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Refugees and Others Enduring Displacement, Structural Injustice, and Ethical Place-Making

Lisa Eckenwiler and Verina Wild

ABSTRACT: As states persist in conceiving of asylum as a privilege rather than an entitlement, vast numbers of people displaced by conflict, disaster, famine, and dire poverty continue to dwell over long periods of time in conditions of isolation and severe deprivation. In this paper we contribute to the argument that long-term displacement—the fact of it and its management in settings such as refugee camps—is a manifestation of and perpetuates global structural injustice. Along with others we argue that the systems and processes established for addressing displacement: 1) profoundly undermine equal opportunity; 2) contribute to a loss of political community, identity, and agency among displaced people; and 3) obscure privilege from the privileged. All three effects can result in long-term consequences for the displaced population and host societies. We argue that this expansion of opportunities for some and constraint for others constitutes structural injustice on a global scale due to migration movements in and in between countries. The account we offer is distinctive for it foregrounds the significance of *place* in the processes through which structural injustice is unfurled against migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees living in conditions of long-term displacement. At the center of our analysis is a conception of people as ecological subjects, for whom place – understood as more than spatial location – is a key determinant of global structural justice, as it shapes (enables or constrains) people’s experience, identity, health, and capabilities. We argue the ideal and practice of ethical place-making (EPM) has rich potential to respond to structural and global injustice in this context. EPM, understood here as a *remedial* responsibility, can mitigate the harms of encampment and segregation in urban enclaves. At the same time, it can serve as a catalyst in reforming the structures and processes that generate injustices and in forging ties of solidarity. We conclude by clarifying the way that ecological subjectivity grounds responsibilities of justice to displaced people.

Introduction

Around the world currently, over 70 million people are forcibly displaced, most trying to escape war, persecution, disaster, drought, and/or famine (UNHCR 2019). In this paper we pick up on the arguments that 1) the existing international apparatus concerning displaced people, such as asylum-seekers, has contributed to the creation of the new norm of chronic, insecure containment; 2) this state of affairs should be understood through the lens of structural injustice (Parekh, 2016; Schiff, 2018); and 3)

we thus have responsibilities of justice to asylum-seekers and other migrants in the immediate and long-term. Drawing on Iris M. Young's (2000) account of the structural injustice of segregation, work by Hannah Arendt, Serena Parekh, and Kelly Oliver on the plight of refugees and asylum-seekers, and the anthropological research of Michel Agier and others on camp settings and informal settlements, here we add to the understanding of the injustice of chronic displacement and encampment (and the like) and offer a partial remedy. We argue that prevailing conditions: contribute to a loss of political community and identity; radically threaten agency and equal opportunity; and obscure privilege from the privileged. We further maintain that structural injustice in this context involves the moral experience of a loss of place and, then, implacement in inhospitable, deprived, and depraved environs for protracted periods. More responsible, more just, policy and planning around displacement should organize around a conception of people as ecological subjects. We describe these responsibilities in terms of the ideal and practice of ethical place-making, an essential element of an enabling, or capabilities-oriented, conception of justice (Eckenwiler, 2012; 2016). Grounded in an ecological conception of persons, ethical place-making (EPM) sees people as embedded socially and spatially, and enmeshed in structural injustice. It takes account of the ways in which asylum-seekers and others enduring long-term displacement are situated in asymmetrical social, political, and economic structures and relations of power that have contributed to their being uprooted, and that make the current conditions in which they dwell not just unsustainable, but hostile. Constructively, it facilitates the formulation of an account of what ecological subjects generally and refugees particularly need to flourish and to be treated fairly as they await settlement (and eventually within a new given society) – a process from which

all benefit on our account. Presented here as a remedial responsibility, EPM has the potential to mitigate some of the harms of encampment and, at the same time, serve as a catalyst in advancing global structural justice. From the perspective of policy making around refugee reception and resettlement, ethical place-making should serve as a guiding ideal and a principle for the policies and practices of international institutions, states, local government, and civil society.

The Systems for Asylum, Refugee Management, and Segregation

From the international moral consensus that people fleeing their states or otherwise displaced should be protected and assisted came the moral triumphs of the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, 1951). The Convention's principle of non-refoulement holds that a state cannot deport [is obligated to welcome] any person who meets these criteria. The Convention also commits states to treating them in a way that is "as favourable as possible". These two pillars—one strikingly vague—stand as the international community's ethical commitments. There is no obligation for states to assist other states in supporting refugees. While the Refugee Convention covers people with a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, here we explicitly include all refugees, climate refugees, people fleeing disaster, armed conflict, famine, victims of trafficking, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and others suffering under long term displacement, particularly when lived out in camps or other isolated areas. Many displaced people fall outside the scope of the Convention, but are often protected under supplementary or other

regulations. In recent years, a spate of international compacts have been forged including: UN Guiding Principles on Internally Displaced Persons (1998), the UN Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (2019), or the WHO Draft global action plan 2019-2023 on “Promoting the health of refugees and migrants” (2019).

