

Responses to Refugee Crises in International Comparison

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In the summer of 2015, European governments, activists, and the international media went into crisis mode. The preceding years had seen some of the largest movements of refugees across national borders since World War II as result of the war in Syria, then in its fourth year, and other violent conflicts in the Middle East, Central Asia, and Africa. Nonetheless, European governments and the European Union were caught off guard when the numbers of refugees and other migrants trying to cross the Mediterranean or making their way over the so-called Balkan route dramatically increased in mid-2015. By September 2015, the “European Refugee Crisis” had become a fixed term that dominated European public discussion of the situation. Policy-makers, activists, researchers, and journalists in Europe and North America engaged in heated, often polemical debates about how to cope with the “crisis.” Should the refugees be granted asylum? If so, which groups? On what terms? How many refugees should each country take in? Would large numbers of refugees jeopardize the security of citizens in the receiving countries? And, in the long run, should those countries try to integrate the refugees as permanent residents? If so, how was their integration to be achieved? How could European societies deal with rapidly increasing cultural and religious heterogeneity?

Historians have joined other scholars and experts in speaking out about the European Refugee Crisis, but they have had little influence in setting the terms of debate. In fact, the perception that an unparalleled crisis was unfolding rested to a certain extent on an ahistorical reading of the situation. Each new report of “record numbers” of arrivals and the “unprecedented” challenges Europe faced deepened the sense of urgency

and crisis. Yet, as some politicians and observers were quick to point out, the Euro-Mediterranean situation of 2015 was by no means unparalleled. Proponents of a more generous European admission policy and some academics pointed to successfully managed refugee crises inside and outside of Europe over the twentieth century. In a now famous press conference on August 31, 2015, German chancellor Angela Merkel reaffirmed that Germany would do its part to aid refugees from Syria. “We can do it!” she declared, and she offered several examples from history to back up that confident prediction. Among her examples was an earlier large-scale inflow of forced migrants: the so-called expellees from formerly German territories who had to be resettled after 1945.¹

The resettling of the expellees became a recurring if controversial point of reference in the German discussion of the 2015 “crisis” and its aftermath, but it was not the only historical example that figured in the ongoing debate across Europe. Depending on the country, newspaper readers (re)encountered the émigrés from the 1917 Russian Revolution; the 10,000 mainly Jewish children relocated from Central Europe to the United Kingdom in 1938 (the so-called *Kindertransport*); Hungarians who fled the failed revolution of 1956; Indochinese boat people in the late 1970s; and refugees of the Yugoslav Wars of the 1990s.²

In most cases, such historical references were nothing more than that: references. Largely detached from their specific context, historical examples were offered as reminders of a benevolent, mainly Western tradition of assistance to refugees or as evidence of “best practices” that receiving states might adopt at their own discretion.³ Nevertheless, such

¹ Angela Merkel, press conference, August 31, 2015: www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Mitschrift/Pressekonferenzen/2015/08/2015-08-31-pk-merkel.html.

² Historical references recur throughout the articles, editorials, and commentaries on the unfolding refugee situation published, e.g., in the *New York Times*, September 9, 2015; *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, September 14, 2015; *The Guardian*, September 10 and 21, 2015; *Foreign Policy*, September 10, 2015; *Le Monde*, September 18 and October 1, 2015; *Die Zeit*, October 23, 2015. For a comparative analysis of media reactions in three major receiving countries (Sweden, Jordan, and Turkey), see Dalia Abdelhady, “Framing the Syrian Refugee,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Migration Crises*, eds. Cecilia Menjivar, Marie Ruiz, and Immanuel Ness (Oxford, 2019), 635–56.

³ See the critical remarks by Jessica Reinisch, “History matters ... but which one? Every refugee crisis has a context,” *History and Policy*, September 29, 2015, www.historyandpolicy.org/policy-papers/papers/history-matters-but-which-one-every-refugee-crisis-has-a-context.

examples offer a glimpse into a much broader history of refugee crises.⁴ Over the course of the twentieth century, especially in the decades after World War II, many countries experienced the arrival of large numbers of refugees and other forced migrants within short time spans, in some cases repeatedly.⁵ Some of those refugee crises involved more people, measured as a share of the world's population, than the 2015 situation, and some also posed much more dramatic economic and demographic challenges to the host countries. For some of the host countries in this larger history of refugee crises, the challenge of integrating millions of refugees was a defining experience that was interwoven with processes of state-building in the wake of war and decolonization.

