

ANNALES

Anali za istrske in mediteranske študije
Annali di Studi istriani e mediterranee
Annals for Istrian and Mediterranean Studies
Series Historia et Sociologia, 35, 2025, 3





ANNALES

Anali za istrske in mediteranske študije
Annali di Studi istriani e mediterraneei
Annals for Istrian and Mediterranean Studies

Series Historia et Sociologia, 35, 2025, 3

ISSN 1408-5348
e-ISSN 2591-1775

UDK 009

Letnik 35, leto 2025, številka 3

**UREDNIŠKI ODBOR/
COMITATO DI REDAZIONE/
BOARD OF EDITORS:**

Roderick Bailey (UK), Gorazd Bajc, Simona Bergoč, Furio Bianco (IT), Aleksandr Cherkasov (RUS), Lucija Čok, Lovorka Čoralić (HR), Darko Darovec, Devan Jagodic (IT), Aleksej Kalc, Urška Lampe, Avgust Lešnik, John Jeffries Martin (USA), Robert Matijašič (HR), Darja Mihelič, Vesna Mikolič, Luciano Monzali (IT), Edward Muir (USA), Vojislav Pavlović (SRB), Peter Pirker (AUT), Claudio Povoło (IT), Marijan Premović (MNE), Andrej Rahten, Žiga Oman, Vida Rožac Darovec, Mateja Sedmak, Lenart Škof, Polona Tratnik, Boštjan Udovič, Marta Verginella, Špela Verovšek, Tomislav Vignjevič, Paolo Wulzer (IT), Salvator Žitko

**Glavni urednik/Redattore capo/
Editor in chief:**

Darko Darovec

**Odgovorni urednik/Redattore
responsabile/Responsible Editor:**

Salvator Žitko

Uredniki/Redattori/Editors:

Urška Lampe, Boštjan Udovič, Žiga Oman, Veronika Kos

Prevajalka/Traduttrice/Translator:

Cecilia Furioso Cenci (it.)

**Oblikovalec/Progetto grafico/
Graphic design:**

Dušan Podgornik, Darko Darovec

Tisk/Stampa/Print:

Založništvo PADRE d.o.o.

Založnika/Editori/Published by:

Zgodovinsko društvo za južno Primorsko - Koper / *Società storica del Litorale - Capodistria*® / Inštitut IRRIS za raziskave, razvoj in strategije družbe, kulture in okolja / *Institute IRRIS for Research, Development and Strategies of Society, Culture and Environment* / *Istituto IRRIS di ricerca, sviluppo e strategie della società, cultura e ambiente*®

**Sedež uredništva/Sede della redazione/
Address of Editorial Board:**

SI-6000 Koper/Capodistria, Garibaldijeva/Via Garibaldi 18
e-mail: annaleszdjp@gmail.com, **internet:** https://zdjp.si

Redakcija te številke je bila zaključena 30. 09. 2025.

**Sofinancirajo/Supporto finanziario/
Financially supported by:**

Javna agencija za znanstvenoraziskovalno in inovacijsko dejavnost Republike Slovenije (ARIS)

Annales - Series Historia et Sociologia izhaja štirikrat letno.

Maloprodajna cena tega zvezka je 11 EUR.

Naklada/Tiratura/Circulation: 300 izvodov/copie/copies

Revija Annales, Series Historia et Sociologia je vključena v naslednje podatkovne baze / *La rivista Annales, Series Historia et Sociologia è inserita nei seguenti data base* / *Articles appearing in this journal are abstracted and indexed in:* Clarivate Analytics (USA): Arts and Humanities Citation Index (A&HCI) in/and Current Contents / Arts & Humanities; IBZ, Internationale Bibliographie der Zeitschriftenliteratur (GER); Sociological Abstracts (USA); Referativnyi Zhurnal Viniti (RUS); European Reference Index for the Humanities and Social Sciences (ERIH PLUS); Elsevier B. V.: SCOPUS (NL); Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ).

To delo je objavljeno pod licenco / *Quest'opera è distribuita con Licenza* / *This work is licensed under a* Creative Commons BY 4.0.



Navodila avtorjem in vsi članki v barvni verziji so prosto dostopni na spletni strani: <https://zdjp.si>.
Le norme redazionali e tutti gli articoli nella versione a colori sono disponibili gratuitamente sul sito: https://zdjp.si/it/.
The submission guidelines and all articles are freely available in color via website https://zdjp.si/en/.



VSEBINA / INDICE GENERALE / CONTENTS

Mojca Puncer, Vesna Žegarac Leskovar & Peter Šenk: Preserving the Past for the Future: Architecture with the Legacy of Care and Aesthetics 237
Preservare il passato per il futuro: architettura con l'eredità della cura e dell'estetica
Ohranjanje preteklosti za prihodnost: arhitektura z zapuščino skrbi in estetike

Igor Sapač & Polona Vidmar:
 The Importance of Interdisciplinary Scientific Research for the Contemporary Interpretation and Revitalization of Neglected Architectural Heritage: The Case of Novo Celje Manor near Žalec (Slovenia) 251
L'importanza della ricerca scientifica interdisciplinare per l'interpretazione contemporanea e la rivitalizzazione del patrimonio architettonico trascurato: il caso del maniero di Novo Celje vicino a Žalec (Slovenia)
Pomen interdisciplinarnega znanstvenega raziskovanja za sodobno interpretacijo in revitalizacijo zapostavljene stavbne dediščine: primer dvorca Novo Celje pri Žalcu (Slovenija)

Nataša Smolič:
 Nastavki umetne inteligence v likovnosti in etika njihove uporabe 273
Applicazioni dell'intelligenza artificiale nelle arti visive e l'etica del loro utilizzo
Applications of Artificial Intelligence in Visual Arts and the Ethics of Their Use

Katarina Oštrbenk, Tjaša Alegro, Alenka Černelič Krošelj & Maja Turnšek: Virtualni 360° ogledi kot orodje promocije kulturne dediščine: rezultati eksperimenta promocije Posavskega muzeja Brežice 289
Tour virtuali a 360° come strumento di promozione del patrimonio culturale: risultati di un esperimento di promozione del Museo Posavje di Brežice
Virtual 360° Tours as a Tool for Promoting Cultural Heritage: Results from an Experiment at the Posavje Museum Brežice

Danijel Germek:
 Razbitina nemške desantno transportne ladje (MFP) F 956 pri Piranu 305
Il relitto della motozattera tedesca (MFP) F 956 presso Pirano
The Wreck of the German Lighter (MFP) F 956 near Piran

Melita Lemut Bajec, Judita Giparaitė & Helena Bažec: Proverbs with the Word »Bee« in English, Italian, Lithuanian and Slovenian 329
Proverbi contenenti la parola "ape" in inglese, italiano, lituano e sloveno
Pregovori z besedo »čebela« v angleščini, italijanščini, litovščini in slovenščini

Marjan Horvat: Kultura, dediščina in trajnostni razvoj: deliberacija kot spodbujevalec družbene preobrazbe 343
Cultura, patrimonio e sviluppo sostenibile: la deliberazione come motore di trasformazione sociale
Culture, Heritage and Sustainable Development: Deliberation as a Driver of Social Transformation

Petra Weingerl: Načelo lojalnega sodelovanja v Evropski uniji na področju državljanstva 361
Il principio di leale cooperazione nell'Unione Europea nel campo della cittadinanza
The Principle of Sincere Cooperation in the European Union in Nationality Matters

Almedina Lozić:
 Operation of Power Through Gratefulness/Gratitude: Experiences of Syrian Refugees and Asylum Seekers in the United Kingdom 375
Funzionamento del potere attraverso la gratitudine: esperienze di rifugiati e richiedenti asilo siriani nel Regno Unito
Delovanje moči v hvaležnosti: izkušnje sirskih beguncev in prosilcev za azil v Veliki Britaniji

Kazalo k slikam na ovitku 391
 Indice delle foto di copertina 391
 Index to images on the cover 391

received: 2024-11-28

DOI 10.19233/ASHS.2025.25

OPERATION OF POWER THROUGH GRATEFULNESS/GRATITUDE: EXPERIENCES OF SYRIAN REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

Almedina LOZIĆ

The London School of Economics and Political Science, Houghton Street London WC2A 2AE, United Kingdom
e-mail: a.lozic@outlook.com

ABSTRACT

This research constitutes a rare effort in examining how gratefulness/gratitude constructs refugees'/asylum seekers' lived experiences by centring underlying presence of power. Power in gratefulness/gratitude is here defined by using colonialism/coloniality framework to establish asylum as a continuation of those processes. Types of manifestations of gratefulness/gratitude that were explored were expressing signs of appreciation, confirming white saviourism and making concessions through integration, contribution to the new society and humility. Two main conclusions were made. Firstly, the study found that involuntary and voluntary expressions of gratefulness/gratitude can overlap, meaning that even voluntary expressions can be tied to power. Secondly, gratefulness/gratitude can take different forms; as a tool of control and marginalisation of refugees/asylum seekers, for obtaining benefits or as actual gratefulness/gratitude.

