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The Sociology of Refugee Migration

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Abstract

Theorization in the sociology of migration and the field of refugee studies has been retarded by a path-dependent division that we argue should be broken down by greater mutual engagement. Excavating the construction of the refugee category reveals how unwarranted assumptions shape contemporary disputes about the scale of refugee crises, appropriate policy responses, and suitable research tools. Empirical studies of how violence interacts with economic and other factors shaping mobility offer lessons for both fields. Adapting existing theories that may not appear immediately applicable, such as household economy approaches, helps explain refugees' decision-making processes. At a macro level, world systems theory sheds light on the interactive policies around refugees across states of origin, mass hosting, asylum, transit, and resettlement. Finally, focusing on the integration of refugees in the Global South reveals a pattern that poses major challenges to theories of assimilation and citizenship developed in settler states of the Global North.

THE SOCIOLOGY OF REFUGEE MIGRATION

Refugee status opens doors closed to many other migrants, as states increasingly try to filter who can cross international borders (Shacknove 1985). Along with many scholars, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) insists that "refugees are not migrants" (Feller 2005, p. 27). The UNHCR's goal is to safeguard the refugee exemption from restrictive policies (Betts & Collier 2017). Skeptical media and political entrepreneurs in turn dismissively label people trying to get in as "migrants"—not "genuine refugees" with legitimate claims to enter and be protected (Crawley & Skleparis 2018).

The notion that migrants and refugees are distinct extends throughout the academy for historical and contemporary political reasons. The great wave of transoceanic European immigration to the New World in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries took place at a time when there was not a separate track for refugee admissions nor an international refugee regime. As a result, foundational theories of immigration typically ignored the refugee question even if many of those early migratory movements, from Russian Jews fleeing pogroms to Irish escaping the Great Famine, can be reconceptualized as forced migrations (Zolberg et al. 1989). Immigration studies in the United States, Canada, and Australia address post–World War II refugee admissions, but they easily conflate all people who moved to settler states as "immigrants," regardless of why they came (Jupp 2002, Kelley & Trebilcock 2010, Portes & Rumbaut 2014). Research on US immigration has been especially influential on the broader field of international migration studies, whose foundational theories generally assume labor migration (FitzGerald 2014, Massey et al. 1998).

The field of refugee studies is a more recent scholarly endeavor with its own research centers, journals, professional associations, and research paradigms that focus on the concerns of refugees, their advocates, and legal scholars. In the 1980s, academics based primarily in the United Kingdom shaped the field around the assumption that refugees are fundamentally different from migrants because of the push factors that impel their movement and of the states' unique legal obligations to protect refugees in the post–World War II regime (Black 2001, Richmond 1988, Van Hear 2012). There is surprisingly little overlap between refugee studies and the sociology of international migration (Scalettaris 2007, Stepputat & Sørensen 2014, Van Hear 2012). A review by Mazur (1988, p. 45) claimed that "whether sociology has a contribution [to refugee studies] distinguishable from that of geography, anthropology, economics or political science. . .remains to be proven." Castles (2003, p. 14) lamented that "there is little sociological literature on forced migration and one certainly cannot find a developed body of empirical work and theory."

This review argues that the sociology of international migration and refugee studies can mutually enrich each other and push theorization in both directions. A sociology of knowledge approach illuminates the classificatory struggles that created and sustain the refugee category and shows how predominant frames in the field limit scholarly understandings (see Bourdieu 1991). Breaking out of the constraints of the statutory refugee label allows social scientists to bring to bear well-developed tools from the study of international migration and integration that can help explain refugee experiences across countries of origin, transit, and destination. World systems theory and a refugee household decision-making model are particularly productive.

The insights of refugee studies can benefit the sociology of international migration in three ways. First, migration theories explain a subset of mobility: labor migration. Expanding the inquiry to include people who flee violence challenges theorists of international migration to define their scope conditions and to consider interacting factors that explain movement as well as decisions to stay. Second, in contradistinction to many underpoliticized theories of international migration (Piore 1979, Stark 1991, Todaro 1969), refugee studies rightfully focuses on the role of states in

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shaping the flows and life chances of mobile persons (Greenhill 2010, Zolberg et al. 1989). Finally, attending to refugees expands the range of cases to be considered when analyzing other concerns in the sociology of international migration, such as integration, transnationalism, and citizenship. The migration literature's tendency to investigate labor flows to Western states disregards most refugee movements, which take place between neighboring countries in the Global South (Chimni 1998). Investigating a broader set of cases enables a better specification of scope conditions for existing theories, introduces fresh research questions, and develops a systemic understanding of international mobility and its constraints.

WHO IS A REFUGEE?

Sociologists of migration rarely define who is a migrant (FitzGerald 2014). By contrast, debates have raged about just who is a refugee ever since exceptions for refugees were created in restrictive immigration laws. The refugee label confusingly blends categories of everyday usage, law, and social science (Hamlin 2017). The definition is consequential, potentially a matter of life and death, when governments decide whether to admit certain individuals or groups. The construction of the categories also matters analytically because the categories deployed shape explanations of why refugees move, the opportunities and barriers to integration in their places of transit or destination, and eddies of circular movements along the way.

