

GAINING A SENSE OF CITIZENSHIP AND BELONGING
IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND:
THE WORK OF REFUGEE SUPPORT PROVIDERS

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the notion of citizenship in relation to former refugees and asylum seekers by exploring how refugee support providers aid in the resettlement process in Aotearoa New Zealand. The policy and funding environment that these support providers work in is dynamic, and the contact they have with those they support is complex and challenging. Former refugees' and asylum seekers' positions are precarious. While they are subject to screening by the immigration system and become integrated into a new society in material ways, they also negotiate new forms of citizenship. The research reveals the central role of refugee support organisations as enablers of citizenship in providing platforms that bridge the differences between cultures, amidst barriers.

Keywords: belonging; citizenship; refugee; right to the city

INTRODUCTION

Citizenship is both a legal entitlement or membership that confers rights and responsibilities and a set of everyday practices shaped around a generalised right to live a liveable life, free from discrimination (Butler 2004; Lefebvre 1996; Yuval-Davis 2006). The broad nature of citizenship and its pervasiveness as an inclusionary and exclusionary process are central to how former refugees and asylum seekers are supported to gain a sense of citizenship in their new country. As such, citizenship encompasses more than just a legal framework and a gift from the state based on moralistic grounds (Purcell 2014; Staeheli *et al.* 2012). It is an everyday sense of belonging to a place that is conferred by both legal entitlements and host communities. Such belonging is understood as a sense of simultaneously feeling 'at home' and 'feeling safe' (Tomaney 2015, 508). It is both intimate and personal, and also highly political in the sense that belonging

is granted through power relations that are enacted *with* and *in* specific times and places (Antonsich 2010; Trnka, Dureau and Park 2013).

This article explores the notions of both legal and everyday citizenship and examines the role support providers play in aiding in the resettlement process of former refugees in Aotearoa New Zealand. The study seeks to add to the scarce research surrounding the experiences of support providers who engage with refugee-background people daily. Where others have studied the difficulties refugees face in accessing healthcare (Lawrence and Kearns 2005), the ability of Somali women in finding and maintaining paid employment (Jelle, Guerin and Dyer 2006), or perhaps the difficulties involved in attending tertiary education for refugee-background students (O'Rourke 2011), our study sought a more holistic overview of the crucial role refugee supporters play in addressing needs such as education, employment and healthcare. Furthermore, our study explores the constraints that support workers may face in achieving this. Refugee-background people's positions are precarious within systems over which they have little control, in new environments they have yet to trust. As such, support providers are crucial to a smooth transition to Aotearoa New Zealand which will enhance former refugee people's sense of citizenship. In this article, we ask three interrelated questions. To what extent and how do support organisations facilitate or enable such citizenship? Second, what constraints do support agencies experience in providing such support and to what extent do they overcome them? Finally, if everyday citizenship is enacted in communities within and in relation to host communities, then what is the host community's role in facilitating such citizenship? We begin to address these questions, first, by setting out the argument for a dual understanding of citizenship as both legal rights and responsibilities on the one hand and everyday citizenship on the other.

LEGAL AND EVERYDAY CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship has historically had a range of meanings, conceptualised as a legal entitlement (Harbitz and Boekle-Giuffrida 2009), a birth right (Kofman 2002), and as an entanglement between legal rights/obligations and daily ordinary life (Staheli *et al.* 2012). Citizenship and its beginnings have been traced through millennia (Faulks 2000; Heater 1990) but there is a growing body of literature which examines contemporary notions of citizenship and its impact on a globalising and increasingly interconnected world (Gaventa and Tandon 2010; Kivisto and Faist 2007). The diversity of citizenship research includes inequalities suffered by marginalised ethnic or gender groups who struggle to enjoy rights they are entitled to (Manicom 2005; Sweetman 2004), refugees'

access to the labour market and economic power (Grace, Nawyn and Okwako, 2015), or refugee and migrant engagement in social movements as practices of citizenship (Ataç, Rygiel and Stierl 2016). Other scholars have focused on former refugee experiences, particularly refugees' changing identities in resettlement (Valentine, Sporton and Nielsen 2009), the precarious lives of migrant labourers (Lewis *et al.* 2015), migrants' and refugees' conceptions of citizenship (Leitner and Ehrkamp 2006), and the role of state theory in approaching refugee and asylum issues (Gill 2010). Much of this latter work implicitly focuses on everyday citizenship or *de facto* citizenship, rather than legal citizenship sometimes referred to as *de jure* citizenship. For the purposes of our argument, we draw out a clear distinction between these two broad meanings of citizenship. This highlights how entangled and interdependent both forms of citizenship are.