Still the displacement persists, and only grows in frequency and duration.

As things stand, in many instances the international system initially designed for the *protection* of refugees and asylum-seekers operates to perpetuate the disadvantage of the displaced, especially if they are “sheltered” in camps or live in otherwise segregated areas¹ (Parekh, 2016; Wild, 2013). Camps (in the form of transit (aka sorting) centres; cross border points (which are self-organized places of shelter); refugee camps or settlements; IDP camps, etc., can be found in many countries. Millions of refugees are currently dwelling in them as states tighten their borders.

In Germany, for example, refugees are held in state-run camps for months or sometimes years until a decision about their future prospect is made. In Australia refugees are contained in state-run offshore camps on Pacific islands, without the opportunity ever to set foot on Australian soil. The four long-term camps in the Dadaab region at the intersection of Kenya, Somalia, and Ethiopia, are hosting approximately 250,000 refugees, mainly from Somalia. The camps opened as early as 1991, as temporary settlements, but by now many refugees have raised their children and grandchildren on the site. The Kenyan government has announced its intentions to close the camp recently; it has done so before. Zaatari—located in Northern Jordan and providing

¹ In the following we will focus on the effects segregation has on individual refugees. We will not discuss the larger geo-political significance of camps and their potentially negative externalities such as prolongation of civil war (Wood, 2015; Narang, 2015).

refuge to many fleeing from the war in Syria—is another large camp. Dadaab and Zaatari are both run by UNHCR, in collaboration with other international organisations and NGOs.

Refugees who are not hosted in camps often live in slums, or other settlements – primarily in urban areas – that are segregated from the majority population (Guterres and Spiegel, 2012; Lichter et al. 2016; Metcalf et al. 2012). Currently over half of all refugees live in urban settings. Leading scholars predict that refugee and forced migration studies will increasingly be concerned with urban dwellings rather than with life in camps; some maintain that camps should be avoided in the future due to their disadvantages for the refugee populations (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2014; Seeley, 2013). On the other hand, Germany, despite strong criticism, is currently implementing a new system of housing *all* arriving adult refugees in larger camps until a first decision is made (CDU, 2018; BAMF 2018). Altogether the last 25 years have seen an overwhelming increase in frequency, scale and magnitude of humanitarian emergencies, with protracted situations of segregated living spaces for refugees becoming the norm (UNOCHA, 2019; Spiegel, 2017; Fiddian-Oasmiyeh, 2014).

At the same time, due to years of underinvestment, and despite constant calls for resources, financial constraints erode the capacity of humanitarian actors such as UNHCR to meet basic, pressing needs. For the year 2018, The UNOCHA estimated the requirements at 24,9 Billion USD. Only 44% of those were met, leaving 11 Billion USD of humanitarian aid requirements unmet (UNOCHA, 2019). Given the funding gaps UNHCR and other humanitarian aid organisations have endured enormous cuts leading to insufficiencies in food, health services, security, education and other basic needs (Cullen

Dunn, 2015). For example, the World Food Programme frequently is forced to cut food assistance for refugees due to shortage of funding (WFP, 2015). Despite a commitment by the international community to provide school education to all Syrian refugee children, still 1,5 million are without any education. The funding for education is short of 45% below the funding targets (Human Rights Watch, 2017).

In sum, spatial segregation of refugees in minimalist and sometimes harrowing conditions is a notorious phenomenon worldwide, either in the form of humanitarian-run camps, state-operated detention centers or informal urban enclaves isolated from areas where citizens dwell (Refugee Law Project, 2005, Hess et al. 2018).² It is important to underscore that even in settings not formally established by states, it is states who have created the conditions in which migrants dwell, for example, through the establishment of remote extra-territorial zones for pre-empting border arrivals, indeed, exacerbating the humanitarian emergency. The urgency to discuss this phenomenon increases given the long-term nature of modern refugee displacement, constant funding difficulties, and critical resource limitations (UNHCR, 2008; 2009). Soberingly, UNHCR reports that shelter is “one of the most underfunded sectors of humanitarian response“ (IOM for the Global Shelter Cluster, 2018, x). Estimates are that between 2015 and 2018, across all countries, humanitarians received less than 30% of the needed funding.

Segregation and Global Structural Injustice

² The segregation literature discusses how segregation not only occurs in relation to the residence of the refugees, but on multiple scales such as leisure, workplace or social media (Van Ham et al. 2016).

In order to analyze why the situation facing displaced people is so profoundly wrong, and in particular, ought to be understood as global structural injustice, we turn first to Iris Marion Young's account of the injustice of segregation (2000), for "[t]he essence of a refugee camp is separation" (Verdirame and Pobjoy, 2013, 472). The anthropologist Michel Agier (2011, 180) draws on Foucault in describing them as "out-places": "Places of this kind are outside of all place, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality" (Foucault, 1984).

