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Call for Papers/Feedback
Dear Reader,

The climax of human conflict is expressed in war. The effects of war reach far beyond the front lines of battle fields. Soldiers, civilians, and societies as a whole on all sides of a conflict may experience deep and penetrating change as a result of armed conflict. The sweeping spectrum of change can range from dramatic improvements to mechanical, technological, medical, and political advances to complete devastation, slow and painful destruction, and absolute demoralization. War reshapes societies faster than any other process experienced by human beings. The very fabric of social reality can be torn to pieces and woven back together in ways previously unimaginable to those living through the process. For some, a social reality can be completely eradicated, while for others social cohesion can be refined and fortified to impenetrable strength. This special edition of Social Dialogue has provided an opportunity for a diverse exploration of the effects of war on society. I hope this edition will generate further discussions about all aspects of the effect of war on society. While a limited number of pages restricts the breadth and depth of topics presented, I hope that enough questions are raised to inspire further exploration of this important issue.

We begin this edition with two pieces authored by veterans of the United States military. The first, written by Dan Powers, highlights the experience of a soldier who has served in several of the most recent American combat operations and focuses on the experience of returning and reintegrating into society. The second, written by Professor Lawrence Trite who is a Vietnam War combat veteran, also explores the experience of soldiers returning home from war by considering similarities between recent American wars and those experienced by the ancient Greeks.

A theme that emerged in several papers that we received is represented by the next three articles. The first, written by Professor Julie Stewart, explores some of the benefits associated with Guatemalan refugee displacement with regard to gains in social and political capital. Dr. Stewart devoted a significant amount of time working with displaced individuals and a piece of her insightful research is shared with us here.

Continuing on the theme of individuals displaced as a result of armed conflict, Barbara Heninger’s article draws from her personal experience working with Iraqi refugees in Salt Lake City. Her article pays particular attention to mental health concerns while offering practical solutions to help refugees successfully integrate into their new lives.

The third article under the umbrella of displaced persons was written by Wendi Whittaker who also worked closely with refugees in the Salt Lake City area. As a result of her experiences, she is able to offer suggestions on how the University of Utah in particular can engage and offer assistance to newly arrived refugees. The previous two papers were both written by students who dedicated many hours and tireless effort to working with refugees in Salt Lake City. Their efforts are commendable and I am pleased to be able to include so many articles which were inspired and informed by the authors’ hands-on experiences.

This edition is concluded with an article written by Jennifer Givens in which the relationship between military and the environment is explored. Specific attention is paid to the relationship between militarization and ratification in the Kyoto Protocol.

I hope that readers are able to consider new perspectives and also explore questions raised by each of these pieces. I would like to invite responses and feedback in order to continue this ‘social dialogue’. I would also like to express my gratitude to the students and professors who contributed excellent work and made this special edition possible. A special thanks to Sophie Nathenson, Jessica Winitzkie, Nekehia Quashie, and Marti Morris whose dedicated efforts made this edition possible. Many thanks as well to Dan Powers whose assistance was integral to the completion of this project.

Sincerely,

Daniel Poole

Editor
Returning From War: The Reception and Perception of Heroes

Dan Powers

Introduction

I hope that bringing this special edition together will facilitate real conversation about the issues that veterans, especially combat veterans, face when they attempt to re-integrate into society, particularly in an on-campus setting. Returning from conflict zones, my perspective has always been different when I returned than it was before my most recent trip. There are a number of physiological and psychological difficulties faced by those who return from war. This is meant to serve merely as an introduction and provide some thoughtful points to the general conversation of how we can help veterans reintegrate successfully.

Returning From War, Readjustment

Unfortunately the multi-volume Studies in Social Psychology of World War II (1949), produced by the War Department and Princeton University Press, was only a study conducted of active ‘in service’ members. In chapter 13, The Soldier becomes a Veteran, it states the following, “Detailed study of the veteran, was outside the scope of the Research Branch and hence falls outside the scope of these volumes” (Stouffer et al. 1949: 596).

One of the most difficult changes for those who have served is returning to a world where threats and violence are far less a part of daily reality, and sensitivity to those pressures has a negligible impact on immediate survival. It is an immediate change that is stark and noticeable the first day. There is also the challenge of adjusting one’s own sense of how to interact with others. Probably the most common hurdle is highlighted by the inevitable comment offered by nearly everyone who ever knew you before you went to whatever place, ‘You seem different’. Certainly you feel different, but you are brought back to a reality that you have changed in some way, and people you have known for many years or your whole life notice that something has changed. Now as the person returning, you have yet another not so small stress to worry about.

What is a ‘Hero’? Reconciling Combat Actions, Morality, and Personal Beliefs

It is never an easy thing to return from war. I have done it more than once, and each instance has its own specific flavor and nuance. In my personal experience, I found accepting the “hero’s welcome” difficult. War is an ugly business, and it is one of the saddest of the human conditions. Once you have seen war with your own eyes, you realize why people literally run away from war. Coming back from my first post 9-11 trip complete with band, reporters, cameras, and a welcome home speech by some General, I found myself wishing for a return to the subtle disembarking of the plane with no one waiting at the dimly lit hangar on the far side of the airfield. That scenario was the most common return from events during the 1990’s. After the first time, it seems as routine as anything else, even as ‘routine’ as being shot at.

Veterans who served would like to know that the public appreciates the hardships and sacrifices that were made on their behalf. What veterans are left to wrestle with is that almost none of the work was grand or glorious. The work was necessary. Most of this work goes against the very ideals we cherish in our society, exemplified by phrases such as ‘life is valuable’, ‘violence is bad’, and so on. To conduct the work of war requires the dehumanization of your adversary and immunity to emotional responses. In war, only mission
objectives and operational goals have attached value. People get hurt and friends die. People die without explanation or reason. A soldier’s mission may not allow them to help people who need help, like civilians who are just unlucky and in the way of the fighting. For many, to have a person or a group publicly call you a hero, it is not a compliment. Reality is far more complicated for combat veterans. For some, there is a desire to remain anonymous, due to our own feelings that what we did on those trips was not meant to be a vehicle to fame or recognition. There is a genuine tendency to avoid any attention. Many veterans completely withdraw from society altogether. It has little to do with us seeing ourselves as good or bad. Aside from the bravado and propaganda of a respective commander’s speeches, the quiet and subtle returns were always the easiest in my own experience. Actually ‘getting’ home brings such a myriad of strange emotions. It seems better suited to not have cameras and families present making a big deal out of it.

In 2002 and 2003, coming back felt like returning from a war. In the 1990’s returning from the places of thirty-second sound bites felt more surreal. One day you woke up and were just home. The two returns are certainly a contrast to each other. Although the military has done a better public relations job of saying that soldiers needing help can get it without negative impacts to their respective careers, it does not mean that the culture inside the military has changed. In reality, if a soldier asks for help it is usually the end of their career. Even after military service, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), carries considerable social stigma. This contributes to veterans having a strong desire to suppress inclinations to seek help. Evidence does not support the idea that those currently serving in the military are ‘psychologically troubled’ nor statistically predisposed to mental illness. These type of accusations remain leveled by popular news sources in response to spiking suicide rates and attempts to have open discussions about the psychological impacts of recent conflicts. Percentages of “combat-related” PTSD range from 2-17%, according to one study last year (Richardson et al. 2010). These percentages are consistent with rates of diagnosis from earlier conflicts. Rates of depression have been measured ranging from 50-70% among returning veterans (Hoge 2004). These numbers do not help in identifying the specific indicators of exposure to specific clinical diagnoses (Stouffer 1950).

A recent exhaustive study suggests that as many as two in three returning veterans from Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) are likely to meet the criteria for clinical diagnoses of PTSD, Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) (which is often sustained through multiple or prolonged exposures to explosive blasts), severe depression, or a combination of these. One of the diagnostic problems is that many of the symptoms overlap multiple diagnoses (Tanielian and Jaycox 2008). The same study estimates that in a best-case scenario, only 53% will receive minimally adequate care.

Social Support Structures, Lessons, and Dangers From the Past to the Present

During WWII, most men of service age served in one capacity or another. When these veterans returned they already had a support structure in place - at their place of employment, their church, their respective neighborhood (McGuire and Powers 2008). The percentage of the general population, post 9-11, which serves in any “Active” or “Reserve” component of the military is less than 2% of the total population. There is no longer an automatically built-in social support structure. As argued there is a direct correlation between the number of everyday people who serve in the military and subsequent combat related PTSD diagnoses (McGuire and Powers 2008). Having a basis of understanding to a veteran’s experience provides a critical alternative to seeking mental health treatment. Sometimes it is enough to know the person you are talking to served just part-time. In the years after WWII, the social support network was pre-made and existed everywhere. Everyday supplies and food were rationed at home. This may have demonstrated a sense of equal sharing of burden (Leff 1991).

After the Vietnam War, the phrase “Vietnam Syndrome” became the watchword in the collective American psyche. In 1991, after the signing of the agreement that remnants of Iraqi forces move out of Kuwait, it was declared that America had beaten Vietnam Syndrome. However, the problem of the perception still exists. Two books that came to symbolize the Vietnam war experience and its psychological aftermath are Achilles in Vietnam (Shay 1994) and Odysseus in America (Shay 2002). The blockbuster films Apocalypse Now (1979) and Platoon (1986) portray all veterans as troubled and psychologically broken. While some veterans have difficulty in readjusting, they are not
morally corrupted or sociopaths. Less than 2% of the current American population serves in uniform, let alone serve in combat where the percentage drops to 0.1% (US Census Bureau 1940, 1950, 2000; See Also Hoge 2004: 18-20, Tables 2-4).

Moving Forward

In the Fall of 2009, a record number of veterans, in the tens of thousands, returned to colleges and universities to undertake or return to their formal education after service in uniform, taking advantage of the new post 9-11 GI Bill. This, coupled with my own knowledge of hundreds of veterans on my own campus, motivated me to attempt to find a way to applaud the successes and highlight some of the hurdles that veterans face returning to school, re-integrating into society, and finding direction after their service. Veterans bring a large breadth of valuable experience and knowledge back to the classroom. Whether in the sciences, culture studies, or humanities they are usually focused and motivated. They also bring with them uncommon hurdles.

