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Speaking From Experience: Issues Surrounding Third Country Resettlement for Sudanese Acholi in New Zealand

Introduction

In this paper I argue that we need to move from a dehumanised and top-down understanding of refugee resettlement success and instead focus of the ways in which refugee-background individuals¹ themselves conceptualise and understand that success. In other words, third country resettlement² should first, foremost, and only be understood as successful if it is considered to be so from the point of view of those persons actually engaging in the act of resettlement. In this way, institutional resettlement agendas or programmes cannot in themselves be conceived of as successful or not, as they can and should only be understood as successful in relation to specific instances. Instead, success must be measured independently for each separate refugee-background individual or family. A movement toward a focus upon individual cases and away from large-scale generalisations of the 'Truth' of refugee-resettlement success is, therefore, simultaneously also a movement toward a moral position of "speak[ing] truth to power" (American Friends Service Committee 1955; cf. Foucault 1976, 1984, 1990, 1997).

In this paper, I argue that it is precisely the lack of coherence between refugee-background assessments of resettlement success and those of the official refugee industry institutions which account for the variation between assessments of success given by those who govern refugees (Daniel 2002; Foucault 1990, 1991; Malkki 1995) and those from a refugee-background themselves. For example, although language proficiency (Nolin 2006: 162), lack of employment (Nolin 2006: 166), low paying jobs (McSpadden 2004: 37), institutional and structural racism (McSpadden 2004: 36), class immobility (Kusher & Knox 1999: 407), and stigmas associated with stereotypes surrounding ethnic identities and the refugee label itself (Nibbs 2011) are all variously evaluated as being related to problems surrounding refugee integration, it is not solely through quantitative (and necessarily reductive) analysis of these conditions in which successful resettlement can be measured. Nor can a legitimate measurement or analysis of this success be attempted through the use of the even greater reductionist simplification of artificially prioritising any *one* of these areas of concern, because successful resettlement is not a matter of how any one alone acts upon integration but rather how, in combination, these and other factors variously contribute to problems by contributing to that specific loss of human potentiality which Farmer (1996), following Galtung (1969), has termed "structural violence".

Underlying the argument given in this paper is a moral and intellectual critique of the normative modes of thinking which tend to accompany institutional and researcher interactions with refugees. Essential to this critique is a call for a critical engagement with the language that we use in framing so-called refugees and their experiences, because language may in fact only further marginalise, dehumanise, and victimise the very people resettlement programmes allege to help. Indeed, in this paper I argue that all people working with refugee-background persons must attend first and foremost to the lives, stories and experiences of those individuals *as* individuals. This is because, as Michael

Jackson (1998, 2005) has shown, by definition all generalisations will necessarily do violence to individual experience. Fundamental methodological questions then revolve around how we are to go about giving the people we work with the time, space, and quality of interpersonal interaction that a commitment to their experience demands? In other words, how can we do justice to their humanity? I argue in this paper that voice and representation can be found in giving power to the personal narratives of the people with whom we work, speaking truth to power by that means which Jackson (2002) has called the “politics of storytelling”.

According to Jackson (1998: 16):

“In Marx’s vision of the human condition, active, purposeful labour (praxis) is seen as the driving force. Work produces and reproduces both self and societies... Not only does work provide the livelihood of persons, it creates modes of sociality and sustains a vital sense of what it means to coexist and cooperate with others. Accordingly, human labour not only generates and regenerates organic and social being; it is the means whereby human beings create and recreate the intersubjective experience that defines their primary sense of who they are”.

Following this rationale, the successful resettlement and integration of people from a refugee-background depends to a large extent upon active, purposeful labour, an individual’s success in finding gainful employment.

Beyond this rather utilitarian viewpoint, however, successful integration also requires existential achievement, whereby an individual is affirmed as a relevant social being, in control of their existence. Jackson (1995: 16; cf. Jackson 2005) terms this the ‘becoming’ of a social self-identification which allows a person to “feel at home in the world”. For Laura Hammond (2004), the ability of many refugee-background individuals to feel ‘at home’ in their country of resettlement depends upon the creation of viable understandings of self, community, and host society. These understandings, she argues, are found in the everyday creative and reproductive processes of just “getting on with life” (2004: 15): those modes of living and acting in relation to quotidian needs which produce distinctive modes of intersubjective sociality which echo their particular socio-cultural heritage and yet are elaborated within the parameters and restrictions of their new environment.