Keywords: displacement, gratefulness/gratitude, colonialism/coloniality, Syria, United Kingdom

FUNZIONAMENTO DEL POTERE ATTRAVERSO LA GRATITUDINE: ESPERIENZE DI RIFUGIATI E RICHIEDENTI ASILO SIRIANI NEL REGNO UNITO

SINTESI

Questa ricerca costituisce un raro sforzo nell'esaminare come la gratitudine costruisce le esperienze vissute dai rifugiati/richiedenti asilo, mettendo al centro la presenza del potere. Il potere nella gratitudine viene definito attraverso il quadro del colonialismo/colonialità per stabilire l'asilo come una continuazione di tali processi. I tipi di manifestazioni di gratitudine che sono stati analizzati comprendono: l'espressione di segni di apprezzamento, la conferma del salvatorismo bianco e le concessioni tramite l'integrazione, il contributo alla nuova società e l'umiltà. Sono state elaborate due conclusioni principali. Lo studio ha rilevato che le espressioni involontarie e volontarie di gratitudine possono sovrapporsi, il che implica che anche le espressioni volontarie possono essere legate al potere. In secondo luogo, la gratitudine può assumere forme diverse; come strumento di controllo ed emarginazione dei rifugiati/richiedenti asilo, per ottenere benefici o come effettiva gratitudine.

Parole chiave: sfollamento, gratitudine, colonialismo/colonialità, Siria, Regno Unito

INTRODUCTION

Recent literature on asylum has turned to critically examining power imbalances between refugees/asylum seekers (RAS) and the new society. Mirzoeff (2021, 1303) described refugee camps as “[spaces] of disappearance” that prevent RAS’ social inclusion; the drivers of displacement have been probed in relation to colonial histories (cf. Mayblin, 2017) and Frydenlund and Dunn (2022) analysed particularities of RAS’ experiences that enable their capitalist exploitation. One reflection of power that has received little attention is refugees’/asylum seekers’ gratefulness/gratitude (RASG) for asylum (Healey, 2014, 614). RASG can be understood as gratefulness/gratitude felt for receiving asylum, a gift that should be repaid to the new country/society (Healey, 2014; Ignatieff, 2017). As such, it can be a powerful tool. RASG can be used to justify the imposition of expectations, reproduce the privileged position of citizens by positioning RAS as always in need of citizens’ help and to impede resistance (Moulin, 2012; Ignatieff, 2017; Nayeri, 2017; Ortlieb et al., 2021). On a political level, emphasising RASG for a new life, unavailable in their home country, can serve to justify international interventions and to sustain an image of a white saviour (Espiritu, 2006, 341–344; Nguyen, 2016, cited in Gallagher, 2016) or used to claim adequacy of asylum policies (Hetz, 2021). Finally, since RASG is related to a “[group]-based benefit” /.../ that helps a particular individual, but is provided to multiple recipients” (Tsang, 2021, 28), it can be employed as a tool to reinforce structural and systemic marginalisation of RAS. While these underlying notions of power point to the importance of this topic, they also limit the understanding of RASG. Rendering every expression of RASG as a consequence of power imbalances (cf. Healey, 2014) and expectation of RASG as eternal, since “the debt extends endlessly” (Nguyen, 2012, 9), reinforces perceptions of clear manifestation of power in RASG and RAS’ passive position.

This gap in literature means it is not clear in what ways and to what extent are lived experiences of power in RASG aligned with theorisations described above. Do all RAS experience expectations of RASG and power? Is power felt in all demonstrations of RASG or can it coexist with actual RASG? Are RAS’ responses always those of compliance and how do they resist? Can they use RASG for their own benefit? Presenting how RAS understand, manage and/or resist RASG can highlight their stances in discussions on RASG and their social inclusion. This ties to the second research gap, the neglect of consideration for “imperialist foundations upon which refugee studies [sit]” (Mayblin, 2017, 5), which has been accentuated by many researchers (cf. Chimni, 1998; Arat-Koç,

2020; Turner, 2020). To address this gap the present study examines the extent and operation of power in lived experiences of RAS through colonialism/coloniality of power and its reflections in RASG. It foregrounds the continuation of colonial systems in approaches to ‘managing displacement’ and the role of RASG in upholding these systems.

In the last 30 years asylum rights in the UK have become increasingly constrained by policies that limit who can be granted asylum, small quotas for resettlement, restricted access to support as well as intensification of deportation, border controls and surveillance methods (Mayblin, 2017, 13–19). This study chose Syrian RAS in the UK as a case study, since, aligned with the current heightened focus on displacement, the study was interested in a recent example. Most have also already spent a few years in the UK, giving them time to engage with the society.

The study posed the following research question: *How and to what extent do Syrian refugees/asylum seekers in the UK experience power through gratefulness/gratitude?*

LITERATURE REVIEW

RASG and power

The literature tends to conceptualise gratefulness and gratitude separately. Following Walker (1980–1981), Rusk et al. (2016) distinguish between gratefulness and gratitude depending on whom they are directed at; the former applies when gratefulness for benevolence/benefit is a general feeling and the latter when it is directed at someone or something. Considering this study documented both types it will use both terms. Gratefulness/gratitude is evoked by receiving benevolence/benefits from others that “[exceed] our rights or entitlements” (Walker, 1980–1981, 48). Asylum is guaranteed by the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (1951) and as such it should not be conceptualised as benevolence/benefit, however, entrenched understanding of asylum as a gift and not a right creates expectations of RASG. This study analysed three modes of manifestation of RASG; simple gestures, confirmation of white saviourism and concessions. Simple gestures or verbal expressions of RASG are described by Berger (1975, 303) as “[signs] of appreciation” in personal interactions for benevolence/benefits received. White saviourism incorporates expressing gratefulness/gratitude for asylum – being saved from violence (Healey, 2014, 621) – and consequently for a better life – being saved from “[backwardness] and [destitution]” (Espiritu, 2006, 341). Finally, concessions are usually performed through one’s behaviour (Berger, 1975) and here refer to integration, contributing to the society and humility.

Providing benevolence/benefits can emanate both power and actual gratefulness/gratitude (Hobbes, 1968, cited in O'Connell Davidson, 1998, 170). At the root of the distinction between the two is reciprocity; power demands or expects reciprocity, actual RASG does not (Rusk et al., 2016, 2201). Berger (1975, 302–303) phrased this difference in the nature of reciprocity as “a like return” versus “a sign of appreciation”. The line can be developed even further. In literature on RASG power is also referred to as debt. According to Roberts (1991, 335) indebtedness occurs when benevolence/benefits and debt are not taken upon gladly, meaning that expecting or demanding reciprocity is not inherently tied to power. Power, under that premise, is present only if gratefulness/gratitude is expressed involuntarily (Watkins et al., 2006, 236).