It does seem that people generally want to help. The obvious barrier is that neither the veteran nor those trying to help really understands how they can help. In a promising trend, some universities and colleges have adopted a veterans resource center, which acts as the primary liaison between veterans on campus and the school. One example is the Veterans Resource Center at the University of New Mexico, established in 2009. While definitive results are still too early to measure, early indicators are good. Continued innovations and attention will prove to be of benefit for everyone. Ignoring or summarily dismissing these problems will not help to improve the situation. Having honest discussions will help to improve the reintegration efforts for veterans and those around them. Successful reintegration provides benefits for society and helps to improve the quality of the workforce. Often it is merely a matter of connecting the right people together to create innovation and change for the better.

References


Author Bios

Dan Powers served in the US Army for several years. He has served in several operations spanning most of the globe including Latin America, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and the Middle East with the 82nd Airborne, Special Forces, NATO forces, and Joint Task Forces. His research focuses on ancient warfare, PTSD, and Veterans Issues. Powers has spent time with the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, and has been accepted to pursue his Ph.D. in Ancient History at the University College Dublin in Dublin Ireland.

Dr. Lawrence Tritle is Professor of History at Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles. He has previously taught at Loyola University, Chicago and UCLA as visiting Professor of History. He is the author or editor of eight books on Greek history, including From Melos to My Lai (2000), as well as numerous articles on various aspects of the ancient world. As a 1st LT in the US Army Infantry, he served in Vietnam in 1970/1 in the Mekong Delta for which service he earned the Combat Infantryman’s Badge, Bronze Star, and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry. Tritle’s research interests now focus in the field of ancient Greek history and comparative war and violence.
In 1925 Ernest Hemingway published “Soldier’s Home,” a classic story of the alienation of the returning soldier - his inability to love, his inability to find meaningful work. Echoes of Hemingway abound across time and culture: (North) Vietnamese veteran and author Bao Ninh’s powerful story of war and survival is little different from the testimony of the fifth century BC Greek philosopher Gorgias, who tells of men disabled physically and psychically (Tritle 2009). Contemporary newspapers report the same of the post-Iraq, post-Afghanistan generation of young Americans. While these may not at first see themselves in these stories, a close reading will reveal the connections with little doubt.

Life after war is not easy, as Hemingway, Bao Ninh, and so many other authors make clear. Some Vietnam vets, for example, were in fact spit on, while others were tarred with epithets like “baby-killer,” “rapist.” Other vets, like those in the US after the Civil War, went west where they helped create a lifestyle of mayhem and violence the repercussions of which rebound today. But perhaps the commonest experience for veterans and those who come into contact with them is a black-hole of silence - not terribly different than that depicted in Stephen King’s story The Langoliers - being invisible to those around them in the World.

This same silence extends to talking. In her thoughtful and compassionate study Vietnam Wives, Aphrodite Matsakis refers to the “no-talk rule,” and the many wives who refer to their husbands as “icemen.” This too finds common ground in other generations, as my mother did on reading Vietnam Wives and seeing her story enmeshed with that of my father, a World War II aviator. Not only do many veterans not talk about war, but of intimacy - with their wives- and of cool, difficult, relations with their children. These things were experienced too not only after the great wars of the twentieth century, but long before as Lady Hotspur makes clear in her plea to her husband Harry to talk to her (W. Shakespeare, Henry IV, Part One, act 2, sc. 3, ll. 40-62). But if there is one giant difference between those veterans and those of today, it is that the homecoming is warmer, that the level of understanding is greater than at any time before.

But this wall of silence that moves, even frightens perhaps, Lady Hotspur, and which Aphrodite Matsakis explores, has its origins in the barrier between veterans and non-veterans, especially those who, to borrow that old term from the US Civil War, “have seen the elephant.” Veterans will always think that non-veterans won’t and can’t “get it” - that unless you’ve been there you can’t understand the things they might tell of having seen and done. As a consequence, survivors and perpetrators of violence too frequently keep quiet, which, in my view, so encourages and contributes to the ongoing cycle of war and violence.

It is this silence that makes so important the voices of the survivors of violence. Of these there are many, but those founding fathers of dramatic literature, the Greek dramatists, are especially noteworthy. Some time in the middle years of the Peloponnesian War (c. 424-418 BC), the Athenian dramatist Euripides staged his play of the homecoming of the greatest of Greek heroes, Heracles. As so often with Attic drama, the playwright tinkered with the traditional storyline and made it clear that Heracles was not returning from his famous labors, but rather “from the war.” Thoughtful members of the audience would have picked up at once that Euripides was speaking to them of their own homecoming from far-off campaigns - that the issues being explored before them were real and were as much about their own lives and war-related traumas as with any mythic hero. This
Euripides expresses with dramatic clarity. Finding his family in mortal danger threatened by a local tyrant, Heracles intervenes quickly and brutally, killing the tyrant before he can act. But the violence pushes Heracles over the edge - he loses control and kills as quickly those dearest to him, his wife and children (see further Trite 2010).

Today there remain critics and scholars who imagine that Euripides has created a sort of psychological thriller, who would not take the time to connect the play to the on-going trauma and terror of the Peloponnesian War. Such an interpretation ignores classicist (and World War I combat soldier) Victor Ehrenberg’s reminder that the poet is not only an artist but also a contemporary and eternal voice (Ehrenberg 1954: 6-7), as well as the wartime realities that Euripides and his fellow Athenians faced. This could be demonstrated many times over, but the Ft. Bragg murders of 2002 in which in a month’s time four Army wives were killed by their husbands returning “from the war” (in this case Afghanistan) provides but one real-life tragic counterpart to Euripides’ drama.

Since 1996 I have been actively engaged in making connections between the realities of war, be it Vietnam, World War II, or Iraq, and the complementary literary and historical experience of ancient Greece. In part this has been a personal mission. As a Vietnam combat veteran (1970/1) I know too well the difficulties veterans have in telling their stories: in expressing the alienation they sense in the company of non-veterans; their guilt in surviving when friends did not; their alienation they sense in the company of non-veterans; their guilt in surviving when friends did not; their contradictory love and hate of war and violence; their reliance on alcohol and drugs to enable them to cope with life - these being just a few of the problems that weigh upon the veteran population (further Shay 1994, Trite 2000).

Homer and all three dramatists, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, have assisted me in the classes I teach in making clear these connections. From time to time I have invited into my classes veterans to listen to student reports on Homer and the dramatists. The veterans, sometimes accompanied by therapists or social workers, share with students their thoughts on the issues the poets were trying to explore. While this gives a sense of reality to the literature, it also aids the veterans in breaking free from their own self-imposed isolation, to see that their guilt is no less self-imposed, to try and understand why men kill.

In addition to these classroom situations, I have also assisted in the development of several related public outreach programs in Los Angeles and California. In 1989/90 I participated in the development of a program funded by the California Council for the Humanities that organized programs on the Vietnam War in California public libraries. In 2008/9 I assisted in another program funded by the California Council for the Humanities that presented a series of dramatized veterans’ stories in a theatrical setting (performances took place in July, October and November 2009).

Two ideas provided the structure to these presentations: first, to enable veterans of different wars to see that their problems and experiences are common to all veterans; second, to instruct, in effect, the wider population of the pain that veterans as survivors of violence live with on a daily basis.

There can be little question that such dramatic presentations (including also the forthcoming second phase of Page & Stage, a program [planned for 2010/11] presenting performances of ancient Greek drama focusing on veterans’ homecomings, directed by Prof. Peter Meineck of New York University) resonate with the wider public today and certainly veterans and their families. Homer’s Odysseus breaks into tears on hearing the story of Troy and reflecting on those friends who, as the veterans would say, didn’t make it back; on another occasion he explodes with merciless rage in defending what is his and the woman he loves (issues explored by Shay 2002). In 1998 and the release of Saving Private Ryan, newspapers in the US and Germany carried stories of veterans tearfully emerging from theaters; documenting the ease with which veterans can turn to violence (a good deal of it self-inflicted) could be readily verified simply by googling “veterans and violence.”

Among the surviving dramas of classical Athens, the war plays of Euripides - Andromache, Hecuba, Trojan Women, as well as Heracles - offer themes that would, in my view without doubt, resonate with contemporary audiences and members of the veteran population. Not only do we see the violence of the returning soldier and the issue of suicide (Heracles), but also the varied impact of war on women (Andromache, Hecuba, Trojan Women). Additionally, it might be argued that no one thinks more about war than veterans, which explains the number of times Euripides explores the fundamental issue: why war? what drives men to fight and die? (see the Euripidean war plays cited above but also, Euripides’ Orestes and especially, his Helen, all available in Grene and Lattimore 1959).
Euripides was not alone in exploring the impact of war on those who fought and those who waited at home. His older contemporary Sophocles also reflected on these issues. In *Ajax*, he not only explored issues of shame and suicide, but also the constant potential for violence among veterans, themes which movie-goers have seen recently in such Iraq War films as *In the Valley of Elah* (2008) and *Stop-Loss* (2008). In the same vein his play *Philoctetes* reveals the plight of the war wounded and survivors’ guilt. Within the last several years this play has been staged before audiences of West Point cadets and Iraq War veterans whose empathetic reactions were reported in the *Los Angeles Times* (August 15, 2008) and *New York Times* (September 19, 2008).

The Greek philosopher Heraclitus once remarked, rightly I think, that “war is the father of all things.” It is this universal experience of war that allows for dramas produced in democratic Athens to reach out and speak to audiences in another democratic society twenty-five hundred years later. No less important to note is the universal experience of the returning soldier, and how the realities he or she faces on returning to the “World” are little different over the millennia and across culture.

**References**


What War is Good For: An Exploration of How Wartime Displacement Can Promote Community Development

Julie Stewart, Ph.D.

Introduction

A general consensus exists between social scientists concerning violent conflict and development: the former is not good for the latter. Scholars from diverse fields – including economics, sociology and political science – agree that wars are a major obstacle to development (Cain 2007; Collier 1999a, 2003; Dreze 2000; Gamberale 2008; Murdoch and Sandler 2002; Scheetz 2002). Via death and displacement, wars severely diminish the labor pool able to generate income. War also destroys physical infrastructure, disrupts communication and transportation, encourages capital flight and discourages foreign investment. This is even more pronounced for civil wars, where losses on both sides of a conflict are contained within a single nation-state. Put simply, civil war is “development in reverse” (Collier 2003: ix).