Still, the questions remain: ‘Is it possible to measure the success of refugee resettlement and integration? If so, how can we do this?’ According to Kusher and Knox (1999: 15), associated and in some ways more fundamental questions ask, ‘who should be given the task of measuring this? Which aspects of the resettlement process should be privileged in these measurements? And, most importantly for the argument being presented here, why are these people given the task of measurement and why are these aspects privileged?’ Kusher and Knox (1999: 15-16) make several important observations regarding these questions and highlight the frequently tautologies underlying the rationales used by various actors to legitimate their privilege to define and measure the success of refugee integration. In other words, Kusher and Knox argue that it is often government agencies and refugee service providers who have the power to decide the answers to these questions that deem themselves to be most adequate to define both the questions and their responses in the first place. Consultation, if undertaken at all, is often arbitrary and severely limited. In my

own research with South Sudanese Acholi and other refugee-background groups in New Zealand, I have been witness to or have been told about this same problem of naming, classification, and definition many times. For both myself and many of my research participants, it seems as if these problems stem from the ways in which academics and institutional employees think about and act toward refugee-background persons. Specifically, many of these problems emerge out of the assumptions underlying the distributions of unequal power relations within the machinations of the 'refugee services industry'.³

So, Kusher and Knox (1999: 15) ask, when measuring the success or failure of refugee integration, who is it that we are to listen to? Are we blithely to take the word of government agencies and listen to the rationales of refugee industry bodies? Or, is there potentially more to be gained through listening to the views of refugee-background persons themselves? According to Stein (cited in Kusher and Knox 1999: 15), the choices made at this point about which voices to listen to will largely determine what aspects of the settlement process are prioritised, how these will be measured, and why some aspects of the process get prioritised while others are neglected or forgotten. Stein asserts that government assessments, for example, may take a pure 'problem solving' rationale, whereby successful resettlement may be a factor of simply reducing those receiving social welfare, unemployment, or other benefits to the neglect of whether a reduction in total numbers accessing these benefits has any real difference on the quality of life for the individuals so concerned. The conditions of transparency imposed upon NGOs, on the other hand, may lead toward a tendency to quantify success in relation to those accessing services or attending workshops and other 'community-oriented' events. Kusher and Knox (1999: 16) believe that the terms of success and the measures adopted are often "woefully inadequate" for the task at hand no matter which of these types of actors are considered. All that is *really* being measured, they contend, are those aspects of refugee-resettlement deemed most salient to people who have never actually experienced a refugee-background themselves. It is little wonder, then, that these measures often seem to be little more than self-legitimizing discourses which retrospectively justify particular actions by the very fact that an action has been taken.

According to Michael Jackson (1995, 1998, 2002, 2005), the need for a feeling of belonging to a group and a feeling of control, no matter how incomplete, over the conditions of one's own life lies right at the heart of the human existential imperative: the almost universal human need to demonstrate one's ability to engage in practical action and to enact one's agency⁴ at the precise moment when one is most powerless. Hammond (2004: 3), Kusher and Knox (1999: 411), and Long and Oxfeld (2004: 6) have all variously argued that many refugee-background groups, when embedded within those situations of uncertainty and conditions of unfulfilled hopes and expectations which permeate the uneven process of refugee-resettlement, turn to their traditions and culture to provide a sense of existential certainty which Laing (1960, cited in Jackson 1998: 16) has termed "ontological security". According to these authors, refugee-background groups take concerted collective action to build and maintain their individual and communal agency through the continuity of acts and beliefs practiced in and remembered from the society of origin.