Young points to three key ways in which segregation is wrong and, specifically, serves to perpetrate structural injustice. First, segregation violates the principle of equal opportunity. Second, it erodes political identity and impedes political communication. Third, it obscures privilege from the privileged. When taken all together, segregation produces and reinforces structures of privilege and disadvantage, and over time generates structural injustice.

It takes little argument to show that chronically displaced people suffer from all of these. In the analysis of precisely why and how the segregation and other processes involved in managing displacement reflect and perpetrate global structural injustice, however, we highlight the significance of *place*: how its design, creation, and maintenance as separate, carceral, and bare operate to erode opportunity, social and political life, identity, and contribute to myopia. "Place" on our view encompasses how we interact with and within the material environment socially, assemble and attach particular meanings, and form identities and forge relationships and, corporeally, how we move in it, absorb it, modify and are modified by it (Seamon 2013; Bennett, 2010). In foregrounding place and emplacement as central to justice – and therefore at the same

time, a potent tool in the systematic erosion of equal opportunity, identity and community, and the maintenance of the myopia that helps to sustain it – our argument is grounded in a conception of persons as “place-lings, never without emplaced experiences” (Casey, 2009, 321). In our preferred parlance, we are “ecological subjects”, relational creatures, densely enmeshed in social relations and also spatial locations (Code, 2006).

Inspired by research in social epidemiology and other fields that reveals the many ways in which societal determinants, including place-related factors, help to account for poor health and contribute to health inequities (Marmot and Wilkinson, 2008), ecological subjectivity is a conception of persons and their experience that reckons with the full extent of our interdependence, that is, the reality that social relations and implacement in particular environs and forms of dwelling are integral to our prospects. Place, especially in terms of responsibilities and justice, is of particular significance for migrants as they are in fact “atopos, without place, displaced, unclassifiable. (...) Neither citizen, nor foreigner, nor truly to the side of the Self, nor totally to the side of the Other, he stands in this (...) frontier between social being and social not-being.” (Bourdieu, 1999).

Equality of opportunity

We could enumerate several but here highlight just two key ways equality of opportunity for displaced people is thwarted in comparison to regular citizens: through confinement and gravely diminished health. Because they are assigned to and confined in specific places, often severely constricted spaces, their movements so thoroughly circumscribed, for most people living in camps and other segregated settings is living in an open-air

prison. Kelly Oliver characterizes this as “carceral humanitarianism” (2017). Camps and other places where refugees dwell are not, in most cases, actually prisons but this is how their residents generally experience them, that is, as places whose function is to contain, or “park and guard” (Agier, 2011, 3).

I have the feeling to live in a free prison, that I am voluntarily in prison but that I cannot use my freedom (...) Where we are from we also don't have any rights and only little food, but we have tried to live. And here in Germany we found out that we are human beings and that we have rights, but that makes life in the camp even worse. Because now you know it, but you can't live any more. (Pieper 2008:143)

Segregated asylum-seekers, so implaced, have radically diminished opportunities for participation in a range of social domains, and unequal in comparison to citizens of the country they reside in. As people without the rights of regular residents and citizens, they are, at least temporarily, forbidden to work (e.g. in Australia, Germany, Jordan, USA) and so remain dependent on state or international assistance for lengthy periods of time. Access to education is highly variable and often grossly underresourced in refugee camps, threatening the future prospects of many young children and (e.g. medical) students alike, indeed generations, and in turn, the future capacities of the countries they call home. Children also generally lack access to play areas and suffer from boredom and limited physical activity.

These carceral conditions exist on particular landscapes, natural and material. Not only are displaced people constrained in terms of embodied movement, they are also often located and corporeally embedded in remote, ugly, deprived environs with scant natural resources like water, trees, and green space. Because they are supposed to be temporary, moreover, the material provisions available to people (if any) are often, as Agier puts it, “liquid” (2011, 36). He points to the plasticity and disposability of materials

most often used in camps for things like tents, covers, furniture and sheeting, appropriate for what Peter Redfield refers to as a “minimalist biopolitics” (2013).

Not surprisingly, people in these settings suffer from a range of complex physical and mental health conditions (Bakker, 2016; Tufan et al. 2013). Before or during transit, of course, many have faced food insecurity, violence, fear, torture, loss of loved ones, and other psychological, social and economic conditions that undermine health and deepen health inequities (Acarturk, 2018; Alpak et al. 2015; Wild 2017). If there is access to health services within encampments, it is often restricted to acute medical care. Health services in these settings are not equipped to adequately address chronic or mental health conditions or social determinants of health concerns (Norredam, 2006). The situation in places where displaced people are confined can be extremely dire and threatening to health. In the United States, for example, detention conditions in Customs and Border Patrol facilities at the southern border are widely believed to have led to the death of migrants. Emergency care has not been provided, medications have been confiscated, inappropriate medications administered, abuse of migrants has been documented, and families separated, inflicting trauma on children and parents (USDHS, ICE, 2019). Moreover, although data is still scant and methodologies inconsistent, studies in low-, middle- and high-income countries show how camp-life itself, with limited access to health care, rife untreated PTSD, boredom from monotony, agitation, in addition to the experience or witnessing of rape and violence etc are detrimental to physical and mental health (Hutson et al. 2016; Jabbar and Zaza, 2014; Buckley-Zistel et al. 2014; Silove, 2007). Studies show significantly worse health outcomes for refugees living in the camp in comparison with those living in urban areas (Crea et al. 2015). While methodologically