Similarly, experts often paint a singular portrait of refugees, those internationally displaced by conflict or war. Journalists and scholars commonly depict refugees as quintessential victims, with a particular focus on powerless and passive women and children (Eastmond 2007; Rajaram 2002). They are helpless vessels waiting to be filled with well-intentioned humanitarian aid (Malkki 1995). Deprived of citizenship rights and autonomy, refugees embody the brutality of war.

But the reality is more complicated. Currently, there are 42 million forcibly displaced people worldwide, with 15.2 million of those classified as refugees under the protection of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR 2008). Without discounting the pain, suffering and devastation that most refugees have experienced, this study seeks to move beyond what Indra (2000) calls the “canonical grid” of refugee studies. Refugees are more than “acted-upon” products of larger forces (Lubkemann 2000). Even in the most tragic circumstances, they can shape their own lives by demonstrating courage, resourcefulness and adaptability (Van Houte & Davids 2008). Refugees have individual motivations; they can strategize, respond to opportunities that accompany their status as international refugees and build upon these choices following displacement. This research answers the call for more studies of refugee agency (Lubkemann 2000; Indra 2000).

Accordingly, this study on Guatemalan refugee experiences moves beyond many national-level narratives of war and refugees on two dimensions: time and place. In terms of time, it explores refugee experiences well after displacement, once the immediate danger that caused people to flee their country has passed. In terms of place, this study “scales down” to the level of communities and individuals. By focusing on the individual and community experiences of forcibly displaced Guatemalans, this research not only excavates agency, but also delineates the positive outcomes of physical displacement. This dual shift in analysis uncovers previously hidden dimensions of refugee experiences and thus provides a dialectical approach to the subject of war and refugees. Rather than focusing exclusively on displacement and destruction, it uncovers the potential for re-birth and development. The hypothesis which emerges out of the research detailed here is that war-induced displacement created the possibility to form international relationships and intra-group social bonds, acquire education, useful skills and material goods, and develop political voice.

This hypothesis comes from my research on post-war Guatemala. Thirty-six years of civil war – a
conflict which principally targeted indigenous, rural populations – displaced 1.5 million people within the country and sent approximately another 150,000 people to refuge in Mexico. Approximately 46,000 people were officially recognized as refugees and lived in camps monitored by the UNHCR. Roughly 50,000 people lived as refugees in the southern Mexican state of Chiapas, while the remainder settled in the Mexican capital or in other Mexican cities (CEH 1999; REMHI 1998). As the internal conflict ended in the mid 1990s, the official refugees began returning to Guatemala, where they began rebuilding their lives in one of over 55 return-refugee communities.

Through my work with an international human rights organization which accompanied Guatemalan refugees, I met the return-refugees whose experiences are featured in this study. I met community members in 1994 and 1995, visited them several times in 1996, and conducted fieldwork in two return-refugee communities during two four-month periods in 1998 and 2003. Initially, I collected testimonies of war-time human rights abuses. I later transitioned into the role of researcher, studying how these communities were faring in the post-war era and interested to identify which factors might help them develop.

This article draws on 55 semi-structured interviews with former Guatemalan refugees, including local leaders and rank-and-file community members from two return-refugee communities. Interviews lasted between 30 minutes and six hours. I conducted most of these interviews in informal settings, typically someone’s home or fields, often walking while we walked or worked. I supplemented these semi-structured interviews with other qualitative methods. With many families, I shared in their daily routines, playing with the children, shelling corn, preparing food. I also observed community workshops, meetings and special events. This range of qualitative measures allowed me to construct a trajectory of refugee experiences. The trajectory begins with their experiences during a decade in political asylum and ends with an analysis of their post-return status. Intended as a microcosm of the Guatemalan refugee experience, these cases help us to explore how the tragedy of war can be a catalyst for development.

**Refugee Reflections on Life in Mexico**

Life in Mexico was sharply different than the violence and persecution that led to the Guatemalan exodus in the early 1980s. Living in refuge exposed them to new ways of thinking and organizing. It gave refugees the freedom to form institutions that would prove pivotal to their return to Guatemala and their post-war life. And it allowed them to learn new skills. For Guatemalan refugees, this time in exile created unprecedented opportunities for social, political and human capital formation, three foundational components of successful development.

**Human Capital Formation in Refuge**

One of the first and enduring findings from this research was that experiences in refuge contributed to the acquisition of human capital: an individual’s stock of knowledge and skills and his/her educational attainment.

When asked for memories of the refugee camps, Nuevo Mexico community leader Nicolas observed: *For me, it was like a school, it was like a temple of knowledge. We have all kinds of people here, who learned all kinds of things in refuge: carpentry, agriculture, health.*

Almost immediately after arriving in Mexico, the refugees looked for work. Most refugees began their experience in Chiapas, the state that directly borders Guatemala. Some rented land to farm, while others worked as local agricultural laborers. Farming in a new environment introduced the refugees to different techniques and new crops. As Jaime explained:

*Before we went to Mexico, we only knew how to grow a couple of crops, mainly corn. But working in Mexico, I learned new ways to cultivate, how to use chemicals, and how to sell new products.*

Jaime put that knowledge to use once he returned to Guatemala when he diversified his crops from the traditional corn and beans to include a tomato variety that enjoyed a broad market in Guatemala. Many return refugees learned about organic farming in Mexico, a technique they use to cultivate cardamom, palm hearts and an ornamental plant called *hizote poni*. Others grow vanilla, which they learned to cultivate in Mexico. They plan to sell the refined product back to the Mexican company that sold them the seeds.

Other refugees learned carpentry, tailoring and weaving from the Mexican Commission for Help with Refugees (COMAR). As I talked with Jerónimo one day, he stood next to an intricate, eight-foot-long display of colorful threads, tied around the columns supporting his front porch. As we spoke, he moved from side to
side, weaving a beautiful hammock that would sell for nearly $50. He had learned this weaving technique in Mexico. Research on Guatemalan artisanship confirms that weaving skills learned in Mexico became an important supplemental source of income upon return (Little 2004).

Life in the camps exposed refugees to additional non-work knowledge. Many learned principles of basic health and sanitation, and how to treat common diseases. SMT member and health promoter Pedro’s formal health training began in Mexico. Through the leadership of the Catholic Church in Chiapas, he began taking workshops on health. His training expanded as he worked with government nurses to treat basic health needs. At first he mainly observed and provided translation. Later he began administering antibiotics and vaccines, and providing health advice on common preventable diseases. Once he returned, he received more training from the Guatemalan Department of Health and now holds a community health post. In addition to facilitating the development of concrete skills and practical knowledge, the refugee camps provided a catalyst for investment in formal education. As Cruz, a community education promoter explained:

*In Guatemala, I finished primaria [elementary school], nothing more. But when we were in refuge, all together in one location, we saw the need to create a school. So we received trainings in refuge, from the Mexican Ministry of Education and from COMAR. That’s how I began.*

COMAR was central to this process. It brought in exiled Guatemalan educators to train people as educational promoters (Taylor 1998).

Other teachers began – and even finished – their formal education while in refuge. After first being a student in the camps, SMT community member Juana began teaching in 1999. She now teaches social science, Spanish, and women’s issues. When I asked her to describe the most important part about living in the camps, she replied:

*It was definitely education. There I learned more than I ever learned in Guatemala. I also developed confidence, enough confidence to start teaching myself.*

Maria – a primary and middle school teacher who is now the middle school principal in her village – explained that she became a teacher in Mexico. She taught in Mexico for 11 years and received her formal teaching certificate upon return to Guatemala in 1999. When I asked Maria why education was important, she responded:

*Without education, we would continue like before, not doing anything. But our education has brought us back to our history and it has helped us figure out how to develop.*

One of Maria’s village’s singular successes is its educational attainment. The community’s secondary education completion rate is over 50 percent, more than five times the national average (Hallman et al. 2005). And even more impressively, ten percent of its college-age youth are on track to graduate with university degrees – a remarkable achievement given the national graduation rate of less than two percent.

Pablo, another village educational promoter, told me:

*In Mexico, we learned the importance of promoting a multi-lingual agenda and of not ignoring our 500 years of oppression. Our government tried to eliminate our Maya roots, and we see education as the principal tool to resist that.*

These data suggest that contrary to conventional wisdom and research on refugees, these years in exile provided the resources and opportunity for human capital formation. In Mexico, refugees learned new agricultural and weaving skills, developed capacities in health, and advanced their formal schooling far beyond the Guatemalan average. In fact, as of 1999, 87 percent of Guatemalan refugees living in Mexico were literate, as compared to 63 percent of the general population in Guatemala (UNDP 1999).

**Social Capital Formation in Refuge**

The Mexican refugee experience was also critical in enhancing social capital, particularly bonding capital: the strong ties which connect immediate family members, friends and neighbors. This was particularly important for women, who due to patriarchal cultural norms and the demands of maintaining family reproduction, had led more insular lives in Guatemala. As SMT community member Maria explained:

*I like to participate in women’s organizations, because now it’s not like before, when women didn’t get involved in groups. We started getting involved when we were living in Mexico. Now, when there’s a workshop, lots of women join.*

Another woman – Avelina, from Nuevo Mexico – explored this theme further:

*In the camps, that’s where I learned how to speak my mind, with confidence. I don’t know how to read or
write, so for a long time I was embarrassed. I didn’t think I could speak. But working with the other women helped me to understand that I could help with the return [to Guatemala], not just for my family, but for the community.

Three women’s groups formed in the refugee camps: Madre Tierra, Mama Maquín and Ixcumané. Nuevo Mexico community leader and Madre Tierra co-founder Doña Victoria explained that “We began as a group which formed to try to meet our family’s needs, to get food and other necessities to our family.” Doña Victoria described why they named their group Madre Tierra:

*Without the land, we can’t live. Just like a mother; it gives us food and everything we need. And as mothers, we decided we needed to organize, to help the whole community survive, not just our families.*

When they first met in Campeche in 1984, 30 or 40 women attended the Madre Tierra meetings. An internationally funded NGO – Servicios Mayas – began helping them coordinate with the other groups. Over time, Madre Tierra and the other women’s organizations proposed projects to other NGOs. The number of members grew to the hundreds. They began to focus on health, potable water and education.