Articles One and Thirteen of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights declare that all human beings are born free and equal, that every person has the right to freely move and live within each country, and the right to depart and return to any country (UN General Assembly 1948). However, the reality is often quite different and nation state boundaries are increasingly controlled. The notion of citizenship, in its most basic form, is a connection between the governing power and the citizen (Faulks 2000; Heater 1990). It is a legal membership conferred either by *jus sanguinis*, a blood claim to a place or *jus solis*, a claim to territory (James 2014). *Jus sanguinis* is a more traditional form of citizenship, reinforced through social norms (still very present in contemporary times), but also determined through defining whose bloodline counts. For example, in some countries only a paternal bloodline counts, in others both paternal and maternal apply, and sometimes these bloodlines confer rights to a non-citizen-parent who bears a child in the territory (Casteñeda 2008). *Jus solis* claims to territory are also variable and complex, with more overt forms of discrimination and preference for bodies of particular colour, sex, origin, or ability (Butler 2004). Thus, both *jus sanguinis* and *jus solis* are highly political, and conditional on the rules of the state, which vary from country to country. State boundaries require individuals to have documents, passports and visas, with some nations more 'open' than others. The laws are in place not only to protect a nation's citizens and minimise any security risks, but also in often subtle ways serve to construct and envision society in ways that meet dominant ideals, social norms and reflect structural power relations that privilege some groups over others (Staeheli *et al.* 2012). A state's moral obligations as well as those under international law to accept refugees and asylum seekers, or to address an often increasing presence of undocumented or stateless people, disrupts such implicit goals. As such, the promise of legal citizenship does not necessarily always reflect a right to freedom and equality, and both refugee-background

people and support services are often constrained by these regulations and the structural power relations that sit behind them. Individuals such as former refugees thus have limited agency in the context of the state's power to grant and deny citizenship rights (Preibisch and Santamaría 2006).

In 2019, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) recognised more than 25.9 million people as refugees (UNHCR 2019). Nation states' international obligations are set out under two frameworks for resettlement. In both, a refugee is defined as someone who is outside of their home country, needs protection due to a high likelihood of being harmed, whether for religious, political, or racial reasons, or by being affiliated to a particular social group. The first is a framework governed by the UNHCR which sets out a regular (annual) programme of resettlement. Under this system, Aotearoa New Zealand accepts a limited number or quota of refugees for resettlement each year. Until 2018, the quota had been fixed at 750 per year for thirty years (Beehive 2018). From 2018 the quota increased to 1,000 refugees each year, and then increased again in July 2020 to 1,500. An emergency intake of 750 Syrian refugees was also accepted from 2016 to 2018 (Immigration New Zealand 2017). Former refugees who enter Aotearoa New Zealand under this pathway are sometimes known as 'quota refugees'. Their refugee status is investigated and confirmed by the UNHCR prior to their arrival in Aotearoa New Zealand and they are provided with permanent residence status on arrival. They may then apply for full citizenship status after a period of five years. Quota refugees are also eligible for support through the New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Programme (Marlowe, Bartley, and Hibtit 2014).

The second pathway to securing refugee status and citizenship is through seeking asylum. Asylum seekers arrive in the country seeking protection. Their claim for refugee status has not been definitively evaluated (Immigration New Zealand 2017). If they are cleared from security risks, asylum seekers may enter the community while awaiting formal refugee status, which then means they can apply for residency in due course. Those who are deemed a risk may be detained at a Corrections facility (Ministry of Justice 2013). Once confirmed as refugees, asylum seekers are often known as 'convention' refugees, named after the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees signed in 1951 that Aotearoa New Zealand is a signatory to. In contrast to 'quota' refugees, there is no regular number of asylum seekers that will be accepted each year as part of an agreed programme of resettlement, and, as a consequence, 'convention' refugees tend to have less formal support. For example, 'convention' refugees are excluded from the orientation programme at Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre (MRRCC) in Auckland, a six-week programme that introduces former quota refugees to life

in Aotearoa New Zealand for former quota refugees.³ Figure 1 below provides a summary of these categories.

Thus, the legal processes of resettlement and gaining citizenship can be summarised as first becoming formally recognised as a refugee, then gaining some form of residency status, and ultimately having the right to apply for citizenship. However, despite states providing legal membership through visas, residency status or indeed, ultimately, a certificate of citizenship and a passport, social inclusion is not necessarily guaranteed for refugee-background people. As suggested by Painter and Philo (1995, 112), often foreigners ‘are not properly regarded as “like us” who are fashioned out of the same historical, cultural, ethnic, linguistic and even religious materials’. As noted in the introduction, the very notion of citizenship therefore goes beyond legal membership to a sense of where you belong. But belonging is variously defined. As Painter and Philo (1995) stress, often it is imbued with a nostalgic territorial sense of being ‘fashioned’ from the ‘soil of the nation-state’, having a birth right, or ancestral right to territory. Thus, a sense of belonging is entangled with legal framings