Constructivist Approaches

The term "refugee" first entered English to describe the Huguenots expelled from France in the seventeenth century. During the early twentieth century, governments applied the label on an ad hoc basis to many groups such as White Russians, Armenians, and German Jews, amid an emerging sense in Europe that refugees deserved protections that other mobile persons did not (Gatrell 2013). During World War II, as in the present day, stakeholders debated whether particular groups and individuals were refugees or "merely" immigrants. The open deterrence of refugees was becoming less politically legitimate, even as the criteria for selecting them in settler states continued to be deeply embedded in the economic and ethnoracial preferences of existing laws (FitzGerald & Cook-Martín 2014, Neumann 2015).

After World War II, the victorious Allied powers negotiated the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, whose Article 1(A)(2) defines a refugee as a person who,

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

This focus on persecution was not created ex nihilo in 1951. Gray (2016) shows that ancient Greek notions of sanctuary focused on political persecution, and that intellectuals transmitted this classical inheritance into the mid-twentieth century. Long-standing traditions of political asylum in national laws, such as Article 120 of the 1793 French Constitution, predate international instruments. Regardless of the precise genealogy of the notion of refugee, the Western powers' control over the 1951 Convention crystallized a definition that emphasized persecution over other forms of distress caused by economic or environmental catastrophes. This definition was intended to prevent the repetition of the Allied powers' failure to save European Jews from the Holocaust

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as well as to fire an early salvo of the Cold War aimed at embarrassing communist countries by encouraging defections. None of the Eastern Bloc countries, except Yugoslavia, participated in the negotiation of the Convention. The Western powers adopted a classically liberal approach that privileged the protection of refugees based on violations of political or civil rights. This worked to their advantage, given the recurring violation of those rights by totalitarian communist states. By contrast, a definition of refugees based on violations of social rights would have undermined laissez-faire liberalism (Chimni 2009, Karatani 2005, Long 2013, Skran & Daughtry 2007).

The 1951 Convention included geographic and temporal limitations that only applied the refugee category to Europeans displaced by World War II. The 1967 Protocol removed the limitations of time and place and confirmed the crucial principle of non-refoulement, according to which refugees cannot be returned to countries where they will be persecuted. The United States and Canada did not join the international regime until 1968 and 1969, respectively. By 2015, 148 countries had signed the Convention and/or the Protocol and established one of the strongest norms, along with antislavery, to govern international mobility. The Convention delegates in 1951 debated whether to include internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the refugee definition, but to preserve the principle of nonintervention in sovereign states that undergirds the Westphalian system, they settled on a definition insisting that refugees were only persons who had crossed an international border. The principle of sovereignty eroded slightly after the end of the Cold War, culminating in the notion of states' responsibility to protect IDPs from the most egregious crimes against humanity. In 2016, there were more IDPs than statutory refugees (Loescher 2001, Stahn 2007, UNHCR 2017).

The UNHCR, founded in 1950, is the primary producer of knowledge in the study of refugees. The agency assembles, curates, and distributes statistical data from its own operations and national governments. The UNHCR identifies who the refugees are, where they are coming from, where they are going, and how they are treated. Idiosyncratic definitions created in the early days of the refugee regime have become path dependent (Loescher 2001). For example, "Palestine refugees" were the first non-Europeans to be legally considered refugees by the international community. Their protection falls to an ad hoc agency created in 1949, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) (Akram 2002).[1] This population of 5.3 million refugees often falls outside the scope of knowledge production by the UNHCR. Palestine refugees are excluded from the presentation of politically consequential facts, as is evident in the 2016 UNHCR Global Trends report (UNHCR 2017). Although the report includes Palestine refugees in the overall count of the world's refugees, they are erased from figures that illustrate major source and hosting countries. Palestine refugees, and the states that host them, become increasingly tangential to the global conversation about refugee displacement and scholarly investigations.

Historical comparisons of the scale of refugee flows are extremely misleading when they neglect that all the baseline statistics collected by the UNHCR only include Europeans. For example, the UNHCR claimed in its 2016 Global Trends report that the "world's forcibly displaced population remained at a record high" (UNHCR 2017, p. 2). The world's press and prominent scholars amplified this claim (Betts & Collier 2017, pp. 15, 204; Gladstone 2017). Although it is true that the 65 million displaced people in 2016 are more than the estimated 60 million displaced after World War II according to UNHCR data, the postwar figures only include Europeans and ignore an additional 90 million people displaced in Asia alone, for a total of 175 million people displaced

[1]Palestine refugees are defined by UNRWA as "persons whose normal place of residence was Palestine during the period 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948, and who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict" (**https://www.unrwa.org/palestine-refugees**).

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by World War II across the globe. The partition of India led to the further displacement of 13.5 million people across the Pakistan/India border between 1947 and 1951, but they were not labeled refugees within the UNHCR mandate. The scale of displacement in 2016 was even lower in relative terms, at less than 0.9% of the world's population, compared to 7.6% after World War II (Gatrell 2013, pp. 3, 151; UNHCR 2017). The fact that the world's refugee statistics reflect a definition of the refugee forged in 1951 contributes to the contemporary failure to apprehend the scale and global distribution of refugee movements over time. It feeds fears that the world is facing an unprecedented refugee crisis and thus legitimates proposals to change the existing architecture of protection (e.g., Betts & Collier 2017).