Then in 1993, women from each of the Mexican departments housing refugees – Chiapas, Quintana Roo and Campeche – met to start planning their return to Guatemala. They organized to discuss how to return, where to get the resources, who would help publicize it. Many of these women organizers had worked together for as long as ten years. The bonding capital they had built provided a foundation to support the refugee return. In one discussion with a group of women in Nuevo Mexico, Natividad reflected:

*Before we left [for Mexico], there were days when I did not talk to anyone who was not in my family. But living in the camps helped me learn how to join with others and work together. It showed me the necessity. Now I feel a part of something that is important.*

**Political Capital Formation in Refuge**

But organizing was not the exclusive domain of women. Refugee men were undergoing a similar politicization as they forged social connections and found their influence. They were exposed to new ways of thinking about rights and citizenship. This was partially because Mexico was a more open, less repressive country than Guatemala. As SMT community member Gaspar remembered:

*In Mexico, we had freedom, we could think and analyze. ….. We heard the radio, read the newspapers and we learned what things were like back in Guatemala.*

Jerónimo highlighted the different attitudes they witnessed in Mexico:

*We always observed the Mexicans, how they expressed themselves, what they demanded of the government. We learned that we have the right to speak, and we should not allow people to walk all over us*” (Manz 2004: 189; 196).

The UNHCR, COMAR, and the Catholic Church – particularly Bishop Samuel Ruiz García’s diocese in Chiapas – helped empower the refugees by sponsoring workshops on human rights, the Guatemalan Constitution, and political citizenship (Pitarch et al 2008). These sources of linking social capital eventually translated into political capital. From these workshops, in Jimilla’s words, “We learned about citizen’s rights and obligations and about the political constitution.” (Manz 2004: 197). These workshops helped build the framework which would guide the refugees as they negotiated their return to Guatemala.

By the mid-1980s, refugee organizations were thriving, with many refugees assuming leadership posts for the first time. As Nuevo Mexico community leader Marcelino explained:

*In Guatemala, I only received one year of formal schooling. My personal training comes from workshops, trainings and, personal interactions in Mexico. In Mexico, I worked to develop myself, in order to have a better vision of the world. There we actually lived better than here. In Mexico, we tried to visualize how we were going to organize and worked to be able to learn how to confront the government.*

The refugees formed three prominent refugee organizations in Mexico: the Permanent Commissions to Represent the Guatemalan Refugees in Mexico (CCPPs), Mama Maquín and the Guatemalan Christian Action (ACG). The ACG was an organization of catechists inspired by liberation theology who sought to unite the spiritual and material goals of the refugees. Mama Maquín was the primary organization for refugee women (much more prominent than its sister organizations Ixcumané and Madre Tierra), which through consciousness-raising and workshops promoted gender equality, encouraged women to get involved in the efforts to return to Guatemala and facilitated project development. At its height, Mama Maquín
had approximately 8,000 members (Pessar 2005). The CCPPs, which formed in 1987 to integrate the refugees from the various camps and negotiate for their return, were a loose confederation of elected refugee leaders for the tens of thousands of refugees living in the camps.

As the official body representing the refugees, the CCPPs negotiated with the Guatemalan government through its newly created office on refugee issues, the Special Commission for the Assistance of Repatriates (CEAR). This was the first time refugees themselves negotiated a return agreement with the government of the country from which they fled, while a war was ongoing.

These negotiations culminated in 1992 with the October 8th Accord. Because of the considerable concessions the refugees extracted from the government, in many respects, it was more important than the official United Nations-mediated Peace Accords which ended the war in 1996. In the October 8th Accord, the Guatemalan government agreed to guarantee voluntary and protected returns for all Guatemalan refugees; access to land, agricultural inputs and financial support; revolving credit for community development; basic social welfare provisions; infrastructural support (roads, potable water, and electricity); free association and movement; and international accompaniment. Most importantly, requirements that the returnees participate in military service and militarized civilian patrols were waived (Taylor 1998: 45-47, 215; Plataforma del Acompañamiento 1997: 4-10).

Analysts and return-refugees concurred that the Accord would not have been possible without those years in Mexico (Taylor 1998). In exile, refugees learned their constitutional and international rights and how to appeal to the media and government authorities. They created and strengthened social networks and formed representative leadership structures through which they were able to acquire unprecedented concessions. Whether they had become health workers, educational promoters, cooperative directors, or catechists, exile was a formative time which made the refugees politically aware and provided crucial skills they would use for the return and in post-refugee life. In short, refugees developed political capital. Candelaria, a Nuevo Mexico leader, summed up her experience this way:

In refuge we formed a different vision of the world, and began to understand our government. During those years, we developed ourselves more fully – both as individuals and as a community.

Conclusions

To sum up, the return-refugees’ accomplishments were unprecedented. Historically, they were the first refugees to negotiate their own return while war was ongoing. And following the returns, they demanded the fulfillment of the peace accords: principally land, infrastructure and development support. The initial cost of the peace accords was $2.6 billion, with substantial funding directed to return refugees. For example, the Guatemalan government invested approximately $30 million to purchase land for refugees (Cheng and Chudoba 2003). This helped to address the historic inequality in land tenure, in which 2.1 percent of the population owned 72% of all arable land (CEH 1999).

Many refugees indicated that the prospect of owning their own land was the main reason they returned to Guatemala. These accomplishments are direct evidence of political capital developed in exile. Guatemalan refugees conveyed their interests and influenced government performance.

The development momentum illustrated here began with human capital formation. The formal education and specific skills that the refugees developed formed a critical foundation for future success. It created both the confidence and the know-how for further action. Social capital is the next link in the development chain. In exile, refugees developed close bonds with one another and formed an array of organizations that created the convergence of interests and identity. The resultant associational density known as bonding capital was critical in leveraging their political capital. But this associational density did not develop in a vacuum. Through their connections with the Catholic Church, the United Nations, the Mexican government and an array of NGOs, refugees had access to resources and ideas that allowed them to congregate, develop consensus and build a political platform. Without this crucial linking capital, these other accomplishments would not have been possible. Thus, political capital was an organic outgrowth of human and social capital.

While certainly not universally applicable, this study suggests that if we shift our analysis temporally and spatially, we may uncover unanticipated sources of community development. This research on the connection between wartime displacement and community development suggests that war – while undoubtedly devastating – may contain dialectical properties that allow for new growth and development.
This means that we need to disaggregate our studies of war to the level of individuals and communities. It also means that we need to take agency seriously, for if nothing else, this is a study of agency in the most unlikely of circumstances.

References


Three decades of war in Iraq have produced an ongoing humanitarian crisis resulting in a massive death toll and a huge displaced population. Refugees arrive in sheltering countries bringing with them the stresses of their experiences of persecution and other traumatic experiences of war. The resulting physical and psychological problems place a burden upon health and social services out of proportion to their numbers (Karmi 1992). In addition, there are specific stressors unique to immigrant populations. Without specific measures in place to address these challenges, some at-risk Iraqi refugees may experience delayed adjustment and continuing mental health problems.

This paper explores the pre-migration trauma specific to Iraqi immigrants, the high incidence of mental health problems in this population, attitudes towards mental health issues along with barriers to treatment. Most effective at addressing these problems have been efforts to provide English as a Second Language classes to new immigrants. Lacking is the number of bilingual, bi-cultural therapists accessible to Iraqi immigrants. This paper suggests that American friends as mentors would be especially effective in helping the Iraqi immigrant adjust to a new culture and a new life in a new country, thereby helping to alleviate much stress and anxiety.

This paper relies on three studies that reveal the mental health of Iraqi refugees entering the United States. A Michigan study documented the health of sample groups of all refugees entering the Detroit metropolitan area between 1983 and 1985. This was at the beginning of the Iran-Iraq War and an Iraqi sample group was included in this study (Young et al. 1987). Data collected from the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS) in Dearborn, Michigan compared the mental health of Iraqi refugees to other non-Iraqi Arabs who sought mental health services at the center between 1998 and 1999 (Jamil et al. 2002). Lastly, a Colorado team of researchers offered free physical examinations and health screenings to all refugees arriving in Denver between 1991 and 2001. Clients screening positive for depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and panic attacks based on a 25-item psychiatric symptom checklist were referred to mental health therapists who had specialized training in war trauma in a cross-cultural context. Results of the check list were tabulated and referrals were tracked to determine the number of clients who kept their appointments (Savin et al. 2005). These three studies make it possible to compare Iraqi immigrant groups arriving in the United States after varying periods of experience within a war-torn country. In addition, a UNHCR-commissioned study of Iraqi refugees arriving in Syria detailed specific war-related trauma experienced by this population (Awabdeh 2008).

**Pre-migration Trauma**

Iraqi immigrants coming as refugees to the United States as well as refugee populations in general have been shown to have a high prevalence of mental disorders. The Immigration and Nationality Act defines a refugee as someone who leaves their country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution. Consequently, intense trauma is inevitably part of the refugee’s experience. The Denver study that screened all immigrant groups between 1999 and 2001 found 12% of refugees from war-torn countries (defined as regions where a major military conflict took place in the 10 years previous to data collection) screened positively for mental health concerns as opposed to only 4.6% of
those from non war-torn countries (Savin 2005).

Profound stressors have contributed to the life of the Iraqi citizen prior to the time s/he flees his/her country. In addition to a rise in the rate of violent deaths during the 2003 U.S. led invasion of Iraq, for example, overall mortality from nonviolent causes rose by 60% during the post-invasion period (Alkhazai 2008). Additional stressors are enumerated in a 2008 UNHCR-commissioned survey of trauma among Iraqi refugees in Syria. The survey shows one in five Iraqi refugees has been tortured or has suffered from other violence. High percentages of Iraqi refugees reported being affected by air bombardments, shelling or rocket attacks (77%). Eighty percent had witnessed a shooting, 68% had experienced interrogation or harassment by militias or other groups including death threats, 72% were eye witnesses to a car bombing, 75% knew someone who was killed and 16% had been tortured. Most instances of torture were perpetrated by members of militia groups (69%) and included beatings, electric shocks, objects being placed under fingernails, burns and rape (Amos 2008).