Asylum Seeker	Convention Refugee	Quota Refugee
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual who seeks asylum at the border on arrival and whose claim for refugee status is yet to be approved by the state. • Cannot be extradited while awaiting confirmation. • May apply for a work visa in the meantime. • Typically housed within society; on parole; at the refugee resettlement centre; or if deemed a threat to security detained in a Corrections Facility. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual whose asylum claim has been approved. • Family members who enter under the Refugee Family Support Category are also convention refugees. • Granted a visa status (work/student) and may apply for permanent residence status after 3 years. • Receives no orientation programme from the state. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual who is a registered refugee with UNHCR overseas. • Enters Aotearoa New Zealand as a permanent resident. • May apply for citizenship after 5 years. • Undergoes a six-week orientation programme, and receives further support for up to 12 months.

Figure 1. Summary of the three main categories of refugee-background people in Aotearoa New Zealand (Source: the authors, drawn from ChangeMakers Refugee Forum, 2013; Hazou 2017; Immigration New Zealand, n.d.; Marlowe and Elliot 2014).

of entitlement as *jus sanguinis* or *jus solis*. There are temporal, spatial and cultural dimensions to this kind of belonging and associated citizenship that are embedded in everyday performances, actions and the social norms of specific places. These are often exclusionary norms that reinforce divisions between who can claim to belong and be 'inside' and those who do not have the requisite characteristics to be inside and remain 'outside'. In this sense, moving through a country's legal gates is but one of several potential challenges to overcome for former refugees. While legal status undoubtedly helps in developing a sense of belonging, acceptance and inclusion presents a range of potential additional negotiations, compounding and entangling a former-refugee's past turmoil with the everyday exclusions and potential marginalisation in their new society (Staheli *et al.* 2012).

In the next sections we provide the evidence to support our claim that citizenship is better conceptualised as a practice that requires both the security provided by legal citizenship, but, crucially, also involves establishing a sense of belonging, acceptance and social inclusion through practices of everyday citizenship.

METHODS

Drawing from research conducted in 2015, this section explores how support providers enable both legal and everyday citizenship in Aotearoa New Zealand. The research drew wholly on qualitative methods, including a review of nine policy documents and reports, and eleven semi-structured interviews carried out in Christchurch, Wellington and Auckland with key informants. The Human Ethics Committee of the University of Otago granted approval for this study (D15/189). The policy documents, reports, interview transcripts and notes were coded into particular themes, including: legal aid, advocacy and lobbying, reuniting family members, language, health, empowering former refugees, community, constraints to citizenship, and fostering settlement and belonging. Key informants were grouped into three categories. First, most interviewees were categorised as 'support providers', and came from eight organisations who directly support refugee resettlement. Second, two interviewees are categorised as NGO advocates, because the organisations they work for did not provide direct support, but rather advocated for former refugee rights. The eleventh interview participant was a researcher, whose research outputs contribute to former refugees' citizenship. Pseudonyms are used to protect participants' identities, and quotes from interviews in the following discussion use the pseudonym followed by an indication of which category the interviewee's organisation fits into (for example, interview with Sarah, NGO advocate).

RESULTS

The following explores the everyday citizenship practices enabled by support workers demonstrating how these are entangled with achieving legal citizenship. It highlights the work undertaken as well as the challenges support workers and former refugees experience.

Enabling citizenship

Support providers engage in a range of different activities that enable both legal and everyday citizenship. As noted earlier, former refugees enter the country by different pathways as either 'quota refugees' or 'convention refugees', which in turn determines to some extent what support is readily available to them. Infrastructure and some funding exist to support quota refugees primarily through the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre (MRRRC) and agency and volunteer support for the first year in their new communities. They have a degree of certainty about their future rights to apply for full citizenship after five years of permanent residency. Moreover, quota refugees gain specific help with everyday needs because they have a social worker and volunteers allocated to work with them in their new communities. They therefore gain support in paralegal matters, such as applying for welfare benefits through Work and Income (WINZ) and tax matters with the Inland Revenue Department (IRD) (Ravi, Advocacy NGO), and they also receive support navigating the school system, healthcare, and other services. Clearly, permanent residency as a form of legal citizenship enables access to these paralegal and social support systems.

