and short video clips of the elders and their families in Liberia. The exhibit will be launched on Staten Island, and Liberian residents, service providers, government officials, and funders will be invited to attend the opening. The second part of the exhibit will be a live Web site which will host the photos and videos from the project as well as a computer and Web cam set-up on Staten Island and in Monrovia where participants can see and talk to their friends and family independently and on a regular basis.

Evaluation. The goals and objectives will serve as the primary evaluative measures of the project. There are four defined goals: (1) to enhance the social connections of and support for older Liberians in the Diaspora; (2) to allow local service providers a better understanding of the context from which the Liberians on Staten Island fled; (3) to address the culture and values of older Liberians in the Diaspora; and (4) to raise public awareness and funding to address the special needs of Liberian elders. These goals are in the process of being implemented and evaluated.

At present, weekly support groups, photography, and video clips have seemingly enhanced participant social support and social networks locally and transnationally. Group members on Staten Island have reported interacting with and helping each other more than they did prior to the project. On the other side of the ocean, families who never knew each other are now connected. At the party in Monrovia, participants reported having a new extended family.

Two of the family members in Liberia have passed away since this project was implemented. The videos from this project were the last contact family members on Staten Island had with their family at home. Participants report the videos as being significant.

Increased awareness about Liberian history, culture, values, and elder needs will come from the multimedia exhibit.

A secondary evaluative component will derive from data collected by the Quality of Life Scale for Refugees/Asyleees/

Asylum-Seekers, developed by Paker and Chaudhry.[22] This scale is administered at three-month intervals and measures basic/biological, social, and psychological well-being. For the purposes of this project the author is focusing on the social measures, which will be evaluated separately from composite scores. Data will be compiled after the multimedia exhibit is curated.

Discussion

The rich narratives and photo representation of these eight elders reveal the complex journeys, shifts in identity, shifts in roles, and support systems that have impacted their acculturation processes. The range of struggles and successes has empowered these eight people to endure some of life's most challenging circumstances. They have strived to regain their energy and demonstrate resilience. Their willingness to share their stories will help to preserve the people's history of the Liberian Civil War.

The analysis of their narratives leads to a more complete understanding of challenges that older refugees face: isolation, limited social networks and social support, limited employment opportunities, and deteriorating mental and physical health.

It is the hope of this project that the social and emotional support gained from support group meetings with new and old friends will help this group of elders to better cope with or avert depression. Additionally, this project aspires to use the visual arts to enhance quality of social relationships and ultimately protect the elders and their health.

The challenges of acculturation illustrated through the Coming Home project persist across class lines. This group of eight ranges from having no formal education to holding a graduate degree from the United States. Class is not always a protective factor for displaced people.

As Liberia reconstructs herself under the leadership of Africa's first female president, the Diaspora community, young and old, will play a significant role in the rebuilding process.

> Reconstruction after conflict will not only involve the homeland or the actual arena of conflict; transnational links and Diaspora connections that develop to sustain societies in conflict are likely to irrevocably be integral parts of "post- conflict" society to be reconstructed.[23]

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia (TRC) is visiting the United States to engage Liberians in the Diaspora about the TRC process. The Liberian TRC will be the first to engage the Diaspora in the formal healing process.

Limitations and Other Considerations

Planning this project was challenging as it fell somewhere between an arts initiative and a psychosocial intervention. After numerous conversations with service providers and experts in the field, the decision was determined by scope and funding. Because the planning process was time-limited, the author was not able to engage participants' social networks on Staten Island. Involving them would have made this a more holistic project and more of a true psychosocial intervention. Funding was also limited. At the time of planning and implementation, art-oriented funding streams were more abundant than funding streams for psychosocial programs. In the end, the majority of funding came from individual donors for whom the designation between an arts initiative and a psychosocial program was irrelevant. Regardless, with more planning time, additional human resources, and a more systemic approach, this project could evolve into a true psychosocial intervention and incorporate a comprehensive battery of tests and psychosocial measures.

Sustainability of the Coming Home project is critical to its overall success. Maintaining interaction between elders on Staten Island as well as communication transnationally is paramount. As the multimedia exhibit is planned and implemented the author and partner organizations will utilize the publicity to recruit volunteers to "adopt" elders on Staten Island, the goal being to expand their social networks beyond the African community. Funding to sustain a regular senior support group is also needed, as are computer and Web camera donations to set up the communication hubs on Staten Island and in Monrovia.

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Internal Exile:
Effects on Families and Communities

Rosemary A. Barbera

Abstract

Military regimes throughout Latin America used a variety of tactics to instill terror in the population. In the case of Chile, the military dictatorship used torture, assassination, disappearance, exile and relegación, or internal exile, in its quest to weaken social movements and control social and economic processes. This article will discuss the effects of relegación on the families and communities that the relegados left behind, drawing on human rights literature and interviews of persons in the Santiago shantytown of La Pincoya.

Résumé

Les régimes militaires partout en Amérique latine ont employé toute une variété de tactiques pour semer la terreur au sein de la population. Dans le cas du Chili, la dictature militaire eut recours à la torture, l'assassinat, la disparition, l'exil et le "relegación", ou exil interne, dans ses efforts pour affaiblir les mouvements sociaux et contrôler les processus sociaux et économiques. Cet article discutera des effets du "relegación" sur les familles et les communautés que les "relegados" laissèrent derrière eux, en se basant sur la littérature traitant des droits de l'homme et sur des entrevues avec des gens du bidonville de La Pincoya à Santiago.

Introduction

During the twentieth century, human rights violations and political violence ran rampant in Latin America, as in other parts of the world.[1] The political violence unleashed by military regimes throughout Latin America led to immense and profound suffering throughout the continent. The military regimes used horrifically brutal techniques to subjugate those whom they considered subversive, or just to instill profound fear and insecurity in the population. These techniques included all forms of torture, mass detentions and arrests, exile, assassination, disappearance, arbitrary search and seizure operations, and internal exile, also known as *relegación*. Poor neighbourhoods and rural peasant communities were especially affected and afflicted by these practices. Life was disrupted, families were torn apart, and whole neighbourhoods and communities were physically and psychologically destroyed. Such was the situation in Chile.

This article will specifically address how the human rights violation of *relegación* in Chile affected families and the social fabric of communities. *Relegación*, or internal exile, was the practice used by the military regime in Chile of sending someone, usually a well-known community leader, to a remote part of the country, effectively cutting her/him off from their natural systems of support. At the same time, *relegación* left many opposition organizations without their leaders, thereby weakening the opposition to the Pinochet regime.

The topic of *relegación* has not been widely studied and there are scarce references in the literature to *relegación*. This article will attempt, using information gathered in intensive interviews in the Chilean shantytown (*población*) of La Pincoya, to contribute to the literature to understand the effects of *relegación*. A number of key leaders in La Pincoya were subjected to *relegación* during the military regime. Their neighbours and family members remember the personal and communal loss this *relegación* had on the community and its organizations.

Review of the Literature

And there they were, numbed in their millennial and captivating pain. They were there, inclined, dangling in an invisible net of suspended time. I approached them. I wanted to speak with them, but what could I ask them? How could I comfort them? By what right could I enter lives sealed by political violence?

How to ask then what it means to be the mother of a disappeared? Of a political prisoner? Why should I see them cry?[2]

The above quotation from noted Chilean author Marjorie Agosín captures the essence of the consequences of human rights abuses across systems levels. "Dangling in an invisible net of suspended time" is how many people discuss the effects of *relegación*; they felt that while their loved one or neighbour was internally exiled, life was on hold. In La Pincoya many feel that the advancements of their neighbourhood were brutally and violently truncated by the military coup on 11 September, 1973, and with that they feel like they are stuck in time, that their lives are sealed by political violence. The regime of Augusto Pinochet "attempted to *desarticular*[3] the former society"[4] and erase its former social and economic achievements, including those achievements of the residents of La Pincoya. A variety of methods were used by the Pinochet regime to *desarticular* the community, including the human rights violation of *relegación*.

There are a number of ways to conceptualize the legacy of human rights violations.[5] These include addressing the issue from the perspective of trauma and examining the literatures of trauma and disaster.[6] Another way to conceptualize this issue is to examine literature that relates to psychological effects including self-concept and the way an individual conceives of her or himself.[7] Grief and guilt are a third way to examine this phenomenon.[8] A fourth way to conceptualize this area is to look at the loss of community ties and social capital that one may experience after a trauma.[9] And a fifth perspective is that of examining the survivors' ongoing participation in society. The focus of this study is informed by all of these perspectives, with a special emphasis on collective action and community involvement, particularly with an eye on how communities demonstrated resiliency despite the incredibly harsh conditions under which they lived. Much research and writing have been done examining how human rights violations might affect an individual's functioning; however, the literature is sparse when looking at community in the midst and after human rights abuses.[10]

Human rights violations are social phenomena. Therefore they have societal implications for individual survivors and society at large.[11] These violations are both an assault on the human rights of individuals and an attack on the rights of the society. *Relegación*, for example, has significant repercussions on the social fabric of society as the act of *relegación* extends beyond the person being exiled to that person's networks. The *relegación* serves to instill fear and to send a clear message that anyone who voices disagreement with the regime and its practices could also find themselves in a similar situation. It also sends an insidious message of fear – fear of harm, and fear of trusting one's neighbours, co-workers, and friends. In this way, its tentacles reach far beyond the victim/survivor to the community at large, enforcing a "rupture in the normal process of life, a rupture that is forced from the outside, from the dictatorial state, whose acts violently and abruptly disturb human life."[12]

The process of *relegación,* which consisted usually of arrest, torture, and internal exile, also involves trauma at many levels.

Trauma is generally taken to mean a blow to the tissues of the body – or more frequently now, to the tissues of the mind – that results in injury or some other disturbance. Something alien breaks in on you, smashing through whatever barriers your mind has set up as a line of defense. It invades you, takes you over, becomes a dominating feature of your interior landscape – 'possesses' you – and in the process threatens to drain you and leave you empty.[13]

So, trauma is both the cause of the event (the blow) and the subsequent condition that results. It affects the traumatized in mind, body and spirit. As Erikson says, it is an invasion that permeates all aspects of life and becomes a defining feature.

Since humans are social beings, this trauma can be understood not only as an assault on the individual person, but as an assault on the links and connections between people and the patterns of relationships through which people define themselves and give meaning to their lives.[14] This is a trauma "provoked by human violence, consciously and meticulously planned"[15] by the state and the apparatus of the state.[16] This has clear implications for community involvement. The quality of the life of the community is affected by the quality of life of its members and the community suffers as individuals suffer and as society redefines itself; what is inflicted on one part of the body, affects other parts.[17]

In Chile, the processes of arrest and torture, followed by disappearance, exile, or *relegación*, were part of a larger process of collective terrorism intended to provoke "generalized fear and collective anxiety"[18] in the population. The purpose was to infuse all aspects of life with fear so that fear permeated society and immobilized possible resistance to the military regime. These forms of political repression often cut a person off from social support systems as well as altering her or his relationship to the larger society.[19] The sense of trust in the community was disabled, at best, and shattered, at worst, in this process. Therefore, community members were no longer able to rely on the forms of social capital upon which they previously counted. Possibilities for participation and social interaction decreased and frustration ensued. According to Doménguez and Weinstein, the boundaries between what was safe and what was dan-

gerous were no longer clear. This affected the person's sense of social belonging.

In the community, a traumatic event may lead to the breakdown of social codes and networks. This, of course, has significant implications for how a community functions and its ability to mobilize to overcome the trauma. Since, as Oxhorn[20] suggests, the emergence of social organizations in Chile had to do with social relations, the breakdown of social codes and networks that resulted from the practices of the military regime debilitated those social relations. This was particularly true in the Chilean *poblaciones* where neighbours lived piled upon one another, in close quarters and always in need. The close proximity of their living conditions, as well as their great economic need, drew people together as allies, trying to jointly solve their problems. It was because of these networks of neighbours during the dictatorship that the fabric of civic life was not completely destroyed and could carry on, at least for some members of society. Oxhorn also points out that the idea of "community was virtually synonymous with friendship and a sense of 'belonging.'"[21] Therefore, when a key member of the community was taken away and sent into *relegación*, the entire community was deeply affected.

This concept of community has been integral. It is through community that members have been able to get their physical, emotional, and psychological needs met.[22] This concept included the idea of solidarity, which is central in Chile, and the idea of collective action, which meant putting the needs of the group over individual concerns.[23] The military regime aimed to destroy the ties of community and to force an individualistic mentality upon Chileans in order to cure the society of what the regime considered to be the "cancer of communism." Therefore, instead of turning to neighbours and community members to help meet their needs, individuals were now forced to rely upon themselves. Slowly they lost the habits of solidarity and collective action as they witnessed and experienced human rights abuses and fear increased.

"The Southern Cone Military regimes, more than other dictatorships, were institutionalized systems that deliberately produced and spread fear."[24] These military regimes operated under a National Security Doctrine that broadly defined risks to security and instilled comprehensive fear in the majority of the population. In Chile "the entire population was affected directly by the repressive acts of the state"[25] in the name of national security. Since the National Security Doctrine of the regime had as its goal to change the way Chileans thought, they used every means at their disposal to do so. This led to the internalization of fear, loss of group identities, devastation of social organizations, and a diminishing of the capacity to engage in activities of soli-

darity. Fear "was instilled both directly and indirectly in society as a whole through the combined effect of repressive policies, the absence of institutional protection, and the superimposed model of social transformation."[26] Therefore, fear became a defining reality in daily life in Chile, and in the interactions between ordinary Chileans and the established state institutions. Violence – "an historical structural violence"[27] – imposed fear of the very state charged with caring for the people.

The authoritarian regime in Chile "created a culture of fear"[28] that guided the actions, reactions, interactions, and even thoughts of the populace. It was a culture of fear that permeated all aspects of life and living and did not allow people to feel safe, even in their own homes with their own families. Corradi, Gagen, and Garréton explain it in the following way:

> For decades, the populations of many countries have been subject to generalized or centralized violence; they have experienced the erosion of public values, of legal and even primary social bonds. Uncertainty, self-doubt, insecurity have been the staples of public life. In such contexts, fear is a paramount feature in social action: it is characterized by the inability of social actors to predict the consequences of their behavior because public authority is arbitrarily and brutally exercised.[29]

The unpredictability of the reactions of the military regimes, along with the ongoing, strategically executed campaign of terror, led to further incapacitation of social life and social organizations throughout Chile. The perfection of state terrorism led to societies embedded in fear – it eliminated safe spaces where peop1e could join together in solidarity;[30] "people have become trapped in the fear of fear"[31] which then rendered them isolated, terrorized, and debilitated. Or, as Rojas points out, "although we are not all the direct victims of the regime, we have all been submitted to the terror, the fear, the psychological manipulation, the human transfiguration"[32] that led us to live in a constant state of internalized fear.