Kusher and Knox (1999: 16) argue that it is through the maintenance of 'traditional' cultural and ritual practices such as weddings and funerals or through the recital of singing, dancing, or similar performative aspects of culture that people of a refugee-background create emotional, psychological, and imaginative connections to the people, places, and events important in their past and which make them culturally-identifiable and socially-relevant individuals. Culture, then, becomes an important expression of what it means to be from X, to be associated with Y, or to identify as Z. Culture, and especially the communal aspects of cultural performance and language, are therefore important expressions of both self and community. This pragmatic use of culture is a form of enacting one's agency within situations of marginalisation and can become significant means of both identification and resistance. Indeed, through the almost-unconscious and communal resistance underlying these collective cultural performances, and as Marlowe's (2011b) Losoncz's (2011) research among South Sudanese in Australia has demonstrated, tradition itself becomes a weapon of that particular form of everyday resistance recognised by Scott (1985) as the last act and voice of the deeply oppressed.

Sudanese Acholi in New Zealand⁵

For the Sudanese Acholi with whom I have worked over the last year, the use of these traditional cultural expressions as acts of agency (and potentially resistance) are best exemplified in the creation and subsequent actions of the Sudanese Acholi Cultural Association (SACA). SACA was set up in Upper Hutt, near Wellington, New Zealand, in early 2008 by a collection of young mothers originally from the Acholi tribe. SACA was created with the express desire of promoting Acholi culture and heritage to the children of the Acholi community in New Zealand, many of whom were born outside of South Sudan, either in New Zealand or in refugee camps in Kenya or Uganda. In their Inaugural General Meeting in early 2008, SACA members outlined their goals and proposed actions in the following way:

"SUDANESE ACHOLI CULTURE ASSOCIATION (SACA) NZ.

WHO ARE SACA:

The Acholi people came from Sudan, they settled in Magwe County, east of Equator, and Southern Sudan. Their culture value is known to be the best in Sudan and to the Acholi people it's what identifies us as Acholi. It is passed down from generation to generation. Part of the Acholi generation are in NZ. That why the SACA should exist.

THE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE SACA NZ:

- *Culture education for the Acholi children through performances.*
- *To retain and strengthen Acholi culture within the Sudanese community of NZ.*
- *To share our traditional culture with the wider community.*

WHY SACA IS IMPORTANT:

- *SACA aim for Acholi children to know who they are and where they came from.*
- *SACA want Acholi children to know the value of their culture.*

- *Research shows the importance of culture identify for successful resettlement.*

WHAT IS SACA GOING TO DO IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS?

- *Singing Acholi songs.*
 - *Performances and dance.*
 - *Speaking and reading Acholi language.*
 - *Development of Acholi language.*
 - *Telling tradition/history to the children.”*
- (Sudanese Acholi Cultural Association, 2008, *sic*).

The importance of SACA teaching their culture and heritage to the children of the community echoes the importance said to be placed upon children by many other refugee-background groups around the world. According to the work of Fanjoy (2011), the reasons communities in situations of resettlement prioritise cultural education for their children is because children are seen as the future of the community and the primary means through which cultural continuity can be maintained. Unfortunately, Fanjoy argues, this prioritisation of children as privileged holders of the future and connections to the past means that these children, through the possibility of total or even partial assimilation into the host society, also contain within them the seeds of the community's greatest weakness.

Narratives of resettlement, good and bad

The parents and elders of the Acholi community in New Zealand, like those in many refugee-background communities worldwide, are hyperaware of the 'problems' of too quick or complete integration of their children into the social and cultural values of the mainstream majority society. Even worse for these parents, and similar to the ways in which the Australia state is viewed by many Sudanese in Australia (Losoncz 2011; Wille 2011), parents in the Acholi community see the New Zealand state as privileging the rights of the child over those of the parent and the culture, effectively subverting the traditional generational hierarchy at the heart of Acholi society. During one meeting, Bernice⁶ complained:

“BERNICE: And that is what I am looking here in New Zealand, it is very hard for those who do not have the father...Even now for some of those who have father it is now very hard. Because, for me, like I am just a woman. They say that maybe I am just a woman. They can't listen to me as if they were listening to a father or anything, because I am just a woman, and so they are not listening. So that is really the challenge we are facing. Because there is no one to support you... And to make it worse, you know, in this country you are free to do what you want. That is what they [the children] say. Even to walk naked, if you want! That is what they say... And those are the challenge we are facing! It is really different, the children here. It is really different. You know Pearl, the woman who was here the other day, one day her little girl was trouble! I don't know if she was 14 or 13 or something. But one day she went to school but she didn't go to school, she was somewhere. So the school ring the mum and they say to her, 'where is your daughter?' But the mother did not know. So she rang the police and together they try to find her. But when she went home, her mother ask her, 'where were you?' But she did not want to say, so the mother start smacking her And after that the girl, she