Asylum seekers have a significantly less certain pathway. Because they await confirmation that they meet 'refugee' status while they are already in Aotearoa New Zealand, they do not have formal legal status. They must apply for work visas, and their precarity may mean it is difficult to find work. They do not automatically have access to housing support, education programmes about how society in Aotearoa New Zealand works, language classes, legal support around how to apply for entitlements, or other matters surrounding their refugee status (Addison, Support Provider; Ravi, NGO Advocate). One support provider, Addison, spoke of the struggles that 'convention' refugees face from the beginning of their asylum process. Most asylum seekers approach a support organisation 'out of desperation' since they are likely to be out of resources and need a place to stay. One support provider in this study offers limited hostel accommodation for asylum seekers and convention refugees. Even with their work or student visas, asylum seekers are in the most precarious position since their refugee status has not been confirmed, and they are only allowed temporary entry until

their applications have been approved or declined. The unevenness of the quota and convention pathways is significant, and highlighted here, as it permeates subsequent discussions. Nevertheless, support providers are keenly aware of this unevenness, and some providers specifically work with both quota and convention refugees. Thus, depending on their legal status, different categories of refugees and former refugees are able to access differing levels of support.

Rebuilding a new life

Because refugee-background people come from diverse experiences, it is important to recognise the precarious and traumatic environments that refugees often come from to then help them ease into the next part of their life. Many have experienced torture, incarceration, losing loved ones and abandoning their life's possessions (Chile 2002). Yet former refugees are 'very resourceful and have got amazing strengths' (Amelia, Support Provider). Similarly, Qasim, a support provider, suggested that 'it's very important to start from yourself' where 'being flexible in mind' provides limitless possibilities. These comments suggest former refugees are flexible and determined to make the most of 'the second chance for [their] life which is New Zealand' (Qasim, Support Provider).

Nevertheless, former refugees face a formidable task of rebuilding their lives in Aotearoa New Zealand. Cristina (Support Provider) suggested that the crux of easing the transition into Aotearoa New Zealand society is two-fold. While she agreed that language is crucial (discussed below), Cristina provided an entirely distinctive approach from other refugee organisations, as did Derek (Researcher). She argued that the transition begins with 'a warm welcome, and an authentic welcome' because former refugees need to feel safe and her organisation goes to lengths to ensure 'emotional safety ... [and] intellectual safety' of the people she works with. This permeates all matters, from taking into account that the learning and physical environment may differ to that which former refugees are used to, and recognising the importance of teaching diverse students to 'value kindness and respect and inclusion and difference' and that it is acceptable to 'express ideas and opinions and disagreements'. Illustrating the complexity of a 'simple' question in a classroom, Cristina (Support Provider) explains:

We don't just say to people, 'what's your opinion?' because that can be a very difficult question to answer and can make people feel unsafe ... and because it's frightening and scary and they feel as if they're failing ... So ... you start off with really simple things like, 'would you like to sit here or there?' [or] 'do you want the red folder or the blue folder?'

This process begins to raise levels of trust across everyone in the room and, in the broader setting, there is no judgement, no punishment and the students are encouraged to offer their suggestions and opinions. The notion of trust links to the idea of the importance of building social bonds, such as within the classroom, and a comfort in developing familiar patterns (Ager and Strang 2008). The teachers' considerations of their students clearly reflect efforts to empower former refugees in preparing to handle everyday citizenship processes.

The second part of the process of transitioning to Aotearoa New Zealand society is, for Cristina (Support Provider), the importance of 'provid[ing] opportunities so that people can begin their lives again'. Amelia (Support Provider) concurred, and added that understanding 'everything about New Zealand and New Zealanders' and being able to be 'independent' would set former refugees on a more equitable platform within wider society. For 'quota' former refugees, this begins at the MRRC, where they are given lessons on *tikanga Māori* (Māori customs and culture). A formal *pōwhiri* (Māori welcome) is conducted on site at the MRRC. Representatives from the New Zealand police also hold talks at the MRRC, and this gives the former refugees a chance to interact and build trust in the police which may be contrary to their experiences prior to resettlement (Cristina, Support Provider). In addition, former refugee community leaders give workshops and talks on the various community groups and support systems available in their respective regions (Fahad and Qasim, Support Providers). Former refugees are then empowered by support providers through learned patterns of safety and trust, and by getting used to what it means to have a 'normal' life (Cristina, Support Provider).

Connecting people and services

Other ways in which refugee support providers help former refugees lie in connecting people with appropriate services in the community that recognise former refugees' specific needs. Community Law Centres provide free legal services and several support providers mentioned working closely with the Law Centres. The Centres provide assistance in understanding documentation required for various application processes without the usual expense associated with legal advice (Sarah, NGO Advocate). In addition, once former refugees have permanent residency status, they can apply for family members to join them under the family reunification process. However, this is a highly complex process, in which family members are sponsored by the former refugee (usually a 'quota' refugee), and they enter as 'convention' refugees, thereby relying on family for the kind of support they need.⁴ This places a significant burden on former refugees who may already be struggling, and yet this is recognised

as crucial to the settlement process (Addison, Meredith, Support Providers). Having extended family members safe and nearby provides an increased sense of wellbeing and security (Ager and Strang 2008). Thus, refugee organisations provide guidance in legal matters by dispensing advice, directing their clients to other organisations who may be of more help, as well as literally and figuratively walking clients through difficult system processes.