Relegación is one way that the state inflicts terror on the population in order to diminish dissent and achieve social control. All forms of human rights violations increase vulnerability, including *relegación*. With *relegación*, "people are deprived of their homes, communities and means of livelihood."[33] At the same time, communities are deprived of their leaders. As the data will show, this was certainly true in the *población* La Pincoya[34] in Santiago, Chile, one of neighbourhoods that tried to resist the Pinochet regime. According to Ariel Dorfman,

internal exile . . . has immense advantages for the dictatorship. It disrupts and neutralizes the dissident movement by sending some of its most militant members to faraway places, where they lose contact with what is going on. The whole country become a prison, and it costs the state nothing. . . nor are the effects on the permanent inhabitants of those remote places to be overlooked: there for all to see, is proof of the government's omnipotence.[35]

Through massive human rights violations, the regime was able to warn the population not to engage in dissent, or they would suffer the consequences. The dictatorship did so in such a way as to "control the public space and reduced communication so that people could not address their problems collectively," making people feel "like caged animals."[36]

As the literature demonstrates, the effects of widespread human rights abuses in Chile reach far beyond those physically harmed; the Pinochet regime aimed to affect quotidian life in a such a way as to dismantle community ties and break down networks of solidarity. *Relegación* served the purposes of the military as it contributed to the *desarticulación* of opposition organizations as well as spreading fear in the general population.

Methodology

The research method used for the present study was a qualitative design which made use of intensive interviews, participant observation, and case studies. The researcher has been a resident of La Pincoya since 1987 and has participated actively in community and human rights organizations since that time. Research began by asking permission to interview community leaders who had family members who were *relegados*[37] since the focus of the research was on the effects of the *relegación* for those left behind. These leaders, in turn, supplied the researcher with the contact information of other families who had a member *relegado*, thus making use of a snowball sample. Likewise, the researcher interviewed community leaders who had participated in community organizations with *relegados* in order to learn the effects of *relegación* on the community. They, too, supplied more contacts, again using a snowball sampling method.

Simultaneously with conducting intensive interviews, the researcher was also actively engaging in participant observation. She attended community meetings and accepted offers to have *onces*[38] at people's homes in order to ask them about their memories of *relegados*, human rights violations, and the community in general. She also contacted people who had worked as social workers, therapists, organizers, and in other capacities in the human rights field during the military regime to ask for their impressions of *relegación* and its effects on communities and families.

Relegación

In Chile, internal exiles were sent to all different parts of the country, usually to isolated small towns that were difficult to reach and far from public transportation. It was as if the dictatorship used the geography of Chile as a form of exile.[39] According to Lorena,[40] whose husband was sent into *relegación* multiple times:

> They sent them to the north, the south, wherever, and all of the towns were tiny and far away. For the people that were from small towns, it was easier. But for those who were from a city, it was a difficult adjustment. For everyone it was difficult being so far removed from family, friends, support systems and networks. There were usually no telephones and it was difficult to communicate with family members.[41]

Juan, Lorena's son, continues: "It was tough for us kids growing up not knowing where our father was. One day he was with us, the next our home was violently invaded by the police and out father was taken away."[42] In most cases, families were not given information about a possible court date for their loved one's case, and if they were lucky, they might be able to wave goodbye as their loved one left the courtroom and was sent to the far reaches of Chile.

Once the person arrived at the destination of their *relegación*, adjustment began. But it is here that an interesting phenomenon occurred. According to Manuel, who was *relegado* on more than one occasion, the "town people demonstrated solidarity with the *relegados* by bringing us mattresses, food, and welcoming us into the town. It was their own, significant way of dissenting from the military regime. In fact, they even saved the best eggs for us."[43] This is not to say that life was easy; it was not. However, there were humane gestures that helped make the difficult situation a little less difficult.

Effects on Families

Meanwhile, families were left to wonder about their loved ones. With the help of the *Vicaría de la Solidaridad*, the Roman Catholic Church's human rights organization, they were able to eventually find out where their loved ones were. The *Vicaría* at times even provided bus tickets for family visits. These trips, however, were quite stressful. Carmen remembers once when she was going to visit her husband, Fernando: "The Vicaría gave us bus tickets to travel to this far away place to visit Fernando. When we got there, he was not there and no one knew anything about him. We were terrified that he had been killed or disappeared."[44] Lorena remembers that this was so stressful for her and her four children. "We did not know where they were taken. We were lucky because we saw them being taken from the jail, at 6:00

in the morning, but after that we did not find out for weeks where they were and how they were."[45] Families lived with permanent stress and uncertainty.

This stress was caused by multiple factors. First, families were affected financially because, in many cases, the primary breadwinner was no longer contributing financially. Lorena comments, "I had to scramble to find a job and provide for our family. I had to accept double shifts in order to earn enough money so that we could survive in Santiago, and to send supplies to my husband."[46]

Second, as the family tried to scramble to adjust, children often felt abandoned as one parent took over the responsibilities of two. Marcos remembers, "The time they took my father, my mother spent so much time working, we were always left alone at home. We had to fend for ourselves. Then, when my mother was taken away, it got even worse."[47] Juan add,: "We were told that our parents were delinquents and common thugs. We suffered a lot because of that."

And, third, many families found that their status in the community was significantly altered as other families avoided them for fear that they too would be targeted for persecution. Rosa remembers that "neighbors no longer engaged in conversation with me. Sure, they said hello to me and commented about the weather, but the conversations stopped there."[48] Mónica adds, "I could no longer count on my neighbors to help watch my kids or with other chores. This was really tough on me since my children were small and I had to work outside of the house. I understand that they were afraid, but just the same, it was difficult."[49]

Effects on Communities

Just as families suffered with the *relegación* of a loved one, communities also suffered when their leaders were taken away. Johnny remembers what it was like when the leader of the youth group he participated in was taken: "When they took Fernando from us, we were devastated. He was like a father-figure to all of us; we knew he really cared about us. In retrospect, I now realize that we were not the only ones who suffered during his *relegación*."[50] What Johnny alludes to here is the fact that Fernando was the leader of a local opposition political party. In that capacity he helped lead protests, educate youth, and organize the neighbourhood. His loss was felt strongly by the community. When his wife Lorena was taken, the community also suffered. Lucy recalls:

> Lorena was a protagonist in this community from day one. She helped lead the land invasion that gave birth to La Pincoya and from that moment forward she has been a leader. She led the drive for health care for our new neighborhood, and then when the dictatorship took away our access to health care, she organ-

ized grass-roots health groups so that people could get their needs met.[51]

When asked about how the community suffered, Lorena, Johnny, and others agreed that La Pincoya was targeted for repression because it had a history of protagonism. Leaders like Lorena and Fernando were integral parts of that protagonism and their absence was deeply felt. "People no longer wanted to get involved because they were scared, and they missed the leadership of Lorena and Fernando," said Tamara.[52]

Discussion

The data show us the intersection and contradiction between vulnerability and resilience. People like Lorena and Fernando both were in vulnerable situations because of their political and social commitments and demonstrated incredible resilience despite the consequences. This has serious implications for human rights, social service, and psychosocial workers in communities that have been torn apart by political violence because it shows that, despite repression, people can still be the protagonists of their own lives and that natural indigenous leaders can significantly improve the relations of a community.

Another way in which vulnerability and resilience were demonstrated was in the ways that the families of *relegados* joined together in solidarity, again despite the potential harsh consequences. Families were able to go beyond their own fear and pain and join together to work for the freedom of their loved ones. Lorena commented, and began to cry:

> People demonstrated great solidarity with us. They had their own troubles, but still reached out to us because we had more children and more needs. One old man brought me six rolls every day; another gave me 500 pesos. These were family members of people who had suffered, or they themselves had suffered. They had everything to fear, but they were moved beyond their fear, unlike our neighbors who remained distant and afraid.[53]

This is a clear example of how, despite terror and trauma, people are quite resourceful. Human rights, social service, and psychosocial workers can learn a great deal from this example in order to provide better services and work in solidarity with communities that are dealing with the effects of human rights abuses; we can learn to focus on the strengths of individuals and communities, rather than the weaknesses or the assumed pathologies. The literature is replete with discussions of trauma and its effects; this is a focus on pathologies rather than on strengths. This also assumes a certain Western/Northern interpretation of the

world[54] that prioritizes the interpretation of "professionals" over the experiences of the people. We need to let go of the biases that our Western/Northern education has forced upon us in order to work in partnership with affected communities using their local knowledge and strengths as the starting point for our work.

We can also learn that the saying "give voice to the voiceless" is at best a misnomer, and at worst patronizing; everyone has a voice, it is just that some voices are heard while others are not. Instead of focusing our work on being ventriloquists[55] and speaking for others, we can help create the conditions where all voices are heard and respected. That is, we can use our privilege in the service of vulnerable populations to work with them as they increase their resilience, or, better yet, do away with the very conditions which necessitate resilience in the first place.

Conclusion

The human rights violations of the military regime in Chile caused significant damage to the social fabric of society. Whereas Chile's history of organizing for social change dates back almost to the founding of the republic, the military regime aimed to destroy the solidarity and community ties that made organizing possible. As a result, many people no longer trusted one another and did not want to get involved in collective organizations, especially if the leaders of those organizations had been targeted for repression. The *relegación* of many leaders in the *población* La Pincoya led to an increase in vulnerability in families and community organizations that now found themselves without their leaders. There was, as a result, a loss of community participation as people were afraid to participate for fear they, too, would be targeted. At the same time, for a small but significant part of the population there was an increase in resilience and resistance. Despite the fact that people's sense of power to be actors in their own lives and the lives of their community was violently attacked, some people still participated, organized, protested, and worked to overthrow the military regime of Pinochet.

These people, like Lorena, Fernando, Carmen, Manuel, and others, continued to organize, agitate, and fight for human rights. They suffered, as did their families, but they did not compromise their values. Each one of them was arrested, tortured, and sent into internal exile, in the far reaches of Chile. Despite their increased vulnerability, they were resilient and determined to continue the fight for a democratic Chile where human rights were respected. They, like many refugees throughout the world, are protagonists of change and examples of resilience. We can learn from their courage, resilience, and example. And, we can apply what we learn to our work with vulnerable populations around the globe.

Notes

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2. Marjorie Agosín, *Ashes of Revolt: Essays on Human Rights* (Fredonia, NY: White Wine Press, 1996), 53.

3. The term "*desarticular*" has no direct translation into English but refers to a process of disarming, dismantling, incapacitating. Where this term was originally used in Spanish I have kept the word in Spanish. The state's attempt to *desarticular* community connections and organizations through the use of terror, torture, *relegación*, and other means led to increased vulnerability for refugees, internal exiles, and their families and communities since people were isolated from their support systems.

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5. Mario Vidal, *Lo igual y lo distinto en los problemas psicopatologicos ligados a la represión político* [What Is the Same and Different in Psychopathological Problems Associated with Political Repression] (Santiago: CINTRAS, 1993).

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8. Inger Agger, *The Blue Room: Trauma and Testimony among Refugee Women – A Psycho-social Exploration* (London: Zed Books, 1992); see also Weinstein and Lira.

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11. Elizabeth Lira and María Castillo, *Psicología de la amenaza política* [The Psychology of Political Threats] (Santiago: Instituto Latinoamericano de Salud Mental y Derechos Humanos, 1991); see also Elizabeth Lira, Brian Loveman, Tony Misfud, and Pablo Salvat, *Historia, política, y ética de la verdad en Chile, 1891 0 2001: Reflexiones sobre la paz social y la impunidad* [History, Politics and Ethics of the Truth in Chile, 1891 – 2001: Reflections about Social Peace and Impunity] (Santiago, Chile: LOM Ediciones, 2001); Weinstein and Lira.

12. Comité de Defensa de los Derechos del Pueblo (CODEPU), Crimenes e Impunidad: La Experiencia del Trabajo Médico, Psicológico, Social y Júridico en la Violación del Derecho a la Vida, Chile 1973–1996 [Crimes and Impunity: The Experience of Medical, Psychological, Social and Legal Work in Relation to the Right to Life, Chile, 1973–1996] (Santiago: LOM Ediciones, 1996).

13. Erikson, "Notes on Trauma and Community."

14. Agger; see also van der Kolk and McFarlane, 1996.

15. Comité de Defensa de los Derechos del Pueblo (CODEPU).

16. Paz Rojas, "Horror y olvido. Violencia de estado, derechos humanos y salud" [Horror and Forgetting. State Violence, Human Rights and Health], in *Persona, estado, poder: Estudios sobre salud mental Volumen II, Chile 1990–1995* [Person, State, Power: Studies on Mental Health, Volume II, Chile, 1990–1995], ed. Comité de Defensa de los Derechos del Pueblo (CODEPU), (Santiago, Chile: Ediciones LOM, 1996), 63–71.

17. Daniel Bar-On, *The Indescribable and the Undiscussable: Reconstructing Human Discourse after Trauma* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1999); see also Allan Young, "Suffering and the Origins of Traumatic Memory," *Dædalus* 125 (1996): 245–260.

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21. *Ibid.*, 115.

22. Almarza.

23. Oxhorn.

24. Garretón.

25. Luis Ibacache, Jaime Meléndez, Luisa Castaldi, Margarita Cabrera, and Hector Vega, "Las huellas del miedo. La represión política: Daño y reparación" [The Footprints of Fear. Political Repression: Harm and Reparation], in *Persona, estado, poder: Estudios sobre salud mental Volumen II, Chile 1990–1995* [Person, State, Power: Studies on Mental Health, Volume II, Chile, 1990–1995], ed. Comité de Defensa de los Derechos del Pueblo (CODEPU), (Santiago, Chile: Ediciones LOM, 1996), 29 - 39.

26. Garretón.

27. Rojas.

28. Norbert Lechner, "Some People Die of Fear: Fear as a Political Problem," in Corradi, Gagen, and Garretón, eds., 26 - 35.

29. Juan Corradi, Patricia Weiss Gagen, and Manuel Antonio Garretón, eds., *Fear at the Edge: State Terror and Resistance in Latin America* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992).

30. Dirk Kruijt and Kees Koonings, "Violence and Fear in Latin America," in *Societies of Fear: The Legacy of Civil War, Violence and Terror in Latin America* (New York: Zed Books, 1999) 1–31.

31. Ibacache *et al.*

32. Rojas.

33. Thomas G. Weiss, "Internal Exiles: What Next for Internally Displaced Persons?" *Third World Quarterly* 24 (2003): 429–447.

34. The history of La Pincoya is fascinating and filled with protagonism. La Pincoya is the product of years of community organizing, culminating in a series of land invasions in 1968. For more detail on the history of La Pincoya see Rosemary Barbera, "From Protagonists to Spectators and Back Again? The Legacy of the Chilean Military Dictatorship on Community Participation in *La Pincoya*" (doctoral dissertation, Bryn Mawr College, 2003); and Mario Garcés, "Memoria, identidad e historia local" [Memory, Identity and Local History} (paper presented at the meeting Proyecto Desarrollo de Capacidades parra la Integración MERCOSUR, Asunción, Paraguay, May 2000).