Refugee numbers are flawed and can be intentionally misleading. These numbers serve political purposes: to advocate for increased aid or influence admissions policies. Aid agencies and major refugee-receiving states may overreport the number of refugees and/or repatriates to solicit more international aid. Conservatives may invoke the specter of massive refugee flows to justify restriction (Crisp 1999). Additionally, institutional factors can purposefully or inadvertently distort statistics. During the European crisis of 2015, the European Union (EU) border agency Frontex counted the same people two or three times over. According to sociologist Nando Sigona, an individual counted on arrival in Greece who then left the EU to travel through the Balkans to another EU state would be counted again on entering an EU country such as Hungary (cited in *Nature* 2017). Castles's (2003, p. 26) warning that "policy-driven research can lead not only to poor sociology, but also to bad policy" rings especially clear when exaggerated numbers perpetuate fears of an unprecedented crisis in ways that undermine refugee protections or misdirect scarce resources.

The categorization of refugees is malleable both from above and from below. State labels are not necessarily transferable. The same person who is a "refugee" in Kenya could be a "guest" in Jordan, an "asylum seeker" in Germany, a "migrant worker" in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), or an "irregular arrival" in Canada. There is also a gap between the definitions imposed from above by states and international institutions and the self-definitions by displaced people who sometimes reject the refugee label or only use it situationally when interacting with authorities. For some, "exile" carries a more accurate and/or higher class connotation (Chatelard 2010, Ludwig 2016). The distinction between external and self-assigned refugee labels is important for two reasons. First, it draws attention to how refugee status may be a favorable legal category for gaining admission to a state's territory, yet it may be unfavorable when the identity is stigmatized and impedes belonging. Second, recognizing that some forced migrants do not want to identify as refugees allows scholars to unpack the social construction of refugee victimization and the narratives that states and NGOs promulgate to depict themselves as saviors (Espiritu 2014, Rajaram 2002).

Although refugees and asylum seekers are often colloquially conflated, their legal designations reflect their distinct spatial relationships to the state in which they seek sanctuary. In states of resettlement, refugees are selected and vetted while still abroad. Their migration is expected and facilitated by governments and international agencies. Asylum seekers ask for protection within or at the borders of states in a process that is co-constructed by the asylum seekers, legal advocates, government officials, and judges. Ethnographic accounts show how actors on the ground try to force asylum seekers' complex life stories into legal categories and classify them based on unwritten expectations of how a victim should act (Galli 2017, Mountz 2010). Autonomous judiciaries have been key institutional actors in expanding the grounds for asylum to include, for example, women fleeing domestic violence who are left unprotected by the governments of their countries of origin. The category of persecution for "membership of a particular social group" has been especially expansive (Goodwin-Gill & McAdam 2007).

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Realist Approaches

Unlike constructivists, realists use the refugee category to investigate the experiences of individuals and groups who exist independently of how they are labeled (Hein 1993). An immediate source of confusion and ethical dilemma is that refugee is a category of both legal practice and sociological analysis (Brubaker & Cooper 2000). Constructivist accounts favored in sociology are in tension with legal arguments built on a realist rock. For example, the legal concept of "recognizing" refugees is based on the premise that refugees are an ontologically given category existing in the real world, waiting to be seen for who they are. As the UNHCR (2011, ch. 1, paragraph 28) explains in its refugee status determination handbook,

> A person is a refugee within the meaning of the 1951 Convention as soon as he fulfils the criteria contained in the definition. This would necessarily occur prior to the time at which his refugee status is formally determined. Recognition of his refugee status does not therefore make him a refugee but declares him to be one. He does not become a refugee because of recognition, but is recognized because he is a refugee.

Discussions of human rights pose a conundrum for those who wish both to understand and to deploy the concepts, or at least not to pour boiling oil from the ivory tower on the heads of vulnerable people. According to the Turton (1996, p. 96) principle, there is no "justification for conducting research into situations of extreme human suffering if one does not have the alleviation of suffering as an explicit objective of one's research." Yet historians and sociologists point out that ideas about human rights are historically elaborated, malleable, and contingent (Frezzo 2015). This observation threatens to rob human rights claims of their rhetorical persuasiveness, which is based on the fiction that such rights are natural and inalienable. While acknowledging these tensions, we argue that sociologists should not hold themselves hostage to a refugee definition created to meet specific political objectives in 1951. We agree with Hathaway (2007) that legal scholars and social scientists need not marry their distinctive approaches, and we leave to legal scholars the debate about whether certain grounds for refugee status should be expanded in domestic and international law (McAdam 2012) or remain focused on persecution based on more classical interpretations of the five Convention grounds (Hathaway 2007). A constructivist account of the refugee category does not preclude the legal argument that states have obligations to protect individuals who meet agreed standards.

Most sociological definitions of refugees are oriented around a set of related dichotomies that define refugees against migrants, or at least against other types of migrants. The common thread in many of these categorizations is that refugees have less agency. Their movements are described as involuntary (Jászi 1939), forced (Petersen 1958), or reactive (Richmond 1988). Proponents of forced migration studies have steadily expanded the scope of the field, usually in the hope of promoting new legal protections for people whose movements are compelled. The concept of forced migration includes development-induced migrants—such as populations forced to move after dam projects flooded their land, environmental refugees displaced by climate change, slaves, deportees, trafficking victims, and IDPs (Black 2001, Bylander 2015, De Wet 2006, McSherry & Kneebone 2008, Mooney 2005).