Asylum and colonialism/coloniality

It is not possible to disentangle asylum and marginalisation of RAS from colonialism and coloniality of power (Mayblin, 2017). The latter refers to the “continuity of colonial forms of domination after the end of colonial administrations” (Grosfoguel, 2011, 14). Asylum is an essential part of and dependent on colonialism/coloniality. Mayblin (2017) describes how dehumanisation and hierarchisation of people during colonialism is conditional for similar treatment of RAS. While perceptions of differential human worth during colonialism rested on constructed racial differences, dehumanisation and hierarchisation of RAS is rooted both in race and in understandings of civilisation and modernity. The West, on the other hand, is positioned as superior in both systems. This continuation is seen in usage of such narratives as a justification for particular responses to crises and displacement. Similarly, as Mill (2006, 259) in 1859 justified colonialism by claiming that “nations which are still barbarous [...] benefit [from being] conquered and held in subjection by foreigners” today ‘Global South’ countries are presented as “unable to govern themselves” (Arat-Koç, 2020, 376), while the ‘Global North’ is assigned with solving the crises (cf. Belloni, 2007). The latter’s relation to the sources of crises causing displacement is “invisibilized, normalized and legitimized” (Arat-Koç, 2020, 376), which “[naturalizes [...] disparate]” circumstances between ‘North and South’ (Espiritu, 2006, 339). Embedding superiority and power continues through integration of RAS in the new societies. The expectation is that they wish to come and integrate or even assimilate into what is deemed to be a high-principled and admirable country/society (Honig, 1998, 2; Espiritu, 2006). Thirdly, asylum is considered to be a gift; only some receive it and the eligibility criteria is subject

to changes. The giver is not only the state but also each citizen. Since their approval is needed, citizens can decide on matters pertaining asylum and determine RAS’ fate, which enables continuation of the colonial hierarchy between citizens and RAS (Ignatieff, 2017, 229–230). Finally, asylum and colonialism/coloniality are linked through racial capitalism. Exploitation of racialised communities that enables capitalist systems continues in different forms till today (Robinson, 2000; Nguyen, 2019, 120). Refugee capitalism is a particular type of racial capitalism (Frydenlund & Dunn, 2022), since position of RAS is similar. “[...] [The] refugee is first and foremost another wage laborer in the free market, a cog in the capitalist machine, as opposed to a unique recipient of humanitarian aid. To see the continuity [...] is to see the forces of colonialism, capitalism, and racialization at play in displacing migrant subjects across time and space” (Nguyen, 2019, 121). RAS are underpaid, systematically directed into performing most difficult and dangerous occupations and prevented from obtaining better jobs (Nguyen, 2019, 110; Frydenlund & Dunn, 2022). They are vulnerable to capitalist exploitation due to low social benefits, poverty, legal status, mental health struggles, unfamiliarity with the language and the new environment as well as due to social perceptions of racial inferiority (Frydenlund & Dunn, 2022, 3–7).

RASG and colonialism/coloniality

These reflections of colonialism/coloniality in asylum are tied to demonstrations of RASG. The first mode of demonstrating RASG is integration (Nayeri, 2017; 2020). Besides repatriation and resettlement, integration into the new society is the only available option presented to RAS (Chimni, 1998, 363). Despite integration being defined in literature as a multi-level and -directional process (Spencer & Charsley, 2021), it is rather experienced as a one-way action. Countries design and implement these three approaches “to manage, and control refugee lives to fit the ideals of the receiving society” (Bannerjee et al., 2022, 36). RAS are expected to integrate by “living like a national citizen” (Ortlieb et al., 2021, 281), which aligns more with coloniality than integration as a multi-way process. As such, it can exert power over RAS by imposing expectations that reflect society’s wishes, even if they are in direct clash with RAS’ cultural practices (Ortlieb et al., 2021, 276). If expectations are not fulfilled, RAS can face consequences. In such setting citizens’ demands are the primary concern (Ignatieff, 2017) and there is little space for consideration of RAS’ needs, which indicates hierarchisation and dehumanisation as during colonialism/coloniality (cf. Mayblin,

2017). Oppressive elements of integration can be simultaneously obscured and further reinforced by RASG. Integration can be presented as an act of RAS gratefully taking on the opportunity to change and become part of a 'better' society. "The hate wasn't about being darker, or from elsewhere. It was about being those things and daring to be unaware of it. As refugees, we owed them our previous identity. We had to lay it at their door like an offering, and gleefully deny it to earn our place in this new country" (Nayeri, 2017). Through the process of grateful integration superiority of the new society to which one's home country cannot compare (Espiritu, 2006; Nayeri, 2017; 2020) can come to be confirmed. When integration is set into the context of RASG it can traverse into the realm of assimilation, power and coloniality.

The second way of demonstrating RASG is related to perceptions of superiority as well; RAS can demonstrate RASG for asylum and a new life by confirming they are being saved from violence (Healey, 2014, 621) and "[backwardness] and [destitution]" (Espiritu, 2006, 341). The term white saviour has perhaps been most succinctly, and cynically, described by Cole. "The white savior supports brutal policies in the morning, founds charities in the afternoon, and receives awards in the evening" (Cole, 2012). White saviourism, being a "colonial relationship" (Milazzo, 2019, 60), is related to notions of power in RASG. It enhances divisions between the 'non-West and West'; the former is "backward and war-like" and needs to be saved by the West, which is presented "as the realm of reason, modernity and tolerance" (Belloni, 2007, 455). As during colonialism, support provided by those in privileged positions to those who are marginalised is seen as essential for 'progress'. They are presented as being best positioned to determine the form of support needed and what it should incorporate (Cammarota, 2011, 243–244; Milazzo, 2019, 60). Furthermore, despite their role in oppression, a white saviour is presented as innocent. "[Internalist] interpretation of the root causes of refugee flows" enables the West to distance itself from the sources of crises and to downplay its role (Chimni, 1998, 351). Failure to recognise and extensively examine involvement of the West in political situations in RAS' home countries and consequently its contribution to displacement allows for maintenance of asylum as a charity and the West's innocence, superiority and saviourism. The perception of generosity in turn drives expectations of RASG, regardless of the amount or type of support RAS are provided with (Arat-Koç, 2020, 372–379; Nguyen, 2016, cited in Gallagher, 2016). The nexus of saviourism, innocence, charity and RASG constructs

refugees as colonial subjects in a relationship with a substantial power imbalance. RAS' position as colonial subjects and that of the new country and its citizens as the white saviour comes to be "[confirmed] and [legitimized]" through expressions of RASG (Arat-Koç, 2020, 379).

Third aspect of demonstrating RASG is related to RAS contributing to their new country/society. Frydenlund and Dunn (2022) identified several elements that enable refugee capitalism, however, they did not consider the role of RASG. If asylum is considered to be a gift that only some receive, citizens must be reimbursed for their generosity (Ignatieff, 2017). By working, achieving success and using myriad of opportunities that are now, supposedly, available to RAS in the new society, they can demonstrate RASG and begin repaying the gift of asylum (Ignatieff, 2017; Nayeri, 2017; 2020; Ortlieb et al., 2021). This framework makes RAS vulnerable to systemic exploitation in the labour market and creates a perception of their voluntary compliance. It also justifies the lack of state support, respect for RAS' rights (Turner, 2020) and expectation of self-reliance (Easton-Calabria & Omata, 2018), which denies their humanitarian position and allows imposition of capitalist exploitation (Turner, 2020). Moreover, impacts of "structural barriers and histories of dispossession" (Turner, 2020, 155) on RAS' position in the labour market are backgrounded and adherence to citizens' demands and display of RASG is prioritised (Ignatieff, 2017).

The final way of demonstrating RASG is not complaining and being humble. Once RAS are given the protection of asylum, they change into colonial subjects since they do not have "the capacity to speak politically and [are denied] the expectation that they will be heard" (Nyers, 2006, 17). Doing so would mean "[questioning] the hierarchies and moral subordination" to citizens and nation states (Moulin, 2012, 61). They are not supposed to protest in any way but are rather expected to accept whatever they are presented with without complaining in order to express RASG for asylum (Moulin, 2012; Nayeri, 2020). This expectation contains perceptions of differential human worth and reaffirms them; RAS as dehumanised colonial subjects should (Mayblin, 2017) naturally be satisfied with whatever they are given and even express RASG for it. By speaking in any way RAS would be asserting themselves as knowing what is best for them (Moulin, 2012, 61) and not the nation states and/or citizens, as the colonial logic of white saviourism implies (cf. Cammarota, 2011; Milazzo, 2019; Arat-Koç, 2020). Hetz's research (2021, 882–884) shows that even when RAS obtain citizenship they can remain tied to RASG and reluctant to express criticisms on matters pertaining asylum publicly.

METHODOLOGY

Methods

The underlying presence of power has been alluded to in theorisations about RASG but such connections have been seldom explored through RAS' experiences. The lack of qualitative methodological approaches has limited the understanding of how power in RASG is lived. By using in-depth interviews this study was able to centre RAS and obtain insight into the complexities and nuances of connections between lived experiences of RASG and power, such as different manifestations of RASG, actual RASG, potential benefits and resistance. Secondly, this gap limited understanding of the suitability of different methods as it was not possible to fully reflect in advance on potential sensitive aspects that might arise. However, using semi-structured interviews allowed adjusting interview questions to specific experiences of each participant (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

Data collection

I conducted semi-structured interviews with seven informants (four women and three men) in English. Six interviews were conducted over Zoom and one in-person in June and July 2022. I recorded interviews with my personal computer and later transcribed them. The empirical data are securely stored by me. Duration of the interviews was between 60 and 120 minutes. Before the interview, I addressed confidentiality and anonymity and each participant signed the consent form. The topic guide consisted of introductory questions, questions on experiencing expectations of RASG, their understanding and reactions to RASG. During analysis in July and August 2022 I posed several additional questions to five participants to obtain clarifications and additional missing information.