35. Ariel Dorfman, "Into Pinochet's Chile: Return to a Country of Exiles, Part I," *The Nation,* April 13, 1985.

36. Ariel Dorfman, "Into Pinochet's Chile: In Search of Internal Exiles, Part II," *The Nation*, April 20, 1985.

37. Those who have been sent into *relegación*.

38. *Onces* is the evening meal which consists of tea and bread.

39. Dorfman, "Into Pinochet's Chile: In Search of Internal Exiles, Part II."

40. Names have been changed at the request of participants.

41. Interview with "Lorena," August 20, 2006.

42. Interview with "Juan," August 20, 2006.

43. Interview with "Manuel," May 8, 2006.

44. Interview with "Carmen," August 25, 2006.

45. Lorena.

46. *Ibid.*

47. Interview with "Marcos," May 8, 2006.

48. Interview with "Rosa," August, 25, 2006.

49. Interview with "Mónica," August 25, 2006.

50. Interview with "Johnny," August, 24, 2006.

51. Interview with "Lucy," August 24, 2006.

52. Interview with "Tamara," August, 26, 2006.

53. Lorena.

54. Ignacio Martín-Baró, *Writings for a Liberation Psychology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994).

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Confronting the Insider-Outsider Polemic in Conducting Research with Diasporic Communities: Towards a Community-Based Approach

Bruce A. Collet

Abstract

Researchers focusing on diasporic contexts face the difficult task of wearing their "academic hats" while at the same time building meaningful relationships with immigrant communities. This is no more apparent (and important) than with "non-community" (i.e., outsider) researchers. Here diasporic communities, having already experienced the trauma of forced migration, must see the academic researcher as one they can trust and who is invested in their long-term well being. In this paper I address methodological and philosophical concerns related to the insider-outsider researcher distinction and to conducting research as an "outsider." The principle aims of the paper are to critically examine the distinctions that create and perpetuate the insider-outsider polemic, explore what this polemic "looks like" within diasporic contexts, and consider community-based participatory research as one "vehicle" that might effectively address some of the thorniest problems associated with the insider-outsider distinction.

Résumé

Les chercheurs consacrant leurs travaux aux contextes diasporiques sont confrontés à la difficile tâche de porter leurs "chapeaux d'universitaire" et d'établir en même temps des rapports significatifs avec les communautés d'immigrés. Cela est encore moins évident (et important) pour les chercheurs "non communautaires" (c.-à-d., étrangers). Les communautés diasporiques, ayant déjà éprouvé le traumatisme de la migration forcée, doivent percevoir le chercheur universitaire comme quelqu'un en qui elles peuvent faire confiance et qui tient à cœur leur bien-être à long terme. Dans cet article, je traite des problèmes d'ordres méthodologiques et philosophiques liés à la distinction entre chercheur initié et chercheur étranger, et à la conduite des recherches en tant qu'"étranger". Les objectifs principaux de cet article sont d'examiner de façon critique les distinctions qui créent et qui perpétuent la polémique initié-étranger, d'explorer comment cette polémique est perçue dans des contextes diasporiques, et de considérer la recherche participative communautaire comme un " véhicule " qui pourrait traiter de façon efficace certains des problèmes les plus épineux liés à la distinction initié-étranger

In this paper I address the insider-outsider researcher distinction as it relates to conducting research with diasporic communities.[1] While the distinction has in many cases legitimate historical precedent and real perpetuating factors (such as racism and classism), basic philosophical problems associated with the dualism, such as group boundaries and group membership, remain. The distinction becomes even more complicated in this regard given the fluid and dynamic nature of diasporic communities wherein there may exist multiple homes and multiple belongings.[2] Yet despite philosophical complications with the insider-outsider dualism, ethical issues pertaining to non-refugee academics engaging in refugee research persist. Most pertinent is the fulfillment of what Karen Jacobsen and Loren

Landau identify as the "dual imperative" in refugee research, namely, to satisfy rigorous academic research standards while also ensuring that the knowledge and understanding generated by forced migration research be used toward the advancement of refugee protection and the betterment of refugee policy.[3] Community-based participatory research is one vehicle that might effectively address some of the thorniest problems associated with the insider-outsider distinction related to research with diasporic communities and concomitantly address the imperative articulated by Jacobsen and Landau. This is particularly so with regard to bridging the academic-community divide and herein (re)defining the role of the outsider researcher and his / her relation to diasporic communities at large.

I begin this article with an overview of the basic ways in which the insider-outsider researcher distinction has been created and maintained, giving special attention to the manners in which universities and communities, and academic and non-academic cultures, have been separated. I then move to examining complications regarding the distinction, including the special context of research within diasporic contexts. Thirdly I attend to Jacobsen and Landau's dual imperative in refugee research, drawing relations between the imperative and "outsider" researcher. I conclude the article with a discussion of community-based research, and the promises it holds for both the researcher and the researched.

Conceptualizing and Understanding Insider-Outsider Distinctions

The term "outsider researcher" with reference to relations between researcher and the researched is most basically understood in terms of group membership, wherein an "outsider" is a non-"member" of the community in question. Hence a man researching women, a black researching whites, and a heterosexual researching gays may all be said to be "outsider" researchers by virtue of their not being women, whites, or gays. By the same token, members of these communities conducting research *about* these communities may be construed as "insider" researchers. The implicit assumption behind distinguishing insiders from outsiders based on group membership is that only such insiders can properly understand and represent the experience of their community.[4]

Yet basic group membership or non-membership only scratches the surface of the reasons for and tensions inherent in insider-outsider distinctions, and there are far weightier concerns. Chief among these is the existence of unequal power relations between the researcher and the researched, and the very real possibilities of abuse and exploitation. Criminal practices in human experimentation such as those carried out by the Nazis in concentration camps during World War II, the Imperial Japanese Army on war prisoners in the infamous Unit 731 (Second Sino-Japanese War and World War II), and by the US government on African-American males (te Tuskegee Syphilis Study, 1932–1972) are some of the most glaring examples of abuse of power carried out by "outside" researchers.[5] In other cases, while perhaps not overtly criminal, power imbalances between the researcher and the researched can still lie at the heart of very questionable research ethics, particularly where there is a lack of informed consent or full knowledge of the research goals and methodology.[6]

Intrinsic also to power dynamics is what Meredeth Minkler depicts as a "dialectic of resistance" between outsider researchers and communities which have experienced historical trauma and internalized oppression, such as Native and African communities in North America.[7] Here researchers who are "members" of the subordinating group (most typically white men of European desent) are either rejected or viewed with great suspicion and mistrust based on what they historically represent to the community. Even in cases where such outsider researchers purport to act in an emancipatory way by "giving voice to" the neglected and disenfranchised, communities may still reject such efforts on the basis of not wanting to depend on outsiders for their representation(s). As David Bridges writes, in these cases communities believe that in allowing members of the (former) subordinating group to cast their representations, they are reinforcing both the fact and perception of their subordination "as well as exposing themselves to potential misrepresentation."[8]

The final insider-outsider tension germane to this article pertains to the distinction between the *academic* researcher and the "non-academic" community being researched. This distinction is multifarious, reflecting not only contesting notions of research "legitimacy" and the motives for conducting research, but also the history of contact between any particular university and community, as well as sometimes dramatic differences between university and community cultures.

The question of legitimacy and "purity" with regard to research origins and processes can serve as a point of disconnection and distance between university researchers and those being researched. As Yolanda Suarez-Balcazar, Gary Harper, and Rhonda Lewis point out, the "entrenched conservatism" of discipline-defined research narrows the parameters within which research agendas and processes are deemed to be worthy of academic pursuit. Here it is from within the academic *discipline*, rather than the *community*, that research questions are articulated and research agendas are formalized.[9] The motivation behind such

"pure" academic-based research is first and foremost to add to the knowledge in the field and to publish in peer-reviewed scholarly journals, rather than to be of direct "use" to the community being researched. Indeed, as Philip Nyden points out, having one's research referred to as "applied" or "local" may be a subtle put-own rather than a complient within some academic circles.[10]

Not surprisingly the above research motivations may be regarded by the community under investigation as quite antithetical to their own more immediate concerns and problems. Further, as Minkler indicates, university researchers guided too rigidly by such motivations are apt to give ill attention to prior consultation with the communities they are working in or to be insufficiently concerned with related relationship building. Within the community being researched this can over time lead to a sense of being "overused" by academic institutions and a hardening of feelings toward outsider researchers.

Intrinsically related to the above tensions are very real and tangible differences between academic and non-academic community cultures. Two important issues here concern language and time. Language use is key to working with communities, and academics insensitive to the language norms in circulation within the communities in which they are working may convey a sense of condescension or paternalism through their use of discipline-specific jargon, whether intended or not. Regarding time, academic and non-academic communities may have very different senses of time as well as timetables. Here the communities under question may not be living their lives in accordance with semesters or terms. Conversely, university researchers may not be under the same types of time pressures that impact communities, particularly where the operations of community-based organizations are concerned.[11]

The above points constitute some of the major areas of insider-outsider tensions. Yet important questions exist regarding the basis of many of these tensions, and their endurance as potentially insurmountable problems. In the next section of the paper I re-examine these areas in light of their weaknesses, and I examine the complexity of insider-outsider distinctions in diasporic contexts.

Complicating Insider-Outsider Distinctions
The most violent and egregious representation of the researcher-researched distinction, namely criminal misconduct or abuse on the part of the researcher, has been thankfully addressed through greater adherence to international human rights law generally and through the creation of research oversight bodies in particular. Regarding the latter, such entities as the institutional review board (US and

international) and such policies as the Tri-Council Policy Statement (Canada) work to ensure that research conducted on human subjects adheres to strict ethical standards. These mechanisms not only protect the "researched" from overt physical and mental abuse, but also mandate procedures regarding consent and disclosure, and participant knowledge of research goals and processes.[12]

A separate basic problem regarding the insider-outsider polemic concerns the notion of "groups." As noted, a fundamental manner in which insiders have been differentiated from outsiders rests on the notion of group membership, wherein anyone "outside" the group in question is deemed to be an "outsider" and anyone "inside" an "insider." Yet such a manner of distinguishing insiders from outsiders necessarily rests on assumptions of homogeneity within insider communities. Here insiders must be "the same" to a degree that sufficiently differentiates them from outsiders. Yet even a cursory glance at the illustrations noted earlier concerning groups immediately calls into question this manner of distinguishing insiders from outsiders. For example, the "gay community" is in fact a highly heterogeneous group, wherein such differentiating factors as race, ethnicity, class, and religion may in fact *outweigh* the shared characteristic of homosexuality in terms of a uniform group identity. This problem necessitates the creation of finer and finer identity descriptors (*e.g.* gay, white, Christian, working class) to uphold the status of "insider." As David Bridges notes, the problem here is that as we add more descriptors to define the identity of any given community "we are more likely to create people who stand in relation to it in some respects as an insider and in some respects as an outsider."[13] Hence researchers are most often likely to be "partly" insiders based on their affinities with the community in question, and "partly" outsiders based on their differences, thereby disrupting the original distinction.

Notwithstanding the above complication, Bridges writes that on the particular note of researcher status, the insider researcher will always be something of an outsider in his or her community "by virtue of becoming a researcher."[14] This is particularly the case in communities that are culturally remote from universities and academe. Within communities that are not only culturally remote from but also have had historical animosity with universities, insider researchers may be seen as having "sold out" to the establishment and viewed with suspicion and distrust, *despite* their shared identification(s).[15]

Insider-Outsider Distinctions in Diasporic Contexts
The particular case of conducting research with *diasporic* communities, which will be the subject for the remainder of this article, adds complexity to the insider-outsider compli-

cations addressed above. For one, certainly diasporic "communities," just as other general groupings, are in themselves highly heterogeneous. Factors discussed above such as class and levels of religiosity will also define sub-communities within diasporic contexts. Other factors such as personal migration history (*e.g.* exact reasons for leaving one's home country and exact reasons for coming to the host country) as well as generational standing (first, second, third, and so on) are more particular to newcomer settlements, and again add a great deal of nuance to how "insiders" and "outsiders" might possibly be distinguished. Further, transnationality as a defining feature of many diasporic communities introduces yet another set of complications regarding the insider-outsider dualism. As R. Cheran writes, the traditional categories of "home" and "host" lands in the context of migration and diasporas are being disrupted by the multiple homes and multiple belongings attended to and exhibited by refugees.[16] This *plurality* of locations and homes erodes conceptualizations of the insider as one with a singular homeland and homeland attachment, and conversely of the outsider as one possessing multiple homelands and multiple belongings.

Yet despite the fact that there do exist complications regarding how insiders and outsiders might be differentiated, particularly within the very fluid contexts of diasporic communities, there exists a residual moral problem (or challenge) associated with the outsider in forced migration research, namely, to demonstrate the utility and "worthiness" of the research endeavour. It is to this issue that I now turn.

Problems That Remain: Addressing the Dual Imperative

As I note in the introduction to this piece, Karen Jacobsen and Loren Landau write of a "dual imperative" in forced migration research. The imperative is rooted in what the authors perceive to be two principal aims in refugee research, namely to satisfy rigorous academic standards while also ensuring that the knowledge and understanding generated by the research be used toward the advancement of refugee protection and the betterment of refugee policy. While the first imperative may be seen as a response to establishing research "legitimacy" and hence justifying its place in academe and satisfying the demands of academic peers, the second may be seen as stemming from a type of moral principal asserting that research into others' suffering can only be justified if alleviating that suffering is an explicit objective.[17] To demonstrate the presence and functioning of the dual imperative in the research literature, Jacobsen and Landau write that most forced-migration research seeks to address and explain refugee issues "with the intention of influencing agencies and governments to develop more effective responses," and that that in comparison to non-humanitarian fields "there are relatively few studies that do not conclude with policy recommendations for NGOs, the UN or national governments."[18]

The dual imperative described by Jacobsen and Landau has an intrinsic connection to the problem of the outsider researcher. As I indicate above, this concerns fulfilling the "second" component of the imperative, namely, to demonstrate the utility and "worthiness" of the research. I would like to advance here that to the degree that those engaging in forced migration research fulfill only the "first" component of the imperative (to meet high academic standards, to establish academic legitimacy) without sufficient attention to the "second" moral component, they necessarily *create themselves* as a kind of outsider. The kind of outsider I am referring to here is one who, owing to a lack of sufficient attention to the moral component, may convey unconcern for or disregard of the refugee community and its well-being.[19] Now one certainly could argue that the act of making "policy recommendations" in itself contains a moral dimension in terms of motivation, dedication, etc. However the degree to which such recommendations actually add up to a moral act depends upon advocacy and follow through. Otherwise researchers here run the risk of merely (and passively) adhering to and reproducing a formative structure characteristic of scholarship in the field.