The forced migration framework usefully highlights the compulsion in many movements, but the conflation of different categories of migrants comes at an analytical cost. One of the more provocative moves is to lump international adoptees into the same category of forced migration as people driven from their homes by war (Louie 2013). The observation that adopted children's movement is forced is accurate. Yet children are routinely taken from one country to another

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without consulting their preferences, which was the justification for the 2012 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program in the United States that granted temporary protection from deportation for certain classes of unauthorized immigrants who entered the country as children (Amuedo-Dorantes & Puttitanun 2016).

Movement takes place on a continuum of compulsion. At one pole, options are limited, all choices are bad, and the difference between leaving and staying is death, be it at the hands of a death squad or starvation in an infertile land. At the other extreme, people who hold passports that allow them to bypass visa restrictions in the Global North and who have high levels of financial, human, and social capital face no great penalty if they stay home and can choose among a menu of destinations. Between these extremes are people who must leave to achieve their expectations of a dignified life. A challenge for refugee status determination is that whereas the extent to which migration is compelled by violence lies on a continuum, individual cases must be shoehorned into categorical definitions. Dichotomous categories juxtaposing refugees and economic migrants are especially ill suited to capture the underlying messiness. Partly as a result, legal categories have proliferated that provide complementary protection for non-Convention refugees, such as subsidiary protection in the EU and temporary protected status in the United States (Goodwin-Gill & McAdam 2007).

Another criterion long used to distinguish refugees from migrants is that the former are people who leave for political rather than economic reasons (Simpson 1939). The political/economic dichotomy is only useful in some cases, and it obscures the multiplicity of motivations that drive many migrations. Illiberal states can use economic tools to punish opponents and despised minorities by cutting off their access to employment, markets, education, and land. Economic crises often have political causes, and they can generate political unrest. Wars raise the risk of falling victim to generalized violence as well as that of becoming unable to maintain one's livelihood in a collapsing economy.

Betts (2013) proposes the concept of survival migration, which has the merits of breaking down the political/economic dichotomy and of recognizing the agency of those who move, while capturing the fact that some people are motivated to move by existential stakes rather than the desire to maximize consumer utility or some lesser goal in the hierarchy of needs. Operationalizing the concept of survival migration is difficult, however, given the social malleability of expectations about what constitutes reasonable subsistence and the fact that many people who flee illiberal governments face nonlethal types of persecution. A further complication of the political/economic dichotomy is that individuals' goals and opportunities to achieve them often change over the course of time and multiphase movements (Crawley et al. 2016, Koser & Martin 2011). There is no a priori reason to accept the political refugee/economic migrant distinction.

For sociological purposes, we follow Zolberg et al. (1989) in defining refugee migration as flight from political violence, including the threat of violence behind persecution. This conceptualization facilitates the engagement of refugee studies with theories of migration. It is possible to investigate empirically how variations in economic conditions and violence, as well as their interaction, affect out-migration over time (Alvarado & Massey 2010, Bohra-Mishra & Massey 2011, Schmeidl 1997). This approach requires a realist conception of refugees as people who are motivated to flee at least in part by political violence, regardless of whether they are named as such by a legal authority. We survey the surprisingly thin empirical literature on the drivers of refugee flows to establish the extent to which they can be explained by theories of international migration developed to explain labor mobility, and where they cannot, we highlight the need to refine theories for contexts of political violence.

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WHAT DRIVES REFUGEE MIGRATION?

What types of political violence generate refugees? Nation-state building (Roucek 1939, Stoessinger 1956, Zolberg et al. 1989), genocide, politicide (i.e., the elimination of politically defined groups) (Fein 1993, Schmeidl 1997; but see Neumayer 2005), wars with foreign interventions, and generalized violence rather than institutionalized violations of human rights have been singled out as types of conflict that are more likely to generate refugee flows (Schmeidl 1997). However, these findings risk circular reasoning, because they are based on refugee statistics collected by the UNHCR and national governments that use a legal, rather than sociological, definition of refugee. It is not surprising that genocide and politicide generate refugee flows when the definition of refugees in these statistics designates people who are "persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion." In other words, it is difficult for realists to escape the legal construction of the refugee category when measuring the sociological determinants of refugee movement.

One way to avoid this circularity is through independent surveys that do not select on the dependent variable. For instance, Bohra-Mishra & Massey (2011) found that low to moderate violence during the Maoist insurgency in Nepal reduced the level of out-migration, whereas high levels of violence increased the odds of movement. Adhikari (2013) estimated the higher risks of migration in Nepal after the outbreak of violence and showed how out-migration was mediated by the destruction of industry and loss of crops, land, and homes, thus opening the field to a better understanding of the mechanisms linking violence and flight.