The sample is very small, which can prevent using the findings as representative and limit the extent of diversity of experiences portrayed in the study. However, the study's aim was not to collect representative data but rather it was one of the first attempts to research the link between RASG and power. Moreover, despite the small sample the study nonetheless presents many nuances of lived experiences.

Inclusion criteria and recruitment

The criteria included seeking asylum in the UK due to the conflict in Syria, spending at least 12 months in the UK and working/studying. The last two criteria ensured RAS had had enough time to

become involved in various aspects of social life and had regular social interactions. While legal status of refugees and asylum seekers is different, it was not specifically considered, since the study was focused on lived experiences in daily life, where one's legal status can remain unknown to others. My sample consisted of participants that had legal status of a refugee or asylum seeker, two recently became British citizens, lived in big cities, were highly educated and in higher-status occupations. Participants were recruited through convenience and snowball sampling where first participants were recruited through personal acquaintances.

Data analysis

In the data analysis thematic analysis was used. It allows to identify and establish connections between themes/patterns in the collected data. In the thematic network, codes, as elementary features (Attride-Stirling, 2001, 387–389), were "[organized] [...] into clusters of similar issues" called organising themes. These then formed the global theme, in which the main findings came together (Attride-Stirling, 2001, 389). The study relied on both inductive and deductive coding. The organising themes represent the three forms of power operating through RASG; simple gestures, white saviourism and concessions. They stem from previous research findings and were adapted to reflect the data collected. Codes are grounded in the collected data and describe participants' experiences and perspectives. The final coding frame consists of 21 codes, three organizing themes and one global theme.

The study set out to determine presence, type and extent of power in experiences of RASG by analysing whether expressions of RASG were voluntary. However, since RASG as a form of power and actual RASG in certain instances overlapped, it was also examined whether voluntary expressions were tied to power. This was done by assessing whether unequal power positions between RAS and citizens or misuse/misinterpretation of RASG can be recognised in voluntary expressions of RASG.

Ethics

Ethical approval was obtained from London School of Economics and Political Science. To minimise ethical concerns, participants were not asked about their lives during the conflict or about leaving Syria. All participants were made aware of the possibility to refuse answering a certain question or to stop the interview. To increase anonymity, in the analysis I used pseudonyms and gender-neutral pronouns. The main ethical concern was



Figure 1: Coding framework.

how to analyse operation of power in RASG that would not misrepresent participants' experiences. To avoid this, the topic guide included questions that directly prompted participants to reflect on their understanding of RASG and its manifestations as well as on the reasoning behind their answers. Moreover, during analysis I posed additional questions to five participants.

FINDINGS

Simple gestures as power and actual RASG

The role of power in RASG expressed through simple gestures in interpersonal relationships was

very limited; even some participants that rejected complying with expectations wanted to express RASG for certain benevolence/benefits and to certain individuals. Five participants recounted expressing RASG in interpersonal relations with simple – mostly verbal – gestures and on their own terms. Jabar often mentioned in conversations being grateful to be in the UK, grateful to the society and citizens for good treatment, safety and the opportunities. Jabar also thought that demanding RASG causes indignity that is why they linked these feelings to the absence of such expectations, showing agency over one's own RASG. Malak, Sana and Yasmine felt grateful only in supportive relationships:

I'm grateful to my manager, [...] she tried to empower me, [...] send me to training, put me in touch with people, supported me in my [decisions]. (Yasmine, 2022)

Expressions of RASG can be an individual conscious decision that represents actual RASG; as Malak (2022) said, "it's not just need, I want to express that". These cases seemed to suit Roberts' (1991, 335) and Watkins' et al. (2006, 236) definition of actual RASG, where reciprocity is voluntary. On the contrary, an entanglement of willingness and power can be seen when compliance is offered due to certain needs. Nour felt obliged to do so even without external expectations of RASG. In the recount of such events the power imbalance is evident:

Even if I'm invited for dinner, I feel the need to take food with me. This is a good example how I'm so grateful that people are in my social circles and I'm included in their weddings and things like that [...]. I try to be extra helpful when there's no need. (Nour, 2022)

Nour (2022) explained such behaviour by belief that "people will get upset and no longer be my friends in the time I needed friends so much". Helpfulness was expressed as a sign of appreciation to continue receiving benevolence/benefits; in this case support. This was not purely a voluntary decision as they were demonstrating RASG out of need and perception that that is the only way to obtain benevolence/benefits. Concurrently, RAS might be attempting to hold power in those relationships, since by expressing RASG, they were trying to influence citizens to reciprocate. It is thus unclear where willingness ends and power begins and what is the extent of RAS' power in interpersonal relationships. Using RASG as a strategy also opens questions about the "sincerity" of expressed RASG (Walker, 1980–1981, 41). RASG is not a feeling anymore but a method or a tool with a certain exchange value.

In other instances, when presence of power was evident, Nour resisted, which also shows that one's reactions are not always the same. One such occasion was a friend offering them food even though Nour did not need such financial assistance:

He said "now that you claim asylum maybe you can come regularly for food". [...] When you become a refugee a lot of the identity becomes connected to the status and that type of offer ties in with the idea that we're not friends, we're not equal, but I need to offer you charity. (Nour, 2022)

Experiences of participants point to a more complex relationship between simple gestures and power than the one usually described in literature. Overall, participants were not passive; all engaged in (re)shaping and (re)defining their experiences of gratefulness/gratitude but they could not always counter power.

Disputing white saviourism

Six participants rejected white innocence of the UK country/society. They viewed the UK's role through colonialism, weapons sales and inadequate response to the conflict in Syria. They were also critical of the UK's treatment of RAS, such as forced repatriations and creating anti-refugee sentiment. Only Jabar did not perceive UK country/society as responsible:

There's a lot of unaddressed grievances for the role of Britain in [...] making the Middle East a very dysfunctional area, but it's no one's fault now, [...] we can't go on and blame them for something that happened 80 years ago. [...] [In] countries with democracy government can change like this (snaps fingers) and you have completely different policy. (Jabar, 2022)

Jabar recognized the UK's role but they perceived today's government and society as separate from that historical period. Disconnecting historical systems from the present and dismissing the continuation of infliction of violence through different systems can reproduce power relations with whiteness at the top regardless of voluntary reciprocity. This does not only erase economic and political benefits of both past and current violence for Western countries and societies while impacted countries have to resolve consequences by themselves but it can also lead to a paradoxical situation where a country whose historical role in the current violence is acknowledged can still position itself as a white saviour. Distinction between actual RASG and power should perhaps consider the outcomes of RASG. If displaying RASG contributes to the reproduction of inequalities, voluntary compliance might not be enough to designate those expressions only as actual RASG but also as power.