An "academic detachment" inattentive to above concerns reifies the researcher – researched distinction, and resurrects many of the ghosts associated with it, such as exploitation of knowledge and community "use." It is a much more stubborn and inflexible basis for distinguishing / creating the outsider than such things as group membership, conceptions of home, or generational standing. To transcend *this* particular kind of entrapment entails, as indicated, more strongly embracing a moral component, and this in turn entails entertaining types of research processes that undermine academic-community divisions.

A Community-Based Participatory Approach

Community-based participatory research (CBPR) is a quite radical orientation to conducting research when looked at through the lens of a traditional academic approach. Tracing its roots to the action research school developed by social psychologist Kurt Lewin in the 1940s and revolutionary alternative approaches to research that emerged from work with oppressed communities in South America, Asia, and Africa in the 1970s, CBPR is a collaborative endeavour that strives toward equitable involvement in the research process between the researcher and the community "researched."[20] There exists a range of definitions and conceptualizations of

CBPR, extending from broad and generally "open" senses of the practice toward those that are more narrowly and contextually construed. The most encompassing definitions of CBPR position it as research rooted in the community, serving a community's interest, encouraging community participation at all levels, and geared toward affecting social change.[21]

Principles of CBPR practice generally flow from the above conceptualization. For example, in writing about CBPR in the area of public health research, Barbara Israel and colleagues articulate nine essential principles of practice. These state that CBPR (1) recognizes community as a unit of identity, (2) builds on strengths and resources within the community, (3) facilitates collaborative, equitable partnerships in all phases of the research, (4) promotes co-learning and capacity-building among all partners, (5) integrates and achieves a balance between research and action for the mutual benefit of all partners, (6) emphasizes local relevance of public health problems and ecological perspectives that recognize and attend to the multiple determinants of health and disease, (7) involves systems development through a cyclical and iterative process, (8) disseminates findings and knowledge gained to all partners and involves all partners in the dissemination process, and (9) involves a long-term process and commitment.[22]

The fundamental characteristics of CBPR most germane to this study are firstly that the research "problem," or perhaps more appropriately, "need," is articulated *with* the community as opposed to *on* the community. This necessitates considerable investment in partnership building (principle number 3 above) and establishment of trust. However, the payoff is well worth the effort, as the researcher is far less likely to be viewed as a "problematizer," aloof from voices expressed by those directly experiencing the phenomenon. Secondly, research is conducted utilizing community strengths and resources (principle number 2 above). This means that community members are directly involved in the research process. Here universities and communities recognize that they each have unique resources to contribute. While, subject to their own training, community members may not be expected to carry out duties requiring a high degree of methodological skills, they nonetheless can carry out very essential roles, from community mobilizing and organizing to specified tasks in data processing and management.[23] Finally, and perhaps most importantly here, the community has *ownership* of CBPR findings. Regarding this hallmark of the CBPR process, Minkler writes, "A fundamental tenet of CBPR involves its commitments to giving the study findings back to the community and facilitating strong community involvement in

decision making about the use of those findings for action and social change."[24]

The above points build a strong case for fulfilling the moral component of the dual imperative advanced by Jacobsen and Landau. They thereby weaken, at least in principle and theory, conditions within which a researcher may create him or herself as an outsider, particularly where the utility and worthiness of the research is in question. There is debate within academia about the degree to which CBPR fulfills the first component of the dual imperative (fulfillment of rigorous academic research standards and expectations). However, scholars such as Nyden and others are forcefully demonstrating the worthiness and utility of embracing CBPR approaches within academe.[25]

Conducting CBPR within diasporic communities is not without its complications.

In their critique of methodologies common in forced migration research, Jacobsen and Landau point out problems associated with becoming "too" involved with refugee communities, as well as difficulties associated with using local researchers (or, in the context of this article, "insiders"). While the authors are writing primarily about fieldwork in humanitarian situations such as refugee camps or other types of near diasporas, many of the situations they describe might very well also apply to conditions within far diasporas.

Regarding level of involvement with refugee communities, Jacobsen and Landau note that researchers living or working among refugees may be more susceptible to accepting "imagined" histories or becoming incorporated into refugees' survival strategies. This, the authors assert, may amount to a problem known as "reactivity," where "the active presence of the researcher potentially influences the behaviour and responses of the informants, thereby compromising the research findings."[26] However, while CBPR certainly entails a greater degree of community "involvement" on the part of the researcher(s), it does not mean that distinct roles and responsibilities in the research partnership are not maintained. Those engaging in CBPR in fact serve communities better *by maintaining* particular boundaries, the breach of which might seriously compromise research ethics.

With regard to difficulties associated with using local researchers, Jacobsen and Landau note two major issues. Firstly, there is the risk of bias, particularly where local researchers are employed to help with translation and other services involving data interpretation. Secondly, there is the risk of problems attached to subgroup affiliation on the part of local researchers, wherein particular loyalties may influence or affect the use of data (for example, as against other subgroups). As with the point concerning level of involve-

ment with the community, both of these areas speak to the importance of maintaining rigour in the research process. For example, materials translated from English into the native language(s) of the community in question should be back-translated into English by native speakers without previous or direct involvement with the project (a strategy that Jacobsen and Landau advocate).[27] In the case of the problems associated with subgroup loyalty, the research project must take measures to appropriately screen as well as train community members with this potential problem in mind.

Yet the larger and perhaps more fundamental issue that the above problems speak to concern the level of community "buy-in" to and involvement in the research mission and outcomes, and this is where CBPR may be particularly effective. To the degree that community members are a part of and have ownership in the research process and outcomes, they have more to lose personally if they do not adhere to standards of practice. Further, having a cross-section of community members involved in the actual generation of research "findings" creates a built-in mechanism for weeding out problems of bias as well as misuse of power associated with researcher status.[28] As Nyden asserts, validity measures in community-based research actually *increase* and analytical red-herrings are avoided as multiple perspectives watch over the work.[29]

In all, engagement in CBPR allows the outsider academic researcher to be "less an outsider" and more a partner with the community concerned. As demonstrated above, this is accomplished first and foremost through the very aims of the research, which are *to have* an impact, and not merely the recommendation of an impact. As well, CBPR breaks down one of the most rigid factors separating communities from researchers, namely the perception and fear that the community will be (once again) "used" for research purposes, without receiving any real or tangible benefit. Further, CBPR disrupts the (potentially) myopic perspectives to which discipline-defined researchers are acutely vulnerable. Community needs, as Nyden writes, do not present themselves as departmental-specific problems (*i.e.*; a sociological problem, an economic problem). Rather they are by their nature interdisciplinary and holistic.[30] This forces researchers to step out of their boxes and to entertain multiple angles on the issue at hand. Finally, CBPR is a *sharing* rather than an *assertion* of power, and for diasporic communities, this is certainly a welcoming note.

Conclusion

The designation of outsider researcher is perhaps ultimately unavoidable. There may always exist criteria, however minute, that distinguish an "us" from "them," and certainly diasporic communities are not immune to this. Yet some of the most fundamental ways in which outsiders are depicted and their statuses reified *can* be challenged and even undone. Of all areas of social and cultural research, refugee research is perhaps one of the most important contexts for doing so. Refugees, by virtue of their migration experiences and their frequently diminished levels of power within host societies, constitute a population *particularly* vulnerable to the exploits of academic researchers. Here overcoming obstacles presented by the insider-outsider distinction is not merely a methodological and academic concern, it is also one with an important moral dimension.

Jacobsen and Landau's articulation of the dual imperative in refugee research, namely satisfying rigorous academic research standards while also ensuring that the knowledge gained be used toward the advancement of refugee protection and policy, provides a very useful framework for critiquing the role of the academic researcher within diasporic contexts. The imperative is extended in this article towards providing insight about the degree to which researchers may perpetuate an outsider status, particularly where the moral component is lacking or only partially fulfilled. I have argued in this piece that community-based participatory research is one very effective means of addressing obstacles standing in the way of closing the insider-outsider gap, particularly in relation to research purposes and outcomes.

The "democratization of knowledge" is an inherent component of CBPR. Here institutions share their access to and their creation of knowledge, and research is far less exclusively the domain of universities alone.[31] There may be no more pressing need for the democratization of knowledge than with and within diasporic communities, where knowledge turned into action defines a route toward better livelihood, and where researcher identities reshape towards more generative forms.

Notes

1. The particular diasporic communities I am referring to in the paper concern the "wider diaspora," or countries of asylum further afield. This may be contrasted with a "near diaspora," which pertains to neighbouring countries, or countries of first asylum. See Nick Van Hear, "Refugees in Diaspora: From Durable Solutions to Transnational Relations," *Refuge* 23, no. 1 (2006): 11.
2. R. Cheran, "Multiple Homes and Parallel Civil Societies: Refugee Diasporas and Transnationalism," *Refuge* 23, no. 1 (2006): 5.
3. Karen Jacobsen and Loren Landau, "The Dual Imperative in Refugee Research: Some Methodological and Ethical Considerations in Social Science Research on Forced Migration," *Disasters* 27, no. 3 (2003): 185–206.

4. David Bridges, "The Ethics of Outsider Research," *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 35, no. 3 (2001): 371.

5. See Naomi Baumslag, *Murderous Medicine: Nazi Doctors, Human Experimentation, and Typhus* (New York: Praeger, 2005); Peter Williams, *Unit 731: Japan's Secret Biological Warfare in World War II* (New York: Free Press, 1989); James H. Jones, *Bad Blood: The Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment* (New York: Free Press, 1993).

6. Famous examples include the Stanford Prison Experiment (1971) as well as the Milgram Experiment (1963). See "Quiet Rage: The Stanford Prison Study," videocassette, prod. Philip Zimbardo and Ken Musen, Psychology Department, Stanford University, 1991; Arthur Miller, *The Obedience Experiments: A Case Study of Controversy in Social Science* (New York: Praeger, 1986).

7. Meredith Minkler, "Ethical Challenges for the 'Outside' Researcher in Community-Based Participatory Research," *Health Education and Behavior* 31, no. 6 (2004): 689.

8. Bridges, 380.

9. Yolanda Suarez-Balcazar, Gary Harper, and Rhonda Lewis, "An Interactive and Contextual Model of Community-University Collaborations for Research and Action," *Health Education and Behavior* 32, no. 1 (2005): 94.

10. Philip Nyden, "Academic Incentives for Faculty Participation in Community-Based Participatory Research,," manuscript, Center for Urban Research and Learning, Loyola University, Chicago [2002]: 6.

11. Minkler, 689.

12. Institutional Review Board Services, *Ethics Review,* <http://www.irbservices.com/> (accessed January 28, 2007); Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, *Guiding Ethical Principles*, <http://www.ncehr-cnerh.org/english/code_2/> (accessed January 28, 2007).

13. Bridges, 372.

14. *Ibid.*

15. Suarez-Balcazar, Harper, and Lewis, 90.

16. Cheran, 4.

17. Jacobsen and Landau, 186

18. *Ibid*, 185

19. The embedded assumption here is that "insiders" are inherently concerned about their communities' well-being, and that their research activities are motivated by and dedicated to this concern.

20. Minkler, 686.

21. R. Slove, "Research by the People, for the People," *Futures* 2 (1997): 541–549; L. Green, M. Daniel, C. Frankish, C Herbert, W. Bowie, and M. O'Niel, "Background on Participatory Research," in *Doing Community-Based Research: A Reader,* ed. D. Murphey, M. Scammell, and R. Sclove (Amherst: Loka Institute, 1997).

22. Barbara Israel, Amy Schulz, Edith Parker, Adam Becker, A. Allen III, and Ricardo Guzman, "Critical Issues in Developing and Following Community Based Participatory Research Principles," in *Community Based Participatory Research for Health,* ed. Meredith Minkler and Nina Wallerstein (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003). Of course *enacting* CBPR is a very complex and often political process, and the authors are careful to note that the principles are written as ideal goals, formed with the recognition that their achievement depends upon the context and purpose of the research, and the participants involved in the process.

23. Suarez-Balcazar, Harper, and Lewis.

24. Minkler, 693.

25. Nyden.

26. Jacobsen and Landau, 192.

27. *Ibid.*, 198.

28. In qualitative research, an example of effectively using a cross-section of community members in the generation of findings is inter-rater review of coding schemes and the application of codes to transcripts, etc. See Richard Boyatzis, *Transforming Qualitative Information: Thematic Analysis and Code Development* (Thousand Oaks: Sage).

29. Nyden, 12.

30. *Ibid.*, 7.

31. *Ibid.*, 9.

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Dialectics of Humanitarian Immigration and National Identity in Canadian Public Discourse

Harald Bauder

Abstract

Humanitarian immigration is an important element in the construction of Canada's identity as a liberal and compassionate country. Drawing on Hegelian dialectics, a discourse analysis of newspaper articles published between 1996 and 2001 examines processes of national identity formation through humanitarian immigration in the media. My interpretation of this discourse suggests that Canada's national identity is constructed on the basis of material inequalities through negation and sublation of refugees. By representing refugees who experience gender violence, children, and victims of natural disaster as deserving, the media construes an identity of Canada as compassionate. War criminals, supporters of hate crimes, and violent offenders are involved only to a limited degree in this dialectic.

Résumé

L'immigration à titre humanitaire est un élément important dans la construction de l'identité du Canada en tant que pays libéral et compatissant. Utilisant la dialectique hégélienne, une analyse de discours est entreprise d'articles de journaux publiés entre 1996 et 2001 afin d'examiner les processus de formation de l'identité nationale à travers l'immigration à titre humanitaire dans les médias. Mon interprétation de ce discours suggère que l'identité nationale du Canada est construite sur la base d'inégalités matérielles, à travers la négation et la 'réhabilitation' (l'anglais 'sublation', et l'allemand 'Aufhebung') de réfugiés. En présentant les réfugiés victimes de violences liées au genre, les enfants, et les victimes des catastrophes naturelles comme méritants, les médias construisent une identité du Canada comme compatissante. Les criminels de guerre, les défenseurs des crimes de haine, et les contrevenants violents ne sont pris en compte que de façon limitée dans cette dialectique.

Introduction

Humanitarian immigration is, next to economic and family-oriented immigration, one of three pillars of Canadian immigration policy. Although refugees constituted only 13.6 per cent of all immigration to Canada in 2005,[1] the significance of this category lies in its ethical and political value. Through humanitarian immigration and refugee admission, Canada fulfills its commitment to humanitarianism and constructs a self-image as a liberal and compassionate nation.[2]

In this paper I examine media discourse of humanitarian immigration. My analysis focuses on newspaper articles published in five major Canadian newspapers during a period when Canadian immigration reform was hotly debated in the press. Drawing on Hegelian ideas of dialectics, I interpret this discourse in the context of national identity formation. This interpretation highlights the press's representations of Canada's international reputation, discursive constructions of deserving *vis-à-vis* undeserving refugees, and coverage of contested cases of refugee applications and deportations.

