Celebrating 40 Years — Reflections on Refuge: 2012-2018

Christina Clark-Kazak, Johanna Reynolds and Dianna Shandy

See table of contents

Explore this journal

Cite this document

Clark-Kazak, C., Reynolds, J. & Shandy, D. (2022). Celebrating 40 Years —
Reflections on Refuge: 2012-2018. *Refuge*, *38*(1), 6–10.
https://doi.org/10.25071/1920-7336.40964

Celebrating 40 Years — Reflections on Refuge : 2012-2018

Christina Clark-Kazak[a] , **Johanna Reynolds[b] and Dianna Shandy[c]**

HISTORY Published 28 April 2022

As one of the longest-standing bilingual, open access, peer reviewed journals in the field of forced migration, *Refuge* has always been an important source of inspiration and knowledge for us. So, we were honoured to take up the challenge of stewardship of the journal as the editorial team from 2012 to 2018.[1] As we look back on this period, our key learnings are: a deep commitment to open access; efforts to broaden and diversify forced migration scholarship; the importance of a reflective book review section; and, the use of special issues to highlight emerging research in the field. Our *Refuge* editorial team was also marked by a deep sense of feminist praxis, or care, comradery and collegiality particularly in navigating the occasional rough spots.

Open access is growing in popularity in academia generally, but in the field of forced migration it is particularly important. Due to structural inequalities in the production of knowledge, academics and journals based in the Global North dominate forced migration scholarship, while the majority of displacement occurs in the Global South. Open access is a small step towards redressing these inequities by ensuring that the research is accessible — and therefore accountable — to people most affected by the research. It also means that copyright remains with authors and that publicly-funded research is publicly available.

With *Refuge*'s transition to full open access in 2012, our editorial team spent a lot of time and energy making the journal's digital presence and online publishing more streamlined and thus our decades of archives more accessible. With a grant from the Canadian Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), we completely overhauled our website, created a new logo and revised our publication agreement to reflect our open access commitment. We started a partner-

CONTACT

a (Corresponding author) ✉ cclarkka@uottawa.ca

Public and International Affairs, University of Ottawa, Ottawa, ON, Canada

b ✉ johanna.reynolds@gmail.com

Centre for Refugee Studies, York University, Toronto, ON, Canada

c ✉ shandy@macalester.edu

Department of Anthropology, Macalester College, St. Paul, MI, United States

ship with *Érudit*, a French dissemination platform for peer-reviewed journals in North America, which facilitated our presence in library searches and in impact indices (Érudit, n.d.). We also made the difficult decision to cease printing hard copies for free distribution. We moved to a cost-recovery, print-on-demand service. Throughout all of these necessary but time-consuming structural changes, we benefited greatly from the support of the *Refuge* International Advisory Board, the Open Journal Systems (OJS) software team, the York University librarians and the copyright office at the University of Ottawa.

Refuge has always had a strong commitment to publishing under-represented scholarship. During our editorship, we collaborated closely with the Canadian Association for Refuge and Forced Migration Studies (CARFMS) to mentor winners of the CARFMS student essay contest towards publication of peer-reviewed articles. We also had a workshopping process for papers that had great potential, but that needed additional editorial input to increase their chances of positive peer review. Less successfully, we reached out to francophone authors to encourage publication in French, but our efforts were somewhat curtailed by the hegemony of English in academia. During our tenure, we also made concerted efforts to grow the journal's authorship and readership across disciplines and geographies. We were able to showcase *Refuge* at a number of Canadian and international conferences including the CCR consultations, Metropolis, CARFMS and IASFM — reaching both established and emerging scholars as well as practitioners. These new professional and personal connections broadened the journal's scope.

The book review section grew in both depth and breadth and emerged as one of the most visited parts of the journal.