Lack of perceptions of white innocence led to participants rejecting expectations of RASG for being saved from violence and 'underdevelopment' by the UK government/society. While they felt a general feeling of RASG for being able to claim asylum and be in a safe environment where they can have a high-quality life, they did not frame it in the inferiority-superiority dichotomy, where 'underdevelopment' was seen as intrinsic. They rather situated this question in the historical exploitation in reaching 'development' and disputed that Syria was a place that offered no resources:

I'm living in better, but I don't have to be grateful because this is the basic right of human being to live safe, free and have education, place to live. [...] [And] you have better quality of life because you used resources of other countries. (Yasmine, 2022)

[British always say] "they started from nothing, look where they are now". [...] [As if refugees] were just born in this moment when they arrived to the UK [...] and now because this great country gives you opportunity you establish your life [...]. (Nour, 2022)

Saviourism narratives can be used to portray government's policies on Syria and RAS as adequate or at least unproblematic (cf. Espiritu, 2006; Hetz, 2021) as well as portray the new country/society as the only one that is capable of improving RAS' position (cf. Cammarota, 2011; Milazzo, 2019). Malak, Sana and Nour tried to resist expectations of RASG in personal interactions at work or university and publicly communicate the complexity, however, they struggled since their actions and words seemed to have been interpreted through white saviourism. The participants felt this narrative is rooted in the UK's colonial history and wields through different parts of the society – identities, systems and institutions – which severely obstructs resistance. The seemingly intrinsic character of white saviourism seemed to have impeded RAS's efforts to counteract it, which meant they were experiencing power:

Whenever they know that I'm from Syria [they think] it's an upgrade by default, where in reality it might not be [...]. They totally dismiss the idea of uprooting. [Even if you] share what you really think they might not really get complex thing of [uprooting]. (Sana, 2022)

[...] [the] HR said "oh, isn't that lovely that we managed to save two people's lives", and I thought that was quite a big thing to say, because it wasn't their doing. (Nour, 2022)

Nour reported this incident in their annual review but there was no response. The available means of resistance were few and insufficient as their experiences did not seem to be understood adequately nor were there established ways to file a complaint in formal environments. To avoid potential discussions and being accused of resentment Sana (2022) unwillingly expressed RASG, saying: "I don't believe it and I feel like a hypocrite when I say that [it's better here]". RAS' compliance operates like a manifestation of power even though it is rejected internally.

Contrarily, Jabar and Khalil were both grateful, however, neither of them used saviourism narratives. Instead, there were multiple other reasons. Both explained they were rather being realistic and pragmatic. Considering that some countries do not grant asylum, Khalil (2022) accepted that it was not treated as a right and that RAS "cannot expect everything to be ideal". Jabar felt similarly since there was no guarantee asylum would be granted:

They could have told me "you can go somewhere else, you'll be fine, you're a young man". (Jabar, 2022)

They both seemed to accept systemic failures in ensuring the right to asylum, signifying such feelings were not purely voluntary, they were rather conditioned not by rights but by practice. Another example of pragmatism is reflected in intentional use of RASG as a means of obtaining benefits/benevolence. Khalil (2022) recognised connections between colonialist exploitation and white saviourism and was "annoyed by how [the West] looks down at some regions" but was nonetheless driven by desire to have a home. By being grateful Khalil hoped to build a positive attitude and connection to the new environment:

[If] I started showing resentment to this place [...] it would be very hard after some time to say "I feel like I belong here". [...] I see some people who are very resentful to the UK, but I don't want to be like them because, and I say this with a lot of sympathy for them, they suffer a lot. (Khalil, 2022)

While RASG could potentially have a favourable outcome it was simultaneously compounded by power. Khalil seemed to make a conscious and pragmatic decision to disregard the reasons behind resentment and foster RASG. Khalil (2022) was also aware of potential misuse of RASG since "it looks like due to my need someone [is] taking advantage". However, it seemed that there was no alternative to this, if they wanted to build a home in the UK.

Finally, Khalil (2022) thought the situation in Syria was incomparably worse and was grateful for greater respect for human rights in the UK:

I saw the brutal way human rights were violated, killing, bombing cities and detaining people. [Despite of] all the issues [in the UK], at least there's a basic level of respect for human rights. [...] [I think] you cannot compare this with what our government did. (Khalil, 2022)

While Espiritu (2006) and Nguyen (2016, cited in Gallagher, 2016) speak about how RASG can be used to justify international interventions, in Khalil's view denying RASG could lead to underestimation of negative impact of conflicts. Feeling grateful for safety and quality of life in the UK served to emphasise dire situation in Syria and criticise violations of human rights. In this case RASG is a form of resistance and exercise of power. However, when these narratives are entirely separated from the history of colonialism, they nonetheless support white saviourism.

The nexus of willingness and power significantly marked participants' experiences. In terms of white saviourism, RAS remained colonial subjects. Whether they expressed RASG or not and regardless of the reasons, their sole presence could be evoked as RASG to the country/society for being saved.

Diverse and restricted operation of power in concessions

Integration

Existence of expectations to integrate was reported by all participants. Nour, Malak and Sana understood integration as an expression of RASG that demands assimilation from RAS. Malak (2022) thought RAS were expected to "become British regarding all cultural habits and speak proper English". The message was, as Nour (2022) said, "we bring you here, be grateful and be like everybody else". While these expectations are continuously marked as integration, they rather resemble assimilation and align with elements of coloniality of power. RAS' lives, including to an extent private lives, are constructed as a reflection of the citizens' lives. In this context, every integration can be understood as a sign of RASG and acknowledgment of the UK as better/superior, even though that might not be RAS' intention. For instance, Nour preferred some aspects of the UK society and willingly integrated but was vocal against such expectations. Even when RAS tried to exercise power over their integration, they lacked the power over narratives.

The sole act of integration is not enough. Sana (2022) felt there was a "connection between gratefulness and [...] being at ease when it comes to [integration] with this culture". This ease expresses RASG for receiving a new life and opportunity to be in a 'safe and better' society. RAS not using these opportunities can evoke confusion and judgment:

My manager's wife works with a Syrian and he was saying that he found that [she was] very lively, integrating with the society, trying new things and getting introduced to this culture [...]. The way he told me this it felt like I am not doing that. (Sana, 2022)

Perception that RAS have everything they need obscures the role of external factors, that is reasons for RAS being unable to integrate or for rejecting integration (Schneider & Crul, 2010; Spencer & Charsley, 2021). The 'failure' to integrate becomes portrayed as a choice and RAS as ungrateful. Reasons are in reality multiple and can range from mental health to economic situation (Iqbal et al., 2021). Sana consciously rejected to participate in social aspects of integration as a way of resistance to being a RAS and expectations to be grateful:

I feel my isolation is more an act to resist being a refugee, rebelling this uninformed decision I had to make and the display of gratefulness from other people. (Sana, 2022)

Four participants did not connect integration to assimilation but defined it similarly as Khalil (2022) as a "basic component of gratefulness" that combines a set of expectations. They placed emphasis on respecting the law and British culture, adapting one's attitudes and behaviour, learning the language, not 'abusing' the benefits, renting one's own house and paying taxes. Even though all four participants said they were integrating willingly their experiences were still related to coloniality of power. Firstly, their perceptions of integration reflected those set by the country/citizens. The power is not only about the ability to set conditions of integration but also about its purpose to delineate between citizens and RAS. According to Ignatieff (2017, 230), to appease citizens that "resent being placed on an equal footing with refugees" in order to secure their continued support they are given the option to influence matters pertaining asylum. Confirmation and reproduction of hierarchies by accepting integration as defined by the country/citizens is hence the key component of the integration process and coloniality. Furthermore, expecting one-way integration in return for asylum also reproduces coloniality and power imbalances. It speaks only about duties of RAS and disregards that integration is a process occurring on multiple levels and directions (Spencer & Charsley, 2021). Such process would consider RAS' experiences and needs or demand respect for their culture and equitable inclusion of their histories and cultural heritage in the wider culture and society. In a one-way integration, these aspects become constricted to the personal realm. Oukail told how every Ramadan they explained to their work colleagues that they were not Muslim:

They're trying, but they don't understand that people coming from the Middle East could not be Muslims, they all Muslims, that's it, finish the lesson [for] today. There are different

cultures in the Middle East [...], if you want to embrace the differences, you need to learn this, but I don't think they're trying to do this, they're just saying "everyone is welcome" but only touch the surface. (Oukail, 2022)

Another element of coloniality can be found in neglecting RAS' needs. Jabar and Yasmine thought that integration-related expectations set on RAS and citizens are the same. However, RAS are not like citizens. Firstly, Jabar, Yasmine and Khalil placed these expectations in the context of RASG unlike integration of citizens. Integration of RAS can then be interpreted as an obligation and asylum not as a right but a gift that should be returned or a privilege that should be earned by fulfilling expectations. Secondly, they labelled RAS that did not integrate in accordance with the expectations as ungrateful, however, the extent to which citizens fulfilled expectations was not questioned. Most importantly, equating RAS and citizens can propel a false assumption that their needs are the same, and if needs of citizens are met, then those of RAS are as well. Country/society is perceived as having fulfilled all RAS' rights and needs, which makes imposition of expectations to express RASG and integrate seem natural. Consequently, RAS' integration is prioritised, additionally sidelining their needs. Their lived realities, particularities of their situations and whether they are well-placed to fulfil the expectations are not considered. This also further validates colonial relations between RAS and citizens. The concern given to citizen's demands on integration allows neglect of RAS' needs to go unchallenged indicating the underlying dehumanisation and lower human worth assigned to RAS (cf. Mayblin, 2017).