difficult to correlate, studies on refugees outside of camps who are still living in segregated areas, disconnected to the host community, similarly show the detrimental effect of it especially on mental health (Samarasinghe, 2006). Refugees in camps or in otherwise segregated areas thus lack crucial capabilities to be healthy, which erodes, in turn, their opportunity for a flourishing, self-sustained, and self-determined life (Wild, 2013). Given that health is a meta-capability, necessary for all other capabilities (Venkatapuram, 2011), where it is profoundly threatened, prospects for equality of opportunity may be all but eliminated.

Political identity and expression

Compounding the plight of refugees and other displaced people is the fact that very often they live outside of domestic political processes, formal and informal. As displaced persons they are rendered voiceless and so lack representation and the potential to participate and be protected as citizens (Soguk, 1999; Goppel, 2012). After arrival at the new territory, and settled in places that are not meant to be connected to active political communities, not only do they lose their status and power as citizens or residents, their socio-political voice more generally can be diminished in the absence of communication channels ranging from journalism to artistic expression³.

Hannah Arendt and, more recently, Serena Parekh have argued that forced displacement and encampment harm people through subjecting them to a loss of political community and legal identity, and ultimately, a profound form of suffering Arendt

³ We acknowledge the great efforts and individual successes of current art projects with refugees (See for example, Espiritu and Duong, 2018).

described as “ontological deprivation”. More than just political identity, membership, and legal status, refugees lose belonging—in their own communities and as part of common humanity—and a sense of agency and voice. These felt experiences of expulsion, exclusion, and having agency ignored over time have political *and* ontological significance in eroding political identity and effectively silencing large swaths of humanity and denying them political engagement (Parekh, 2016, 82-3).

We can enrich the understanding of the suffering involved in ontological deprivation by underscoring the significance of place for human existence, flourishing, and identity. For ecological subjects, or place-lings as Casey puts it, a relation to place is constituent of our identities—not just the kinds of creatures we are but also how we understand ourselves. Integral to the ontological deprivation of the long-displaced, then, is a rupture of social and political relations and identities, and *too*, terrestrial interdependence. This is partly a matter of the geographies and landscapes in which we dwell; above all, it concerns the ways we live in relationship to them, and understand ourselves and one another (hooks, 2009; Berry 2012). Dina Nayeri recounts something of this in her essay, “The ungrateful refugee”, as she describes her experience in what became her family’s destination country, the US: “No one ever asked what our house in Iran looked like, what fruits we grew in our yard... No one asked ... if we had any photos of the Caspian Sea” (2017).

Privilege Obscured

Given their segregation, interaction and political engagement with citizens of other countries and even the countries in which they reside is (apart perhaps from social

media networks) severely limited or absent altogether. The plight of displaced people is largely obscured for regular citizens partly due to the physical structure and remote locations of camps and other dwellings. As Michel Agier describes it:

“This world seems to include all available space, the whole breadth of the terrestrial globe... But this totality is no more than a mirage, delicately maintained... The other reality remains invisible, even though its existence is not totally unknown: large parts of the planet are separated off, behind high walls and barriers or across long stretches of sand or water, at the heart of deserts and forests. ... countless camps, kilometres of transit corridors, islands and marine platforms and enclosures in the middle of deserts... each...encircled by walls, barbed wire and electric fences, or imprisoned simply by the dissuasive presence of the emptiness surrounding it. (2011, 1-2)

The built environment, in conjunction with media coverage or its absence, functions to maintain existing relations of power and privilege by denying opportunities for the privileged to be aware of and/or question their advantage or even identities or to interact with displaced people.

In all, these harms suffered by the chronically displaced and segregated serve to deepen their individual disadvantage and ultimately also global structural inequities. The global segregation of asylum-seekers and other migrants, indeed, both reflects and perpetuates global structural injustice, constraining opportunities for them while relatively expanding them for others. As Young explains it: Structural injustice “exists when social processes put large categories of persons under a systematic threat of domination or deprivation of the means to develop and exercise their capacities, at the same time as these processes enable others to dominate or have a wider range of opportunities for developing and exercising their capacities” (2011, 52). The ethical concern is not merely that structures constrain, but the potential to dominate for some,

here regular citizens in stable and secure living conditions with (to varying degrees depending upon the country) opportunities for political, economic and cultural participation, and simultaneous contraction of opportunity for others, in this case people displaced by conflict, persecution, disaster, and climate conditions.