Language

In addition to supports that provide connections to specific service providers, the majority of participants agreed that ‘language is the key ... it’s the key to integration’ (Fahad, Support Provider). Language proficiency facilitates inclusion, allows access to meaningful employment and interaction with wider services, integration with communities, and the development of mutual understanding of cultural backgrounds. Successful resettlement refers to a coalescing of access to different basic needs such as education, jobs, homes, healthcare, and social cohesiveness to and between communities members (Ager and Strang 2008). A lack of language proficiency means former refugees may become isolated and may not understand what services are available nor be able to find out how to ask or apply for them (Amelia, Support Provider). Nevertheless, learning English is a struggle for some, particularly for former refugees who are illiterate in their first language (Fahad, Support Provider). Some refugee organisations within Aotearoa New Zealand provide ongoing English language tutoring after the Resettlement Programme at the MRRC, but it is the responsibility of a former refugee to seek this out (Fahad, Support Provider).

Some support providers specifically help refugees, former refugees and asylum seekers achieve a sense of belonging and connection with community neighbours by increasing English language proficiency (Cristina, Support Provider) and such programmes often dovetail with other forms of support. For example, an initiative called the Pathways to Employment Programme was introduced in 2016 and is available to all former refugees, refugees and asylum seekers. It links them with employers and helps them to learn how to be successful in job interviews and write a good CV, for example (Amelia, Support Provider).

Connecting with host communities

In addition to these specific programmes, community refugee support providers hold various events to enable relationship building. These include forums for specific groups such as women, elderly, and youth, so that members of each group can familiarise themselves with each other. One support provider holds

an annual event in the summer where the wider city community is invited to join in with cultural performances, food and events catered for all ages (Fahad, Support Provider). The event is considered to be a cornerstone in creating a more inclusive society and encourages social cohesion by involving various NGOs and the local university to give talks on key issues and connect the community through mutual understanding. In addition, each year on World Refugee Day (20 June), most regions hold a celebration organised collaboratively by the local council and refugee organisations. In 2015, in Auckland, celebrations included events with cultural performances and food stalls set up by former refugees. The refugee organisations also set up booths with information on the support they provide and were available for discussions. Other events support providers reported on include weekly tea sessions in the neighbourhood (Amelia, Support Provider) and sports events such as an annual soccer tournament, as they believe that sport brings the community together (Fahad, Support Provider).

For former refugees, living well within and learning about Aotearoa New Zealand is a long and ongoing process. Support practitioners' work is crucial for current and former refugees' first settlement experiences, helping them get to a point where they may be independent. However, there are constraints to the levels of support needed to enable former refugees to gain everyday and legal citizenship.

Constraints and limitations on support provider work

The constraints discussed by interview participants fall under two main categories: funding, resourcing and capacity on the one hand; and attitudes and perceptions toward former refugees on the other.

Funding, Resourcing and Capacity

All interviewees referred to the issues associated with insufficient funding. Some support providers are completely managed by a volunteer administration team and survive through grants, donations from other organisations and the general public. Others are fully funded by various government ministries such as the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) and the Ministry of Social Development (MSD). However, such funding often has strings attached, as Sarah (NGO Advocate) reports in relation to advocacy:

They don't have the resources to do comprehensive advocacy on issues or they are not allowed to because it would get their funding

cut as some [funding] contracts have clauses where they are not allowed to advocate.

Another participant agreed that they can be ‘a little bit controlled’ by the agendas of their funders.⁵ They also acknowledged that their organisation would not be able to provide the valuable support that they do without this funding, but they face significant challenges since their funders do not always understand the intricacies of the support work and they ‘have to continuously justify what [they] do’. As a consequence, some participants agreed that being independent of government funding meant organisations might have more freedom in how they provide support for refugee-background people (Sarah and Ravi, NGO Advocates).

Besides funding being a constraint in providing support, resourcing for volunteers to accommodate the demand for support is often difficult. One support provider who relies on volunteers suggested that all providers, even those with funding, were stretched too thin:

In an ideal world, [volunteers] wouldn’t need to provide support to refugees because they [former refugees, refugees and asylum seekers] would get support from the core services [government funded] that are out there for refugees that should be providing the support (Meredith, Support Provider).

There were often tensions between different organisations across all cities, and frustration about the unevenness in the support that quota and convention refugees were provided (Amelia, Support Provider). Arguably, these tensions between organisations stem from competition between agencies for scarce resources, and a systemic privileging of institutionalised support for quota refugees. The constraints highlight both a lack of resourcing and the range of compromises that support providers make to do the work of enabling citizenship.