Leaving Iraq provides relief from immediate problems but adjustments are required to meet the demands of the new environment. According to Saad Dukhan, an Iraqi-born caseworker at the Asian Association of Utah, most Iraqi refugees do not spend time in refugee camps, but rather flee to Jordan, Syria or Egypt where they find temporary housing and usually wait two months to one year for approval from U.S. Immigration to come to the United States (2009). Once qualified for resettlement the individual may still be denied entry to the destination country because of a diagnosed excludable mental or physical health condition rendering him or her medically ineligible from entering the United States as a refugee until he or she is symptom free for a period of one year (Gong-Guy, Cravens, and Patterson 1991).

These problems relating to individual stories have been multiplied during the Iran-Iraq War that lasted 8 years (1980-1988), the Gulf War of 1991, and then in the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003. Therefore these traumas are not limited to a single event but to a series of events leading to losses, suffering and victimizations over a period of decades (Kira 1999). A UNICEF official in Jordan described the situation of recent refugees fleeing Iraq as "a state of prolonged trauma" (Awabdeh 2008). Because Iraqi-born refugees face unique pre-migration stressors in addition to post-migration adaptation stressors shared more generally by immigrants (such as social isolation) they not only have more overall health problems but also an elevated incidence of certain mental health conditions (Jamil et al. 2002).

**Health and Mental Health**

Although there is a lack of commonality in specific medical conditions and symptoms among refugees, Iraqi-born refugees are more likely to have overall health problems than those from other Arab countries. The somatization of symptoms (where mental health problems produce physical symptoms) has been demonstrated among Arabs and Arab Americans. This is due primarily to the stigma and shame often associated with admitting to a mental health problem (Jamil et al. 2002). A 1991 review of health services for immigrants in Los Angeles found somatic complaints to be among the refugee's most frequent presenting problems (Gong-Guy et al. 1991).

Twenty four percent of Iraqi immigrants arriving after 1999 screened positive for mental health disorders that would significantly impair their ability to work, attend school, or interact with other people. This is twice the overall average for all immigrants from war torn countries (Savin 2005). Additionally, Iraqi immigrants who arrived in the United States in the 1990s after the Persian Gulf War demonstrated high rates of depression, PTSD and anxiety (Jamil et al. 2002). Confirming this finding, a 2008 UNHCR-commissioned survey of trauma among refugees in Syria found depression and anxiety to be prevalent at rates of 89% and 82% respectively (Awabdeh 2008).

These rates contrast sharply with those found among Iraqi immigrants arriving in the United States at the start of the Iran-Iraq War. The immigrant groups of Young's (1987) study, which included Iraqis, Poles, Vietnamese and Romanians, were found to have good overall health (physical and mental), similar to the U.S. population as a whole at that time. Only 26% reported severe depression with 38% of Iraqi respondents indicating they had been severely depressed in the year prior to the study (1987). The elevated rates of depression from 1985 to 2008 are a realistic reflection of the circumstances of the region from which they came. High rates of mental health problems impact communities in which refugees settle. In addition, they permeate every aspect of the immigrant's life, negatively affecting marriage, children's performance
in school (even their ability to attend school) and the immigrant's ability to cope with life (Awabdeh 2008).

**Attitudes Toward Treatment**

The level of significance placed on mental health varies among cultures, but refugees often cite other issues as their most pressing problems upon arrival. Lack of English skills, family separation, unemployment, limited funds, lack of transportation and insufficient child care often trump problems of depression or anxiety (Gong-Guy et al. 1991).

When surveyed, Iraqis were least likely to rate their mental health as poor, as compared to other immigrants from the Middle East, Eastern Europe and Southeast Asia. Nevertheless, in the 62% of Iraqis who report mental illness, they are more likely than any other group to report symptoms of multiple disorders. They were also more likely to have sought medical services and reported more untreated health problems than any other group. This could be a function of cultural influences affecting interpretation of symptoms and general health. This may also be a reflection of the lack of availability of health care services in Iraq as opposed to other immigrant home countries (Young et al. 1987).

In a follow-up, Young found that 10% of clients screened positive for mental health concerns. Of these, 37% kept their first appointment for services while 63% chose not to accept mental health services. Those who were referred for treatment and accepted services had reported more symptoms than those who were referred and declined treatment. The greatest numbers of symptoms reported were for depression and anxiety. All were diagnosed with psychiatric disorders (among them 43% for major depressive disorder and 22% for PTSD). These findings suggest that a significant number of refugees were experiencing a high level of suffering and that the most serious of these self-selected for mental health treatment (Savin et al. 2005).

With treatment, initial somatic complaints typically dissipated for all refugee groups as the individual responded to therapy, whereas PTSD and its associated symptoms often lasted many years (though not to the point of interfering with daily activities) (Gong-Guy et al. 1991). A study targeting the mental health needs of Iraqis after the Persian Gulf War demonstrated that the majority of clients showed a partial response to treatment or full remission (Jamal et al. 2002).

**Barriers to Treatment**

According to the Utah Department of Health refugees entering the United States are eligible to apply for Medicaid for eight months after their date of entry. Medicaid assists the refugee with medical, dental and mental health services and offers language services for those who do not speak or read English.

Nevertheless, barriers to accessing health services for all refugees are primarily language related. Difficulty in understanding doctor's instructions and making one's self understood were given as the primary concerns. In addition to lack of English proficiency, other barriers include lack of familiarity with mental health services, fear that a diagnosis of mental illness will lead to deportation or discontinuation of government benefits, and fear of stigmatization by the ethnic community (Gong-Guy et al. 1991). Lack of transportation and conflicts with work have also been cited (Savin et al. 2005).

**Bilingual, Bi-cultural Counselors or Interpreters**

Suzanne Jabbour, chief psychologist at a clinic in Lebanon that serves Iraqi refugees said, "There is no way that a person who has been through whatever these people have been through can survive, unless they have treatment. And even after that, they need people to help them make a life and establish themselves. Unless that person can find that amount of help, he will reach a stage where his life will become meaningless, and he might become suicidal" (Amos 2008). Nevertheless, the delivery of mental health services to non-English speaking immigrants groups presents a problem. The two refugee/asylee resettlement agencies in Utah, International Rescue Committee (IRC) and Catholic Community Services (CCS), have no native-speaking Arabic or Farsi therapists. Neither does Valley Mental Health – the agency to which Arabic-speaking clients who need mental health counseling are referred. The Asian Association of Utah (AAU), a refugee employment and community center, has two Iraqi caseworkers, but no Iraqi therapists or any other therapists who speak Arabic.

Valley Mental Health therapists and all therapists from the three agencies that assist refugees utilize translators. Using interpreters presents several problems. Sometimes interpreters are asked to interpret materials that have been rigorously standardized in English only. Because agencies delivering services to refugees have
limited budgets, the vast majority of interpreters used in mental health have no formal training. Distortions may arise from the interpreters' attitudes toward either the patient or the clinician. Also the interpreter may try to make sense of culturally unacceptable material and may alter the messages to be conveyed or the interpreter may convey his or her own reactions to the material to the client in order to "manage" the interview. Sometimes the agencies utilize family members who have no training in either interpretation or mental health (Gong-Guy 1991). Of particular concern to the Iraqi client according to Saad Dukhan, Iraqi caseworker with the Asian Association of Utah (AAU), is the assurance that his or her confidentiality will be honored (Dukhan 2009).

**Recommendations**

Some problems require more immediate attention than others. Satisfactory English skills and adequate employment help to alleviate the anxiety of the newly arrived refugee. Mr. Dukhan (2009) emphasizes the urgent need for new immigrants to learn English. English proficiency opens the door to education, and education enables the Iraqi man or woman to take care of his or her family without relying on aid. At present public schools, along with local churches and AAU provide English as a Second Language (ESL) classes in Utah. AAU is a primary provider of employment assistance for refugees and asylees in Utah. Mr. Dukhan suggests that all aid be dependent upon the new immigrant participating in ESL instruction.

To address the issue of employment for refugees, Utah Department of Workforce Services (DWS) Refugee Program currently administers the dispersal of state funds for job training and skill training. To address the problem of a lack of adequate numbers of bi-cultural, bilingual therapists and social workers DWS Refugee caseworkers should be aware of training and cost requirements for licensure for mental health counselors (for example for Licensed Professional Counselors - LPCs) so that they could encourage and direct those refugees who appear to have an interest or potential for this type of work.

Because of budget restrictions, IRC, CCS and AAU are all understaffed. Nyuol Nyuol, who supervises 14 caseworkers at AAU, claims the State of Utah guidelines recommend a caseload of 20 families per caseworker. However, his caseworkers typically have twice that. During an interview, he opened a file on his desk and counted the number of families being assisted by one caseworker: exactly 50 families. Similarly, budget constraints limit the number of therapists able to serve the Iraqi immigrant population. Special loans created for refugees wishing to enter training for licensure in the mental health field would help fill the void that is currently in place.

In light of budget restrictions created by the present economy, of primary concern would be the willingness and determination of the recipient to repay his or her loan. At present, the International Organization for Migration, an inter-governmental organization that works with 127 member states to "promote humane and orderly migration" provides an airfare loan for refugees and displaced persons who are in need. "These families typically have no jobs and large families. These often need about $7000 to pay for their tickets," Mr. Nyoul (2009) relates. And when asked how many Iraqi refugees generally are successful in repaying the ticket loan, Mr. Dukhan (2009) replied, "One hundred percent. They pay monthly, even if it's only $10, until the loan is repaid." Providing education loans for Iraqi refugees may prove to be a similarly good investment.

Mr. Dukhan went on to say that when Iraqi refugees arrive in Salt Lake City they feel unsafe. "They don't feel safe in the beginning. They want to feel private. PTSD is a big problem. The first two years are the most difficult for all refugees. They are much better after two years."

There is no one area in Salt Lake City or Utah where many Iraqi immigrants live in a higher concentration than in the general population. "People who never go to school back home like to meet with people in the mosque. They have no English. They don't know the law. They feel safe with their own community. But there are not many of these kinds of people," says Mr. Dukhan. "Those who are educated don't feel comfortable with their community. Americans, for example, don't ask you, 'Do you have a job? How much money do you make?' or 'Who will you marry?' They don't want others in the Iraqi community to ask about their plans for business. This is a privacy issue."