call the police. And the police support her! And the police took her away and Pearl, she spent the night in the prison! And she even had to go to the court! Oh, it was very hard! Very, very hard for Pearl! They say Pearl is violent! But for us it is hard! Especially with girls! We don't want our girls just going here and spend the night there and not go to school! You want to know where she was! But instead of the government saying that the girl was young and the parent should know where was she, they took her side! They shouldn't support a young girl like that to do those things against her parent!"⁷

Similar issues about the problems of resettlement in New Zealand were raised by other members of the community. In the next section of narrative, Alfred, an Acholi community leader not only mentions problems with the changing cultural values of the community's children, but also highlights the psychological disjuncture between the hopes and aspirations of Sudanese refugees before arrival and the actual lived reality of their day-to-day lives. This very same disjuncture has recently been written about by Losoncz (2011), Marete (2011), and Wille (2011) regarding the experiences of other members of the South Sudanese refugee-background communities in Australia and New Zealand:

"ALFRED: [Because of the establishment of the Republic of South Sudan], most people now will go back home. Yes, I mean, they experienced difficulty. This resettlement process, sometimes you get advantage and sometimes you get disadvantage. I mean, like children, maybe they grow up and they go to prison or they do not get any proper education, so then that is the disadvantage. But if children are grown up successfully, they enter university, they have the skills, they are working now, then that is good. But unfortunately, that doesn't happen really very often. And a lot of families, now, they, they are very disappointed. Because when they come to this Western world, they have great expectations. They think, 'Ok, I will come to there, I will get a good job, I will get a good house. I will drive a good car. The kids will go to the good schools. They will get a good education.' And the other things. Like they think that they have money. But when they get here, they find that the government subsidy is not enough. And so much else! Yes, the government subsidy is not enough. And then the kids start mixing up the culture. So they get frustrated at end. Oh yes, people get very frustrated at the end!"

According to the descriptions given by some community members, this disconnection between aspiration and reality is often reducible to the stand-offish nature and the lack of urgency and importance given to individual issues and situations by those in positions of bureaucratic power. Once again, this same narrative of institutional apathy or ignorance is replicated within discourses on their problems with the Australian state apparatus by the South Sudanese participants within Ibolya Losoncz's (2011) and Janecke Wille's (2011) research. Speaking of her own problems getting appropriate support from government institutions, Bernice says:

"BERNICE: You know, I don't know even if I ever told you. About the person at Work and Income? Because I filled the form and then the lady said, when I handed her the form, she said to them 'Ok, now make an appointment for this lady.' But the man never rang me yet...So it means that she wants me to

go and work, that is what I was thinking in my mind... And then he called up. And then he said, 'Ok Bernice. Let me come back to you in another week.' But then he never called up, he never made another appointment... Because they will say, 'But you need the qualifications.' Because I did the [hospitality] course for like 3 months before I went for my surgery. But the course was supposed to take like 2 years... I went to go back again like last year, but the school was closed. The school was closed. So those are the challenge I am facing. And now the time is going, you know? Taking now over 6 years. And old age is also coming now. And so all those things are there with the others."

The same feelings of bureaucratic failure came up in an early group discussion between SACA committee members and myself over the problems SACA has with the everyday funding and running of the group's activities. Here, issues of employment, education, immigration policy, and the loss of cultural identity through the vagaries of integration, the uneven process of refugee-resettlement, and the unequal power relations that underpin refugee-background individual's social interactions are juxtaposed in ways which feed off each other and, I suggest, reinforce feelings of powerlessness and member's lack of agency and control over their own lives:

"DIANA: It started as women. Not men, it was started as women. Then our boys, they begin to say, "We as well, we can do our part!" There were numbers of Acholi boys then but some went back to Sudan and others went to Australia.

YUSUF: Yes, I started from there. I thought, 'I shouldn't let my people down!' Because it is most important to take some part in where you belong. That's how it came about. It started with a good number, but some of the people thought, 'Why are we staying within New Zealand when it is too hard!' and so they took off. Some of them are now in Australia, there are better opportunities.