As noted above, it is clear that support for ‘convention’ refugees is inadequate. However, the institutional support for ‘quota’ former refugees is also seen as insufficient. Where the six-week orientation programme at the MRRC is considered an essential beginning to life in Aotearoa New Zealand, some refugee organisations believe that it is too short a timeframe and should also be available to more than just ‘quota’ former refugees (Amelia, Cristina, Fahad, Meredith, Qasim, Support Provider; Ravi, NGO Advocate). For example, Sarah (NGO Advocate) suggested that the limited timeframe for support (six weeks at MRRC and a further 12 months of dedicated support) fails to acknowledge

that former refugees may need ongoing support to address psychological and physical health problems for a number of years. It was suggested that a longer orientation course would, at the very least, ‘provide people with a sense of routine and order in the day [which] is very healing’ (Cristina, Support Provider). It would also allow a longer education programme for language development, given that much class time in the six-week period is interrupted for various appointments and meetings necessary to sort out legal and administrative requirements for settlement.

There is also a lack of resourcing or capacity in relation to advocacy roles that enable citizenship. Sarah (NGO advocate) works for an organisation that seeks to ‘amplify the voices of [refugees, former refugees, and asylum seekers as] rights holders’. In other words, her work is to support the support providers on the main issues that prevent refugee-background people’s human rights from being recognised, and includes urging governments to uphold their international obligations. For example, Sarah often hears from other providers in their network about difficulties experienced in accessing WINZ, healthcare and education. The process of obtaining access to benefits is complex and there is often a disconnect between entitlement and access (Gouws 2005). Asylum seekers on a work visa may apply for an emergency benefit and supplementary assistance with WINZ, but according to Ravi (NGO Advocate) it is often difficult and support providers are frequently locked in a constant battle to help their clients access benefits. A few participants expressed frustration with the welfare system itself including WINZ office staff interactions with former refugees and asylum seekers and the added difficulty of language barriers (Addison, Amelia, Meredith, Support Providers; Ravi, NGO Advocate). One commented that:

WINZ will invariably say [to ‘convention’ refugees under family reunification], ‘No. You are not entitled to the benefit because you’re sponsored’⁶ which is not correct. But how does a refugee explain that that’s not correct? It takes them, maybe they go along five different times and WINZ will say, ‘No’ ... until they take someone along like me or someone that can explain it ... [so they go] weeks and weeks without a benefit. Then they can’t pay rent and ... food and ... it’s really difficult (Meredith, Support Provider).

There has been considerable media coverage in recent years on the ‘toxic’ and ‘punitive’ culture of WINZ, whereby those seeking access to financial support are treated poorly, with a lack of respect (Jacobson 2018; WEAG 2018). This has been described as a ‘penal’ or ‘punitive’ approach to welfare provision has been well documented (Hodgetts *et al.* 2017), and is further discussed below.

Attitudes and perceptions toward former refugees

The second major constraint to settling well that former refugees face is primarily social, despite the work undertaken by support providers to facilitate community connection and settlement (noted above). Discrimination, prejudice, racism and ignorance were reported to be common by support practitioners (Derek, Researcher; Amelia, Cristina, Fahad, Qasim, Support Providers). For example, a lack of culturally aware health services in Aotearoa New Zealand emerged as a concern, where health practitioners were unaware of refugee-background people's traditions and treated such customs as inconveniences (ChangeMakers Refugee Forum 2011). Reducing discrimination within the local society is considered to be an important part of fostering settling well, with the words 'refugee' and 'asylum seeker' already drawing negative connotations at the onset of any discussion. One participant suggested there has been a 'moral panic' about refugee-background people settling in Aotearoa New Zealand and that there is often 'demonisation ... criminalisation ... [and a sense of] illegality' imposed on them (Derek, Researcher). This labelling of refugee-background people serves to disempower them (Elliot 2007). Yet it is the very label and status of being a 'refugee' that provides legal citizenship, and the very possibility of everyday citizenship. Qasim (Support Provider) highlights the tension, arguing that former refugees who enter through the 'quota' system or have their status confirmed are usually not refugees anymore but are 'New Zealanders' with either permanent residence or citizenship.

As noted earlier, the community itself is where lived experience, both positive and negative, occurs (Staeheli 2008). One participant described former refugees as facing 'reality' once they leave the 'honeymoon' period of the six weeks in the MRRC (Qasim, Support Provider). Our participants emphasised the difficulties former refugees experienced in feeling connected in their new communities. These findings are supported by evidence elsewhere that suggests discrimination and racism toward former refugees continues – whether casual or overt hatred (Bloom and Udahehuka 2014; Hahn 2017; Hazou 2017). Addressing racism is complicated and situated, but, at the very least, enabling everyday citizenship requires community awareness of former refugee experiences and acceptance of their right to belong such that new members are able to perform everyday citizenship fully.