Mr. Dukhan emphasizes the need for "an American friend who has lived here for a long time" to mentor the newcomer. "When they come they are like blind men; they don't know anything (like how to take a bus or find a store, or what might be offensive to other Americans). They can have both Iraqi friends and American friends, but they need American friends. An American friend
can help them know the culture and help them feel safe." He goes on to say that a new immigrant cannot gain the skills he or she needs from his own community. "If you ask an American in Sugarhouse, they will help you. If you ask someone in an Iraqi community, you will get what you need, but maybe it will be in a few years!" American friends aid in acculturation and improve the quality of life of the Iraqi refugee. They also answer the need for socialization without sacrificing privacy. This, then, provides an important tool with limited financial burden on all agencies that assist in refugee resettlement.

AAU, IRC and CCS all rely heavily on volunteer and other unpaid help. AmeriCorp volunteers, student interns, employees paid by the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and volunteers working under the umbrella of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints represent a large number of Americans engaged in providing aid of various kinds for refugees. These volunteers could be recruited and organized to provide assistance and friendship to newly arrived immigrants. Having a mentor eases the stress of resettlement and creates a greater sense of safety that would accelerate the process of healing from a traumatic past. Said Mr. Dukhan, "Iraqis trust quickly. They have white hearts" (2009).

"One hundred percent of people that come feel they owe to America. They help me; they keep me safe; they give me financial assistance." Mr. Dukhan told the story of a man who came to America with his five children. He called his mother and told her, "They give me a house and they tell me to choose. I can't work and they pay me $1200 a month for my rent. I am never afraid again like I am in my country." His mother told him, "I don't understand. I am 84 years old and I am still in Baghdad. In 84 years no one gives me food or cash or a house. America is your country, not Iraq because I am 84 and nobody gives me help."

Today's economic climate, along with the number and diversity of refugees coming to the United States, continue to make mental health service delivery a challenge. Nevertheless, it remains vital to support immigrants from war-torn countries such as Iraq, both for their own sake, and for the community at large. In giving the appropriate aid in a timely manner with programs that do not place unrealistic financial burdens on humanitarian organizations, refugees may be less likely to become marginalized and more able to positively contribute to their families and society.

References


Two Pathways Through Which the University of Utah Can Further Support the Integration of Refugees in Utah

Wendi Whittaker

Introduction

The influences which give rise to refugee outflows can not be categorized as formulaic but rather are a consortium of issues involving: “governmental instability, poverty and environmental problems, societal and regional cleavages and related transboundary links” (Hakovirta 1993: 43). These pressures challenge the power structures of countries, as well as their citizenry, and create a breeding ground of dissonance leading to civil unrest and wars between nations. In these battles over ideology and resources, the innocent are often driven from the security of their homes.

At the end of 2008, there were 42,000,000 people forcibly displaced from their homes worldwide; 15,200,000 of which held refugee status, 827,000 of the 42,000,000 were pending asylum cases and 26,000,000 were internally displaced persons (Refugee Services Office of Utah 2010). The United Nations defines ‘refugee’ as:

... (a person) 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 to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country (United Nations High Council for Refugees 2010).

The United States of America has accepted over 2,000,000 refugees since The Vietnam War through the end of 2008 (Refugee Services Office of Utah 2010). During the same time period, Utah has accepted over 25,000 refugees and Salt Lake County has the fifth fastest growing refugee acceptance rate in the country (House 2009).

The Refugee Working Group of Utah has reported that “twenty percent of Utah’s population growth is foreign-born. Eleven percent of the foreign-born are refugees” (2007: 1). With a growing refugee population, resettlement and government agencies need supplemental resources from host communities. The University of Utah currently supports refugee integration through programs such as: University Neighborhood Partners-Hartland and the Immigration & Resettlement Community Fieldwork Program. Development of additional programs within the Gerontology and Language and Literature Departments would provide an opportunity for University students to enhance their global perspectives as they work in tandem with refugees to create viable programs. Additional culturally relevant programs will ease the experience of refugee resettlement and expedite self-sufficiency. This paper will highlight two gaps: the position of elderly refugees and language barriers for refugees, within the resettlement process in Utah as recognized by the Refugee Working Group’s May 30, 2007 Report and identify resources available at the University of Utah which can address these gaps.

Background

The Refugee Working Group was chartered on October 12, 2006 by Governor John Huntsman and Salt Lake County Mayor Peter Corroon with the directive to gather and evaluate information on gaps and strengths in the refugee resettlement process in Utah and recommend enhancements to the system (Refugee Working Group Oct 2006). Input from refugees, service providers and all other interested parties was solicited in the form of
town-hall meetings, surveys and invitations to submit comments online.

Salt Lake County accepts many of the approximately 1000 refugees who relocate to Utah each year (Utah Department of Health 2008). The bulk of the refugees are placed in clustered communities by their resettlement agency, either Catholic Community Services or International Rescue Committee, chiefly in Salt Lake. There has been a shift in demographics among nationalities seeking refuge. In the 1990s, many of the arriving refugees were from Eastern European countries. Now, the vast majority of refugees are from Southeast Asia, various countries in Africa and the Middle East (Utah Department of Health 2008).

The great majority of refugees today hail from countries not rooted in western culture, have spent a longer time in camps and are commonly illiterate in their native language (Refugee Working Group 2007:1). Illiteracy among recent refugees is higher than that of refugees one to two decades ago resulting in slower English acquisition. The bulk of today’s refugees are immigrating from various countries of Africa and Southeast Asia where language groups are numerous compounding the difficulty of providing adequate translation services. Sharing many cultural practices with the host community, refugees of the 1990s were able to integrate quicker and more independently than recent refugee groups. Increased years in camp endured by many current refugees distance them from modernity. This reality provides for a rougher transition and demands greater attention from resettlement agencies as they support their clients in acclimating. These factors exacerbate issues of resettlement in Utah and heavily tax the resources of resettlement agencies. Considering the differentiated characteristics from previous incoming refugee populations, the increase in the number of people being resettled in Utah and reduced funding statewide, it is necessary to call on the University of Utah for additional community support.

**Discussion and Recommendations:**

**Mitigating the Needs of the Older Refugee Population**

Demographics of refugees have changed over the last decade as have the dynamics within the families of refugees. Many of the countries of nativity among the current wave of refugees have collectivist cultures. The immediate family commonly consists of not only children and parents but grandparents and other extended family members as well. Though the concept of resettling older refugees is not novel, a growing number of refugees have been arriving from Thai camps since 2006 where some have been living for over two decades. The population of older refugees does not dominate the number of refugees immigrating to Utah but their needs are unique.

The Refugee Working Group outlined recommendations regarding older refugees:

- Work with refugee organizations and other providers to create social opportunities for elderly refugees to be with others from their culture/language.
- Create a network of volunteers with language/cultural similarities who will support older refugees with no family in their lives.
- Provide refugee associations and individuals with training on the needs of and services available to the elderly and their caregivers.
- Increase specialized English language training for older refugees, which is designed for the learning processes of older people and whose goals reflect reasonable standards for this population. Include training, which is designed to provide life skills, including medical literacy, and citizenship preparation. (Refugee Working Group 2007)

The need for attention to be paid to older refugees is underscored in Igor V. Persidsky and James J. Kelly who said:

*The existing problems of the elderly (poor health, limited functional abilities, changes in social status, etc.) are aggravated because these elderly have faced the social stress of adjustment and acculturation in a radically new environment...which become even more difficult with increasing age* (1992: 418).

The main problems for elderly refugees lie in language difficulty and lack of understanding of social services in the United States. Though the Utah Department of Aging and Adult Services does offer an ESL class, older refugees would benefit from specialized programs aimed to educate them on available social services and
facets of daily life in their new circumstances.

I propose that the skills of the Gerontology Interdisciplinary Studies Program and Gerontology Masters Program be utilized to fill the identified gaps via service learning courses. By working with existing refugee welcome centers, such as the Hser Ner Moo Community Center and University Neighborhood Partners- Hartland, students can investigate specific needs within the elderly refugee community and implement culturally appropriate programs. The Gerontology Department can also approach their allies in the field to volunteer as mentors to this population. The Gerontology Department and Masters Program is distinctively poised to educate refugee associations on the needs and services available to the elderly in their communities.

Chiseling Away at the Language Barrier

The main agenda for resettlement agencies is to facilitate placement of adults in the workforce as a mechanism of self-sufficiency (Geo-JaJa and Mangum 2007:14). However, it must be kept in mind that acquiring a command of English is crucial for a refugee when pursuing employment and thus a sustainable level of integration. The Refugee Working Group emphasized this acute awareness when referencing the importance of these submissions:

- Promote coordination and networking between all available (language) resources in the community.
- Collaborate by holding a forum with other services addressing language barriers, including state and local government, higher education language departments, and non-profits to develop a strategic plan to address interpretation/translation solutions.
- Translate bus and TRAX information into multiple languages.
- Encourage and help ESL providers to bring their services to the refugee communities by creating community based classrooms in high-density refugee residential areas.
- Identify employers who are supportive of addressing language needs in work place.  

(Refugee Working Group 2007)

In a speech made to the Refugee Working Group in Utah, Dr. Edwin Silverman, Bureau Chief of Refugee and Immigrant Services, Illinois Department of Human Services, stressed that “Language is gold” (2006). Taking advantage of English learning opportunities paves the road for an easier acculturation process for refugees. Literacy and an understanding of English opens job opportunities, improves the rate of health practices, increases the awareness of social services and how to navigate them and provides a platform for leadership within their community and the community at large. Those who develop their English skills create visibility for themselves, have a greater sense of control over their life and have the chance to make their voice heard in the discussion of refugee resettlement practices (Amas and Price 2008).

Author J. Lynn McBrien warns “...an unsuccessful pattern of acculturation is a downward spiral resulting in assimilation into poverty, often into an inner-city underclass” (2005: 332). It is too often the case that refugees over forty-five years old never fully integrate (Refugee Working Group 2006). Some of this reality may stem from the driving need to obtain any kind of basic employment (Geo-JaJa and Mangum 2007). Though employment is necessary, working full-time does not leave much room for the study of a new language on top of familial responsibilities. Employment programs do exist where refugees are paid to work as well as study, like through Deseret Industries and the Humanitarian Center, however, space is limited. With these great demands on refugee adults, refugee children almost invariably master English before their parents. This phenomenon can lead to parentification and dissonance among the generations and sets the stage for cultural deterioration lowering the degree of integration (McBrien 2005).