In some cases this may be fully intended by government policies like restrictive immigration policy, and discriminatory actions based on social norms like xenophobia. Crucially, it can also be an *unintentional* result of accepted norms and well-meaning actions. Here, for example, states are pursuing what they see as their self-interest in maintaining all-but-impenetrable borders (Parekh, 2016). Or, humanitarian actors generally have good intentions, yet they are part of a long and fraught institutional history of operating on the basis of oppressive assumptions concerning what is best for people deemed to need assistance (Oliver, 2017). Structural injustice, then, may or may not be perpetrated on purpose; it may even come with a caring face.

An Ethics of the Temporary: Defining Remedial Responsibilities to Refugees

So far we have argued that these “*out-places*”—their spatial location, design and organization, material composition, and scant provisioning—are integral to the apparatus of global structural injustice deployed against displaced people. What then? Parekh maintains that attention on the obligation to resettle refugees has eclipsed concern for ensuring that they live dignified lives while waiting for a resolution. Again drawing on Arendt, she argues for an “ethics of the temporary” (Parekh, 2016, 104) and calls for consideration of *remedial* responsibilities. Absent resolution in the form of being granted asylum and welcomed in a desired destination country or secure repatriation, what do we

owe the displaced? Given the account above, we can at least say that justice demands attention to the ways that the often carceral, bare, and isolated places designed and deployed to manage asylum-seekers, refugees, and other migrants ought to be reconfigured to avoid thwarting and, to the extent possible, advance equal opportunity, political expression, and help overcome the myopia that contributes to injustices. In the following section we argue that justice in context of displacement, especially when it is protracted, calls for ethical place making.

Ethical Place-making

Architects, designers, and planners have taken up a practice called “place-making”, defined as intentionally creating or re-designing parks and paths, housing developments and neighborhoods, features of landscape, hospitals, and long-term care settings (Project for Public Space, 2016; Silerberg, 2013). Organized around the mounting evidence that reveals the radical extent to which we are ecological subjects, embedded and porous beings who absorb and create environments amidst other forms of life and “vibrant matter” (Bennett, 2010), place-making is referenced in key international documents and declarations including the Sustainable Development Goals (2015) and UN Habitat’s New Urban Agenda (2016). It is also being cited as a (not really so) “new frontier” for public health, figuring into the agendas of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

Ethical place-making (EPM) is a core component of an enabling, capabilities-oriented, conception of justice grounded in an ecological conception of persons (Eckenwiler, 2012; 2016). Elsewhere, EPM has been linked to the capability to be

healthy, or health justice (ibid.). Here we enumerate the essential elements of ethical place-making and explore how they might be realized in the context of long-term displacement to address harms of present policy and practice, and advance some measure of remedial justice for asylum-seekers, refugees, and others.

As this discussion proceeds, we highlight the evolution in thinking about shelter and settlement in humanitarian circles generating change in this sector and, to a lesser extent, among state and local governments organizing shelter for displaced people. Responding to accumulated experience and critique, humanitarians have broadened the scope of their mission beyond the “rescue ethic”, that is, temporary (and allegedly paternalistic) “saving” and protection of others, to include strengthening capacity and in some instances setting the foundation for development. The UNHCR *Policy on Alternatives to Camps* (2014) is one important marker. More recently, UNHCR’s Shelter and Settlements Section has formulated a *Master Plan Approach (MPA) to Settlement Planning* organized around a set of Guiding Principles (GP) with distinctly ethical aspirations. The ethical heart of the MPA is a commitment to “provide an enabling environment for...displaced populations” (UNHCR, 2018), in other words, a place for supporting and building people’s capacities. Below we highlight innovations that align with ethical place-making. We argue that, though the efforts of the humanitarian sector are extremely significant in addressing harms and aiming at advancing justice, they should go farther. Specifically, we argue for supporting political expression and communication and an approach to health that aims at health equity for displaced people. Above all, states must do more to address the structural injustice of segregation and reduction to “bare life” (Agamben, 1998) they impose on displaced people.

Now we turn to the elements of ethical place-making and examine how they can align to support equality of opportunity, including bodily integrity and health, and political communication, resist the myopia that maintains privilege, and help spark solidarity and global structural justice.

Bodily integrity

Ethical place-making (EPM) for ecological subjects calls, first, for *ensuring bodily integrity*. This includes the primary goods vital to all people such as food security, physical protection, privacy, and basic health services. All of these can be endangered in isolated and/or overcrowded camps with weak or absent security measures and infrastructure (Hess et al. 2018).