In the next section, I review the literature on the dialectics of humanitarian immigration and national identity formation. Following a presentation of the research design, I present the results of my analysis. I end with a conclusion.

Dialectics of Humanitarian Immigration

National identity is an important aspect of humanitarian immigration and the admission of refugees. In the context of Australia and Canada, Catherine Dauvergne observes: "Humanitarianism is about identity. The individual identity of the other who benefits from our grace is important, but only because of the light it reflects back on us."[3] Her argument, based on liberal political philosophy, suggests that humanitarianism serves as a way of defining "the nation as compassionate and caring."[4] Dauvergne's observation that "part of our humanitarianism is about … applauding ourselves"[5] is echoed by Minelle Mahtani and Alison Mountz, whose discourse analysis of the newsprint media revealed that:

> Clearly, Canadian immigration officials are looked upon favourably in the media when welcoming Kosovar refugees. We suggest that Canadians felt good about themselves vis-à-vis the press, the actions of government, and the contributions of citizens through that immigration event.[6]

Humanitarian immigration, however, can also contribute to the construction of an unfavourable identity of the receiving country. Mahtani and Mountz continue:

> Months later, however, Canadian immigration officials came under attack for their treatment of the Chinese migrant boat crisis. The media scripted Canadians as irate citizens with a government constructed as "soft:" letting people in through the "back door."[7]

Humanitarian immigration can serve the construction of a national self-image as positive or negative.

The manner in which this national identity is produced follows a dialectical process. In the context of humanitarian immigration, refugee selection policies and practices identify refugees as the Other, or the mirror image of the perceived national self. This process of identity formation relies on constructing and "reinforcing the boundary between an 'us' group and a 'them' group,"[8] a process which relates to Georg W. F. Hegel's notion of "negation."[9]

Following Ludwig Feuerbach, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels rejected Hegel's emphasis on the internal reflection of the self-consciousness. Instead they suggested that the dialectical process has a material basis.[10] This material basis is reflected in the process of national identity formation through humanitarian immigration. In contrast to liberal ideas of justice emphasizing principles of equality between human beings, "[h]umanitarianism is the opposite; it is grounded in a specific type of difference created by material inequality"[11] This material inequality defines who is a refugee and thus serves as an object of negation and national identity formation.

When four boats carrying 599 Chinese refugees arrived at Canada's western coast in 1999, the media represented these refugees as racialized, illegal, and non-belonging. These representations legitimated the rejection of the refugees and reaffirmed a European ethnic Canadian identity of Canada.[12] The "regular" refugee selection process, however, serves a different role. It identifies the deserving Other, worthy of the nation's compassion. The nation exercises this compassion by granting refugee status.[13]

An additional element of the Hegelian dialectical movement is a second negation, or "sublation" (*Aufhebung*).[14] With this second negation, the image of the Other is absorbed into the self. The admission of the foreigner and the "mysteries of strangeness" can be an important component in the replenishment of a nation.[15] In the context of humanitarian immigration, the second negation consists of the inclusion of the refugee Other into the cultural identity of the national self. In Canada, "[w]hen refugees are admitted as permanent members of the community, they are literally invited to change their national identity;"[16] after three to four years of permanent residency they are encouraged to become Canadian citizens and embrace "Canadian" values and norms.[17] The dialectical movement of othering and inclusion involves the resolution of the contradiction that refugees are "both other and not-other."[18] Refugees and humanitarian migrants "must be not like us in order to need our protection, but must be able to shed that identity and merge with the nation when required."[19]

In the empirical part of this paper, I examine the media representation of refugees and humanitarian immigration to Canada. My aim is to examine the relationship between media reporting and the discursive construction of the national self.

Research Design

Context

In contrast to research examining the contents of refugee law and associated legal practices,[20] I focus on the media discourse of humanitarian immigration during a period when the Canadian government reformed immigration law. During this period, humanitarianism was the second most frequently reported issue – behind "danger" and ahead of "political" and "economic-utility" issues of immigration—in the debate on immigration reform.[21] Interestingly, the so-called war on terrorism coincided with an increase of media support for humanitarian immigration.[22]

The focus on the media debate of the reform of immigration law enables me to examine discursive processes in a context in which legal frameworks and material practices

are rethought.[23] In the analysis below, I explore the narratives through which the newsprint media constructs particular representations of refugees and humanitarian immigration. In the context of legal practice "national identity is the most powerful variable for giving an account of [immigration] law's features, changes, and applications."[24] The below analysis examines the role national identity plays in media discourse on immigration reform.

Method

I examined articles published in the *Vancouver Sun*, *Calgary Herald*, *Toronto Star*, *National Post*,[25] and *Ottawa Citizen* between January 1, 1996, and December 31, 2004. This period coincided with the debate on immigration reform in Canada, which began with the release of the 1996 report *Not Just Numbers: A Canadian Framework for Future Immigration* by Canada's Immigration Legislative Review Advisory Group and included the passing of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* in 2001. The search engine *Canadian Newsstand* enabled the electronic download of articles for the selected newspapers and study period.[26] An initial search with the key words "immigration act" and "Canada" identified 490 articles. To select articles and text sequences dealing with the issue of humanitarianism I developed "recording instructions" for *a priori* coding of the data.[27] The final sample contained 119 articles discussing humanitarian issues in the context of immigration reform.

Media debate is multidimensional and complex.[28] The articles contained in the sample typically juxtaposed various opinions. Some commentaries, however, also presented singular viewpoints. For example, the *National Post* occasionally featured rather blatant commentaries by immigration critics Martin Collacott and Diane Francis. I examined these articles and commentaries for common themes and viewpoint in order to reconstruct distinct narratives associated with humanitarianism weaving through the media discourse of immigration.[29]

Such narratives typically represent elite interests.[30] For example, the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* was passed by Parliament only two months after the September 11, 2001, attacks occurred in New York and Washington. In light of terrorism threats, the act allowed for "secret trials" and the indefinite detention and deportation of refugee applicants. In a press release in February 2002, Citizenship and Immigration Canada stated that the new Act is "tough for people who pose a threat to public security" and contains a "security agenda" apparently aimed at refugees and humanitarian immigrants.[31] In the press, these interests of political elites in "national security" and solidarity with the United States are usually complemented and contested by viewpoints reflecting the interests of non-governmental organizations, community leaders, and other elite agents.

Results

Canada's Reputation

The newsprint media establishes the link between humanitarian immigration and national identity by making an association between immigration policy and Canada's reputation of compassion and tradition of generosity. In 1996, at the beginning of the debate on immigration reform, the *Toronto Star* quoted Citizenship and Immigration Minister Lucienne Robillard:

> Canada has a tradition of fair and generous immigration and refugee programs," she said. "The [Immigration Legislative Review] advisory group will provide a series of recommendations to guide and update future immigration and refugee legislation in a way that will maintain this tradition.[32]

In 2001, when the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* was debated in Parliament, an article in the *National Post* paraphrased the chairman of the Commons Immigration Committee, Joe Fontana, who opposed the removal of rights from refugee applicants: "The bill must be tightened … to protect Canada's reputation as a nation open to immigrants and refugees."[33] While the government made adjustments to the Act before it took effect in June 2002, the *Toronto Star* opposed the denial of second hearings to rejected asylum seekers and accused Immigration Minister Denis Coderre of creating "A lopsided piece of legislation that compromises Canada's reputation as a safe haven for those whose lives are in danger at home."[34]

The press often evokes Canada's reputation strategically to construct current policies and practices towards humanitarian immigration as problematic. For example, when the Canadian government proposed to stop recognizing Somali passports as legal identification, refugee advocates accused the government of racism and violating Canada's reputation as a champion of human rights. The *Ottawa Citizen* wrote:

> "From the community perspective, this is a very racist piece of legislation and we think it's the way of curbing Somalis from coming into the country," said Hamdi Mohamed, program manager at the Somali Centre in Ottawa.
> …
> To Ms. Mohamed, the situation "is disgusting, something that shouldn't be happening in a so-called civilized country that claims to advocate for human rights."[35]

Avvy Go, director of the Metro Toronto Chinese and South-east Asian Legal Clinic, wrote an article in the *Toronto Star* using a similar strategy to advocate for better treatment of refugee claimants:

> With the election now behind us, the first thing that our new minority government should do is to restore some compassion and basic respect for human dignity back into a system that has once made us all proud to be Canadians.

> Then and only then, can we truly live up to our hard-earned reputation as one of the most humanitarian countries in the world.[36]

The strategy of evoking Canada's international reputation is also used to construct arguments against humanitarian immigration and for toughening refugee policies. An article in the *National Post* proposes that the arrival of refugees from democracies, such as the United States, Israel, Hong Kong, and European countries, has made "refugee policy a la Canadien . . . the joke of the globe" and "an embarrassment to Canadians."[37] An article in the *Vancouver Sun* presents the viewpoint of the Reform Party's immigration critic, Leon Benoit, that "all refugee claimants who arrive in Canada by illegal means should be detained and their cases decided within 30 days. It's the only way, he said, to get rid of Canada's reputation as a 'soft touch.'"[38] An editorial in the *National Post* presents the arrival of unwanted immigrants as a challenge to Canada's identity as a hospitable country: "By effectively encouraging economic migrants to enter our country illegally, the government only erodes our national sense of hospitality."[39]

Boundary Construction

Regular refugee admission procedures are rarely discussed in the sample of newsprint articles. Apparently, conventional practices of refugee selection fail to make the news and do not contribute to the media's construction of Canada's identity. Rather, the representation of Canada as compassionate and caring occurs through reporting on borderline cases and contested refugee claims. These discussions construct the boundary of who is considered a "deserving" refugee.

A borderline area of humanitarian immigration relates to gender violence. An article in the *Vancouver Sun* featured a story on the court battle of a South Korean mother and her two daughters seeking refugee status on the grounds of domestic brutality:

> Earlier that morning, the eldest child was vomiting at the prospect of being sent back to face a father who had threatened to

kill them for running away, the family said.
> Her mother had the look of the condemned.
> Lawyer Jim Henshall argued that this woman and her daughters were being sent back to a society where spousal abuse and family violence were tolerated to a degree unknown in Canada, and that their family history of abuse—and belief that a vengeful husband and father was lying in wait—equated to a claim for refugee status.[40]

In another article, the *Vancouver Sun* defended the decision by the Immigration and Refugee Board to grant refugee status on the basis of gender violence to a Chinese woman who travelled on one of the boats that arrived at Canada's west coast in 1999.

> She told the board she underwent a forced abortion 13 years ago, when she was seven months pregnant with her third child.

> After the abortion, she told the board, she had another child in hiding. When authorities discovered she was pregnant with a fourth child, she was dragged to the hospital for another abortion, which included the fetus being injected with a poison in front of her. Later, she was forcibly sterilized.

> The ruling includes an excerpt of the woman's interview with a psychologist in Canada about the second abortion.

> "I thought she [the baby] was alive," the woman told the psychologist. "After it was aborted [the nurse] threw it in the corner on the floor. ... I told them: 'It is alive baby, let me have it, raise it.' They said: 'No, because of the injection it's going to die soon.' ... I saw her die and it was very painful. My heart got broken then."

> "She cried shamelessly when describing her experiences," Robles wrote. "She was trembling and her hands were shaking as she testified."[41]

Although the woman neither faces persecution in China nor fits the strict United Nations definition of a refugee, she received refugee status "because the 'atrocious and appalling' treatment she received in China before leaving … caused her 'continuing psychological and emotional trauma.'"[42]

In another case, the policy and program director of the Canadian Council for Refugees, Janet Dench, wrote a commentary in the *Toronto Star* on the government's proposal to establish a new Resettlement from Abroad Class (RAC) catering to people who are not refugees according the United Nations' definition but nevertheless in need of protection. Dench used the example of gender to illustrate the need for the proposed class: "the new class would mean an immigration official need not shut the door on an Afghan woman in a refugee camp in Pakistan simply because she is not singled out for persecution in her home country."[43] By

extending refugee status to cases of gender discrimination and violence, the Canadian media pushes the boundary of who is considered worthy of protection beyond international convention. In this way, the press affirms gender equality as a principle of Canadian identity and paints an image of Canada as compassionate towards women who suffer from the violation of this principle.

Another area of tension between the commitment to humanitarianism and current political practice involves children. The press sees vulnerable children as especially entitled to protection. When a federal court in Vancouver overturned the decision by the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) to deport nine Chinese refugee children an article in the *National Post* quoted the judge:

> "The [children] were members of a 'particular social group,' [and this] warranted more serious consideration and analysis than was provided by the [IRB]," wrote Justice Frederick Gibson. "As members of a particular social group so defined, [their lawyers] urged that the children were persecuted by virtue of their being 'trafficked' on the basis of arrangements made between their parents and human smugglers ... I accept without reservation that argument."[44]

An article in the *Toronto Star* protests against Citizenship and Immigration Canada's intention to separate three refugee youths and suggested that "the conditions in which they were living violated their rights under the UN Convention on the Rights of a Child."[45] The article highlighted why these youths are particularly deserving of compassion:

> Last year, they say that Unita rebels attacked their hometown of Luanda, Angola's capital. Amid heavy gunfire, the girls say that they fled with their mother and neighbours. They say that the rebels captured them and blindfolded them so that they would not know the location of the camp where they were being taken. The last time the girls saw their mother, they say, was in the seconds before their blindfolds were put on.[46]

In another case, Canada's Supreme Court overturned the deportation order of a Jamaican refugee claimant to accommodate the needs of her four Canadian-born children. An article in the *National Post* celebrated the court's decision:

> The court found that immigration officials were biased against [refugee claimant] Mavis Baker, and "completely dismissive" of the interests of her four Canadian-born children when they turned down her application to stay on humanitarian grounds.
>
> "Children's rights and attention to their interests are central humanitarian and compassionate values in Canadian society,"

wrote Justice Claire L'Heureux-Dube in the unanimous decision.[47]

Although this case involves the rights of children who are Canadian citizens, [48] the text passage above illustrates the role of refugee policy and practice in constructing Canadian society as caring towards children and youths to remain with their parents.