The Department of Language and Literature can work with refugees and service providers beyond efforts at Hartland to champion smoother resettlement, empower adult refugees and assist in implementing recommendations of the Refugee Working Group previously outlined. Professors can structure classes to work within the service learning paradigm and refer students to agencies in need of their skills. For example, there is a deficit of translation volunteers for medical visits and employment case-management, our school systems are in need of interpreters for parent-teacher conferences, orientations and for translating documents distributed to parents and university students could
work with the Utah Transit Authority to translate rider information as well.

Language students can be invaluable partners to ESL teachers in duplicating the department’s Hartland program within other clustered resettlement areas. Many refugees have a difficult time navigating public transportation at first and few have cars. If ESL programs are brought to the concentrated resettlement areas, refugees will have greater opportunities to master English at a quicker pace thus accelerating self-sufficiency. Language students are also prime candidates to intern with service providers to approach businesses about creating bridge-way employment programs. Students fluent in a language spoken by one of the refugee communities can be perfect liaisons between employers and refugee cohorts.

Another layer to the partnership between the Language Department at the University of Utah and the refugee community is the International Center. This center is under the umbrella of the language program and is home to numerous international students. These students can be particularly well suited to engage with possible countrymen in not only an interpreting capacity but as a cultural connection.

**Conclusion**

As our population increases in number it is enriched with diversity. Along with this marked growth in population comes an opportunity to expand our collective culture. As Utah experiences shifts in demographics we must work to till the ground alongside refugees laboring to establish new roots. The Refugee Working Group notes that providing welcome expedites self-efficacy (December 2006). When members of a society are engaged and integrated there is communion and reciprocity. Established members of a society benefit as new members amalgamate.

Dr. Edwin Silverman moralizes that a “host community has a responsibility for sustaining this most humane of all government programs (refugee resettlement)” (Refugee Working Group 2006). In the words of an infamous, retired University of Utah biology professor, Fred Montague, “We don’t perform service out of charity, we do it because our destinies are intertwined” (2010). In this spirit, the University of Utah should dedicate an even greater litany of resources to enhancing the integration process of our refugee neighbors.

The current president of the University of Utah, Michael K. Young, had this to say when addressing alumni:

*Never before has an awareness of global cultures, languages, and systems of governance been more important. Fortunately, the University of Utah is uniquely positioned to prepare students in all academic disciplines for leadership responsibilities throughout the world. Our emphasis on international education allows students to expand their global perspective, becoming more socially and politically literate and economically aware. The end result is alumni who are even more engaged and equipped to make the world a better place for all of us.* (2007)

With an estimated 25,000 resettled refugees in our state, the world is at our door (Refugee Services Office of Utah).

By addressing gaps in the refugee elder experience, not only will the older refugee population benefit, but the adult children will be supported in their roles allowing them to apply more energy to self-sufficiency. Through invigorating translation and interpreting services with resources available at the University of Utah Language Department, adult refugees will be encouraged to find their voice, “restor(ing) self-respect and self-determination” (Wallace 1993:17). This is a key element as our state works towards cultivating a symbiotic and integrated community.

Immigrants to the United States have always faced challenges but refugees are particularly at high risk of marginalization.

*We need to help them integrate so that they can help us make our communities strong. The alternative is not a pretty picture. If you didn't help people integrate, you could form a lasting underclass, which is going to drain resources for our children and their children.* (KCPW 2008)

These are the words of Gerald Brown, the director of Utah’s Office of Refugee Services. In this brief statement he addresses why communities in Utah need to step up and aid those seeking refuge from persecution.
Often refugees arrive in the United States with little possessions and low acquisition of English. They are financially supported by resettlement agencies for only a handful of months after which they are expected to be self-sufficient. Federal resettlement resources have not kept up with inflation and account for only 39% of cost to resettlement agencies to fulfill their contractual requirements (Refugee Services Office 2010). Partnerships and a robust volunteer force are needed to bolster refugee resettlement.

If current resettlement practices are not supplemented, many refugees will be relegated to low paying jobs and deterred from pursuing higher education. Whether it is statute, economics or our own morality, which drives us to unite with our new neighbors as they integrate, it is in the community of Salt Lake’s interest to bolster resettlement programs. If refugees are not supported and welcomed as they integrate they are at greater risk for numerous social and economic problems (Geo-JaJa and Mangum 2007). If people with refugee status are welcomed with programs designed to foster self-sufficiency, they will be better equipped to navigate their new home thereby promoting a strong climate of reciprocity. Our state will not only benefit economically but also socially as financial security will deter isolationism among refugees and pave the way for a rich collective culture in Utah.

References


The Treadmill of Destruction: Does State Militarization Help Explain Kyoto Protocol Ratification?

Jennifer E. Givens

War, Society, the Military, and the Environment

War is not good for the environment. Direct examples include the use of the carcinogenic defoliant Agent Orange by the U.S. military during the Vietnam War or the use of nuclear weapons during World War II. War also impacts the environment in less direct ways. During periods of conflict the social structures that define society are disrupted, usually causing harm to both people and the environment. For example, environmental protection policies are not likely to be enforced when other social systems are not functioning; focus tends to be directed toward the conflict and other more immediate survival concerns. Another example of an indirect effect is that war refugees, often forced into high population density camps, can also have negative environmental impacts. Also, even without active conflict, the mere presence of an active military can be damaging to the environment as land is converted to bases, military infrastructure is built, and weapons are produced. Military preoccupation is also a distraction from environmental concern, even though environmental threats could ultimately be more detrimental to the survival of humanity than war. Finally, the military mindset can be seen as counter to the cooperation necessary to address global environmental threats. For these reasons it is useful to explore the connections between national military presence and willingness to cooperate regarding global environmental problems.

Global Climate Change Cooperation and Negotiations

In the realm of global climate change relations we are now almost post-Kyoto, with the first round of emissions reduction targets set to expire in 2012. Yet the most recent meeting on global climate change, the Copenhagen Conference, or COP15, held in December 2009, resulted in the Copenhagen Accord, a brief, non-binding document. The Copenhagen Accord, rather than committing nations to reductions in emissions, recommends reductions, as did the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, from which Kyoto came. The Copenhagen accord lacks even the weak enforcements of the Kyoto Protocol, such as further reducing the emissions reduction targets for those nations who do not meet current targets (Foster 2001). Thus, for many, Copenhagen represents a step backward rather than forward. Why are the global political economic negotiations on climate going in the wrong direction?

In order to understand the current and future possibilities for these negotiations it is useful to examine Kyoto Protocol ratification and to look at factors that impact ratification and rate of ratification. Much research has been done in this area (Roberts and Parks 2010, 2009, 2007 and 2001; Zahran et al. 2007; York 2005). This article adds to the debate by testing ideas derived from Treadmill of Destruction theory, which draws attention broadly to the impact of the military in a society, and specifically in this study to the impact of militarization on ratification and rate of ratification of the Kyoto Protocol. I explore what impact national militarization variables have on Kyoto Protocol ratification in order to get at larger issues related to which nations will contribute to fixing problems of global climate change and what structural factors may help or impede this process.
Kyoto Protocol Background

The Kyoto Protocol is an international treaty that is part of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. It was adopted in Kyoto, Japan in December 1997, and entered into force in February 2005 when Russia’s ratification of the Protocol marked the meeting of the required level of 55% of 1990 global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions producers becoming signatories. In 2001 the United States under former President Bush unilaterally pulled out of the climate negotiations. This caused a flurry of other nations ratifying in protest, however it also led to weakening of the treaty in order to reach the requisite number of nations to meet the 55%, a harder task without the U.S. involved, since it was the main contributor to 1990 levels of GHG emissions (Foster 2001). Under the active Protocol, nations, especially industrialized nations (Annex I), commit to reduce emissions that cause anthropogenic climate change by 5% by 2012; less industrialized nations (Annex II), including India and China, are not held to the same standard since they have not historically committed as much to the current levels of carbon dioxide (CO2) in the atmosphere, although China is now the number one emitter of CO2. All signatories agree to pursue climate change mitigation and adaptation policies and pursue climate sensitive technologies (Zahran et al. 2007). As of 2010, there are 191 states party to the protocol, representing 63.7% of 1990 emissions (UNFCCC website).

Theoretical Perspectives

Two opposing theories are useful to briefly review in order to situate the current research as a test of treadmill of destruction theory and within the larger debate over economic development and the state of the environment. First, ecological modernization theory sees economic development as the solution to environmental problems. While this theoretical perspective acknowledges the prior environmentally destructive outcomes of development, it optimistically sees economic development as increasingly consisting of more sustainable practices encouraged by consumer demand and regulation. Ecological modernization theory is useful in analyzing how societies respond to environmental problems through economic, political, and cultural institutions (Zahran et al. 2007). From this perspective the current economic system does not need drastic reform, but instead the route to environmental sustainability is through economic development, societal regulation, structural change in institutions, and the creation of better, more efficient technology (Mol and Spaargaren 2005 and 2000).

A counterargument to ecological modernization theory is posed by treadmill of production theory. The treadmill of production perspective points out that the capitalist system requires endless growth because of the nature of competition, and this growth necessarily causes ecological degradation (Schnaiberg 1980; Gould, Pellow, and Schnaiberg 2008). In direct opposition to ecological modernization theory, treadmill of production theory frames an economic growth versus the environment conflict. While this perspective has been criticized by proponents of ecological modernization theory as too pessimistic, much empirical support has been found for this relationship (e.g. Jorgenson and Clark 2009). In an article that discusses Kyoto ratification, Foster (2001) asks why the U.S. was reluctant to reduce emissions to a pre 1990 level. His answer in this article is a critique of capitalism that draws attention to the interested parties who benefit from the current situation; he writes, “the depth of the ecological and social crisis of contemporary civilization, the need for a radical reorganization of production in order to create a more sustainable and just world, is invariably downplayed by the ruling elements of society” (15), he focuses on the U.S.’s place within the global capitalist system, calling the country one of the “gods of profit” (14), and he notes that science also often falls prey to corporate interests. Direct parallels of these points can be seen in treadmill of destruction theory.