Refugee Crises, 1945–2000 takes a comparative approach to this larger history of refugee crises. Our focus is not on the causes of large refugee migrations or on the experiences of refugees, but rather on the responses to refugee movements from actors at several levels, ranging from local communities in receiving societies to international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs) and supranational organizations. Adopting a decidedly global perspective, this volume brings together ten case studies from host countries in the global North and South. These cases cover a broad spectrum of types of involuntary migration and of international and domestic contexts. The driving forces and numbers of people involved varied considerably from case to case, and the backgrounds (national, religious, social) of the migrants also differed enormously. The common factor is that in each case the receiving country was confronted with the crucial question of how to deal with the arrival of a large number of people seeking refuge. They could not simply be sent

⁴ For an exploration of the ways in which past refugee crises are remembered, see Tony Kushner, *Remembering Refugees: Then and Now* (Manchester, 2006); Tony Kushner, *Journeys from the Abyss: The Holocaust and Forced Migration from the 1880s to the Present* (Liverpool, 2017).

⁵ The best survey with regard to responses by the international community is Peter Gatrell, *The Making of the Modern Refugee* (Oxford, 2013). See also Dirk Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact: World Migrations in the Second Millennium* (Durham, NC, 2002); *Religious Refugees in Europe, Asia and North America (6th–21st Century)*, ed. Susanne Lachenicht (Hamburg, 2007); *Les réfugiés en Europe du XVIe au XXe siècles*, eds. Olivier Forcade and Philippe Nivet (Paris, 2008); Dirk Hoerder, *Migrations and Belongings: 1870–1945* (Cambridge, MA, 2012); Philip Ther, *The Outsiders: Refugees in Europe since 1492* (Princeton, 2019); Klaus Bade, *Migration in European History* (Malden, 2003); Leslie Page Moch, *Moving Europeans: Migration in Western Europe since 1650*, 2nd ed. (Bloomington, IN, 2003); *The Encyclopedia of European Migration and Minorities: From the Seventeenth Century to the Present*, eds. Klaus J. Bade, Pieter C. Emmer, Leo Lucassen, and Jochen Oltmer (Cambridge, 2011).

away, but they were also widely seen in the receiving countries as an unpredictable challenge to stability and social cohesion.

The case studies in this volume focus on the political and societal responses to different cases of involuntary mass migration since World War II. How did state and society react to the refugees? How did the refugees themselves shape the situation? To what extent were refugees integrated – socially, economically, and culturally – into the receiving society? To what extent did refugees integrate themselves? How were integration and participation pursued and achieved? What facilitated – or impeded – the migrants’ settlement? How was “success” in the settlement of migrants defined? What were the short-term and long-term consequences for the host countries of accepting the migrants? In putting these questions center stage, this volume makes at least two distinct contributions to the growing body of comparative scholarship on refugees and forced migration. The comparative approach has shed new light on individual cases, recasting them as chapters in a larger history of “ethnic cleansing” in the twentieth century.⁶ Scholars in the field have mainly sought to pinpoint the root causes, forms, and dynamics of displacement. The arrival, reception, and integration (or nonintegration) of refugees and the consequences, both long- and short-term, for receiving countries have, by contrast, been little studied in comparative perspective. With its emphasis on the processes after flight and displacement, *Refugee Crises, 1945–2000* addresses this desideratum. Moreover, with the global scope of its case studies, extending beyond the North–South divide, this volume distinguishes itself from a literature that tends to be mainly concerned with Western receiving countries but is seemingly oblivious to the fact that the vast majority of refugees today are to be found in countries of the global South.⁷

⁶ Michael Marrus, *The Unwanted: European Refugees in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford, 1985); Norman Naimark, *Fires of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, MA, 2001); Benjamin Lieberman, *Terrible Fate: Ethnic Cleansing in the Making of Modern Europe* (Chicago, 2006); Philipp Ther, *The Dark Side of Nation States: Ethnic Cleansing in Modern Europe* (New York, 2014); Michael Schwartz, *Ethnische “Säuberungen” in der Moderne: Globale Wechselwirkungen nationalistischer und rassistischer Gewaltpolitik im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Munich, 2013).