The question of what constitutes political violence is not always straightforward. For example, in parts of Central America and Colombia, armed gangs have sometimes taken on state-like qualities by controlling territories and establishing at least some partial local legitimacy in their application of violence. When people flee these spaces and ask for asylum, the legal question is whether they qualify for protection even if states are not their persecutors. A 2014 survey of Hondurans, Salvadorans, and Guatemalans found that Hondurans and Salvadorans were more likely to report their intention to migrate if they had been victims of crime in the previous year. Honduran crime victims were more than twice as likely to say they intended to migrate compared to nonvictims (Hiskey et al. 2016, pp. 6–10). A municipal-level study of Nicaragua, Honduras, and El Salvador between 2011 and 2016 showed that a rise in homicides was associated with increased US border apprehensions of unaccompanied minors from those countries (Clemens 2017). In Colombia, rising violence in the 1990s was associated with increased flows to Europe and Latin America, but not North America (Silva & Massey 2015).

Statist approaches to explaining refugee flows are especially powerful given the salience of foreign policy and security concerns in determining refugee policies, which in turn influence movement. States make refugees. By statutory definition, refugees would not exist without the creation of an international border for them to cross (Haddad 2008). Pluralist and institutionalist theories of the state in sociology and the constructivist approach to international relations explain the competing logics by which governments select refugees and other kinds of immigrants (Orchard 2014). The institutional design of legal systems shapes asylum decisions differently across countries that otherwise share similarities (Hamlin 2014). Realist foreign policy rationales, such as pushing out refugees as a weapon of war (Greenhill 2010), are accompanied by the softer goals of promoting a humanitarian brand abroad (Gibney 2004). Domestic politics also plays a role as ethnic lobbies promote the resettlement of coethnics (Zucker & Zucker 1989) and xenophobic politicians try to keep out racialized others (Arango et al. 2016, Madokoro 2016).

World systems theory posits that interventions by core countries in the periphery spawn migration in the opposite direction (Portes & Walton 1981). Many refugee flows are shaped by this

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dynamic in the US and European metropoles (Abrego 2017, Castles 2003), though counterexamples abound (Neumayer 2005, Vogler & Rotte 2000). Cuéllar (2006, p. 622) identifies a "grand compromise" whereby countries in the Global South host most of the world's refugees while donor states in the Global North finance refugee hosting in the South and resettle less than one percent of the total. At the same time, Northern states try to push their border control onto the territories of buffer states. For example, the EU and Turkey have been negotiating the possibility of rewarding Turks with visa-free travel to the EU in exchange for Turkey's efforts to stymie refugee transit to Europe. In this way, emigration, immigration, transit migration, and refugee displacement become inextricably linked in a global system of mobility control (Içduygu 2000; FitzGerald 2019).

An approach rooted in neoclassical economics adds safety from violence to the economic utilities pursued by individuals in models of labor migration (Morrison & May 1994). At a macro level, violence and dire economic conditions often feed on each other (Zolberg et al. 1989). Quantitative studies vary in their support of economic explanations for refugee flows. Moore & Shellman (2007) and Neumayer (2005) find that income and GDP per capita in the country of origin are negatively associated with refugee flows. Davenport et al.'s (2003) analysis of a global database from 1964 to 1989 suggests that economic factors do not predict refugee migration, a finding repeated by Schmeidl's (1997) study of UNHCR data from 1971 to 1990 and Melander & Öberg's (2006) study of UNHCR data from 1981 to 1999. Smaller studies by Stanley (1987), Amuedo-Dorantes & Puttitanun (2016), and Clemens (2017) find evidence that both violence and economic factors generated the flight of refugees and unaccompanied minors from Central America.

Refugees are a hard case for the new economics of labor migration, because this framework is based on the idea that households allocate labor to different markets, including the one they currently occupy, to manage risks of unemployment, crop failures, and other economic problems (Stark 1991). In contexts of violence, the major risks to be managed are to life and limb rather than the maximization of a household economic portfolio. Irregular migration can incur its own deadly risks and high financial costs, which make moving a high-stakes gamble to circumvent state controls (Belloni 2016). Yet households do not always respond to the risk of violence by collectively fleeing. Individual members of a household may be targeted for persecution and leave, while others stay behind (Steele 2009). Even in contexts of generalized violence, not everyone who can leave always does. Families manage the risks of violence at the same time as they manage economic risks, such as losing their illiquid assets if they all flee at once. The household can be considered a unit of analysis, but there may also be bargaining around migration decisions within the household that is affected by power differentials along the axes of age and gender (Nobles & McKelvey 2015). A 2017 study of unaccompanied child migrants found that most of those in Greece had come from war-torn countries such as Syria and had made a joint decision within their family to flee, whereas most of those in Italy had come from African countries and had taken an individual decision to leave (UNICEF 2017).

The utility of a household-level risk management perspective on refugee flows is illustrated by the Syrian refugee families interviewed by Arar in 2016–2017. The Jabbar[2] family of 11 was split between the Syrian city of Dar'a and the Zaatari refugee camp in Jordan. At age 18, Ahmad left Dar'a with his mother, two unmarried teenage sisters considered especially vulnerable to sexual assault, and three brothers. Ahmad's father stayed behind to protect two married daughters whose husbands refused to flee and to maintain the reliable paycheck on which the family depended.

[2]This is a pseudonym.