BERNICE: Yes. At first we were many, but then most of the people went to Australia because there is no jobs and there is no money here. And also, people want to be where their friends and the relatives are, relatives are very important to where you live. That is why our group is very small at the moment.

RO: Is that one of the reasons that so many people move? Because of the size of the group?

DIANA: Yes. And other reasons. The other two boys, they got married, and one of them, the girl's family was over there. So they decided to live on that side. And the other one went for jobs. Many go for the jobs. And the other one went back to Sudan, because they couldn't bring their wives.

PERSIA: They mainly just go to see their families. Except for a few people who have gone forever, I don't think that they will come back. It is quite shameful, isn't it? Like my brother, he decided to go back because his wife and family, they could not come here, so he decided to go back. Because there is a lot of restrictions on us in immigration. So he decided to go back and he decided not to come back. And there are quite a few who were here who decided not to come back.

RO: I am just very interested why things are so different here?

BERNICE: It is as I say before; it is because we are adopting the culture, the western culture... So now, we need to learn a lot. Wherever you are staying you need to learn the culture.

RO: But surely you don't want to lose your own culture at the same time?

BERNICE: This is true also. But if we have no monies, what can we do?"

Sudanese in New Zealand certainly do not believe that the resettlement experience is all bad, however. Although the narrative accounts given in the above sections are framed in a way which could be construed as if the New Zealand refugee-resettlement experience is entirely negative, I do not wish to portray it as if Acholi in New Zealand are completely unaware of the benefits of their resettlement situation: most are certainly extremely thankful for the many things which New Zealand provides, and continues to provide, for them. Rather, my aim in providing these narratives here has been to suggest that by listening to people from a refugee-background tell their own stories of their resettlement experiences, we may find that the resettlement process and the success or failure of refugee-background individuals integration into mainstream society is never as easy or as simple as some governmental and NGO reports or other indicators would have us believe. A major aim of this paper, therefore, has been to provide data to indicate that the best way to understand the complexity, intricacies, and individual differences inherent within any refugee-resettlement process is to focus attention upon narratives, experiences, and concerns of refugee-background individuals themselves rather than as mediated or filtered through the (necessarily self-interested) discourses and determinations of government agencies or the providers of the refugee service industry .

In an attempt to highlight the other side of the resettlement equation and indicate the benefits which resettlement may provide, it is important to show how SACA members also talk about some of the positive experiences which they have had of the New Zealand resettlement process. Issues of safety and security are common threads in many of the positive stories which refugee-background individuals tell of their resettlement experiences (Hammond 2004; Kusher & Know 1999; Nolin 2006; Wille 2011). Bernice here tells of her own feelings around these issues:

"BERNICE: I said to them, you must support New Zealand, because they are the ones who have taken you in and who have given you a home and safety... I said, 'I am supporting New Zealand because this is home!' Yes! You know, even though we are calling Sudan 'home', we should really think deep: what if something should happen? Say, what if I lost my life? Where will I be buried, because I am in New Zealand? And I have to think, who has helped me? It is New Zealand, the people of New Zealand and the government of New Zealand. So, it is a home. Even I know Sudan is a home, they are not helping me now. Even if I am sick, they would not be taking care of me. New Zealand is the one taking care of me... Especially New Zealand is the home. Even if some of New Zealand is really very hard, we don't mind because we are under their care."

As part of a conversation which included a lengthy narrative account of her own life, Diana echoed many of the same feelings as related by Bernice above:

“DIANA: I was just born there [in Sudan]. But I just call it home, actually. Because most of my people are there, my parents, my relatives. They are still all there. And it is actually home. And then, New Zealand on the other hand, is my second home. So, it is really, if I have to... The situation of comparison is really very challenging! Because that is home where I grow up and learn and I love everything there! That is home! And then here, this is a home that has given me life, and is protecting me, and is keeping me alive. And so this, this is also a home. So, to be fair, this is my life now... I know there is no problem here. I am fine. I can get [my cancer] treatment here.”