⁷ On the importance of the global South as destination for refugees, see Aristide R. Zolberg, Astri Suhrke, and Sergio Aguayo, *Escape from Violence: Conflict and the Refugee Crisis in the Developing World* (New York, 1989); *L’asile au sud*, eds. Luc Cambrézy, Smaïn Laacher, Véronique Lassailly-Jacob, and Luc Legoux (Paris, 2008).

REFUGEE – CRISIS – REFUGEE CRISES

Talk of “refugee crises” pervades public and academic discourse. But what do we mean when we speak of a “refugee crisis”? Each of the component terms is complex, ambiguous, and problematic. Without trying to offer hard and fast definitions, we want to clarify the ways the terms “refugee” and “crisis” are used in this volume. Today, many definitions of the term “refugee” go back to the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, commonly called the Geneva Convention, which recognized refugees as a distinct category of migrant in international law.⁸ Centered on individuals fleeing their countries out of fear of political, religious, or ethnic persecution, the Geneva Convention definition excludes several types of forced migrants and displaced persons, such as refugees from war zones and internally displaced persons. Some of the case studies in this book do deal with refugees who fell under the Geneva Convention, but this volume covers a much broader array of refugees and involuntary migrants. It includes several groups of people whose displacement predated the 1951 definition: people who did not, in a strict sense, cross an international border (e.g., the “returnees” from the colonies); war refugees; and those who were denied refugee status.

Deliberately departing from the 1951 Geneva Convention definition, *Refugee Crises, 1945–2000* uses the term “refugee” more broadly to designate any person fleeing negative political actions and exclusion, much as the term did in the first half of the twentieth century.⁹ A common thread linking the different groups discussed in this volume is coerced migration. All were forcibly driven from their home or felt compelled to flee, and return was not a viable option, at least not in the short term. To be sure, the forms and degree of coercion varied from case to case, ranging from indirect or situational pressure to direct force.¹⁰

⁸ On the historical connections between “migrants” and “refugees,” and the problems of the 1951 distinction, see Katy Long, “When Refugees Stopped Being Migrants: Movement, Labour and Humanitarian Protection,” *Migration Studies* 1, no. 1 (2013): 4–26.

⁹ See, for example, John Hope Simpson, *The Refugee Problem: Report of a Survey* (Oxford, 1939), 3–4; John Hope Simpson, “The Refugee Problem,” *International Affairs* 17, no. 5 (1938): 607–28, esp. 607–9.

¹⁰ On the distinction between direct and indirect force, see Krystyna Kersten, “Przymusowe przemieszczenia ludności – próba typologii,” in *Utracona ojczyzna: Przymusowe wysiedlenia, deportacje i przesiedlenia jako wspólne doświadczenie*, eds. Hubert Orłowski and Andrzej Saksona (Poznań, 1996), 13–29; Philipp Ther, *Deutsche und polnische Vertriebene: Gesellschaft und Vertriebenenpolitik in der SBZ/DDR und in Polen 1945–1956* (Göttingen, 1998), 96.

Those extremes are represented in this volume by postcolonial “returnees” and “repatriates” who feared reprisals in the wake of independence struggles or believed they had no future in newly independent states and by expellees and “resettlers” who were the subjects of state-organized displacement.¹¹ Although natural disasters and climate change can also be seen as causes of forced migration, the case studies considered here all had political root causes.

The ways in which the migrant groups considered in this volume were classified at the time and the concrete legal status they obtained varied widely. Some of them were recognized as refugees under the Geneva Convention; some were denied that status and were deemed “irregular” migrants. Many others – including expellees, resettlers, returnees, and repatriates – were granted a special legal status created by the receiving states. The diversity of cases considered here is intentional. Only by comparing groups that have been categorized in a variety of ways can we assess the role that framing has played in responses to refugee crises and how it impacted the realities of refugee life.