DISCUSSION

Everyday citizenship

The lens of ordinary life highlights these nuances of citizenship (Trnka, Dureau and Park 2013; Staeheli *et al.* 2012). The community in which former refugees settle is a site of power struggle around the privileges of membership (Staeheli 2008) and the politics of belonging in which boundaries of inclusion and exclusion are always negotiated at multiple scales (Yuval-Davis 2006). At the macro level, legal citizenship status is determined by international law and domestic policy. At the local scale, boundaries and membership within them are negotiated in connection to cultural notions of national and public identity (Clarke 2008). Thus, while non-members (visitors/foreigners) and partial members (permanent residents and visa holders) may be permitted to enter into the physical realm of the state and have rights and responsibilities associated with their legal status, they are not independent of society's social norms but are the subjects of it. These social norms are sensed through actions and practices of everyday life, that determine how the world is understood and lived, and often these 'understandings are the means and products of states and other forces directed at creating or legitimating particular kinds of citizenry' (Trnka, Dureau and Park 2017, 2). Former refugees, refugees and asylum-seekers have typically been positioned as 'Other', increasing the distance and disconnecting them from host societies who receive them (Grove and Zwi 2006).

The tensions in Aotearoa New Zealand are clearly indicated in the results above, particularly the assertion of the identity of 'New Zealander' and the very rejection of the label 'refugee' which serves to maintain boundaries around who belongs (see also Hahn 2017). Host communities have the potential to open up and be hospitable to 'Others' as evidenced in the argument Cristina and Derek make for a 'warm', 'authentic welcome' and building 'trust' in both social and formal institutions, in combination with the range of supports that are provided to former refugees in their first year. These support services and practices enable everyday citizenship, and are targeted to enable independence and self-sufficiency, as set out in the New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Strategy (Immigration New Zealand 2012; Marlowe and Elliot 2014). However, a lack of resourcing for support services can compromise the ability of former refugees to gain language skills, and access welfare and health services, among other things, which in turn has the potential to reinforce the distinction between 'Self' and 'Other' and disempower former refugees (Heater 1990; Winchester and Rofe 2010).

Lefebvre's 1967 work, *Le Droit à la Ville* or *The Right to the City*, is useful for a broader conceptualisation of citizenship in this context. While Lefebvre's work related specifically to urban spaces, the broader inclusionary ethos can be applied to the kinds of negotiations former refugees face in resettlement. For Lefebvre (1996), the right to the city encompasses daily life, where people have the capacity and freedom to assert their rights within economic, social and political spheres (Gilbert and Dikeç 2008). Consistent with its original formulation as 'a cry and a demand' (Lefebvre 1996, 158), Marcuse (2012) reformulates it as an insistence by those marginalised and underprivileged in relation to the provision of essential legal and material necessities. In terms of everyday and legal citizenship, Lefebvre's basis for the right to the city provides a bridging platform for all communities to overcome situations of segregation and discrimination. Gaining permanent residency status provides the platform from which former refugees can feel more confident in asserting or demanding their rights to belong, and crucially provides the right to access further entitlements, like education, work, healthcare and income support. These further become mechanisms through which everyday citizenship is performed, through going to school, or education establishments, or work.

However, achieving such collective everyday citizenship is constrained by social norms that create boundaries around who belongs. Even though migration and globalisation characterise the contemporary world, social norms in settler or colonial societies such as Aotearoa New Zealand continue to privilege western white middle class bodies over 'others' (James 2014). These norms are reinforced by institutions such as the welfare system which has recently been strongly criticised for a culture of dehumanising those in greatest need, and, as noted above, has extended to refugees and former refugees accessing these services. The punitive nature of WINZ has developed over recent decades, following influences from broader neoliberalising tendencies that assume people needing financial or other support are there because they have made poor choices, behave immorally, or are otherwise responsible for the situation they find themselves in (Hodgetts *et al.* 2017; Levitas 2005; Young 2011; WEAG 2019). Alongside these forms of responsibilisation, there are assumptions that financial aid will encourage welfare dependency, and long term unemployment (Hodgetts and Stolt 2017). The kinds of structural injustices that result in generational poverty, or the kinds of events that lead to one fleeing their home country and seeking refugee status, are often not recognised in contemporary neoliberal states, but are framed as an individual's fault and something over which they should assume responsibility. Such institutional practices and ideas reinforce the ways in which societal boundaries around legitimate bodies and 'others' such as refugees and former refugees are perpetuated. They also highlight the

complicated and multifaceted ways that structural injustices operate to limit the right to the city and the possibilities for former refugees to settle well and be supported in that process.