Humanitarians as well as state officials struggle to provide these basic goods as noted earlier given resource constraints. Still, they have become increasingly attentive to the structural and other barriers that thwart equitable access (UNHCR, 2018, 25). Where camps and other settings are remote, for instance, innovators call for designs allowing for schools and food distribution to be more accessible (Elmasry, 2018). For vulnerable populations inside segregated settings, planners are re-thinking the placement of bathrooms and food to reduce gender-based violence and finding ways to make health services more culturally appropriate (IOM for the Global Shelter Cluster, nd; BMFSFJ 2018). This concern for equitable access rightly recognizes that populations have distinct needs and aims at addressing intersecting structural barriers that harm bodily integrity, human flourishing and health and ultimately amount to complex health injustices for members of marginalized groups prior to displacement and within humanitarian settings.

Vexing questions remain concerning what we might call the humanitarian “standard of care” owed to people in need of assistance. The humanitarian moral *modus operandi*, i.e., the rescue ethic, has been criticized as it potentially obscures background conditions of justice prior to “natural” disasters (which should be “de-naturalized”). The perpetuation of inequities in humanitarian interventions has led to calls for medical humanitarians to adopt a “comprehensive approach” (Chung, 2012). This involves situating a population within a global context prior to a crisis and then also acutely, and assessing how structural injustice generates health inequities locally. Response to a crisis should then be organized in a manner that avoids perpetuating not only acute harms but also such structural injustices. Where the humanitarian emergency is not an earthquake in Haiti or Pakistan, but the now-chronic problem of protracted displacement, and states—the primary agents of justice in most instances—persist in imposing barriers to migrants and refugees, humanitarian and development actors become the “second best agents of justice” in advancing global health equity (Rubenstein, 2007). A comprehensive approach, thus, also calls for humanitarians—in partnership with other NGOs working over a longer temporal horizon—to intentionally transition toward capacity-building and sustainability, with overcoming structural injustices and achieving global health equity as the long-term objectives.

On our view, to be clear, it is *states*, at least those where such schemes are possible, who should be supporting bodily integrity of migrants, including access to health insurance and services for physical and mental health, and addressing social determinants of health (UNHCR, 2012; Wild, 2015; Wild et al. 2017). Global funding of such efforts is needed in countries that cannot sustain these services.

Nurturing care and interdependence

EPM involves *nurturing relations of interdependence and care involving both people and place*. In the context of displacement, attending to the trauma of protracted and ongoing separation and loss of family, community, and in the most comprehensive sense possible, place, is essential. Finding ways to nurture a sense of belonging while still supporting people’s hopes for a destination country or repatriation demonstrates care (Valentine, Sporton and Nielsen, 2009). Interventions focused on the creation of “therapeutic landscapes” that aim specifically at displaced children are an example (Denov and Akeeson, 2013). Through re-cultivating cultural traditions, building social networks, and creating safe places, ethical place-making can help respond to loss and trauma and help encourage a sense of stability. Wherever possible, universal design and “liquid” materials should be modified to create more culturally appropriate, welcoming environs (UNHCR Global Strategy 2014). Supporting caregivers—of children, elders, disabled people, and others—is another overlooked crucial aspect of nurturing the inherent interdependence of ecological subjects, especially as encampments confront long-term care and the needs of people with disabilities.

Within the scope of this element of EPM is concern for landscape and the relationship of displaced populations to the environment. Thinking ecologically, UNHCR lists this as a principle consideration in the UNHCR (2019), asserting that “environmental considerations drive design,” and citing six other GPs that concern contextual features such as drainage and road infrastructure, site carrying capacity, and most notably, incremental property tenure. The latter has potential implications for other elements of

EPM discussed below, transformative autonomy and equity. We would also emphasize the importance of green space, access to clean water, the ability to cultivate land and have animals, if possible and if this is part of the migrants' desired life plans.

Transformative autonomy

Ethical place-making should *support transformative autonomy*. For human beings as ecological subjects, the notion of individual self-reliance is nonsensical. We define transformational autonomy therefore in the relational sense, as emerging and thriving within relations of social and ecological interdependence, given opportunities for self-directed thought, action, and evolution. For asylum-seeking populations, autonomy seems especially complex. People who have navigated the perils of migration and perhaps detention and encampment are often exemplars of self-determination (Feldman, 2018; Yet many are fragile: trauma, longing, temporal disorientation, hopelessness, despair and depression about life in camps or urban slums are poignant themes of refugee accounts (Agier, 2011; Wild, 2013; Nayeri, 2017).

Refugee camps – and the stakeholders who establish them – have been notorious for at best assuming fragility and at worst inferiority and in any case a paternalistic posture toward displaced people. On the other hand, anthropological research has highlighted the ways in which the “ecology of social life” in camps and similar settings can sometimes be generative, spawning social, economic and political transformation (Agier¹⁴²; 172; Feldman, 2018). In response to this and longstanding critiques of humanitarianism's imperialism and paternalism, the UN High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection officially acknowledged the limitations of the “long-term care and

maintenance” strategy and committed to emphasizing approaches organized around “self-reliance” and “local” strategies (UNHCR, 2018). This has been made manifest in two major ways: engagement of displaced populations in planning and “livelihoods” strategies.