The term “crisis” poses an entirely different set of problems. There is no legal or official definition of crisis. The challenge, then, is not to open up or complicate a narrow definition, as with “refugee,” but rather to put forward a more rigorous analytical understanding of the term. As anthropologist Janet Roitman reminds us, “crisis,” in the vocabulary of politics, is a highly charged term, suggesting certain perceptions and narratives and patterns of behavior while foreclosing others.¹² In everyday and political language, “crisis” serves as a popular catchphrase for turmoil, emergency, chaos, disorder. In some instances, it signifies a situation out of control; in others, a steady decline or imminent demise. The links that are made in public, political, and scholarly discourse between refugee

¹¹ Both expellees and decolonization migrants included subgroups who had been subject to varying degrees of coercion. For a careful discussion of the category of decolonization migrants as “forced migrants,” see Andrea L. Smith, “Coerced or Free? Considering Post-Colonial Returns,” in *Removing Peoples: Forced Removal in the Modern World*, eds. Richard Bessel and Claudia B. Haake (Oxford, 2009), 395–417. On the general problem of delineating the boundary between “free” and “unfree” migration, see Jan Lucassen, Leo Lucassen, and Patrick Manning, “Migration History: Multidisciplinary Approaches,” in *Migration History in World History: Multidisciplinary Approaches*, eds. Lucassen, Lucassen, and Manning (Leiden, 2010), 3–35, esp. 8–11.

¹² Janet Roitman, *Anti-Crisis* (Durham, NC, 2013). On the contextual factors leading to the “crisis” perception of the 2015 situation, see Leo Lucassen, “Peeling an Onion: The ‘Refugee Crisis’ from a Historical Perspective,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, August 4, 2017, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2017.1355975>.

movements and “crisis” are often grounded in this understanding of the term. Several of the refugee movements in this volume were referred to as “refugee crises” at the time. That is no accident. As political scientist Peter Nyers points out, the vocabulary of crisis – in the sense of “emergency” – has become an integral part of the dominant discourse about migration in general and about refugee movements in particular.¹³ It is not surprising, then, that the pitfalls of crisis-as-emergency discourse are especially apparent in discussions of refugees. The search for “immediate, practical, and operational responses”¹⁴ to a situation conceived of as “an emergency” tends to obscure the need for critical reflection and thinking in broader frameworks. In this respect, the essentially ahistorical responses to the 2015 “refugee crisis” and the general tendency to view refugee situations in isolation rather than from a comparative perspective can be seen as consequence of the crisis-as-emergency paradigm.

If “crisis” is to be more than a highly problematic buzzword that obscures more than it uncovers, we have to ask what specific meanings and insights the depiction of a situation as “crisis” might carry that alternative terms such as “turmoil” or “emergency” do not convey. The conceptual history (*Begriffsgeschichte*) of “crisis” provides the basis for an answer.¹⁵ The ancient Greek term, used in various disciplines

¹³ Peter Nyers, *Rethinking Refugees: Beyond States of Emergency* (London, 2006), 1–24. See also Jane McAdam, “Conceptualizing ‘Crisis Migration’: A Theoretical Perspective,” in *Humanitarian Crises and Migration: Causes, Consequences and Responses*, eds. Susan F. Martin, Sanjula Weerasinghe, and Abbie Taylor (London, 2014), 28–49; Cecilia Menjivar, Marie Ruiz, and Immanuel Ness, “Migration Crises: Definitions, Critiques, and Global Contexts,” in *Oxford Handbook of Migration Crises*, eds. Menjivar, Ruiz, and Ness, note 2 above, 1–17. For an attempt at a more complex definition (from the practitioners’ perspective), see Bernard Husson, André Marty, and Claire Pirotte, “Observations on Crises,” in *Responding to Emergencies and Fostering Development: The Dilemmas of Humanitarian Aid*, eds. Pirotte, Husson, and François Grunewald (London, 1999), 11–13. For a sweeping panorama of how migrations and crises intersect in world history and why the crisis narrative prevails in some cases, see Dirk Hoerder, “Migrations and Macro-Regions in Times of Crises: Long-Term Historiographic Perspectives,” in *Oxford Handbook of Migration Crises*, eds. Menjivar, Ruiz, and Ness, 21–36; see that collection for other recent case studies.