A final example of a contested practice relates to victims of natural disaster. A Turkish-Canadian made an emotional plea to the Citizenship and Immigration Minister in the *Ottawa Citizen* to permit the sponsorship of a distant cousin who lost his right foot in an earthquake in Turkey but survived by lying in the rubble "on top of his father's body, unable to move for 35 hours. His foot was caught under the same block of cement as his father's, but thankfully he was not losing that much blood and he was able to survive. … His only wish is to be able to come to Canada to at least escape from the horrible memories of the earthquake for a while."[49] A reader's letter supported the admission of the earthquake victim and suggested that "under some circumstances, this law [Immigration Act of Canada] should be flexible."[50] Both articles construct the earthquake victim as deserving due to the emotional and psychological hardship he experienced relative to the Chinese refugees who arrived around the same time via boat and whom the press portrayed as "illegal."[51]

Limits to Compassion

National identity is constructed not only through the admission of refugees in need of protection, but also through the rejection of refugee applicants represented as unworthy of inclusion into Canadian society. For example, the press expresses little compassion for refugee applicants who committed war or hate crimes. An article in the *Vancouver Sun* supports efforts to deport war criminals from Latin America:

> Some in Vancouver's Latino community call them los fantasmas de guerra – the ghosts of war.
>
> The community applauds Canada's stepped-up efforts to expel the ghosts and deport those who have tortured and murdered civilians back home.[52]

Another example is the case of Ernst Zundel, who is wanted in his native Germany for hosting an anti-Semitic Web site that denies the Holocaust. An article in the *National Post* reports that "Mr. Zundel's attempt to claim refugee status has caused outrage across Canada"[53] and another reiterates the Canadian government's position that "Holocaust denier Ernst Zundel is a threat to Canada's

security because he fosters hatred of Jews, finances hate groups and could incite his followers to violence."[54]

Violent criminals are also not wanted in Canada. An article in the *National Post* elaborates on the criminal history of Jose Salinas-Mendoza, an El Salvadorian refugee applicant, who "committed many crimes and was convicted of 12 offences ranging from drunken driving to sexual assault and assault."[55] The article generalizes based on this case: "The only real refugees are those in camps, like the Kosovars, who cannot afford to get here in the first place. The rest are often tricksters, or worse."[56]

Many articles share the general concerns that "criminals and queue jumpers are abusing our generosity"[57] and that "people are taking advantage of Canada's good will."[58] The term "bogus" refugee appears in articles throughout the study period. However, it was particularly frequent in the weeks before the Liberal government tabled the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (Bill C-31) in April 2000. The *Vancouver Sun* expressed dissatisfaction with the proposed legislation for failing to "stop bogus claimants from clogging the system."[59] The *National Post* argued that "In Europe, nearly 90% of those claiming to be refugees are debunked as bogus" and that if "the West as a whole, and Canada in particular, is to provide a haven to genuine refugees, then we must satisfy ourselves that the refugees meet strict criteria."[60] Drawing parallels to the Canadian refugee system, the *Vancouver Sun* featured an article on Britain, quoting British Conservative Party leader William Hague on the suffering by "genuine refugees … because of the massive influx of bogus asylum seekers."[61] The term "bogus" represents a category of refugee applicants who are not only undesired but who also inflict damage by consuming the resources needed to support "deserving" refugees.

Contested Representations

Although media discourse establishes boundaries separating "genuine" and "bogus" refugees, the allocation of refugee applicants to either side of the boundary is not always a straightforward choice. Sometimes, media opinions differ on whether an applicant is a "genuine" or "bogus" refugee. The former scenario entails that a refugees deserves protection; the latter implies the rejection of a refugee claim.

Throughout the study period, the press discussed the deportation of "terrorist" suspects to places where they could experience torture.[62] Is Canada committed to protect all refugees from the prospect of torture? Or are "terrorist" suspects categorically undeserving of Canadian compassion and protection? The boundary between deserving fugitives of torture and undeserving "terrorists" itself is undisputed but the question is which category applies to a refugee applicant.

When the Supreme Court heard arguments in 2001 regarding the constitutionality of the anti-terrorist section of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, an article in the *National Post* reported that "a large number of intervenors, including the Canadian Bar Association, the Canadian Council for Refugees and the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, appeared before the court to argue that no one should be deported to possible torture."[63] Shortly after this article was published, another article in the *National Post* presented the other side of the argument:

[Several] court cases have made it clear [that terrorists] … entered the country as refugee claimants. This was confirmed at the official level when the RCMP told a conference on Oct. 17 that the modus operandi of all international terrorists coming to Canada was first to claim refugee status and then move on to obtain welfare and medical benefits before turning to crime to boost their income.[64]

A case which occupied the newsrooms in 1999 involved Es-Sayy Jaballah, who is wanted in Egypt for inciting violence. An article in the *Toronto Star* illustrates the conflict between inadmissibility due to alleged involvement in "terrorism" and the protection of human rights:

He [Jaballah] came to Canada in 1996 and claimed refugee status. His claim was denied last March and he was arrested. He has been in custody since, and says he would be executed if he returned to his native Egypt.
…
CSIS has accused Jaballah of maintaining contact with members of Egyptian al-Jihad, a group believed to be connected to last year's deadly embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania, court records show.[65]

Another case involved the Sri Lankan refugee Manickavasagam Suresh, an alleged fundraiser for the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (classified a "terrorist" organization in the United States), and the Iranian refugee Mansour Ahani, a former narcotics officer who was trained by the Iranian Ministry of Intelligence and Security in assassination techniques. Ahani's case was front-page material in 1999, when the *National Post* wrote:

The Canadian Security Intelligence Service believes that Mr. Ahani, whose appeal to stay was turned down recently in federal court, is a dangerous trained terrorist who works for a branch of Iran's government that plans and executes terrorist operations. Mr. Ahani's lawyers have fought his removal with a long series of challenges in the federal and Ontario courts.

"We are now in a legal position to remove Mr. Ahani," said Huguette Shouldice, a spokeswoman for Citizenship and Immigration Canada. "We intend to remove him as expeditiously as possible. Canada won't be safe haven for terrorists or criminals."[66]

Two years later, in 2001, when the Supreme Court heard the cases of Suresh and Ahani, several newspaper articles reiterated the fear that Canada will become a "haven" for terrorists.[67] An article in the *Vancouver Sun* elaborated on the treat of terrorism to Canada:

> Terrorism and terrorist fund-raising are serious threats to Canada's security, particularly as this country is seen as a venue of opportunity for terrorists groups to raise funds, purchase arms and conduct other activities to support their organizations and terrorist activities elsewhere.[68]

An article in the *National Post* saw in Ahani and Suresh a challenge to freedom and democracy:

> The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms allows governments to subject individual rights to limits "justified in a free and democratic society."
>
> "Nothing is more inimical to a free and democratic society than terrorism," the government will hope to convince the court.[69]

Text sequences that presented the counter-perspective typically allocated Suresh and Ahani's case to the side of the deserving fugitive of torture and highlighted Canada's international commitments to humanitarianism. For example, an article in the *Ottawa Citizen* argued:

> Veteran [Supreme Court] Justice Frank Iacobucci led the pack with his assertion that sending people to countries where they would be tortured would "blow out of the water" international human rights conventions.[70]

Similarly, a report in the *Toronto Star* states: "Their [Ahani and Suresh's] lawyer Barbara Jackman says the principle in both cases is Canada's international reputation—'whether Canada is going to meet its commitment to the international community not to put people in a position where they may be tortured.'"[71]

Another event that illustrates the contested representations of refugees either as unwanted criminals or victims of human rights abuses involved the deportation of six Somalis from Canada to Mogadishu. An article in the *National Post* defended the protection of human rights by appealing to "Canadian values and principles" of humanitarianism:

> Some of the deportees had never been to Mogadishu before; many had been raised in North America and were unfamiliar with their native country.
> …
> Under the watch of 15 private security officers, the group was flown to Somalia and left in Mogadishu, which many consider to be the world's most dangerous city ...
>
> "We are extremely concerned for these people," says Mahamoud Hagi-Aden, a Somali-Canadian and a consultant to the Somali Centre for Family Services, based in Ottawa.
> …
> Mr. Hagi-Aden suggested that the joint removal was undertaken covertly, in order not to attract attention. "We work very closely with Immigration Canada, and are usually informed about deportations. In this case, we didn't hear anything. I think it runs contrary to Canadian values and principles."[72]

The media debate of these cases illustrates arising contradictions when people are pigeonholed into categories of deserving and undeserving refugees.

Complexity of Media Narratives

The complexity of media discourse is further demonstrated by voices that complicate the narratives that I presented above. For example, newsprint reporting occasionally highlighted aspects to the humanitarian international reputation of Canada beyond the binary representation of Canada as neither compassionate nor "soft." An article in the *Ottawa Citizen* quoted Tom Clark, coordinator of the Interchurch Committee for Refugees, who "suspects Canada is currently 'the deportation capital of the world.'"[73] Another article in the *Toronto Star* implies that the number of refugees entering Canada is too small to warrant constructions of Canada as either compassionate or soft on the basis of humanitarian immigration:

> In fact, those presenting their claims for Convention refugee status at Canada's door numbered only 21,803 last year. Out of more than 30 million refugees worldwide, not counting some 15 million "internally displaced," a minuscule 0.0007 per cent arrive here as claimants.[74]

Another example of a challenge to the narratives identified above is the suggestion that Canada's refugee selection process is not guided by humanitarian principles but rather by self-interest. The same article points out that Canada receives mostly the young, motivated, and affluent: "And it's

not the 'masses' who make it to Canada … Here, you don't see many old people. Only the well-to-do or the very inventive and very courageous."[75] Another article in the *Toronto Star* criticizes Canada's pick-and-choose attitude in respect to refugee selection:

> There is a deep-rooted prejudice against refugees who present themselves in Canada and ask for asylum. … They are viewed as an inconvenience because, by virtue of their presence, we are legally obliged to respect their human rights.
>
> When refugees are overseas, on the other hand, we can pick and choose where and how and when we will bestow our generosity.[76]

These examples illustrate that the narratives contained in the newsprint media's reporting on humanitarian immigration are not uncontested. In fact, many reporters and commentators seek to destabilize conventional media perspectives.

Conclusion

Many newspaper articles I examined suggest that Canadian humanitarian immigration policies and the practices of refugees admission are important positive aspects of the image other countries have of Canada. The light this international reputation reflects back on Canada creates an identity of compassion. This interpretation of the media discourse of humanitarian immigration corresponds with existing research on the relationship between humanitarian immigration and national identity.[77] My analysis further suggests that journalists and commentators strategically juxtapose Canada's reputation with current political and administrative practices to construe some policies and practices as problematic—either as falling short of or overshooting Canada's identity as a country of compassion and champion of human rights.

Media discourse negates Canadian national self-identity by discussing the circumstances that deserving refugees are enduring. These circumstances are presented as unacceptable to Canada, requiring Canada to provide protection from them. In this context, media reporting focuses on disputed refugee claims and contested humanitarian policies. In particular, the representation of women who experience discrimination and violence, children who are separated from or abused by their families, and victims of natural disaster as deserving refugees creates an image of Canada as a gender-equal society which protects children and supports victims of disaster. In these newsprint discussions, violence, abuse, and misfortune constitute the material conditions for the negation of the national self.

The integration of refugees into Canadian national identity, *i.e.* the second negation, was rarely addressed in the sampled articles. If it was discussed at all, it was mostly implied. For example, in an article in the *National Post*, the expectation that refugees from wartorn Kosovo become permanent residents and eventually Canadian citizens became apparent only when Canada's refugee policy was compared with that of "the U.S. [which] is insisting that all 20,000 Kosovars who it is giving temporary sanctuary must be returned to Kosovo when peace is restored,"[78] and when the article quoted Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy's defence of Canada's practice as "part of our refugee commitments."[79]

The newspaper articles also established the limits of Canada's compassion. The press was outraged when war criminals, supporters of hate crimes, and violent offenders sought refuge in Canada. Obviously, the press does not sanction such behaviour and denies these refugee applicants compassion. The ideologies they embody have no place in Canadian society. The newsprint media does not represent these applicants as "both other and not-other."[80] Their representations constitute a negation of the national self, but the second negation—their absorption into the Canadian national community—is prevented. They are excluded from the dialectic of humanitarian immigration beyond the first negation. Interestingly, unlike deserving refugees who are represented as passive victims, undeserving refugees are portrayed as active agents of violence, crime, and immorality. Furthermore, what define refugees as undeserving are not material conditions of inequality but violations of ideological taboos.

The discursive boundary drawing between the circumstances that define deserving and undeserving refugees is a separate process from allocating individuals to either side of this boundary. Noteworthy media debates involved the cases of refugees who are accused of supporting terrorism but who could be tortured if deported. As terrorism supporters they are unworthy of incorporation into Canadian society, but as victims of torture they deserve compassion. The media debates of these cases illustrate that the question of admissibility is not a matter of degree of worthiness on a scale of material inequality, but rather a contradiction between conditions of material inequality and ideological incompatibility. This contradiction, however, has not been resolved—either in media discourse or at the level of policy and law in which this discourse is embedded.

Notes

1. An additional 2.5 percent of "humanitarian and compassionate cases" were classified "other immigrants"; see Citizenship

and Immigration Canada, "Canada – Permanent Residents by Category," *Facts and Figures 2005*, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pub/facts2005/overview/03.html> (accessed March 31, 2007).

2. Catherine Dauvergne, *Humanitarianism, Identity, and Nation: Migration Laws of Australia and Canada* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2005).

3. *Ibid.*, 164.

4. *Ibid.*, 75.

5. *Ibid.*, 73.

6. Minelle Mahtani and Alison Mountz, "Immigration to British Columbia: Media Representations and Public Opinion," *Research on Immigration and Integration in the Metropolis Working Paper Series* No. 02–15 (Metropolis BC: 2002): 29.

7. *Ibid.*

8. *Ibid.*, 72.

9. Georg W. F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (Paderborn: Voltmedia, 2005 [1807]).

10. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Die deutsche Ideologie* (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1953).

11. Dauvergne, 72.

12. Sean P. Hier and Joshua L. Greenberg, "Constructing a Discursive Crisis: Risk, Problematization and Illegal Chinese in Canada, *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 25, no. 3 (2002): 490–513.

13. Dauvergne.

14. Hegel.

15. Bonnie Honig, *Democracy and the Foreigner* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 4.

16. Dauvergne, 124.

17. The Canadian citizenship test and the booklet *A Look at Canada* explicitly request those becoming Canadians to endorse the "democratic values" of "equality," "respect for cultural differences," "freedom," "peace," and "law and order," and define "multiculturalism," "volunteerism," and "protecting the environment" as Canadian values; Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Ottawa, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/look/look-00e.html> (accessed March 28, 2007).

18. Dauvergne, 162.

19. *Ibid.*

20. *E.g.* Dauvergne.

21. Harald Bauder, "Immigration Debate in Canada: How Newspapers Reported, 1996–2004," *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, forthcoming.

22. *Ibid.*

23. I assume here that public discourse of immigration shapes and is shaped by social conventions, legal practices, and immigration law; see Tuen van Dijk, *Communicating Racism. Ethnic Prejudice in Thought and Talk* (Newbury Park: Sage, 1987); Tuen van Dijk, *Racism and the Press* (London: Routledge, 1991); I. Crespi, *The Public Opinion Process: How the People Speak* (London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers, 1997). However, this relationship is complex and media opinion on immigration does not always translate into immigration policy and law; Bauder.

24. Dauvergne, 26.

25. Although the *National Post* was called *Financial Post* until 1998, I only use the name *National Post* in the text.

26. The records of the *Globe and Mail* were incomplete. I did not include this newspaper in the sample.

27. S. Stemler, "An Overview of Content Analysis," *Practical Assessment, Research and Evaluation* 7, no. 17 (2001), <http://pareonline.net> (accessed December 2006).