Although it does not appear in the MPA’s GPs, UNHCR’s Global Strategy for Settlement and Shelter cites as GP #7 “Community Empowerment”. The principle calls for affected populations to participate in nearly all aspects of shelter and settlement planning, construction, maintenance, monitoring and evaluation. A recently issued series of case studies on shelters and settlements found community engagement to be an emerging strength in humanitarian responsiveness (IOM for the Global Shelter Cluster, 2018). This aspiration toward respecting and nurturing autonomy among displaced people holds significant potential for resisting structural injustice in the organization of shelter.

The current primary strategy for supporting autonomy among displaced people is the “livelihoods” approach, which integrates both humanitarian and development strategies (Jacobsen, 2006). Advocates applaud the livelihoods approach as an “enabling” policy framework for its support of self-reliance through access to work (Crawford et al. 2016). Reference to “livelihoods” is ubiquitous in humanitarian literature concerning shelter for displaced populations, especially those located in urban areas. UNHCR’s MPA emphasizes this and “economic inclusion” under its GP#6, “Providing an enabling environment” (2018). Few governments have supported it, yet some have eased restrictions on the movement and employment of asylum-seekers and allowed them to hold work permits.

While we recognize the necessity of economic inclusion, we have hesitations about the emphasis on the livelihoods strategy and the assumptions motivating it. To the extent that the livelihoods approach is linked to a rhetoric that suggests displaced people create “negative externalities” for host societies (thwarting economic growth, adding to congestion and degradation, and threatening security) and that these strategies will offset them (Zetter, 2014), they reflect assumptions belied by evidence that can disrespect and insult migrants. Furthermore, we think the rather neoliberal, market-oriented emphasis on economic agency should be resisted in favor of one more closely aligned with an ecological conception of persons. This would mean following the prescriptions set out here. Livelihoods strategies also stand to perpetuate injustice if they are structured in ways that channel them into exploitative work opportunities (Koch, 2015).

In support of transformative autonomy, ethical place-making calls for going farther, in particular to help address structural barriers to political communication for refugees and supporting their political engagement in destination countries and the countries they have left. These barriers clearly include the geographical place of camps, like the proximity to meetings, or the infrastructure in camps such as billboards and info points. We interpret political communication broadly to include art, journalism and social media activity along with other more non-traditional forms of expression and the right to vote. Research reveals that there is considerable political activity in settings of displaced people, including the formation of new political communities and solidarities (Feldman, 2018; Agier, 2011). But formal support for participation and expression is often absent or even actively suppressed (Hess et al. 2018). This is due, perhaps, to the historical orientation toward crisis-response in addition to the humanitarian principle of neutrality.

But if displaced people are ever to return to the places from which they came, they will have to work toward the restoration of political communities and functioning governments. Moreover, supporting political expression and disseminated communication can help mitigate the myopia that contributes to structural injustice and advance global justice (Espiritu and Duong, 2018).

Rooted freedom of movement

Ethical place-making for ecological subjects requires some measure of *stability and rootedness and, at the same time, the opportunity for free and fluid movement*. If encamped, for example, EPM with the aim to improve structural injustices calls for as little restriction as possible on people's movements within these settings. In addition to the severe mobility constraints imposed by segregation and carceral designs and operations, multiple "geographies" can be traced inside their boundaries that are relevant to EPM and justice, including that of: international humanitarian organizations (IHOs); policing agencies; locals working for IHOs; and camp residents. Traditionally, Agier suggests, camps are designed around a "geography of fear" that can serve to restrict residents' movement and therefore equality of opportunity. Among the latter two groups, even more distinctive geographies can be identified. Women, for example, sometimes design pathways to avoid harassment and violence (Hyndman, 2000, 92). EPM directs attention to such concerns and to the ways the "geography of humanitarian assistance", even where not organized around fear, can serve to perpetuate gender and no doubt other inequities, e.g. in relation to disabilities, within segregated settings (Hyndman, 2000, 98 – 110).

This element of EPM, furthermore, demands creating the conditions that enable people to move beyond the confines of camps and enclaves in order to access services and a wider range of social opportunities, including social interaction and work. In and around urban areas especially, political efforts—partnerships mostly between humanitarians and government (often local, urban) officials—aim at developing accommodating legal frameworks in urban planning and development, for example, or insurance schemes, in host and would-be destination countries. The Settlement Planning MPA’s leading GP for example, asserts, “National legislation, policies and plans provide a framework for settlement design” (UNHCR, 2018, 14); the *High Commissioner’s Dialogue on Protection Challenges 2018: Protection and solutions in urban settings*, is centered around working with city leaders to help integrate displaced people in policy and planning schemes (UNHCR, 2018).