¹⁴ Nyers, *Rethinking Refugees*, note 13 above, 5.

¹⁵ On the term “crisis” as a historical concept, see Reinhart Koselleck, “Krise,” in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, eds. Otto Brunner, Werner Conze, and Reinhart Koselleck (Stuttgart, 1972–97), vol. 3, 617–50; Reinhart Koselleck, *Critique and Crisis: Enlightenment and the Pathogenesis of Modern Society* (Cambridge, MA, 1988), esp. 103–4, 127; Reinhart Koselleck, “Some Questions Concerning the Conceptual History of ‘Crisis,’” in *Culture and Crisis: The Case of Germany and Sweden*, eds. Nina Witoszek and Lars Tragardh (New York, 2002), 12–23; Randolph Starn, “Historians and ‘Crisis,’” *Past and Present*

(medicine, jurisprudence, military, religion), encompassed a variety of meanings, such as “discrimination,” “struggle,” and “decision.” Its medical sense was later adopted in writings about politics and history. “Crisis” designated the critical moment in the course of a disease at which it would either intensify (and possibly lead to the patient’s death) or subside (and possibly open the way to recovery). Rooted in this conceptual history, “crisis” as a term of historical analysis highlights certain moments and particular aspects of them.¹⁶ It denotes a temporally limited, exceptional situation, even if its beginning and end are subject to debate. It is a moment when action is – or is thought to be – urgently needed, a moment of decision with wide-ranging consequences for the future. By extension, crisis also implies a high degree of uncertainty about the possible outcome of a situation. In contrast to a medical crisis, a historical crisis generally points to a structural change, a transformation; it does not end with a simple return to the preexisting situation. Finally, a crisis is also marked by “crisis-awareness”¹⁷ among contemporary actors and witnesses. Insofar as it refers to a real situation, crisis is essentially a mode of self-reflection and self-description. It is not only a narrative about origins but also a reflection on the future: about impending decisions, their potential consequences, and the possibility of shaping consequences. As a mode of self-description, “crisis” shapes judgments (or expresses preexisting ideas and interests) and informs decisions, with far-reaching consequences.

By taking a more complex idea of crisis as its basis and by providing a broad historical comparison, *Refugee Crises, 1945–2000* seeks to break away from the shortcomings of the crisis-as-emergency paradigm. We do not contend that “refugee crisis” is a clear-cut, universally applicable analytical term. Nonetheless, conceiving of the case studies in this volume as critical moments of decision highlights a common factor that, in turn, provides a starting point for comparative analysis. In each case, the

52 (1971): 3–22; Edgar Morin, “Pour une crisologie,” *Communications* 25 (1976): 149–63.

¹⁶ See in particular Rudolf Vierhaus, “Zum Problem historischer Krisen,” in *Historische Prozesse*, eds. Karl-Georg Faber and Christian Meier (Munich, 1978), 313–29.

¹⁷ Koselleck, *Critique and Crisis*, note 15 above, 137; Vierhaus, “Zum Problem historischer Krisen,” note 16 above, 321–2; Carla Meyer, Katja Patzel-Mattern, and Gerrit Jasper Schenk, “Krisengeschichte(n): ‘Krise’ als Leitbegriff und Erzählmuster in kulturwissenschaftlicher Perspektive – eine Einführung,” in *“Krise” als Leitbegriff und Erzählmuster in kulturwissenschaftlicher Perspektive*, eds. Meyer, Patzel-Mattern, and Schenk (Stuttgart, 2013), 9–23.

receiving country was confronted with the crucial question of how to deal with the arrival of a large number of people seeking refuge.