This section also furthered our commitment to amplify the work of underrepresented authors and reviewers – those whose primary language is not French or English, emerging scholars, scholars located in places where it was challenging to get a copy of the book to them (where the post was unreliable or the cost of getting the book to them prohibitive). We endeavoured to publish a mix of reviews written by emerging scholars but also pushed established scholars to continue to contribute to this side of the scholarly process. We strove to review books published by some lesser-known publishers to promote a diverse landscape of publishing venues. We made a persistent, if not always successful, effort to publish reviews in French and of books written in French, alongside the reviews in English. We strove to be timely in our reviews, working directly with publishers to send manuscripts to reviewers in galley format when possible and even managed to have the review roughly coincide with the book's publication date several times. We commissioned several review essays, and the section soon became one of the key features of the journal.

In addition to the annual publication of a 'general' issue, the period of 2012-2018 also saw the curation, editing and publication of key special issues on emerging issues, including: racialized refuge (2019); historical and new approaches to private sponsorship of refugees (2016 & 2019); feminist perspectives on the Syrian refugee "crisis" (2018); power imbalance in the refugee regime (2017); refugee voices (2016); making home in limbo (2015); and, environmental displacement (2014). These special issues were topical, and also engaged with broader social and political questions of our times. Working with guest editors was one of the highlights of our time at *Refuge*. These collaborations not only brought in fresh and

diverse perspectives, but also allowed *Refuge* to extend our reach and relevance. Indeed, Refuge consistently delivered cutting-edge, open access scholarship. Free from the constraints of a large publisher, the editorial team had considerable latitude and flexibility to respond to good ideas. Many of our special issues were published in less than one year from receipt of articles through peer review to publication. This is a testament to the dedication of the *Refuge* team, but also to our commitment to doing things differently. Notwithstanding the important critiques of measuring impact (e.g., DORA 2012), we were proud to watch *Refuge's* impact factor more than double between 2014 and 2018 and triple by 2020.[2]

Another intentional commitment for us was to provide an avenue for the publication of research findings or recommendations that may not be accepted in traditional academic journals due to their community-based nature. An example of this was the collaborative work of the Canadian Council for Refugees, Centre for Refugee Studies, and CARFMS on ethical considerations in research with people in situations of forced migration. This document has been widely cited and used by both academics and community-based researchers refugee-led and advocacy organizations, providing foundational elements for other groups to build their own guiding principles. Similarly, the 2016 special issue on the launch of Canada's Private Sponsorship Program included reflections by Casasola from UNHCR Canada, and Michael Molloy, long-standing public servant, collaborated with historian Laura Madokoro to offer insights from civil servants in the 2017 issue on power in the global refugee regime.

We would like to end with some personal reflections.

Johanna:

While I was a PhD student at York University, *Refuge* was instrumental to my own academic research and development and soon became a key teaching tool given its open access content. For many emerging scholars in the field, *Refuge* is our first experience with academic publishing. It was thus a great honour to serve as the journal's Managing Editor from 2015 to 2018. I reflect on this period as a time of deep academic growth, as this role allowed me to engage with critical scholarship and broaden my own personal and professional networks. I learned a great deal about the publishing process, the technical frustrations of Open Access Systems and how much time and work goes into publishing just one issue. I also learned to savour the final moment you hit 'publish' and see it all come together! I am especially grateful to Christina and Dianna for showing me the true meaning of feminist praxis and mentorship.

Dianna:

Like many wonderful opportunities in my life, I learned of the *Refuge* Book Review Editor position through my affiliation with the International Association for the Study of Forced Migration. I was drawn to this opportunity to work with scholars from diverse disciplines, to immerse myself in the latest forced migration literature, and to work bilingually in French and English (uncommon for those based in the United States). As I've embarked on an academic leadership chapter in my career, I credit working collaboratively with the *Ref*uge editorial team, supporting other scholars and managing the

---

[2] There are a number of ways in that journal-level (vs. article-level) impact metrics are measured. One is by using Google Scholar's journal ranking tool (https://scholar.google.com/citations?view_op=top_venues), another is Scopus' CiteScore (https://www-elsevier-com.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/solutions/scopus/how-scopus-works/content), which counts the citations received in a given time period (e.g. 2017 to 2020) to articles, reviews, conference papers, book chapters and data papers published in the same period, and divides this by the number of publications published in that period.

administrative logistics in my *Refuge* role as an early litmus test for my appetite for this kind of work. One of my favorite *Refuge* memories is tucking copies of books for review in my suitcase when traveling internationally to hand deliver books to reviewers. *Refuge* was the kind of gig that inspired that kind of entrepreneurial spirit. I am grateful to have had this opportunity.