Some of these reflections of coloniality of power seemed to be acknowledged by participants but nonetheless disregarded since they approached RASG through a strategic lens. Jabar and Khalil thought that RAS should satisfy the new society's expectations on integration and hence negotiate a better future position for RAS:

If they get well-integrated and become part of the society, [...] it will be easier for [future refugees]. (Jabar, 2022)

It's better we show a positive image of ourselves to counter the negative effect, although it's not fair [...] [but] we have to do our best in trying to change the image among the public [about] refugees. (Khalil, 2022)

In Khalil's experiences nexus of willingness and power was particularly evident. Having no other choice, Khalil accepted that RAS had to integrate to demonstrate they were good. Both believed that by

following expectations they can obtain benefits/benevolence of being like a citizen and stop being, as Khalil (2022) said, a "guest". However, unlike RAS, citizens were never expected to demonstrate RASG or use it as a strategy to obtain their status. It can be doubted that unequal power positions existing in such displays of RASG can fully transform into the citizen's position. Instead, being a refugee can be understood as a "significant and durable [way] of being in and moving through the world" (Nguyen, 2019, 111).

Contribution

Usage of narratives on RAS' economic value to foster their acceptance by the society (cf. Turner, 2020) clearly manifested in participants' experiences. Proving they are 'good' and not benefiting from taxpayers' money, desire for successful stories as well as political narratives led to all participants reporting expectations to contribute as a way to express RASG for asylum. RAS are framed primarily as participants in the labour market rather than recipients of humanitarian aid (Turner, 2020) while their particular situation makes them more vulnerable. Frydenlund and Dunn (2022, 3–7) list trauma, low social benefits and services, unfamiliarity with the environment and RAS' legal status as factors that enable their capitalist exploitation. RASG could be added to the list of sources that contribute to refugee capitalism. Sana's experiences are particularly demonstrative of how RASG amplifies and justifies expectations to contribute. Firstly, the job itself is constructed as a gift received by RAS, so they should be grateful. A friend told Sana (2022) that the workplace "helped me because I'm a refugee to get the job". Sana (2022) felt the need to counter the charity narrative and demonstrate being 'worthy' of having received the job and "prove that I am capable of doing stuff". Moreover, if being hired is charity, RAS are not employed like other citizens. Their employment is rather compared to other RAS who were not that 'lucky' or those who are still in Syria. Sana (2022) felt they were obliged to express RASG by "[maximising] the benefit of" having a job. RAS cannot be 'ordinary' workers and live 'ordinary' lives regardless of their ability to work, trauma and mental health struggles or their wishes (Nayeri, 2017).

Secondly, RASG can become a structural barrier in the labour market and reproduce inequalities. Sana's experiences can again be used as an example of exploitative or at least unequal working conditions. Sana (2022) worked long hours, on the weekends and took on additional work due to the expectation to do so but felt that it was "taken for granted and that took a toll on me". This could be an example of how RASG changes perceptions of RAS' work; since them working overtime was seen as 'natural' and since

it being unacknowledged had negative impacts on their wellbeing, their effort might not result in career advancements. Moreover, RASG can lead to further neglect of RAS' needs. When this framework prioritises citizens' expectations, obscures RAS' struggles and fails to adapt work environments to their particular experiences RAS' careers and their personal wellbeing can be impacted. Sana felt their struggles and efforts were not recognised:

There is lack of acknowledgment of what refugees go through in order to at least [manage to] do their jobs, it's taken for granted. (Sana, 2022)

While Frydenlund and Dunn (2022) focused on working-class jobs to demonstrate refugee capitalism Sana's experiences suggest that RASG in the labour market operates even when RAS perform upper middle- and high-class jobs. Their experiences also indicate that RASG does not necessarily require of RAS to be "less capable than the native, needier" (Nayeri, 2017, no page), since even when RAS achieve comparable 'success' they can be compelled to express RASG through other means. All RAS can be exposed to colonial subjectification of having to in some way express RASG that invisibilises structural inequalities and reproduces citizens' "priority to the privileges and entitlements of civic membership" (Ignatieff, 2017, 229–230), including opportunities and achievements.

Validating this priority, Khalil (2022) believed it is the duty of everyone to contribute to the community but expected of RAS "to prove more useful", since they are a "guest":

If you were born here, you're born here, you get privilege of being citizen [...] but when you're not born here, you're a guest. [...] Maybe in the future when you become part of the system, paying taxes, doing things, you become like them. (Khalil, 2022)

Khalil seemed to understand display of RASG through contribution as a way to become like a citizen and receive the same benefits in the future. Differences between RAS and citizens are supposed to disappear. However, their unequal positions perhaps cannot be resolved. Nguyen (2019, 111) describes "refugeeness" as an "embodiment" that has no end. He particularly centres "refugeetude" around RAS' involvement in the labour market as an exploited subject and further explains that "lack of material stability prevents [refugees] from gaining a sense of belonging, agency, and settledness" (Nguyen, 2019, 119). Khalil seemed to experience a similar lack of a sense of belonging, agency and settledness, which seemed to stem, not from their economic position, but from the constant struggle

to set aside their grievances and remain pragmatic and grateful. Extensive community work as a sign of RASG was supposed to be a way to attain those senses but the effort to remain grateful seemed to be constantly evoked. This is evident from Khalil (2022) wanting to "pay back" but also acknowledging and trying to intentionally disregard that "it's not pay back because they didn't give me anything". What should be a way to become like a citizen is an obstacle itself. The obstacle might be interminable and expectations of RASG eternal (cf. Espiritu, 2006; Nguyen, 2012; 2019).

Other community members not having to contribute or at least not being criticised if they do not, seemed to add another layer of power that again indicates that citizens are owed RASG but they do not owe anything as they are entitled to their rights (Ignatieff, 2017). Instead of humanitarian aid and support RAS are expected to help and benefit the community, reflecting colonial hierarchies between citizens and RAS.

Humility

All participants, except Oukail and Jabar, reported expectations to express RASG through humility and not complaining. Jabar and Khalil were the only participants that felt they should express humility as a form of RASG and were critical of other RAS that did not:

We're not going to go back to being given or not, I've been given something, so, at least I have something. [...] When I hear people complain about the UK a part of me does feel you have to be grateful for what you've got, you can't be here complaining. [...] I have this feeling that [at the beginning] you shouldn't be too demanding. (Khalil, 2022)

As with other expressions of RASG, regardless of the reasons for voluntary compliance with humility power remains part of participants' experiences. They intentionally refrained from making too many demands even if they recognised that not all of their rights are being fulfilled. This is crucial since humility can further contribute to the continuation of harmful state policies or downplay their impacts (Hetz, 2021).

Other four participants found ways to resist humility and complained often. By doing so they were exercising power. They engaged in different forms of resistance as an attempt to escape perceptions of differential human worth, claim freedom and assert control over their lives. Malak and Yasmine attended protests, signed petitions, wrote to members of Parliament and collaborated with civil society organisations. Yasmine (2022) emphasised that even if RAS felt they

cannot complain as they should be grateful, NGOs “help make the refugee to not feel like [they should] accept everything because we are refugees”. Nour informally advocated for other RAS through their job to prevent them having to accept less:

I supported many of my clients to make a complaint about health services, not having an interpreter, job centre services and I find quite a lot of shock in the organisations, like, “how dare you complain?”. They expect an attitude of a beggar, exaggeration in thanking, [...] to accept services, which are not necessarily adequate. [...] But it's about services doing what they are supposed to do. (Nour, 2022)

Requiring from RAS to accept services that are inferior and expecting RASG for them is a very visible way of expression of differential human worth. When Nour demanded services that citizens would be given – Nour gave an example of an interpreter for people with hearing loss – they were positioning RAS as political subjects that are equally entitled to rights as citizens, including to the citizens’ right for their opinions, demands and wishes to be heard (Nyers, 2006). This can cause resentment among citizens (Ignatieff, 2017) as it disrupts the colonial hierarchies and hence can evoke displeased reactions. Nour often succeeded at challenging RASG, however, provision of adequate services was dependant on their advocacy and insistence. It was a continuous struggle and not a systemic solution. The political space where RAS could determine the most suitable policies seemed to be almost non-existent. Another example is Malak’s struggles with complaining about the asylum process. There was no clarity who was accountable and they were left waiting. They tried different means, however, unsuccessfully. Malak (2022) was angry due to the differential treatment: “I don’t think they (the institutions) treat British people like this”. They were not able to escape power as RASG and humility seemed to be built into the systems and structures that RAS were interacting with. The institutions imposed and operated in alignment with those perceptions. As Yasmine (2022) said, to be heard required a lot of “[support from people], [...] effort and negotiation”, which was not always attainable.