CASES AND CONTEXTS

Refugee studies, which emerged as an academic subdiscipline in the 1980s, has often been accused of an ahistorical, presentist bias. And, indeed, historians have been conspicuously late in joining the interdisciplinary study of refugees and refugee protection.¹⁸ This disregard was reciprocated. The founders of refugee studies clearly prioritized examination of the legal, social, political, and economic dimensions of refugee situations in the present over analysis of historical roots or precedents. Historians, in turn, appeared wary of considering refugees and refugee movements as drivers of historical change.¹⁹ This is why, despite the expanding scholarship on topics such as forced migration, refugee protection, and humanitarian aid, refugee history is still, in the words of one of its most eminent proponents, very much an “emerging field.”²⁰ Although the number of case studies is growing, we still have only a fragmented picture of twentieth-century refugee crises and the responses to them. Much needs to be done to connect and compare different refugee crises and to understand how they relate to key developments and macro-processes such as wars, decolonization, the Cold War, and processes of state-building.²¹

This volume offers elements for that sort of broad-picture comparative analysis. The contributors eschew universalizing humanitarian discourse

¹⁸ See the critique by Philip Marfleet, “Refugees and History: Why We Must Address the Past,” *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 26, no. 3 (2007): 136–48.

¹⁹ Kushner, *Remembering Refugees*, note 4 above, 39–40; Philip Marfleet, “Explorations in a Foreign Land: States, Refugees, and the Problem of History,” *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 32, no. 2 (2013): 14–34.

²⁰ Peter Gatrell, “Population Displacement in the Baltic Region in the Twentieth Century: From ‘Refugee Studies’ to Refugee History,” *Journal of Baltic Studies* 38, no. 1 (2007): 43. For good overviews of the historical scholarship, see Jérôme Elie, “Histories of Refugees and Forced Migration Studies,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies*, eds. Elena Fiddian-Qasimiyeh, Gil Loescher, Katy Long, and Nando Sigona (Oxford, 2014), 22–35; Peter Gatrell, “Refugees – What’s Wrong with History?,” *Journal of Refugee Studies*, April 11, 2016, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/few013>.

²¹ Matthew Frank and Jessica Reinisch, “Refugees and the Nation-State in Europe, 1919–59,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 49 (2014): 479; Gatrell, “Refugees,” note 20 above, 15.

that removes refugees from their historical contexts.²² The comparative approach adopted here works against narratives of unbroken national or continental traditions of refugee admission or nonadmission. Radically opposed to a decontextualized approach to the past, historical comparison can only caution against the idea of such traditions. The starting point of analytically rigorous historical comparison is not the construction of identity or sameness between its objects, but the recognition of their historical specificities and differences.²³ The approach applied throughout this volume is thus first and foremost to bring back contexts. These contexts help us not only to understand each case more fully, but also to identify possible commonalities with other cases and with refugee situations in general.

The refugee crises discussed in this volume are embedded in a variety of interlocking local, national, regional, and international contexts. Despite their geographic variety, the cases are connected through certain shared international macro-contexts, three of which are of particular importance: the Second World War and the emergence of the postwar order; the dissolution of colonial empires and the so-called North-South conflict; and the global Cold War and its aftermath. At the same time, the cases also spotlight different phases in the evolving history of international refugee protection since 1945. Several of the crises analyzed in this volume proved in fact to be transformative moments in the development of an international legal framework and new forms of international cooperation to deal with refugees.

The first part of the volume brings together case studies dating from what we call the postwar and decolonization moment, the period of roughly three decades that was marked by the reverberations of World War II and the end of Europe's colonial empires. As a result of wartime displacement, persecution, and expulsion, tens of millions – as many as 60 million by some estimates – were uprooted in Europe alone in the mid-1940s.²⁴ The postwar moment in fact constituted the last catastrophic

²² Liisa H. Malkki, "Speechless Emissaries: Refugees, Humanitarianism, and Dehistoricization," *Cultural Anthropology* 11, no. 3 (1996): 377–404.

²³ On comparative history, see Jürgen Kocka and Heinz-Gerhard Haupt, "Comparison and Beyond: Traditions, Scope, and Perspectives of Comparative History," in *Comparative and Transnational History: Central European Approaches and New Perspectives*, eds. Kocka and Haupt (New York, 2010), 1–30.