Christina:

I was Editor-in-chief of *Refuge* during a significant period of my early to mid-career as an academic. I started my mandate the year after my first book was published and our second child was born, and ended the year after I had moved to the University of Ottawa. My years at *Refuge* gave me some of the greatest learning opportunities of my academic career. While administrative and leadership jobs in academia are too often undervalued, I benefited from reading widely across forced migration scholarship. I also developed close professional relationships with the editorial team, authors, peer reviewers and guest editors. Working behind the scenes at a journal on a shoestring budget created a shared sense of solidarity and commitment amongst the editorial team, whom I still consider trusted colleagues and friends. I was mentored by Susan McGrath, Jennifer Hyndman, Sharry Aiken and the members of the international advisory board. Michele Millard at the Centre for Refugee Studies took care of many, many administrative and financial issues. In the context of academia's relentless drive for impact and metrics, it is important to recognize the huge amount of unremunerated and uncounted care work that goes on behind the scenes at any journal. *Refuge*, for me, exemplifies a deep commitment not only to quality, diverse scholarship, but also to fostering connections and relationships across the forced migration community.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Christina Clark-Kazak, Editor-in-chief, Refuge, 2012-2018

Johanna Reynolds, Managing Editor, Refuge, 2015-2018

Dianna Shandy, Book Review Editor, Refuge, 2014-2019

ORCID

Christina Clark-Kazak ⓘ https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6176-0674

Dianna Shandy ⓘ https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0117-9332

REFERENCES

American Society for Cell Biology. (2012, December 16). *San Francisco declaration on research assessment (DORA)*. Retrieved on February 14, 2022 from, https://sfdora.org/read/

Bose, P., & Lunstrum, E. (2014). Introduction: Environmentally induced displacement and forced migration. *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees*, *29*(2), 5–10. https://doi.org/10.25071/1920-7336.38163, https://dx.doi.org/10.25071/1920-7336.38163

Brun, C., & Fábos, A. (2015). Making home in limbo? A conceptual framework. *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees*, *31*(1), 5–17. https://doi.org/10.25071/1920-7336.40138

Carastathis, A., Kouri-Towe, N., Mahrouse, G., & Whitley, L. (2018). Introduction: Intersectional feminist interventions in the "refugee crisis". *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees*, *34*(1), 3–15. https://doi.org/10.7202/1050850ar

Casasola, M. (2016). The Indochinese refugee movement and the subsequent evolution of UNHCR and Canadian resettlement selection policies and practices. *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees*, *32*(2), 41–53. https://doi.org/10.25071/1920-7336.40270

Chatty, D. (2016). Refugee voices: Exploring the border zones between states and state bureaucracies. *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees*, *32*(1), 3–6. https://doi.org/10.25071/1920-7336.40378

Érudit. (n.d.)*Èrudit: A digital infrastructure for the dissemination of knowledge*. Retrieved on February 14, 2022 from, https://apropos.erudit.org/?lang=en

Kyriakides, C., Taha, D., Charles, C. H., & Torres, R. D. (2019). Introduction: The racialized refugee regime. *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees*, *35*(1), 3–7. https://doi.org/10.7202/1060670ar

Milner, J. (2017). Power and influence in the global refugee regime. *Refuge: Journal on Refugees*, *33*(1), 3–6. https://doi.org/10.25071/1920-7336.40443

Molloy, M. J., & Madokoro, L. (2017). Effecting change: Civil servants and refugee policy in 1970s Canada. *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees*, *33*(1), 52–61. https://doi.org/10.25071/1920-7336.40448

Molloy, M. J., & Simeon, J. C. (2016). The Indochinese refugee movement and the launch of Canada's private sponsorship program. *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees*, *32*(2), 3–8. https://doi.org/10.25071/1920-7336.40412

Reynolds, J., & Clark-Kazak, C. (2019). Introduction: Special issue on private sponsorship in Canada. *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees*, *35*(2), 3–8. https://doi.org/10.7202/1064815ar