28. Crespi; Norman Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992); Minelle Mahtani, "Representing Minorities: Canadian Media and Minority Identities," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 33, no. 3 (2001): 99–133; M. Wetherell, S. Taylor, and S. J. Yates, eds. *Discourse as Data: A Guide to Analysis* (London: Sage, 2001).

29. Fairclough.

30. Van Dijk, *Communicating Racism;* van Dijk, *Racism and the Press.* In addition to elite interests represented in media discourse, the ownership of newspapers affects reporting, as exemplified by the *Calgary Herald*, *Vancouver Sun*, and *National Post* sometimes publishing identical articles. Reprinted articles were not double-counted in the sample.

31. Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Fair and Equitable Response From Minister, News Release 2002–01, Ottawa, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/press/02/0201-pre.html> (accessed September 2006).

32. David Vienneau, "Ottawa to 'Update' Immigration Act to Be Modernized for 21st Century, Minister Says," *Toronto Star*, November 26, 1996, A2.

33. Robert Fife, "Liberals Spar Over Changes to Immigration Act," *National Post*, March 19, 2001, A7.

34. *Toronto Star*, "Wrong Balance," May 1, 2002, A20.

35. Jennifer Pritchett, "Somali Community Outraged by 'Racist' Legislation," *Ottawa Citizen*, August 10, 1999, B3.

36. Avvy Go, "Refugee System Lacks Compassion," *Toronto Star*, July 20, 2004, A18.

37. Diane Francis, "Refugee System Needs Total Overhaul," *National Post*, April 22, 1999, C3.

38. Andres Duffy, "UN Envoy Urges Canada to Remain Open to Refugees," *Vancouver Sun*, February 2, 2000, A6.

39. *National Post*, "Human Cargo," April 3, 2000, A17.

40. Gerry Ballett, "Helping People to Stay Here," *Vancouver Sun*, July 22, 2004, B2.

41. Chad Skelton, "Woman Gets Refugee Status despite No Fear of Persecution," *Vancouver Sun*, June 2, 2000, A4.

42. *Ibid.*

43. Janet Dench, "Refugee Policy Contradicts Itself," *Toronto Star*, January 20, 1997, A13.

44. Finbarr O'Reilly, "Chinese Migrant Children Spared Deportation," *National Post*, December 21, 2000, A4.

45. Carol Lower, "Searching for a Home," *Toronto Star*, October 28, 2001, A6.

46. *Ibid.*

47. Marina Jimenez, "Children's Fate Key in Deportation Cases," *National Post*, July 10, 1999, A8.

48. The case of Ms. Baker and her children is not unique and the press reported on numerous similar cases. For example, the

Toronto Star supported a court decision in favour of a single mother and refugee claimant whose two Canadian-born children were scheduled for deportation; see "Another Half-baked Idea from Lucienne Robillard," *Toronto Star,* May 12, 1998, 1. An article in the *Calgary Herald* criticized the lack of compassion in a decision by Citizenship and Immigration Canada to deport a Sri Lankan refugee although her husband and two children posses Canadian citizenship; Andy Marshall, "Calgary Family Fears Mom May be Deported," *Calgary* Herald, February 19, 1999, B8). An article in the *National Post* laments that "family unity is often disregarded, particularly in deportation cases"; Francisco Martinez, "Canada Is a Human Rights Violator," *National Post,* April 5, 1999, A14)

49. Berna Avunca, "Turkish-Canadians Can't Rescue Destitute Relative," *Ottawa Citizen*, September 18, 1999, B5.

50. Gurel Karaokcu, "Turkish-Canadians Should Be Able to Rescue Relatives," *Ottawa Citizen*, September 25, 1999, B5.

51. Hier and Greenberg.

52. Richard Ouston and Marina Jimenez, "Latinos Still Haunted by Ghosts of War," *Vancouver Sun*, February 23, 1998. Although the article presents the counter-argument that war crimes were often committed by coerced peasants, the authors express their opinion by ending with a quote from a spokesperson of the Centre for Latin American Vancouverites Ethnic Society: "No-one has the right to torture another human being, even if you're involved in a civil war. Everyone has a choice."

53. Bill Curry and Stewart Bell, "Germany Wants Zundel Extradited," *National Post*, February 21, 2003, A4.

54. Stewart Bell, "Zundel Ordered Held as a National Security Risk," *National Post*, March 1, 2003, A4.

55. Diane Francis, "Refugee System Needs Total Overhaul: Criminals Allowed In at Expense of Real Victims," *National Post*, April 22, 1999, C3.

56. *Ibid.*

57. *Toronto Star*, "Immigration Reforms Strike Right Balance," April 9, 2000, 1.

58. Barbara Yaffe, "Immigration Act Has Been a Disaster for Canada," *Calgary Herald*, May 25, 2000, A22. This article was also published in the *Vancouver Sun*, May 24, 2000, A15.

59. *Vancouver Sun*, "Ottawa Is Missing the Boat on Refugees," March 20, 2000, A8.

60. *National Post*, "Human Cargo," April 3, 2000, A17.

61. Kevin Ward, "Britain's Refugee Debate Offends UN Agency," *Vancouver Sun*, April 14, 2000, A14.

62. For example: Alan Borovoy, "Deportation Rules Test Canada's Sense of Fairness," *Toronto Star*, January 1, 1996, A 11; Jim Bronskill, "Lawyer Fears for Woman's Life," *Ottawa Citizen*, March 19, 1997, A1; Allan Thompson, "Immigration Bill Called 'Un-Canadian,'" *Toronto Star*, March 16, 2001, A6.

63. Luiza Chwialkowska, "Terrorist Deportation Policy Can Withstand Challenge, McLellan Says," *National Post*, October 3, 2001, A10.

64. Martin Collacott, "Political Will Needed to Guard the Border," *National Post*, October 22, 2001, A10.

65. Donovan Vincent, "Refugee Claimant Accused of Lying." *Toronto Star*, August 26, 1999, A1.

66. Marina Jimenez, "Officials Ready to Deport Suspected Iranian Assassin," *National Post*, July 8, 1999, A1.

67. Stewart Bell, "Court Ruling Could Make Canada 'Haven' for Terrorists, Assassins," *National Post*, February 17, 2001, A1; Luiza Chwialkowska, "Refugees' Case Has Developed into Slowdown of Ideologies," *National Post*, May 21, 2001, A8; Janice Tibbetts, "High Court to Decide if Suspected Terrorist Can Stay," *Vancouver Sun*, May 22, 2001, A3; Janice Tibbetts, "Top Court Pleas for Refugee Terrorists," *Ottawa Citizen*, May 23, 2001, A5 (also published in *Calgary Herald*); Janice Tibbetts, "Justice May Be Asked to Rehear Case of Tamil, Iranian," *National Post*, September 20, 2001, A8 (also published in *Ottawa Citizen*).

68. Janice Tibbetts, "High Court to Decide if Suspected Terrorist Can Stay," *Vancouver Sun*, May 22, 2001, A3.

69. Luiza Chwialkowska, "Refugees' Case Has Developed into Slowdown of Ideologies," *National Post*, May 21, 2001, A8.

70. Janice Tibbetts, "Top Court Pleas for Refugee Terrorists," *Ottawa Citizen*, May 23, 2001, A5 (also published in *Calgary Herald*).

71. Tonda MacCharles, "Terror Suspects to Learn Fate Today," *Toronto Star*, January 11, 2002, 7.

72. Brian Hutchinson, "Canadian Deportees Dumped in War Zone," *National Post*, March 9, 2002, A1.

73. Bob Harvey, "Church Leaders Demand Better Treatment for Refugees," *Ottawa Citizen*, April 4, 1997, A4.

74. Susan Kastner, "Strangers in a Strange Land," *Toronto Star*, May 31, 1997, L1.

75. *Ibid.*, quoting social activist and recipient of the Order of Canada, Mary Jo Leddy.

76. Janet Dench, "Refugee Policy Contradicts Itself," *Toronto Star*, January 20, 1997, A13.

77. Dauvergne, supra; Mahtani and Mountz, supra.

78. Robert Fife, "Airlift of Refugees Causing a Rift in NATO Alliance," *National Post*, April 7, 1999, A12.

79. *Ibid.*

80. Dauvergne, 162.

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The Resettlement Challenge: Integration of Refugees from Protracted Refugee Situations*

Debra Pressé and Jessie Thomson

Abstract

This paper explores Canada's response, through our Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program, to developments in international refugee policy and will ask how Canada's resettlement program could be used more strategically in the future so as to meaningfully contribute to resolving protracted refugee situations globally while ensuring the successful integration of refugees from these situations.

Résumé

Ce document examine la réponse du Canada à l'évolution de la politique internationale sur les réfugiés, par le biais de son Programme de réinstallation des réfugiés et des personnes protégées à titre humanitaire, et il se demande comment le programme de réinstallation du Canada pourrait être utilisé de façon plus stratégique dans l'avenir pour contribuer de manière significative à résoudre les situations de réfugiés de longue durée dans le monde, tout en assurant la bonne intégration de ces réfugiés.

Introduction

Fifteen years have passed since the forcible exile of the majority of the ethnic Nepali southern Bhutanese population without a durable solution for the approximately 106,000 people now living in the refugee camps in southeastern Nepal.[1]

According to the 2006 edition of *The State of the World's Refugees* by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), of over eight million refugees in the world at that time, some six million were considered to be in a protracted refugee situation. Further, the average duration of displacement has increased from nine years in 1993 to seventeen years in 2003.[2] In total, UNHCR has identified at least thirty-three major protracted refugee situations around the globe, not counting those outside UNHCR's definition due to their size and scope, which are also long-term situations of displacement.[3] These important statistics point to the seriousness and scope of protracted refugee situations globally.

It is clear, fifty-six years after the signing of the Refugee Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (Refugee Convention), that the phenomenon of refugee movements persists and that what was once thought to be a short-term challenge is a reality that is often ongoing for decades. More and more refugees find themselves "warehoused"[4] in refugee camps for years, without access to a durable solution. Not only are refugees unable to return to their country of origin voluntarily, but, in many of these cases, refugees languish in refugee camps, dependent on humanitarian assistance and food aid, with limited or no opportunities for self-reliance or local integration. Densely populated refugee camps with limited opportunities become the home and community of those who have been forcibly displaced for decades. As a result, a significant portion of today's refugees have severe psychosocial and physical health con-

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cerns, limited or no labour market skills, little or no formal education, and, for children, greater developmental challenges.[5] This in itself can be a disincentive for States hosting large refugee populations to provide for local integration and for other States to engage in resettlement of refugees with high needs.

This paper will outline the emphasis that Canada, the UNHCR, and other countries have placed on protracted populations and will examine how this emphasis is the logical extension of policy development undertaken both internationally and domestically since the Global Consultations were launched in 2000. It will also explore how Canada's Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program plays a role in securing durable solutions for refugees and will look to the future, asking questions about how Canada can best address the protracted nature of refugee displacement, while also exploring what this means for how Canada provides integration support to resettled refugees in order to meet their unique needs when coming from a protracted refugee situation.

Refugee Resettlement and the Agenda for Protection

The international community, led by the UNHCR, views a refugee as having secured a solution to his or her plight if the refugee has been able to find a safe and permanent (durable) solution through one of three means: voluntary repatriation to the country of origin in safety and dignity; local integration[6] in the country of asylum; or resettlement to a third country.

Over the past fifty years, millions of people have found a durable solution through resettlement. Since the Second World War, more than 860,000 refugees and persons in similar circumstances have been resettled to Canada.[7] Unlike asylum determination from within Canada, which derives from Canada's legal obligations as a signatory to the Refugee Convention, resettlement of refugees from abroad is a policy decision undertaken as part of our contribution to international burden sharing. In addition to those granted protection through the in-Canada asylum system, each year, under the Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program, Canada resettles from abroad between 10,300 and 12,000 refugees.[8] Of this number, 7,300 to 7,500 are admitted to Canada under the Government Assisted Refugee (GAR) program while the balance are admitted under the Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) program.[9] Private sponsors, members of organizations, and faith-based groups in Canada have assisted over 193,000 persons since 1978 through the PSR program.

To respond to new realities in the refugee context, and in part to react to large-scale protracted refugee situations,

the UNHCR launched the Global Consultations on International Protection in 2000 in an effort to revitalize the international protection regime. These consultations led to the *Agenda for Protection*.[10] The *Agenda for Protection* serves as a blueprint that sets out enumerated goals and concrete ways states can redouble their efforts to enhance refugee protection and find solutions for more refugees. Resettlement is addressed in goal five of the *Agenda for Protection*, which calls on States to increase their resettlement numbers, diversify the kinds of refugee groups they welcome, and introduce more flexible resettlement criteria in an effort to secure more durable solutions, particularly for protracted refugee situations. These consultations initiated, *inter alia*, a discussion on how the international community could use resettlement more strategically in order to benefit more refugees. In 2003, the international community defined a strategic use of resettlement as one where resettlement activity leads to planned direct and indirect benefits accruing to refugees not being resettled.[11] For example, a strategic use of resettlement can help sustain access to asylum in the face of a continued refugee flow; it can also play a role in providing access to more services for the general refugee population. Ideally, a strategic use of resettlement would also help lead to comprehensive solutions for specific refugee populations involving all three durable solutions.[12]

With this in mind, the international community, led by Canada and UNHCR, drafted and agreed to the Multilateral Framework of Understandings for Resettlement (MFU) in 2004.[13] This was an important development for advancing the concept of the strategic use of resettlement and in encouraging resettlement countries to pursue resettlement arrangements that would promote and be part of comprehensive solutions to particular refugee situations.

These developments in the international policy context emphasized the fact that resettlement could not operate in isolation from the other durable solutions and emphasized a need for more strategic and coordinated engagement on the part of resettlement countries to ensure they were part of a wider solution to the refugee dilemma. It was acknowledged that beyond the important role that resettlement can play in helping one family or one individual, resettlement, when pursued in a strategic fashion and in line with the MFU, could have wider positive implications. Further, it was widely agreed that resettlement countries could most effectively help to share the burden of refugee hosting countries, by targeting more vulnerable segments of the refugee population in order to alleviate some of the pressure on refugee camps and refugee hosting communities.

Historically, Canada, among other resettlement countries, had been criticized for selecting the "best and the

brightest" refugees and thereby exacerbating the situation in the refugee camps where these individuals were selected. As a result, concurrent to and in line with the discussions at the international level, Canadian policies shifted in 1998 and were then formalized in 2002 with the implementation of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) and Regulations. IRPA institutionalized this effort to focus on refugees' protection needs in part by softening the selection criteria used to assess refugees' integration potential and by exempting refugees from certain medical requirements.[14] In addition to changing eligibility criteria, Canada also shifted the focus of its resettlement program to those most in need of protection.