²⁴ On the resettlements in Europe in the wake of World War II, see *Redrawing Nations: Ethnic Cleansing in East-Central Europe 1944–1948*, eds. Philipp Ther and Ana Siljak (Lanham, 2001); Pertti Aho et al., *People on the Move: Forced Population*

wave in a series of large-scale refugee movements originating in Europe. During the first half of the twentieth century and well into the 1950s, Europe – including the Ottoman Empire and Russia – was the world’s main producer and recipient of refugees and displaced persons, or, as historians Matthew Frank and Jessica Reinisch have argued, the theater of a “forty years’ refugee crisis.”²⁵ In the early 1920s, there were about 7 million refugees in Europe, including 3 million who had fled revolution and civil war in Russia. Millions more people were displaced by other cataclysms of the interwar period, such as the Greco-Turkish War (1919–22), and by Nazi Germany’s vast resettlement schemes in occupied Eastern European and Soviet territories after 1939.²⁶

In two further respects, it is important to see the post-1945 moment against the backdrop of a longer history of European refugee crises. First, the postwar displacements are part of a longer history of “ethnic cleansing” stretching back to the early twentieth century. After World War I, the idea of building a stable postimperial state system made of ethnically homogeneous nation-states out of the crumbling multiethnic empires of Austria-Hungary, Russia, and Ottoman Turkey was at the origin of large-scale displacements. It was translated into policy in the 1923 Lausanne Treaty sanctioning, *ex post facto*, the large-scale “population exchange” between Greece and Turkey. In the mid-1940s, the forced resettlement of large population groups was still considered a legitimate measure to use in working toward the creation of a stable postwar state order. Second, the international refugee regime that was enshrined in the 1951 Geneva Convention took shape in the context of the European postwar refugee crisis. Initially meant to apply only to

Movements in Europe in the Second World War and Its Aftermath (Oxford, 2008); *Warlands: Population Resettlement and State Reconstruction in the Soviet-East European Borderlands, 1945–50*, ed. Peter Gatrell (Basingstoke, 2009); *The Disentanglement of Populations: Migration, Expulsion and Displacement in Post-War Europe, 1944–9*, eds. Jessica Reinisch and Elizabeth White (Basingstoke, 2011).

²⁵ *Refugees in Europe, 1919–1959: A Forty Years’ Crisis?*, eds. Matthew Frank and Jessica Reinisch (London, 2017); Frank and Reinisch, “Refugees and the Nation-State,” note 21 above, 478–9. See also Eugene Kulischer, *Europe on the Move: War and Population Changes, 1917–1947* (New York, 1948).

²⁶ For a comparative take on refugee movements in the wake of World War I, see *Europe on the Move: Refugees in the Era of the Great War*, eds. Peter Gatrell and Liubov Zhvanko (Manchester, 2017). On the challenges of the post-World War I order, see Robert Gerwarth, *The Vanquished: Why the First World War Failed to End* (London, 2016); Jörn Leonhard, *Der überforderte Frieden: Versailles und die Welt, 1918–1923* (Munich, 2018).

Europe, the post-1945 refugee regime was also a response to the shortcomings of attempts at refugee protection during the interwar period.²⁷

The first two case studies presented in this volume address the postwar refugee crisis in Europe. In Chapter 2, Pertti Ahonen provides a triangular comparison of how three countries – West Germany, East Germany, and Finland – responded to the arrival of large numbers of conationals (or people considered as such) who had been displaced as a consequence of military and territorial loss. The flip side of the expulsion of the Germans from east of the Oder-Neisse line is the subject of Gregor Thum’s chapter (Chapter 3), which examines the repopling of Poland’s new western territories after 1945. The western territories saw the emergence of a motley society largely composed of uprooted people, including more than one million Poles “repatriated” from the Polish territories annexed by the Soviet Union, 200,000 Ukrainian refugees, and hundreds of thousands Polish Jews and migrants from other parts of Europe.

