



Resisting
the
Disempowering
Discourses
that
Dominate
Refugee
Resettlement
in NZ

Marieke Jasperse (MSc)

PhD Candidate





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Refugees

Individuals living outside their country of nationality who are unable or unwilling to return to that country due to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.

The United Nations 1951 Convention





Discourses of Refugee Resettlement

'Trauma'

Pathologizes
refugees (PTSD) &
resettlement
workers (VT)

Pre-flight & flight trauma
vs. post-flight trauma



Discourses of Refugee Resettlement

Neglects:

Discourses of
Survival & Resilience

Prevalence rates of PTSD

Negative Resettlement
Experiences

Personal & Professional
Growth (VR & VPTG)



Methodological Approach

Foucauldian
Discourse
Analysis



Discourse – Power – Subject

Powerful use practices to
privilege particular
discourse(s)
& produce subjects

Postcolonialism

Process AND Product

Methodological Approach & Aim

Semi-structured interviews



Examine the extent to which the disempowering discourses that dominate resettlement are
RESISTED
and/or
REINFORCED
by resettlement workers in New Zealand.



Participant characteristics



12



8 : 5



15 : 10



15 : 10

Acts of

RESISTANCE (5)

from

Former Refugees (2),

Migrants (2) &

NZ European (1)

Engaged in

Resettlement



Male, former refugee,
engaged in a
practical capacity

'I think we have only certain images about refugees. When you hear 'refugee' it looks like somebody is scared, it means somebody escaped and they have no options. We need to change that idea about refugees. We need to focus on the positive side of their lives. How they managed to survive. How they were able to succeed here in New Zealand.'



Female, NZ European,
engaged in a
practical capacity

There is the reaction of 'Oh those poor people'. 'Oh you're just amazing helping them'. 'Oh how do you cope? It's disempowering for everybody. It's disempowering for the refugee communities. It's disempowering for people working in the sector. It's disempowering for me. I want people to see refugees as skilled, intelligent, talented people who come from really diverse backgrounds.'



Male, migrant,
engaged in a
therapeutic
capacity

Everybody we see just has some incredible tale of adversity and resilience . It's a horrible cliché but it really does feel like a privilege to hear these stories. I guess what I'd like people to know about refugees is that they're not helpless individuals who we should all pity and wrap in cotton wool. They're people. People with skills. People with attributes.'



Female,
migrant,
engaged
in a
practical
capacity

'I find that there is not enough encouragement about what they are actually achieving here. I see it across all professionals, particularly Kiwis. 'Oh it was so horrible there and now you arrived to paradise' This is not paradise.'



Female,
former refugee
engaged
in a
therapeutic
capacity

*'For refugees who come
to New Zealand,
it's not only their task to
resettle.*

It's our mutual task.'



Conclusion

Resettlement
=
Resilience & Reward

Responsibility for resettlement

Reflect on **'REFUGEE'** words

Recognize how WE talk about
refugees
has implications for how others
perceive resettling refugees

AND

how resettling refugees
perceive THEMSELVES
and their PLACE
in NZ society

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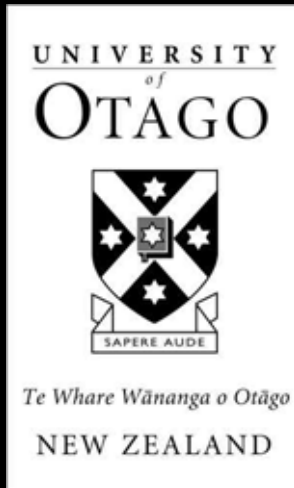
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Contact: marieke.jasperse@otago.ac.nz