

Foreword

Jennifer Hyndman

Research by scholars analyzing refugee and other expressions of forced migration in Canada is distinct from elsewhere in the world. While national and international contexts cannot be neatly separated on the subject of displacement (see Demoz, chapter 7), the amount of research with, for, on, and by people from forced migration backgrounds flourishes here like nowhere else. This book stands out among peers in at least three ways: (1) it focuses on Canada as a place of reception for diasporas from other parts of the world and their uneven inclusion in its polity as well as the global constellations of geopolitics, law, intergovernmental organizations, and humanitarianism that make this possible; (2) it centres “the lived experiences of people through testimonies, case studies, and materials produced by people who have experienced forced migration” (Clark-Kazak, introduction); and (3) it addresses the intersection of these constellations of forced migration with racial justice, colonial violence and Indigenous displacement, and global issues such as climate change and COVID-19.

With the number of displaced persons worldwide now exceeding one hundred million and of these more than 32 per cent outside their country of origin, providing sustained protection and new places to call home is as important as ever. At the time of writing, Canada ranks first in the world in terms of the number of resettled refugees accepted, even if these numbers are modest. In relation to other states on the asylum front, it ranks much lower and does much less of the heavy lifting given its geographical isolation, cold oceans, and long border with the USA, fortified by the Safe Third Country Agreement (STCA). This collection is novel and important because its thirty-eight authors squarely address these processes, politics, and practices of forced migration of people *to* and *within* Canada.

Research with former refugees living in Canada has become a major focus in forced migration studies, with recent books about Canada’s Operation Syrian Refugees (Hamilton, Veronis, and Walton-Roberts 2020; Hynie et al. 2019), the private sponsorship of refugees (Labman and Cameron 2020; see also

Labman, chapter 18), and even the legal frameworks of refugee resettlement (Labman 2019). In chapter 17, Idil Atak deftly juxtaposes resettlement, based on humanitarian priorities and selection from abroad, with asylum processes in Canada; each protection stream is so distinct that it almost defies direct comparison with the other. Negotiating citizenship and securing permanent status (see Moffette, chapter 19) for those whose refugee claims are rejected or those who toggle between temporary status and a path to permanence are struggles that can last for years.

The lively scholarship featured here on refugee inclusion and integration is critical to exposing the shortcomings and changes needed in Canadian institutions – schools, health-care services, and the labour force to name a few (see Hynie, chapter 23). Hynie’s holistic integration model interrogates how well Canadian communities, cities, and levels of government engage and include these newcomers and, in turn, how these newcomers are faring in their new Canadian homes (see also Chen, chapter 24; Ogoe and Wilkinson, chapter 25).

In this collection, *settlement* – a fraught term that could be the focus of another entire book – does not efface the violence and displacement that Indigenous persons in Canada have faced. Veldon Coburn in chapter 1 and Christina R. Clark-Kazak in chapters 13 and 28 engage squarely with the cultural genocide and displacements caused by settler colonialism in Canada. A thoughtful and deliberate commissioning on slavery in the Canadian context by Natasha Henry-Dixon in chapter 2 also draws out the racialized dispersion of African peoples from their original homes and their resistance to it.

Scholars of forced migration have at times essentialized “the refugee” as a figure who can never shed their designation as a displaced person, a positionality that Martha Kwee Kumsa (2006) struggled with from her vantage point as a Canadian professor conducting research with refugees. She writes about her work with refugees of Oromo background after they have arrived in Toronto and illustrates how they no longer self-identify as refugees once in Canada. She reveals how from the point of view of these Oromo youth, refugees are the people living in camps back in East Africa from which they came. The differentiated and racialized inclusion and exclusion of people from forced migration backgrounds are incisively elaborated upon (see Mahrouse and El Omari, chapter 15).

Intersectionality points to the numerous axes of difference that generate a range of identities across the conventional categories of the 1951 Convention definition of refugee – people persecuted because of their nationality, race, religion, membership of a social group or political opinion. But the concept of “refugeehood” also includes many more identities than those covered by the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol, which extended the temporal and geographical reach of the convention definition to the rest of the world. The definition of refugee nonetheless remained Eurocentric and specific to the civil and political rights violation of World War II. This volume systematically

addresses other dimensions of difference and possible persecution that have received far less attention. For example, in chapter 12 Aberman shows how gender and sexual identities constitute membership in a social group to meet the refugee definition. Clark-Kazak's highly original research in chapter 13 shows how social age can differ dramatically from chronological age. For example, the meaning of what it is to be a child varies tremendously across time and space. Disability is another fascinating entry point into forced migration studies as a criterion of "vulnerability" for selecting refugees at the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for referral to Canada (see McNally, chapter 14). The strategies of refugee newcomer households supporting family members with disabilities are poorly understood; they face distinct challenges related to supporting the differently abled family member in a new country.

Diaspora subjects who are scholars in Canada may analyze the political dynamics of forced displacement in the ethnonational communities of which they are part (Amarasingam 2015; Demoz, chapter 7; Yousuf and Hyndman 2023). Or they may use their social locations and geographically diverse networks to examine, for example, gendered strategies of seeking protection through marriage (Taha 2021).

Refugee and forced migration studies have "always been critical" (Biorklund and Hyndman 2023), stemming from people-centred humanitarian and human rights approaches to geopolitical displacement caused by the Cold War. The epistemology and positionality of researchers in forced migration studies, however, have not always been as inclusive of lived experience as they could be. Critical refugee studies in the US and Canada have emphasized the importance of diaspora subjectivities, knowledge production, and self-representation in settler states where these have historically been effaced (Nguyen and Phu 2021). Scholarship flourishes by Canadian researchers who embody a wide range of subject positions that include forced migration backgrounds (Amarasingam 2015; Taha 2021; Demoz, chapter 7), and this book includes the most extensive range of scholars and subject positions, curated deliberately and thoughtfully.

The dominance of scholars located in the Global North who are studying the displacement of people located in the Global South and related research partnerships that reflect this same power dynamic, often means that Global South scholars and institutions collect data for those with more access to funds, without fully getting credit for co-producing knowledge stemming from these data (Chimni 1998, 2009; Landau 2012; Hyndman 2023). This book tackles these disparate power relations in many of the chapters.

Equally, not all war zones and displaced persons garner the same attention. I recently wrote about "humanitarian nationalism" in relation to Canada's unwavering military and humanitarian support for Ukraine in defending itself against the Russian invasion and for its open-door protection policy for all Ukrainians to come to Canada on a temporary visitor visa (Hyndman 2023). Humanitarian nationalism refers to a consensus across governments and civil

society that Canada must thwart Russian aggression and assist Ukrainians affected and those who have fled. As Canadian military aid for Ukraine tops CAD\$1.5 billion just twenty months after the Russian invasion began, more than one million Ukrainians have applied for temporary visitor status in Canada. The comprehensive scope of this humanitarian gesture is laudable, but Canada has not done so much so quickly for any other group of refugees coming to Canada in recent history. Should this level of support become the “new normal” for all displaced persons in humanitarian emergencies? Canada has harmonized its offer of temporary protection with EU provisions under the Temporary Protection Directive but in so doing raised expectations for all refugee resettlement to Canada.

By focusing on Canada in global and local contexts, this collection provides a comprehensive portrait of migration under involuntary conditions. The book exposes where and how Canadian society and institutions fall short (and where they succeed) in their inclusion of and engagement with newcomers from forced migration backgrounds, constituting an effective “report card” on what is not working, what is, and how the former could be done differently.