The third theory, treadmill of destruction, has grown out of treadmill of production theory. Drawing from C. Wright Mills’ inclusion of militarization as part of the formation of the power elite, Hooks and Smith identify a treadmill of destruction that is related but separate to the treadmill of production and capitalism (2005). Hooks and Smith (2004), in an analysis of U.S. military policy and Native Americans, find that while capitalism is part of the explanation, in line with treadmill of production, they also find that “a ‘treadmill of destruction’ is driven by a distinct logic of geopolitics that cannot be reduced to capitalism” (558). Thus the key point is that although they are linked, there are separate dynamics of economic dominance and military dominance. Treadmill of destruction theory points to the way militaries generate ecological destruction, high levels of consumption especially of fossil fuels,
and large amounts of toxic waste; in the 20th century the destructive potential of biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons, even if unused, pose enormous and unprecedented threats to humanity and the environment (Hooks and Smith 2005). Scholars also draw attention to the science and research money linked to the military, military interests as driving forces of which types of technology are developed, the capital and resource intensive nature of militaries including land use for bases, and military links to economic growth, consumption and degradation (Jorgenson 2009; Jorgenson, Clark and Kentor 2010; Kentor and Kick 2008). Hooks and Smith (2004) also point out that the environmental inequality of the “military-industrial complex,” and the demands on the U.S. to remain the leading military power, drive the treadmill. Along these lines, in two related works Christoff (2008) explores how the U.S.’s position as global hegemon with unrivaled military and economic power did not exempt it from censure when it refused to agree to the proposed text at the Bali climate conference (COP13) and he (2010) explores how the economic and military positions in the global system of the U.S. and China, “carbon titans,” impact their positions on climate negotiations and notes the importance of the U.S.’s internal budgetary issues and external attempts to retain military supremacy.

All of these works draw our attention to the importance of the military as a related but separate institution of analysis in environmental outcomes, and these can and should be applied to understanding Kyoto Protocol ratification. Furthermore, since the U.S. stands alone as a major outlier in terms of ratification, its position as the dominant global military power cannot be ignored. Finally, moving forward, increasingly environmentally destructive militarism, the changing state of the planet, and the changing dynamics of global military power will continue to provide fruitful material to study and test treadmill of destruction theory. In this study I test the following hypothesis derived from treadmill of destruction theory: higher levels of dominance of the military in society will be correlated with lower levels of Kyoto Protocol Ratification.

**Previous Studies of Kyoto Ratification**

Roberts and Parks are two of the preeminent scholars on global climate change policy and politics and they repeatedly emphasize the role of inequality in global climate negotiations. The authors (2001) detail what they see as the differential influence of “pollution elites” and the different outcomes it produces in terms of positions in Kyoto bargaining. In core nations European Union nations are leading the way on climate negotiations while the JUSCANNZ nations, Japan, the U.S., Switzerland, Canada, Australia, Norway and New Zealand stall. Iceland and Russia would also be included in this second core group, however, they don’t face binding limits. Outside the core, Roberts and Parks make the point that “there is not one Third World” (505) and they group nations into five positions: OPEC nations (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries), AOSIS nations (Alliance of Small Island States), India and China, those who remain silent or take a middle ground, and those characterized as “emissions entrepreneurs.” Roberts and Parks' recommendations for the future are that we must acknowledge inequality and delink carbon and development.

Several studies have explored determinants of Kyoto Protocol ratification or rate or timing of ratification. Zahran, Kim, Chen, and Lubell (2007) test ecological modernization theory in a cross-national study of 108 nations and pose the questions, what accounts for ratification, stalling, and nonparticipation of different nations and what explains the pace at which countries ratify and commit themselves to reforms? They posit that ecological modernization cannot be reduced to GDP per capita, but instead use independent variables derived from ecological modernization theory that represent economic, political, and cultural development including democratic openness, GDP output per unit of energy input, CO2 emissions per capita, and previous record on international environmental cooperation. They have two dependent variables, a dichotomous dependent variable representing ratification status as of July 2004 and a duration model measured in days; their results are based on binary logistic regression models and Cox proportional hazards regression, respectively. They find support for the analytic contribution of ecological modernization theory in deriving testable hypotheses and they also find support for the importance of ecological modernization theory variables. They find that societies with civil liberties and political rights, high energy efficiency, low CO2 emissions per capita, high education levels, and records of previous transnational boundary environmental cooperation are more likely to ratify, and all but the education index are also related to speed of ratification. From these results they posit policy recommendations based on the
findings that an environmentally conscious public does impact ratification, although it may not impact speed of ratification, and that increasing energy efficiency increases the likelihood that countries will commit to the global effort to reduce anthropogenic climate change.

York (2005) adds demographic variables to the determinants of ratification, and finds that nations with higher projected population growth rates were less likely to ratify the Protocol. York focuses his analysis only on Annex I nations that would face binding limits on emissions of GHGs under Kyoto and controls for GDP per capita, GDP growth, other treaties ratified, and CO2 per GDP. One of York’s dependent variables is also status of ratification, although his date differs from the previous study in that it is as of April 2004. Interestingly, none of York’s control variables are significant; the only significant predictor of ratification in his analysis is the demographic variable of projected population growth. York does not argue that other factors are unimportant; he simply draws our attention to the importance of demographic factors.

A handful of other studies offer smaller contributions to the current study, but warrant mention. McCright and Dunlap (2003) highlight the conservative movement’s impact on the U.S. position on climate change policy. Brechin (2003) studies cross-national opinion on climate change and finds that the U.S. falls in the middle range of understanding despite high levels of education. Lutzenhiser (2001) notes that the debate focuses on costs and fairness of policy options. Discourse analysis of the global climate policy debate and Kyoto ratification are studied and yield quite disparate results in Iceland (Johannesson 2005), Russia (Tipton 2008), and Finland (Teravainen 2010). Finally, Feroz et al. (2009) find a significant relationship between a nation’s Kyoto ratification status and a measure of environmental production efficiency.

Analysis: Methods and Results

Survival analysis and Cox proportional hazards models are used to assess duration until Kyoto Protocol Ratification. These models allow the dependent variable to be an event that occurs across time, with some countries never experiencing the event. Start time is the year the treaty becomes available to be ratified, event is ratification, and end time is present status. Data for the independent variable were obtained from the World Resources Institute Earth Trends Database. 191 countries are party to the protocol, all but 6 of which have ratified the Kyoto Protocol by 2010. Those that have not ratified are considered "censored" and these are: Afghanistan, Andorra, San Marino, Somalia, United States, and West Bank and Gaza. Ratification was measured by year.

Key independent variables are from the World Bank. These include armed forces personnel as a percent of the total labor force (N = 166) and military expenditure as a percent of GDP (N= 146). These two military variables are correlated at .6 and are therefore not used in the same model because this could lead to problems with collinearity, but both are used separately to get at different elements of militarization. I also recode armed forces personnel as a percent of the total labor force as a binary low/high variable. Another key independent variable is GDP per capita (N = 179). I include interactions with time to test for non-proportionality, or change in the relationship over time.

Based on this analysis, I find that as the armed forces personnel as a percent of the labor force increases, it reduces the hazard rate by 10% (11% for the low/high binary variable), decreasing the likelihood of ratification. Also, as military expenditures as a percent of GDP increases, it reduces the hazard rate by 9%, thus decreasing the likelihood of ratification. GDP per capita is significant when included in the model with armed forces personnel as a percent of the labor force and is significant at the one tailed level in the model with military expenditures as a percent of GDP; in both models GDP per capita has a slight effect of increasing the hazard rate (less than 1%) and thus increasing ratification. The results for the two militarization variables remain substantively similar when GDP per capita is controlled for in the models and tests for collinearity between GDP per capita and the two militarization variables were within acceptable limits. Interactions with time for the two military measures were used to test for non-proportionality and the interaction with expenditures was significant, thus there is evidence of non-proportionality for this variable; over time the impact of militarization may decrease slightly (4%). Similar to the study by York (2005) multiple other control variables were tested and found to be non-significant. Also similar to the study by York, the key concept of interest was found to be significant. Militarization variables, both armed forces
personnel as a percent of the total labor force and military expenditure as a percent of GDP, were found to be the best predictors of Kyoto Protocol ratification, in line with treadmill of destruction theory. While I do not discount other predictors, what I draw from this analysis is in line with the findings of other studies that acknowledge the treadmill of destruction; it is important to consider the unique impact of militarization in analysis of global environmental problems and negotiations.

I also conducted sensitivity analysis using OLS regression and all results were substantively the same. I used a version of my duration variable as a dependent variable, which measured years until ratification. In models with the two militarization variables alone, both were significant and correlated with longer time until ratification. In models also controlling for GDP per capita, logged to address positive skew, GDP per capita was slightly negatively correlated with time until ratification, and the effect of the militarization variables remained substantively the same. In other words, across the models I found that a higher percentage of armed forces personnel in the labor force and a higher level of military expenditures per GDP was correlated with a longer duration until ratification and/or a failure to ratify, while a higher level of GDP per capita is slightly associated with earlier ratification.

Conclusion and Implications

Clearly, the elements that impact international relations and treaty ratification such as that of the Kyoto protocol are complex and the statistical analysis presented here represents, at best, preliminary findings. These findings do, however, point to the importance militarization in a society on global climate policy negotiations. Furthermore, I do not attempt to explain all of the myriad factors impacting a state’s decision of whether and when to ratify. The findings for treadmill of destruction theory are similar to the findings of Zahran et al. for ecological modernization theory; treadmill of destruction theory also provides theoretically derived and testable hypotheses, and I find support for these hypotheses derived from treadmill of destruction theory.

The key contribution of this study is that I find evidence, in line with previous work looking at Kyoto ratification and other environmental outcomes (Hooks and Smith 2004, Jorgenson 2009) that military dominance and power must be considered separate from and in addition to economic power in an analysis of environmental treaty support and ratification and a willingness to sacrifice and cooperate on global climate change initiatives. The implications are that in future studies both within and outside of the field of environmental sociology, the role of militarization must be considered in our analyses. This may be especially pertinent to consider as the U.S., an outlier on Kyoto Protocol ratification and the recognized economic and military global hegemon, is currently involved in multiple prolonged military engagements. Finally, these findings draw attention to both direct and indirect impacts of war and the military on society.

References


We welcome papers from undergraduate students, graduate students, and faculty from all departments on any issue of social relevance. Papers should be 5-7 pages in length, double spaced. The deadline to submit a paper is July 15, 2011.

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