The right to the city and, we argue, the right to full (everyday and legal) citizenship involves enabling people with the freedom to create and recreate social and city spaces, to take up entitlements and opportunities (Harvey 2008). This also means being empowered to subvert the boundaries that are dictated by social norms and structural power relations around who the legitimate citizenry is (Trnka, Dureau and Park 2013). When former refugees have and are enabled to take up the right to the city, they become part of a performative, collective articulation of belonging, producing and shaping everyday spaces (Purcell 2002; Sassen 2002; Staeheli *et al.* 2012). This promotes a possibility of change for former refugees as they attempt to settle well into a free and equal life away from the precariousness of their previous situations. It also provides opportunities for receiving communities to learn from new residents, thereby offering the potential to shift ways of thinking and being in the world more substantively. Thus in more pragmatic terms, we suggest one small way to initiate change is to increase funding for support work for former refugees that explicitly enable former refugees to enact everyday citizenship, gain greater language skills, increase employment opportunities, and pursue enhanced wellbeing. Not only will this facilitate their right to city and to everyday citizenship as a collective set of practices, it may also contribute to shifting deeply entrenched discriminatory social norms by demonstrating a broader acceptance of former refugees' belonging as New Zealanders.

CONCLUSION

In summary, we can draw out four key points that address the key questions asked at the outset. Firstly, we argue that citizenship is a dual focus of legal rights and responsibilities to the state on the one hand, and of everyday citizenship on the other, where refugee-background people should be allowed to inhabit everyday spaces freely without discrimination. Secondly, we argue that refugee support organisations are central in facilitating legal and everyday citizenship, and provide necessary and instrumental support options for refugee-background people. Thirdly, in providing such support to enable citizenship, refugee organisations are constrained by a lack of funding and resources, broader society's social norms and institutions, and by wider system processes. However, organisations find creative means to move past these barriers and, in doing so, channel the resilience of former refugees. Fourthly, we suggest that besides refugee support organisations, the host society members

in all its dimensions are central actors in influencing everyday citizenship for former refugee people attempting to settle into the community. The right to the city suggests an ethic of care that accepts the ‘Other’ and cultural difference. As Elliot (2007) argues, to ensure that former refugees can participate fully in social, economic and cultural aspects of Aotearoa New Zealand life, their cultural differences must be accepted and acknowledged by the host society. But such relationships are always situated within the specificity of both groups, the place, and particular power geometries that work to make certain groups particularly vulnerable (Massey 2005). Refugee support organisations therefore play a central role in providing a platform to bridge the differences between cultures and foster a sense of familiarity, equality and understanding within local communities. Moreover, the host society has significant influence in either increasing feelings of uncertainty within society, or instead enhancing feelings of support and overall belonging. Support organisations are thus found to provide valuable platforms for the new residents and host society to firstly bond well together and, secondly, to raise any questions and concerns for the duration of the settlement.

Overall, in terms of legal and everyday citizenship, the evidence presented here suggests that there is a need in Aotearoa New Zealand to increase capacity and resourcing for the settlement process and to provide greater support to asylum seekers and convention refugees in particular. In turn, demonstrating the importance of enabling former refugees to achieve everyday citizenship alongside their newly acquired legal citizenship by providing adequate resources for resettlement will begin to address the discrimination and othering that constrains the ability of former refugees to claim their right to the city. Here, then, securing citizenship is as much about support providers and local communities enabling it as it is about refugee-background people claiming it.

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NOTES

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- 3 As noted in the Discussion section, the term 'refugee' is contested, as many who have been resettled are no longer refugees, but have permanent residence or are full citizens in the legal sense. Yet there is stigma associated with the term. For the purposes of this article, 'former refugees' will be used to describe both quota and convention refugees who have permanent residence status, 'refugees' refers to those with confirmed refugee status (usually 'convention' refugees) and asylum seekers describe those who are yet to have refugee status confirmed.
- 4 Under the Refugee Family Support Category, up to 300 places (in addition to the 1,500 'quota' former refugees) are set aside for family members, their partner and children to enter Aotearoa New Zealand as 'convention' refugees. The process is legally complex, expensive for former refugees and, once here, family members are not well supported. Former refugees may only sometimes hear of this process (Meredith, Addison, Support Providers).
- 5 The participant's pseudonym is not given to avoid inadvertent identification of the organisation.
- 6 This support provider was referring to 'convention' refugees who enter under the Refugee Family Support Category (RFSC). Since those who enter through this category must be sponsored by a former refugee family member, there have been some scenarios where WINZ staff have at first wrongfully denied access to benefits that 'convention' refugees are entitled to.

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