Their resistance was restricted in their personal lives as well. Malak’s experiences seemed to echo Mayblin’s (2017) claim that colonial subjectification of RAS stems from disparity between ‘civilisation and underdevelopment’. Malak believed their perceived habituation to oppression and hence contentment with less seemed to make them undeserving of the same rights and benefits that citizens receive. Consequently, when RAS do receive them, they should be grateful:

Because we came from layers of oppression [the belief is] that we don’t deserve to have proper services, political standing or good stuff. Sometimes when we get something good, we tend to thank people and try to prove to others that we deserve [it] and that we are grateful that we had the opportunity to get this. [...] If you don’t want to express this kind of feelings, people around you will make you feel guilty. (Malak, 2022)

This belief was both internal and external. Malak felt guilty for receiving good opportunities and thought it was being used by the society and parts of the Syrian community to naturalise humility, deny RAS’ rights to complain and impose RASG. Malak (2022) thought that “they play on this guiltiness that you already have”. Sana (2022) also spoke on how guiltiness is being used to impose RASG:

[The belief is] you got another chance at life you better live it since some people are still in the country. Be grateful and enjoy life here. [...] You can sense this [expectation] in the talks or the tone of some people and they would block negative aspects of the UK policies. (Sana, 2022)

This disparity between ‘civilisation and underdevelopment’ seemed to be conveyed also through evocations of guiltiness. It not only proves that the UK is a better place but also that other Syrians have not been that lucky and are in a far worse situation, which means there is nothing to complain about. Guiltiness is in ‘natural’ association with RASG:

Being a refugee is hard work, pressure to be successful, to learn the language. There is also pressure from home, your family thinks that you are in paradise, you have electricity all day, you have opportunities, why are you complaining [...]. I don’t think there is space for people to say “I’m actually tired or struggling”. (Nour, 2022)

If you have depression, you are not grateful. [...] [People would say] “you’re always sad, just focusing on the negative things, you’re depressed, which doesn’t make sense, you’re here, you took another chance at life”. [...] Unless I have funny stories or some good laughs, I don’t really get to interact with people. You need to convince people that you are grateful, living your life and that you are happy about it. (Sana, 2022)

Struggling meant complaining and being ungrateful. The perception of RAS having everything they need and the expectation to enjoy their new life left no space for needing support. Inability to complain

in public and private life matters; as Sana (2022) indicated: “[It blocks awareness of] negative aspects of UK policies against the refugees.” Consequently, this perpetuates marginalisation of RAS on a social and political level (cf. Hetz, 2021) and it also matters for their mental health. Mental health issues and obstacles to receiving support are higher for RAS than other populations (WHO, 2023) and expectations of RASG can further exacerbate it. If they are experiencing mental health issues, they are perceived to be wasting the opportunity that RAS are trying so hard to get. The belief seemed to be that traumatic experiences of both conflicts and displacement cease to affect RAS once they reach the ‘better’ society and that their mental health issues can be solved by RASG. Pressures on RAS further compound when not fulfilling expectations of enjoying their new life alienates them from their social circles and support. In her article, Nayeri (2017) insightfully asks whether “[refugees are] entitled to [their] private tragedies” or they have to “first pay off [their] debt to [their] hosts and to the universe”. Various types of expectations seemed to culminate in the requirement to be “like superhero personalities”, as Nour (2022) said, and to build a new life.

CONCLUSION

This research roots experiences of power through RASG in coloniality to assert the benefits of using the coloniality framework in exploration of lived experience of displacement. It focused on exploring how colonial subjectification occurs through expressions of RASG, particularly through simple gestures, confirmation of white saviourism and through concessions, which included integration, contributions and humility. The study was able to reveal some of the under-researched complexities of manifestations of power through RASG in everyday life, resistance and potential positive impacts of RASG. Firstly, centring RAS’ lived experiences and analysing different manifestations of RASG separately allowed to illustrate that while RAS can experience RASG as power in some manifestations or reject expectations of it, their other expressions of RASG can be defined as actual RASG. In the study, power was significantly present in participants’ experiences in all manifestations of RASG, except in simple gestures that was directed towards specific people that helped them.

Secondly, Roberts (1991) and Watkins et al. (2006) claimed power occurs when reciprocity is involuntary and actual RASG when reciprocity is voluntary. However, this study found that power and actual RASG in

many cases intersect and that voluntary compliance is not necessarily separate from power. The nexus of willingness and power was a distinctive characteristic of experiences with RASG. Some participants wanted to be grateful but their reasons were mostly related to lack of alternatives, asylum not being treated as a right or they internalised external expectations. Moreover, voluntary expressions of RASG in some instances reinforced inequalities and colonial hierarchies between RAS and citizens, which shows that to designate RASG as actual RASG social positions of actors involved and the outcomes of expressions of RASG should be considered.

Thirdly, RASG was shown to operate as a group RASG that can strengthen structural and systemic marginalisation of RAS, an aspect that has not been pronounced enough in research. This was evident when their resistance to RASG was limited by the lack of power over narratives or when their diverse reasons for RASG were dismissed and nonetheless treated as an acknowledgment of superiority. RAS were consequently positioned as an embodiment of RASG regardless of their individual position or stances. Furthermore, in interactions with institutions they were expected to be patient and navigate the lack of information provided on bureaucratic processes. In the labour market, RASG can strengthen refugee capitalism by making RAS vulnerable to exploitative working conditions and rendering complaining unacceptable.

Lastly, positive impacts of RASG were shown to exist, which contributes to studying RAS’ agency and counters narratives on their passivity. Participants used RASG for obtaining benefits. These ranged from building a sense of belonging, emotional wellbeing and having a home to ensuring acceptance by the society, support and better opportunities. However, in order to obtain such benefits, they often had to except power imbalances. The inevitability of pragmatism meant that these benefits could never be fully attained.

Most of these contributions were able to be made due to the coloniality framework, revealing how coloniality impacts and continues through asylum. Colonial hierarchies and dehumanisation were shown to be related to different expressions of RASG that in turn justifies and naturalises unequal power positions. It is this ability of RASG to present differences between citizens and RAS as legitimate and valid that makes it a useful colonial tool. RAS were often unable to fully avoid such relations, despite their attempts of resistance, proving entanglement in their own marginalisation.

DELOVANJE MOČI V HVALEŽNOSTI: IZKUŠNJE SIRSKIH BEGUNCEV IN PROSILCEV ZA AZIL V VELIKI BRITANJI

Almedina LOZIĆ

The London School of Economics and Political Science, Houghton Street London WC2A 2AE, United Kingdom
e-mail: a.lozic@outlook.com

POVZETEK

Begunci/prosilci za azil (BPA) so vpeti v različna razmerja moči v družbi. Ena od struktur moči izhaja iz subtilnega in pogosto spregledanega pričakovanja hvaležnosti od BPA za prejetje azila. Razumevanje mednarodne zaščite kot darila, ki mora biti povrnjeno družbi, omogoča in upravičuje pričakovanja hvaležnosti. Ta raziskava preučuje kompleksnost manifestacij moči prek hvaležnosti in uporablja okvir kolonializma/kolonialnosti z namenom razkrivanja povezav med temi procesi in azilom. Vrste manifestacij hvaležnosti, ki so bile raziskane, so izražanje preprostih gest, potrjevanje reševalskega kompleksa belcev ter integracija, prispevanje k novi družbi in ponižnost. Opravljenih je bilo sedem pol-strukturiranih intervjujev (4 ženske in 3 moški) junija in julija 2022. Na podlagi tematske analize intervjujev je bilo oblikovanih več ugotovitev. Prvič, večina izrazov hvaležnosti je ustrezala opredelitvi hvaležnosti kot moči, le izražanje hvaležnosti prek preprostih gest je bilo opredeljeno kot resnična hvaležnost. Drugič, neprostovoljno in prostovoljno izražanje hvaležnosti se lahko pojavita istočasno, kar pomeni, da so celo prostovoljni izrazi lahko izraz moči. Tretjič, hvaležnost lahko vpliva na strukturno in sistematično marginalizacijo BPA, saj je njihov vpliv na narative o hvaležnosti in azilu bil omejen in njihovi različni razlogi za izražanje hvaležnosti večinoma niso bili upoštevani. Zadnjič, hvaležnost ima lahko tudi pozitivne učinke. Nekateri udeleženci so z njo skušali pridobiti občutek pripadanja novi družbi, čustveno dobrobit ali podporo in boljše priložnosti. Raziskava je pokazala da ima hvaležnost lahko različne oblike; lahko je orodje za nadzor in marginalizacijo BPA, za pridobivanje ugodnosti ali dejanska hvaležnost.