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Ahmad was the "pioneer refugee" (see Bakewell et al. 2012). He expected to help his family members establish themselves in the camp and then return to Syria to attend university. The family expected the conflict would only last a few weeks and did not anticipate the eventual closing of the Syria/Jordan border that ended the possibility of family reunification. Five years after Ahmad's departure, his father remained in Syria. Ahmad explained that earlier he had the chance to flee to Europe, a choice some of his friends had made, but he had decided that he wanted to make it to the West "with dignity" rather than as a "refugee." For three years, he sat for (and failed) the English prerequisite exam to enter the Canadian university system. On his fourth try, he passed and resettled in Canada as a refugee student. He feared that his only hope to reunite his family would be by naturalizing in Canada and sponsoring the immigration of his family members.

The Jabbar family's experience captures the multifaceted ways in which refugee families use moving or staying behind to manage risks to their security, household economy, and ability to live as a unified family. Even in the midst of a rapidly changing security context, refugees take strategic action with multiple time horizons. Household decisions are shaped by culturally elaborated expectations of the different vulnerabilities faced by family members depending on their age and gender; reactions to shifting policies at home, in neighboring countries, and in countries of potential asylum or resettlement; and efforts to maintain an income stream and to protect their assets while laying the long-term educational groundwork for economic mobility. The applicability of the new economics of labor migration framework to refugee migration is ultimately an empirical question requiring more research (see Alvarado & Massey 2010), but the concept that households collectively manage different kinds of risk holds great promise for opening up the black box of mixed motivations for flows.

Economic perspectives on refugee migration are most useful when they distinguish among ideal-typical stages of mobility. In a first stage, violence drives the refugee to the most easily accessible safe space, often within the conflict country, and secondarily to a neighboring, often poor, country. Tertiary movements in which the refugee has the opportunity to consider long-term solutions and options look more like migration for the purposes of work or family reunification (Collyer et al. 2012, Davenport et al. 2003, Zimmermann 2009; but see Day & White 2002). Forced repatriation reduces the weight of economic considerations as well as the refugee's degree of agency (Stein & Cuny 1994).

The segmented labor market theory developed to explain the migration pull factors in industrialized societies (Piore 1979) may help explain some tertiary refugee flows to rich countries. Certainly not all refugee resettlement programs are motivated by labor policies (Suhrke & Klink 1987), but rich destination countries sometimes use refugee admissions as a backdoor to access workers (FitzGerald & Cook-Martín 2014, Gibney 2004). For example, following World War II, Canada resettled Polish refugees to do agricultural work for which German prisoners of war were no longer available. The government tried to disguise its economic motivation for filling gaps in secondary labor markets by publicly emphasizing a humanitarian rationale (Satzewich 1991). Other times, states justify humanitarian policies to a skeptical public by highlighting the utility of refugee labor, as the German government did during the Syrian conflict (Juran & Broer 2017). In other cases, states may accept people fleeing violence as economic migrants without granting them legal refugee status. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the UAE facilitated the entry and residence of hundreds of thousands of Syrians in 2011 without registering them as refugees (De Bel-Air 2015). Accounts drawing on segmented labor market theory are more powerful when combined with analyses of the domestic and foreign policy inputs of refugee resettlement and mass asylum.

One of sociology's main contribution to theories of international migration is to highlight the importance of social networks in channeling migrants along particular routes and reducing the costs of movement and integration (Massey et al. 1998). The refugee literature shows that a

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similar dynamic applies to people fleeing violence (Crisp 1999, Hein 1993, Koser 1997, Scalettaris 2007, Williams 2006). Refugees often travel to the same destinations of previous labor migrations (Gatrell 2013, Silva & Massey 2015). The mass migration of asylum seekers to Europe in 2015 introduced new kinds of social networks facilitated by technology. People on the move turned to Facebook, Twitter, and smartphone applications to learn about the changing landscape of border crossings, lodging, and employment opportunities. When it comes to hosting refugees in camps, social networks can influence which camp one may enter or leave for urban settlement. Sullivan & Tobin (2014) discuss the *kafala* (sponsorship) system in Jordanian refugee camps in which citizens can "bail out" Syrian refugees to live in the city. On the other hand, refugees try to avoid using their social networks when doing so renders their identities more visible and makes them vulnerable to further violence (Arar 2016).

The establishment of a migration industry makes it possible for people with access to capital or credit to move across borders even without established social networks or legal permission (Gammeltoft-Hansen & Sørensen 2013). Nonprofit actors such as Doctors Without Borders aid refugees as well. Such agencies are fundamentally motivated by ideology rather than profit, but they serve a similar function of enabling movements for those who do not have the requisite documentation or social capital (Andersson 2014). The smuggling industry helps circumvent migration controls between the Global South and the Global North. Yet because smugglers sell their services to the highest bidder, the same militias that one day smuggle migrants can be secretly paid the next to do the dirty work of migration control. The Italian government carried out such a contracting scheme in Libya to prevent asylum seekers from reaching European territories where they could ask for protection (D.S. FitzGerald 2018, unpublished manuscript).

WHAT IS SPECIAL ABOUT REFUGEE INTEGRATION?