What I particularly wish to highlight from these excerpts are the health benefits which many refugee-background individuals often gain from third country resettlement. Several members of SACA have had medical operations in New Zealand which would be otherwise unavailable to them in either South Sudan or in a refugee camp before their resettlement. In fact, Diana was still given resettlement status and brought to New Zealand despite both the UNHCR and the New Zealand government knowing she would require urgent life-saving heart surgery upon her arrival in the country. However, lest this be read an indictment of the exploitation of the refugee-resettlement process by refugees themselves, it is important to highlight that we need to move beyond a rather simplistic reading of a manipulative relationship based upon a refugee-background individuals cost/benefit analysis of what health benefits can be gained from New Zealand.⁸ Indeed, as indicated in the narrative sections given from both Bernice and Diana above, many SACA members also mention that through providing them and their families with safety and security, they feel as if New Zealand has now become like a “second home”.

Conclusion

As indicated by both Diana and Bernice in these interview segments, many adults and most children within the Sudanese community in New Zealand maintain what Hammond (2004: 216) calls “a bilateral feeling of home and belonging”. According to Hammond, bilateral belonging is where there is a conscious and on-going maintenance of both a ‘traditional’ or ‘familial’ home in the country of origin and, on the other hand, a ‘pragmatic’ or ‘everyday’ home where the quotidian minutiae of life are lived out in the country of resettlement. For those Acholi families and individuals living in New Zealand, this bilateral feeling of belonging is largely due to a mixture of being thankful for what has been given to them by the government and people of New Zealand and the sometimes depressing seeming inevitability of permanent resettlement within the host society. In other words, and as much literature on refugee-background individuals located within countries of third settlement has shown (Kusher & Know 1999; Long & Oxfeld 2004; McSpadden 2004; Nolin 2006; O’Rourke 2011b), most Acholi in New Zealand would still rather return to a free and peaceful South Sudan than remain separated from their friends, family, and homes, popular media misrepresentations notwithstanding (Moloney 2007; Ndongozzi 2007; Phillips 2011; Quraishy 2007; cf. Marete 2011: 190-192; Wille 2011: 82-84). Through a combination of competing and often conflicting positive and negative associations with notions of home and feelings of belonging, in this way, as in the many others demonstrated in this paper, refugee experiences and attitudes are shown once again to “defy generalisation” (Hammond 2004: 214). This constant ability of refugees’ multiple experiences to defy generalisation should, I argue, lead us yet again to an understanding of the necessity of

giving voice to the particularities of individual refugee-background narratives and treating individual's stories as a necessary first step in any and all interventions with refugee-background families and communities.

Therefore, and following Hammond (2004: 208), I argue that there must be a redirection of "the study [and we could add representation] of refugees toward a more actor centred approach... [which] brings into focus political and economic forces at work at local, regional, national, and global levels with which the group must interact" and that attempts to understand and demonstrate how the various historical and contemporary forces at play in a refugee-background individual's life combine to act on, restrict, or empower them. As Lucia McSpadden (2004: 34-36) has demonstrated, experiences of flight and resettlement, links to people in countries of origin and first refuge, and oft-overlooked aspects such as the emotional, psychological, and imaginative positives and negatives of life in a new country combine to create the fluid and ever-changing intricacies and complexities of refugee's various realities. These realities, in turn, far surpass the patronising and simplistic label 'the refugee experience', let alone being able to be reduced to easy to capture quantitative measures of income level, employment rates, or any other aspect of intersubjective experience which often deny the very intricacies of the humanity they purport to measure.

I conclude here by reiterating the calls of Eisenlohr (2011) and O'Rourke (2011a) at the recent American Anthropological Association conference in Montreal in November 2011: we must move beyond dehumanising quantitative reductions of human existence produced from positions of power and instead prioritise the hopes, dreams, aspirations, and voices of those that power purports to speak for and about. That is, and I cannot emphasize this point enough, we must move beyond analysing refugee-background realities in term of 'mere' survival to be measured solely in over-simplified political or economic success and instead look at the imaginative and psychological dimensions which underpin the human experience of those realities. After all, it is these dimensions which, as a species, make us uniquely human and through the individual and cultural understanding of which we each define our very humanity. Most importantly for refugee-resettlement, however, it is by the prioritisation of these experiential and affective dimensions of human existence through which we can redefine the humanity often lost in discourses about refugees and the resettlement process.