This has been centered around economic inclusion and “livelihoods” so far. But UNHCR argues for intentionally designing multiple services (education, health, and other) around an ideal of shared use by host and displaced communities where possible for the sake of “facilitating peaceful co-existence and ultimately integration” (2018, 27). For this to work, EPM should develop ways to address discrimination and stigmatization against displaced people in unfamiliar and sometimes hostile environs they need to navigate (Crawford et al. 2016, 31-3).

This element of EPM may be the most essential in the effort to overcome myopia, enable global solidarity, and advance global justice (Brun, 2010). Describing an urban place-making project aimed at re-connecting fractured neighborhoods and relationships [in this case with people and the Harlem River] spawned by racially-motivated

segregation (proven by public health researchers to harm health) one planner writes: “[creating] crosswise threads enables solidarity, and fundamental to solidarity is the free system of movement...” (Fullilove, 2013, 164).

We have argued that EPM should be prioritized among other efforts aimed at remedial justice for people enduring protracted containment in “out-places”. EPM has the potential to respond to many of the harms done under current conditions of segregation and scarcity, and advance global structural justice. Rather than using place to undermine equal opportunity, agency and political expression, and eliminate the possibility of interaction, understanding, and solidarity, EPM creates conditions that uprooted and unsettled—enduringly displaced—ecological subjects are due. It is an ideal and a practice that should guide the efforts of states, humanitarians, and funders.

As a final point, we hasten to add that we do not wish to be understood as arguing in support of ghettos. As we noted above, strategies should aim at resisting and overcoming this severely consequential myopia and isolation. Schemes such as unrestricted movement, work permits, and shared education and use of health services described earlier, may be the most important among place-making strategies for displaced people. The interaction such strategies enable can serve as a catalyst for relationships wherein people forge ties of solidarity and create more inclusive, just migrant policies.

Objections and Grounding Responsibilities

We will not respond to the myths promulgated by nationalists that migrants present burdens in terms of the economy and health. Both have been resoundingly rejected in

light of abundant evidence (UCL Lancet Commission, 2017). We also reject arguments that assume global economic scarcity, accepting instead the view that scarcity is socially constructed (Schrecker, 2008).

In response to the nationalist argument that states bear no responsibilities for non-citizens, we, first of all, agree with those who argue that dense social connections between people around the world are pre-political (Young, 2011). Moreover, we are related to the harms others suffer. We agree, indeed, with those who invoke a Youngian, relational, or social connection conception of global structural justice concerning responsibilities to asylum-seekers, refugees, and other migrants: all who contribute to the structures and processes that generate injustice have responsibilities (Parekh, 2016, Heilinger 2020). Our reasoning diverges slightly, however, given our emphasis on place.

On our view, which again rests on a conception of people as ecological subjects, reckoning with our radically relational nature calls for more than appreciating the ways we are constituted socially and not just connected but indeed, *constitutive* of one another; it also involves understanding that we shape our own and each others' environs. As Code puts it, ecological subjects are “made by and making [our] relations in [asymmetrical] reciprocity with other subjects *and with...multiple, diverse locations* [emphasis ours]” (128).” Seeing not just identities but also place in relational terms, as geographers explain it, “highlights the multiplicity of locations as well as the variety of interactions between people who are located differently that go into making places” (Raghuram, Madge, Noxolo, 2009, 8). Young also alludes to this in her analysis of responsibilities for residential segregation: because we “dwell together” in “complex, causal” relations of interdependence, we have responsibilities to one another on her account (2000, 224).

Recognizing ourselves and all people as ecological subjects, albeit differently situated, better equips us for accepting responsibilities for our contributions (however unintentional and indirect, through various processes and practices carried out even across distance) to the creation and sustenance of isolated and desperate places in which displaced people dwell (Eckenwiler 2018).

To advance global structural justice for the displaced while they wait, humanitarians and their donors, and above all, governments operating at all levels should prioritize ethical place making. Specifically, they should transform existing processes and create innovative ones to organize shelter around supporting political expression and communication, ensuring health, educational, and economic equity, and advancing integration.

Conclusion

“There is,” it is argued, “an urgent need to focus on securing an adequate quality of asylum as a means of responding to protracted displacement, and not just on ‘solutions’” (Long, 2011, 11). In this paper we have contributed to the discussion of what is owed in the immediate term to the chronically displaced, a population whose experience we have analyzed through the lens of place, segregation, and structural injustice. Societies, in addition to other actors in the humanitarian-development nexus, with resources, powers, and privileges capable of supporting these essential conditions should embrace ethical place-making as the ideal and practice best equipped to respond effectively to the harms of segregation, address myopia, and promote justice for people enduring displacement as they await resolution and settlement. Through the relations of

solidarity that can be generated through ethical place-making, there is still further potential for global structural justice for asylum-seekers and other vulnerable migrants.

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