The study of refugee integration can simultaneously build upon the sociology of immigrant assimilation/integration while throwing into relief Western-centric or even more parochial assumptions in canonical studies. For the UNHCR, durable solutions are incorporation into the initial host country, resettlement to a third country, or repatriation. Displacement and the challenges of incorporation for refugees are not erased when these durable solutions are met, but in line with the UNHCR's mandate, refugees are no longer "populations of concern." The refugee stops being a refugee. Conversely, for states of resettlement, the arrival of displaced persons is the first chapter in their integration as they acculturate and gain economic independence (Nawyn 2011). The movement that defines the end of the refugee category for the UNHCR marks the beginning of the refugee category for the resettlement state. By adopting a sociological rather than official definition of refugees, researchers can avoid being analytically hobbled by this artificial disruption and can examine a multisite, multigenerational process of integration across countries of mass hosting, asylum, transit, resettlement, and repatriation.

The mainstream sociology of migration in the United States analyzes the experience of refugees such as Vietnamese, Salvadorans, and Russian Jews within the assimilation paradigm, as it does with other immigrants (Menjívar 2000, Morawska 2004, Zhou & Bankston 1998). Canonical research measures linguistic, educational, economic, residential, and marital markers of integration (Alba & Nee 2003). Some scholars acknowledge that the context of reception for refugees is distinct. For example, for decades the US government treated Cubans more favorably than other groups (Portes & Bach 1985). Luthra et al.'s (2017) study of integration in the United States finds that after applying the appropriate controls, national-origin populations with high levels of refugee admissions do not have appreciably different educational outcomes than other types of immigrants. The legal status of individuals may be more important over time than the modest, temporary

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resettlement benefits. In theory, studies that identify an individual's refugee status on arrival, rather than using nationality as a proxy, could better tease out the effects of being a refugee; for example, such effects may be different for refugees who directly fled violence compared to family members sponsored later under immigrant family reunification provisions. Pedraza-Bailey (1985) describes how different waves of refugee migration from the same place can be influenced by different factors, so that the same nationality cannot be assumed to follow the same stages over time.

Much research on refugees in the Global North centers on resettlement programs. Colic-Peisker & Tilbury (2003) provide a typology of different resettlement styles in Australia. Researchers have compared the effects of Canada's private sponsorship and government resettlement programs (Lanphier 2003). Bloemraad's (2006) study of Canada and the United States finds that refugees' political incorporation is influenced, respectively, by models of official multiculturalism and laissez-faire. In each case, refugees' resettlement experiences in Western contexts appear broadly similar to the experience of authorized immigrants drawn by work or family reunification.

Even if the experiences of resettled refugees and other types of immigrants in rich, democratic destination countries eventually converge, the same does not hold true for most refugees. Major refugee-receiving countries in the Global South are generally neglected in the sociological literature, even though 84% of refugees are living in developing countries (UNHCR 2017). State policies often deliberately seek to prevent the integration of refugees by impeding access to citizenship, banning or limiting legal employment, and isolating refugees in camps (Betts & Collier 2017, Malkki 1995). For those living in camps, the residential integration emphasized by neo-assimilation studies is not feasible. Camps are total institutions that simultaneously protect, surveil, and control refugees (see Goffman 1961). In contexts of prolonged displacement and forced encampment, the population of camp residents is the segment of the population into which new refugees assimilate (see Portes & Rumbaut 2014).

Most refugees live in urban areas rather than camps. The urban context creates its own set of challenges to integration that stem from aid agencies' difficulty in making dispersed populations identifiable and available to receive services (see Scott 1998). The UNHCR and other agencies provide aid that includes education, housing, documentation, residency status, and health services. When funding falls short, urban refugees have been deprioritized and encamped refugees gain preference (Werker 2007). Urban refugees must also navigate tensions with the host community in public spaces and institutions in ways that encamped refugees do not directly face when they are segregated (Pavanello et al. 2010, Zetter & Deikun 2010). Access to the informal economy increases the risk of labor exploitation (Jacobsen 2006), even as it can offer new opportunities for entrepreneurship (Betts & Collier 2017). Many small business opportunities are available in refugee niches that are sometimes spatially bound as enclaves, including in camps (see Portes 1995).

For some refugees, the pathway to political rights is generations long and elusive, if not unattainable. Stateless refugee status is passed from one generation to the next like a nationality derived from jus sanguinis. Transmission can last far longer than anyone would predict. A 1967 CIA cable in the wake of the Israeli victory in the Six Day War crowed, "There is every reason to be very optimistic on the question of the Arab refugees, with the refugee problem being solved once and for all and this political cancer being removed from Arab-Israeli affairs" (CIA 1967, p. 1). Fifty years later, millions of Palestinians remain displaced. Three generations of Somali refugees reside in Kenya's Dadaab camp, where for most Somalis, the threat of refoulement is more imminent than the promise of resettlement (Hyndman & Giles 2017). Even in Australia, a liberal state whose citizenship was long based on jus soli, the children of irregular maritime asylum seekers born in Australia inherit their parents' subjugated status as people who will never be allowed to settle (Commonw. Aust. 2014). Acculturated stateless refugees, like acculturated young immigrants who

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grow up in a society without legal authorization to live in it, face blocked mobility (Bean et al. 2015).