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ENDNOTES

¹ Due to discussions held with various refugee-background persons and agencies in New Zealand about the validity, problems, and benefits of the 'refugee' label, in this paper I move beyond the purely definitional term 'refugee' toward the descriptive term 'refugee-background' (individual, person, community etc). As has been well shown by much social science research regarding the 'refugee' label (Daniel 2002; Harrell-Bond 1986; Kumsa 2006; Kuyok 2010; Marlowe 2010, 2011a; Phillips 2011; Zetter 1988, 1991, 2007) (dishearteningly often disregarded by many government or refugee service industry bodies), the very act of labelling somebody as a refugee is a process of Othering steeped in classificatory dehumanisation, where a human individual is reduced to a category and stripped of agency and personal history. A refugee, therefore, is somebody who's sole identity is that of a victim, and somebody who needs an institution to act upon their behalf. Thus the blossoming of the refugee services industry. The irony here, of course, is that in forcing the identity of victim upon 'the refugee', these institutions merely do violence to those individual's subjectivities, replicating the violence which created the so-called refugee in the first place, and further victimising the refugee/victim. Refugee-background, on the other hand, is a descriptive term which refers to people who, although previously recognised as refugees, no longer meet the criteria of the official UNHCR definition due to resettlement in, legal recognition by, and protection of another country. This is a term which has been consciously chosen to best represent the conditions of their lives as refugee-background individuals by the members of the New Zealand National Refugee Network (Adam Awad, NZNRN committee member, pers. comm. 2010; cf. O'Rourke 2011b). It serves notice of the continuing inequalities vis-à-vis other citizens within that country (some of which will be mentioned in this article). See Hebbani, Obijiofor, and Bristed (2010) and Wille (2011) for further discussions on shifts away from the refugee label.

² The UNHCR ranks third country resettlement as third in preference of the three 'durable solutions' given as long-term strategies for dealing with persons suffering from forced displacement. The other two 'solutions' are voluntary (self or assisted) repatriation to country of origin and integration into country of first asylum. Less than one percent (1%) of those people officially recognised as 'refugees' by the UNHCR are given the opportunity for third country resettlement. For more information, see Marlowe (2011) and UNHCR (2006).

³ In this paper I have termed the various governmental and nongovernmental refugee agencies and service providers 'the refugee services industry' in a move to highlight the almost self-replicating nature of the organisations involved and their means of conducting business as part of the wider global political economy of "the refugee industry" (Hyndman 1997, 2000).

⁴ I take my working definition of agency from British sociologist Anthony Giddens (1984: 9), who defines an agent as "a knowledgeable and capable actor". That is, an agent is someone who not only possesses the knowledge and capability to act upon the situations and contexts of their life, but who is also knowledgeable about their capability to act upon those situations. Agency, then, is the act of choosing to put that knowledge and those capabilities into action (or otherwise).

⁵ The Acholi number about 1.2million persons spread across the northern provinces of Uganda and the southern provinces of South Sudan, where they number around 45,000 of the estimated 8 million of the country. Acholi is a Western Nilotic language similar to Alur, Luo, and Lango.

⁶ Due to human ethics committee requirements, all participants in this study have been given pseudonyms to protect their identities.

⁷ All interview excerpts given in this article are written as they were spoken by the various participants in my research. This has been done so as to maintain as closely as possible the distinct and individual voice of each speaker. It is unfortunate that in the presentation of much social science and governmental research, many non-English speaking or second-language English speakers *actual* voices are often lost through the sanitisation process which reshapes what was said to fit an elitist and classist cultural norm of what is 'correct' English.

⁸ It is imperative to be brutally honest here and reiterate that the general pattern is NOT one of refugees 'exploiting' or manipulating the refugee-resettlement system. That system is one which is predicated upon almost total control, domination, and authority emanating from one position of power (the state, whether in its nation form or as its global body, the UN) and being imposed upon the lives and wills of an underprivileged, marginalised, and desperate few (the refugee. Who, it must be remembered, is only a 'refugee' according to the UNHCR definition if that person is fleeing from the destructive power of the state apparatus or its detractors).