Ključne besede: razseljevanje, hvaležnost, kolonialnost moči, Sirija, Združeno kraljestvo

SOURCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Arat-Koç, Sedef (2020):** Decolonizing Refugee Studies, Standing up for Indigenous Justice: Challenges and Possibilities of a Politics of Place. *Studies in Social Justice*, 14, 2, 371–390.
- Attride-Stirling, Jennifer (2001):** Thematic Networks: An Analytic Tool for Qualitative Research. *Qualitative Research*, 1, 3, 385–405.
- Banerjee, Pallavi, Chacko, Soulit & Souzan Korsha (2022):** Toll of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Primary Caregiver in Yazidi Refugee Families in Canada: A Feminist Refugee Epistemological Analysis. *Studies in Social Justice*, 16, 1, 33–53.
- Belloni, Roberto (2007):** The Trouble with Humanitarianism. *Review of International Studies*, 33, 3, 451–474.
- Berger, Fred R. (1975):** Gratitude. *Ethics*, 85, 4, 298–309.
- Braun, Virginia & Victoria Clarke (2013):** Successful Qualitative Research: A Practical Guide for Beginners. Los Angeles – London – New Delhi – Singapore – Washington DC, SAGE.
- Cammarota, Julio (2011):** Blindsided by the Avatar: White Saviors and Allies Out of Hollywood and in Education. *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies*, 33, 3, 242–259.
- Chimni, Bhupinder S. (1998):** The Geopolitics of Refugee Studies: A View from the South. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 11, 4, 350–374.
- Cole, Teju (2012):** The White Savior Industrial Complex. Twitter. <https://x.com/tejucole/status/177809558608150529?mx=2> (last access: 2024-11-25).
- Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951):** Treaty No. 2545. United Nations Treaty Series, 189, 137–221. <https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/Volume%20189/volume-189-I-2545-English.pdf> (last access: 2022-07-16).
- Easton-Calabria, Evan & Naohiko Omata (2018):** Panacea for the Refugee Crisis? Rethinking the Promotion of ‘Self-Reliance’ for Refugees’. *Third World Quarterly*, 39, 8, 1458–1474.
- Espiritu, Yen Le (2006):** The “We-Win-Even-When-We-Lose” Syndrome: U.S. Press Coverage of the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the “Fall of Saigon”. *American Quarterly*, 58, 2, 329–352.
- Frydenlund, Shae & Elizabeth Cullen Dunn (2022):** Refugees and Racial Capitalism: Meatpacking and the Primitive Accumulation of Labor. *Political Geography*, 95, 1–8.
- Gallagher, Beth (2016):** The Thinnest Line: When Does a Refugee Stop Being a Refugee? <https://uwaterloo.ca/magazine/spring-2016/feature/thinnest-line> (last access: 2022-07-25).
- Grosfoguel, Ramón (2011):** Decolonizing Post-Colonial Studies and Paradigms of Political Economy: Transmodernity, Decolonial Thinking, and Global Coloniality. *Transmodernity*, 1, 1, 1–36.
- Healey, Ruth L. (2014):** Gratitude and Hospitality: Tamil Refugee Employment in London and the Conditional Nature of Integration. *Environment and Planning A*, 46, 3, 614–628.
- Hetz, Heidi (2021):** The Concept of the ‘Good Refugee’ in Cambodian and Hazara Refugee Narratives and Self-Representation. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 35, 2, 874–892.
- Honig, Bonnie (1998):** Immigrant America? How Foreignness “Solves” Democracy’s Problems. *Social Text*, 16, 56, 1–27.
- Ignatieff, Michael (2017):** The Refugee as Invasive Other. *Social Research*, 84, 1, 223–231.
- Iqbal, Maleeha, Omar, Laila & Neda Magh-bouleh (2021):** The Fragile Obligation: Gratitude, Discontent, and Dissent with Syrian Refugees in Canada. *Mashriq & Mahjar*, 8, 2, 1–30.
- Mayblin, Lucy (2017):** Asylum after Empire: Colonial Legacies in the Politics of Asylum Seeking. London – New York, Rowman & Littlefield International.
- Milazzo, Marzia (2019):** Speaking for the Refugee Other: Missionering, White Saviourism, and the Politics of Ethnographic Representation in Luis Alberto Urrea’s *Across the Wire*. *Scrutiny*, 24, 1, 58–72.
- Mill, John Stuart (2006):** A Few Words on Non-Intervention. *New England Review*, 27, 3, 252–264.
- Mirzoeff, Nicholas (2021):** Artificial Vision, White Space and Racial Surveillance Capitalism. *AI and Society*, 36, 4, 1295–1305.
- Moulin, Carolina (2012):** Ungrateful Subjects? Refugee Protests and the Logic of Gratitude. In: Nyers, Peter & Kim Ryege (eds.): *Citizenship, Migrant Activism and the Politics of Movement*. London – New York, Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 54–72.
- Nayeri, Dina (2017):** The Ungrateful Refugee: ‘We Have No Debt to Repay’, *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/apr/04/dina-nayeri-ungrateful-refugee> (last access: 2022-06-08).
- Nayeri, Dina (2020):** *The Ungrateful Refugee: What Immigrants Never Tell You*. Edinburgh, Canon-gate Books.
- Nguyen, Mimi Thi (2012):** *The Gift of Freedom: War, Debt, and Other Refugee Passages*. Durham – London, Duke University Press.
- Nguyen, Vinh (2019):** *Refugeetude: When Does a Refugee Stop Being a Refugee?* *Social Text* 139, 37, 2, 109–131.
- Nyers, Peter (2006):** *Rethinking Refugees: Beyond States of Emergency*. New York – Abingdon, Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.
- O’Connell Davidson, Julia (1998):** *Prostitution, Power and Freedom*. Ann Arbor, The University of Michigan Press.

Ortlieb, Renate, Glauninger, Elena & Silvana Weiss (2021): Organizational Inclusion and Identity Regulation: How Inclusive Organizations Form “Good”, “Glorious” and “Grateful” Refugees. *Organization*, 28, 2, 266–288.

Roberts, Robert C. (1991): Virtues and Rules. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 51, 2, 325–343.

Robinson, Cedric J. (2000): *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*. 2nd edn. Chapel Hill – London, The University of North Carolina Press.

Rusk, Reuben D., Vella-Brodrick, Dianne A. & Lea Waters (2016): Gratitude or Gratefulness? A Conceptual Review and Proposal of the System of Appreciative Functioning. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 17, 5, 2191–2212.

Schneider, Jens & Maurice Crul (2010): Comparative Integration Context Theory: Participation and Belonging in New Diverse European Cities. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 33, 7, 1249–1268.

Spencer, Sarah & Katharine Charsley (2021): Reframing ‘Integration’: Acknowledging and Addressing Five Core Critiques. *Comparative Migration Studies*, 9, 18, 1–22.

Tsang, Jo-Ann (2021): (Un)special Favors: Gratitude for Group-Based Benefits. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 16, 1, 27–37.

Turner, Lewis (2020): “#Refugees Can Be Entrepreneurs Too!” Humanitarianism, Race, and the Marketing of Syrian Refugees. *Review of International Studies*, 46, 1, 137–155.

Walker, A. D. M. (1980–1981): Gratitude and Gratitude. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 81, 39–55.

Watkins, Philip, Scheer, Jason, Ovnicek, Melinda & Russell L. Kolts (2006): The Debt of Gratitude: Dissociating Gratitude and Indebtedness. *Cognition & Emotion*, 20, 2, 217–241.

WHO (2023): Five Key Themes for Improved Mental Health Care for Refugees and Migrants. WHO. <https://www.who.int/news/item/10-10-2023-five-key-themes-for-improved-mental-health-care-for-refugees-and-migrants> (last access: 2024-05-21).