The concept that assimilation is a multigenerational process (Alba & Nee 2003) takes on a new dimension when statelessness is an inherited status. Without citizenship rights, most of the world's refugees must rely on precarious claims to human rights and incomplete humanitarian protections (Arendt 1968, Holzer 2015). A "surrogate state" (Kagan 2012) composed of the UNHCR and subcontracted NGOs often provides many government-like functions that help keep refugee populations alive. Analyzing the membership claims that refugees make under these conditions promises to push forward debates in the sociology of migration about the extent to which territorial personhood by virtue of presence in a state, national citizenship, or postnationalism are the bases of meaningful access to rights (Motomura 2006, Arar 2017, Hansen 2009, Soysal 1994).

Despite political and economic challenges to integration, refugees who flee to neighboring states in the Global South often share important cultural similarities with the native populations. Although national identities differ, these populations often have similar ethnic identities, languages, or religions. Integration in major refugee host countries is often different from integration into rich, liberal states of resettlement. Refugees in much of the Global South do not need a generation to learn the language or cultural norms of the host. Instead, the lack of political incorporation and the protections that are afforded in such contexts become the greatest challenge. The ethnic boundary changes that are a subset of the assimilation process may be easier and faster for refugees in the Global South than in many contexts of labor migration to the Global North, even as political integration is slower (or unattainable) because of government restrictions (see Abdi 2015). Analyzing the integration of refugees across cases and social domains points out the limits of universal theorizations about the necessary sequence of domains of assimilation, such as the question of whether acculturation precedes structural assimilation or vice versa (see Alba & Nee 2003).

Studies of the repatriation of refugees cry out for comparisons with other forms of return, be it forced, voluntary, or circular (Bakewell 2000, Black & Koser 1999). As for other types of international migrants, it is sometimes possible for refugees to maintain strong ties with their countries of origin even without repatriation, notwithstanding Hein's (1993) claim that refugee status is constituted by exile and the impossibility of returning home. Refugees often maintain connections with their homelands as conflicts rage, including by sending money, in ways that challenge the notion of complete separation (Zetter 2007); once again, this highlights the utility of a refugee household decision-making model. Bringing together the sociology of international migration and refugee studies promises to refresh debates about transnationalism and diaspora (Wahlbeck 2002). Scholars of immigrant homeland political engagement typically focus on the pacific activities of immigrants who have moved primarily for economic reasons (Waldinger & FitzGerald 2004). Examining the concept of transnationalism in the light of refugee experiences reveals a wider range of engagements, from remittances to the cross-border raids of "refugee warriors," and it illuminates the conditions in countries of origin and destination that facilitate or impede transborder activities (Al-Ali et al. 2001, Banki 2016, Koser 2007, Van Hear 2006).

Sociologists can gain valuable theoretical leverage by turning their focus to integration in the Global South. First, refugee integration in the Global South reflects the experiences of most of the world's refugees—a fact that putatively generalizable theories of integration should take into consideration. Even when the focus is solely on resettled refugees or asylees, most of these individuals have spent long periods in countries that neighbor their places of origin. The lack of a stable legal status and restricted economic options shape decision making during multistage migrations and subsequent experiences in the countries of settlement (Moret et al. 2006). Second, the study of integration in illiberal contexts forces scholars to tackle the unquestioned premises about access

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to membership that have influenced theories of assimilation/integration and postnationalism. Finally, the study of refugee integration in the Global South draws attention to the symbiotic, albeit asymmetrical, relationship in the world system between major refugee host states and donor states of refugee resettlement—a relationship in which the UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) are the arbitrators and facilitators of refugee movement and containment (Geiger & Pécoud 2010). Human rights norms and supranational governance limit the sovereignty of major refugee-receiving countries (Arar 2017). By taking a relational perspective, scholars are better able to understand global policies, state interests, and refugee experiences.

CONCLUSION

Theoretical and empirical studies of the sociology of international migration evolved primarily from observations of economic migration, which crystallized a canon without fully taking into consideration the case of refugees. This scholarly chasm is further widened by the relatively new field of refugee studies, which does not build upon the scholarly lineage of the sociology of international migration but rather upon the concerns of the UNHCR and advocacy knowledge producers. In this review, we have discussed how the sociology of international migration and refugee studies can mutually benefit each other by stretching theory from both ends.

The path dependency of the distinction between the sociology of migration and refugee studies arose from their different moments of formation in an academy dominated by the Global North. The sociology of migration was formed in a period of relatively open immigration with no need for a special refugee category. The field of refugee studies was born during a period of selective immigration with high enforcement capacity, when classification as a refugee could open the door to resettlement or at least constrain deportation back to one's persecutors. Recognizing the origins of these classificatory struggles is critical to understanding contemporary disputes about the scale of refugee crises, appropriate policy responses, and the suitability of different research tools to understand the phenomenon.

At the same time, realist approaches that try to measure how violence interacts with other factors to propel movement offer lessons for theories of international migration and refugee flows alike. Adapting lessons from existing theories, even economistic approaches that at first blush would not appear apposite, like the new economics of labor migration model, offer a framework for interpreting refugees' household decision making. At a macro level, world systems theory sheds light on the interactive policies around refugees across states of origin, mass hosting, asylum, transit, and resettlement. Lastly, focusing on the integration of refugees in the Global South reveals a common pattern of acculturation combined with blocked political and economic integration. This pattern poses a major challenge to theories of assimilation and citizenship based on unwarranted assumptions of access to political and civil rights.

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