While Canadian legislation retained a requirement for refugees to be able to demonstrate "an ability to establish" in Canada, it put "protection" first and foremost and "ability to establish" second. Persons found to be in urgent need of protection and those found to be more vulnerable in relation to the general refugee population in which they live are exempt from the need to demonstrate any integration potential. Further, all resettled refugees are exempt from certain medical requirements. In the implementation of IRPA, the "ability to establish" requirement is rarely used as a reason for refusal. Further, in the context of group processing, public policies have been instituted within the framework of the IRPA such that the entire group being considered for resettlement is deemed vulnerable and therefore everyone within the group is exempt from the ability to establish requirement. At the same time, Canada acknowledges the importance of ensuring that those who are resettled make an active and informed choice about resettlement, which at times can mean that some persons among the most vulnerable are more hesitant or unwilling to pursue resettlement.

Canada's Evolving Resettlement Focus

At the fifty-seventh session of the UNHCR Executive Committee (EXCOM) in October 2006, the Government of Canada called on UNHCR to make resolution of protracted refugee situations a priority in 2006 and beyond. In addition to the humanitarian imperative, Canada has a strategic interest in helping refugees find lasting solutions—because the longer refugee populations languish without access to durable solutions, the greater the risk they could pose to stability in their region, resulting in more refugee outflows. As such, Canada is exploring how its own resettlement program could be better used to help manage down refugee numbers and contribute to the *Agenda for Protection*.

One way to advance goal five of the *Agenda for Protection* is by focusing a portion of our resettlement efforts on specific protracted refugee situations. Today, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) is actively involved with some of the major situations identified by the UNHCR in the 2006 edition of *The State of the World's Refugees*.[15]

This shift in Canadian policies resulted in a significant change in Canada's resettled refugee population. First, the change has allowed far more persons with higher medical and other settlement requirements, including post-traumatic stress disorder and trauma counselling, to be eligible for resettlement. Second, the refugee pool from which Canada selects has shifted from one primarily consisting of European-based political dissidents to one that is largely African, Middle Eastern, and Asian based. Given that some of these groups come from entirely different political, economic, and social contexts, many refugees now have different settlement needs that include special requirements arising from years of trauma or torture followed by years in camps.

These complex refugee situations have given rise to a need for much greater individualized and, in some cases, specialized attention if we are to help today's refugees integrate and establish themselves successfully in Canada.

Current Integration Challenges

Successful integration is undefined in both legislation and policy. While there is some consensus on what integration is, there continues to be a debate around what is meant by successful integration and how success can be measured or defined. A useful starting point is found in the UNHCR's *Refugee Resettlement: An International Handbook to Guide Reception and Integration* (2002).

> Integration is a mutual, dynamic, multifaceted and on-going process. From a refugee perspective, integration requires a preparedness to adapt to the lifestyle of the host society without having to lose one's own cultural identity. From the point of view of the host society, it requires a willingness for communities to be welcoming and responsive to refugees and for public institutions to meet the needs of a diverse population.

It is important to note that under the Multilateral Framework of Understandings on Resettlement, countries, including Canada, agreed that prior to resettlement, measures are to be put in place to provide for the appropriate reception and integration of resettled refugees. This is particularly important for Canada as recent research indicates that today's refugees are achieving lower economic outcomes than in the past. CIC recognizes that current resettlement programming may not adequately meet the unique and changing needs of refugees.

This challenge grows partly out of the fact that, despite the policy changes regarding eligibility for resettlement, few changes were made to how refugees, once selected, are supported in their integration process within the Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement program. For instance, although the change in the refugee profile has created significant pressures for program administrators and those in front-line service delivery, the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP), which in essence was established to provide benefits comparable to those offered by provincial social assistance programs, has not changed since its creation in 1998.[16] Such social assistance programs, however, are neither necessarily geared to helping refugees coming from diverse backgrounds and extended camp stays adapt to daily life in a North American context nor to addressing their health issues, which vary significantly from our historical experiences with immigrant health issues.

Although there are numerous programs available to facilitate the integration process of newcomers to Canada, these may be difficult to access and are most often not tailored to the particular needs of the resettled refugees, particularly those coming from protracted refugee situations.

Meeting the Integration Challenge

If Canada is to contribute meaningfully to managing down protracted refugee numbers while serving Canadian interests that include maintaining the public health and security of Canadians and facilitating integration of refugees, then a more strategic focus on individual needs is warranted. For example, the effects of war and trauma on the subsequent integration of refugee children and youth are not well understood. Research suggests that surviving war and its related trauma can have devastating social and psychological consequences for these youth.[17] Today, over 50 per cent of the world's refugee population consists of children under the age of eighteen. In 2006, 52 per cent of resettled refugees under the Government Assisted Refugee program were under the age of twenty-two. Yet despite these large numbers, little research has been undertaken to help us understand what happens to refugee youth once they are resettled.

In order to better facilitate integration, it is important to understand that integration is in fact a continuum with the starting point well before the refugee arrives in Canada and the end point years after arrival. More recently, settlement workers have posited that a needs-based approach, focused on the individual needs of the client, is required to better assist in the settlement and integration of refugees throughout the resettlement continuum.

One of the major challenges both in the context of measuring success and within efforts to define a more client-centered approach (based on unique needs of individuals and groups) is securing an evidence base for these key areas. This is particularly challenging for refugees, as there is a gap in research exploring "social indicators" of success. Further, much of the research that does exist on immigrant needs and outcomes does not disaggregate data between skilled workers and refugees.

Developing integration measurements for refugees needs to take into account both subjective and objective factors, as well as the experiences of different refugee populations. Within the different refugee populations there are also subgroups such as women, men, children, youth, and the elderly who may have widely different settlement needs. Additionally, each protracted refugee situation is unique and when pursuing multilateral approaches to resolving protracted refugee situations, Canada will need to consider the unique resettlement needs of particular groups in order to establish which barriers to services may need to be addressed and which new supports need to be established.

Certain refugee needs can be predetermined to some extent by analyzing the refugee's background. The refugee's situation prior to being resettled (protected camp situation or other), ethnicity, gender, age, language abilities, health issues, and education are general indicators of their needs. These indicators can help policy makers and program designers prepare integration plans for refugees arriving from protracted refugee situations that include follow-up and monitoring to ensure that the needs of individuals are being met. This has been flagged by a number of reports as being a critical component in integration that is currently lacking in the Canadian system.[18]

Specialized services may also need to be developed to meet the evolving unique needs of refugees. Medical and other needs assessments could help identify what specific resettlement requirements refugees have for which there are currently insufficient programs and services. In turn, these services would need to be developed in communities where refugee populations with those needs have been identified or where community-mapping exercises have indicated that services are currently lacking.

CIC believes the length of time required to negotiate multilateral frameworks for resettlement provides an opportunity to address some of the settlement challenges faced by refugees. For example, it is possible, with more planning, to use the time between developing a comprehensive strategy and actual departure of large numbers of refugees over a multi-year period to develop and implement detailed and population specific pre-departure programs. Such programs, in concert with humanitarian aid

that focuses on primary and secondary education, preventative health treatment, skills upgrading, comprehensive cultural orientation, and language training when feasible, could help refugees selected for resettlement more readily make the transition from refugee to citizen. Ideally, initiatives would include members of the general refugee population who are not being resettled as such programs would also improve their own prospects for return (if conditions are right) and help host countries sustain asylum space and encourage conditions for local integration.

Conclusion

> The Rohingyas in the camps in Cox's Bazaar are the remainder of a group of … refugees who fled into Bangladesh in 1992 to escape persecution by the military junta. . . . more than 26,000 remain in the camps, afraid to return. An estimated 100,000 to 200,000 also live around Cox's Bazaar, but outside the camps.[19]

Canadians have traditionally responded with generosity to refugee crises and humanitarian emergencies. Protracted refugee situations are emergencies that have been forgotten for too long. Canada, as one of the countries that endorsed the *Agenda for Protection*, has a role to play in developing concerted strategies to address refugee situations. A Canadian contribution could include substantial efforts to help create and sustain, especially in fragile and post-conflict states, the environments necessary to support effective protection and to establish the conditions for sustainable durable solutions.

In addition, through a more focused resettlement program that targets specific refugee populations that have been warehoused for years on end, Canada can make a tangible positive impact in some refugee situations. The multi-faceted ways in which different variables affect the integration continuum, however, indicate the need for policies and programs that are grounded in current research designed to target specific refugee populations.

More empirical studies of the impacts of protracted refugee situations are needed to guide future engagement of Canada's Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program. Research studies must consider the various natures of refugee situations and address questions such as: are camp-based populations more or less at risk than urban refugee populations? What are the health needs of refugees in camps in Asia versus those in Africa? What are the differences in trauma and torture narratives among the various protracted situations identified by the UNHCR?

The responses to these and other questions would assist Canada in engaging substantively in multilateral frameworks regarding comprehensive solutions and assist in ensuring the successful integration of those refugees resettled in Canada.

Notes

1. Joint NGO letter, "Nepal/Bhutan: resolve protracted refugee problem," to the delegates of the Bhutan Donors Round Table meeting, 9 February 2006, online: South Asian Media Net, 10 February 2006, <http://www.southasianmedia.net/index_opinion.cfm?category=Human%20Rights&country=Bhutan> (accessed January 10, 2007).
2. The UNHCR defines a protracted refugee situation as "one in which refugees find themselves in a long-lasting and intractable state of limbo. Their lives may not be at risk, but their basic rights and essential economic, social and psychological needs remain unfulfilled after years in exile. A refugee in this situation is often unable to break free from enforced reliance on external assistance." The UNHCR currently uses a "crude measure of refugee populations of 25,000 persons or more who have been in exile for five or more years in developing countries" to effectively define protracted refugee situations. Protracted situations may include both camp-based and urban-refugee populations. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *Protracted Refugee Situations* (June 2004), <http://www.unhcr.org/excom/EXCOM/40c982172.pdf>.
3. Gil Loescher and James Milner, "Protracted Refugee Situations: The Search for Practical Solutions," in *The State of the World's Refugees 2006: Human Displacement in the NewMmillennium*, ed. N. Merheb (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
4. US Committee for Refugees first applied the term "warehousing" to refugees in its World Refugee Survey in 2004.
5. See UNHCR, *Refugee Resettlement: An International Handbook to Guide Reception and Integration* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2002) for examples of the types of special needs refugees may have as a result of prolonged exile. It is estimated that around one in three of the world's refugees has had at least one experience of torture. Studies of refugees offered permanent resettlement indicate that one in four has been subject to torture or severe human rights violations, with almost seven in ten being subject to other traumatic events such as prolonged political repression and the loss of family members in violent circumstances.
6. Commonly referred to as one of the three durable solutions available to refugees, "local integration is based on the assumption that refugees will remain in their country of asylum permanently and find a solution to their plight in that State. It is a legal, economic and socio-cultural process whereby refugees are granted a progressively wider range of rights and entitlements by the host State that are broadly commensurate with those enjoyed by its citizens. These include freedom of movement, access to education and the labour market, access to public relief and assistance, including health facilities, the possibility of acquiring and disposing of property, and the capacity to travel with valid travel and identity documents.

Realization of family unity is another important aspect of local integration." UNHCR, *Resettlement Handbook,* rev. edn. (Geneva: UNHCR, 2004).

7. This figure includes privately sponsored refugees and the dependants of persons granted asylum in Canada where the dependant was residing abroad when the principal applicant received protection in Canada. The total number also includes preliminary 2006 figures.

8. Canada establishes "targets" every year, which means our goal is to resettle at least 10,300 refugees and up to 12,000. The upper end of the target for 2007 was increased from 11,500 to 12,000.

9. Government Assisted Refugees are normally refugees who are referred to Canada by the UNHCR and supported through Canada's Resettlement Assistance Program during their first year in Canada if living outside Quebec. Quebec supports refugees destined to that province under the terms of the Canada-Québec Accord. Private sponsors refer most Privately Sponsored Refugees to CIC. Private sponsors provide resettled refugees with lodging, care, and settlement assistance for the first year. In exceptional cases, refugees are supported for two to three years.

10. For the full text of the *Agenda for Protection*, see UNHCR, *Agenda for Protection*, 3rd ed. (October 2003), 5–7; 73–81, <http://www.unhcr.org/protect/PROTECTION/3e637b194. pdf> (accessed December 8, 2006).

11. UNHCR, *Discussion Paper on the Strategic Use of Resettlement by the Working Group on Resettlement* (June 2003), <http:// www.unhcr.org/protect/PROTECTION/3ee6dc6f4.pdf>.

12. A comprehensive solution is one where concerted effort by a wide range of actors to address a particular refugee crisis results in the vast majority of individuals within a refugee population finding a durable solution through repatriation, local integration, or resettlement. The international response to the Indochinese refugee crisis in Southeast Asia is an important example of a comprehensive solution.

13. A core group led by Canada negotiated the MFU. This group consisted of States from both the developed and developing world, including States hosting refugees for protracted periods, as well as long-standing and emerging resettlement countries, namely: Canada, Australia, Brazil, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kenya, Nepal, the Netherlands, Nigeria, South Africa, Sweden, the United Republic of Tanzania, Thailand, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America. The European Commission and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) were also members of the group. See <http://www.unhcr.org/protect/PROTECTION 414aa7e54.pdf>.

14. Prior to the implementation of the Immigration and Refugee Act and Regulations in 2002, refugees from abroad were selected in part based on their individual ability to communicate in an official language, work and educational experience and potential to successfully integrate within a one-year period. Current legislation emphasizes the refugee's protection needs over his or her ability to establish. In addition, the refugee's integration potential is assessed against the backdrop of his or her entire family's available supports and how well they can be expected to establish within three to five years instead of the previous one year time frame.

15. Canada is actively resettling Somali and Sudanese in Kenya, Afghans in Pakistan, and Karen from Burma (also known as Myanmar) out of Thailand. In addition, Canada has been approached to participate in a multilateral resettlement program of Eritreans out of Sudan. Further, while not listed among the thirty-three major protracted refugee situations, Canada has indicated interest in resettling Chin out of Malaysia. Canada is also involved in multilateral negotiations pursuing comprehensive solutions to the long-standing situations of Bhutanese refugees in Nepal and Rohingya in Bangladesh.

16. All refugees admitted to Canada under the resettlement program are also able to access emergency medical and dental treatment under the Interim Federal Health (IFH) program as well as foundational integration programs such as Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC), HOST, and other services provided through the Integration and Settlement Adaptation Program.

17. Lori Wilkinson, "Factors Influencing the Academic Success of Refugee Youth in Canada," *Journal of Youth Studies* 5, no. 2 (2006): 173–193.

18. Usha George, "A Needs-Based Model for Settlement Service Delivery for Newcomers to Canada," *International Social Work* 45, No. 4 (2002), <http://isw.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/ 45/4/465>.

19. UNHCR, Briefing Notes (15 December 2006), <http://www. unhcr.org/news/NEWS/45827c8a20.html>.

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