The postwar moment was not, however, just European in scope. The violent emergence of the post-1945 order turned large parts of Asia and, later, Africa into the main producers – and destinations – of refugees. The post-1945 dissolution of European and Japanese colonial empires and their replacement with new nation-states was an integral element of the global postwar moment, as were a series of large refugee situations, which we consider in this volume.²⁸ Decolonization-related conflicts in East and Southeast Asia and the Middle East, some of them linked to the Cold War, added considerably to the gigantic worldwide toll of refugees in the late 1940s and 1950s. Territorial partition in South Asia (1947) and Palestine (1948); the collapse of Japanese rule over Korea, Taiwan, and parts of mainland China; and the Korean War and the Chinese Civil War – to name but some of the major outbursts of violence – all set off major refugee crises that forced hundreds of thousands, in some cases millions, of people to leave their homes. The later phases in the emergence of the postcolonial state system were similarly marked by violence and major displacements of population.²⁹ Under the weight of the increasing

²⁷ On the interwar refugee and humanitarian regime, see Claudena M. Skran, *Refugees in Inter-War Europe: The Emergence of a Regime* (Oxford, 1995); Bruno Cabanes, *The Great War and the Origins of Humanitarianism, 1918–1924* (Cambridge, 2014).

²⁸ For a decidedly global take on the postwar situation, see Anna Holian and G. Daniel Cohen, “Introduction: The Postwar Refugee Regime in Global Perspective,” *Journal of Refugee Studies* 25, no. 3 (2012): 313–25.

²⁹ On the various types of decolonization-induced forced migration, see Ian Talbot, “The End of the European Colonial Empires and Forced Migration: Some Comparative Case

number of refugees outside of Europe, the post-1945 international refugee regime created for Europe turned global in the 1960s.

The global dimensions of the long postwar moment come into clear focus in Chapters 4, 5, and 6. The first two of those chapters focus on refugee crises of decolonization that shared many features with the forced resettlements in postwar Europe and that happened, in part, under the auspices of a European colonial ruler, Britain.³⁰ Ian Talbot's essay, "Pakistan: Refugee State" (Chapter 4) examines the long-term consequences resulting from the partition of British India. Displacing an estimated 12 million people, it was arguably the single largest refugee crisis of the twentieth century. Pakistan's state-building was inextricably linked with the integration of a culturally, linguistically, and ethnically heterogeneous refugee population of 7 million, roughly a fifth of the country's population and almost half of its urban population. The state's responses – the creation of satellite towns and refugee settlements, compensation schemes, and economic stimuli, along with other forms of immediate humanitarian assistance – not only strained the state's financial possibilities but also had a multifaceted, mainly negative impact on the development of its political structures.

The other – and still ongoing – partition-related refugee situation of the postwar decolonization moment concerns the Palestinian refugees. Some 720,000 Palestinian Arabs fled or were expelled during the war and civil war that marked the end of the British mandate over Palestine and the creation of the state of Israel in 1948. That first wave of displacement was followed by other waves, most notably the flight of more than 300,000 refugees in the wake of the Six-Day War of 1967. Over the course of several generations, the number of individuals registered as Palestinian refugees has risen to more than 5 million. Chapter 5 by Luisa Gandolfo focuses on Jordan, host country to the largest population of Palestinian refugees, who now constitute about a third of the country's population. Over the course of the past seven decades, the Jordanian state created a layered system of differing legal statuses for Palestinians that provides widely varying degrees of assistance and of socioeconomic and civic integration. Seen in comparison with the postwar refugee crises in Finland, Germany, Poland, and Pakistan, the Palestinian case makes clear

Studies," in *Refugees and the End of Empire: Imperial Collapse and Forced Migration in the Twentieth Century*, eds. Panikos Panayi and Pippa Virdee (Basingstoke, 2011), 28–50.

³⁰ On these connections, see, e.g., Ther, *Dark Side*, note 6 above, 180–97.

how strongly the international context shapes reception and integration processes in host countries. In the cases of Finland, Germany, Poland, and Pakistan, integration of refugees was forced by the international community's acceptance of the territorial changes or expulsions responsible for the refugees' displacement, and that acceptance effectively foreclosed the possibility of the refugees' return to their homes. Moreover, return gained little traction as a political issue among the refugees in those cases, the irredentist dreams of some expelled groups in West Germany notwithstanding. The case of the Palestinians in Jordan was – and remains – fundamentally different. The Palestinian-Israeli conflict remains unresolved; return has not been abandoned or renounced as a goal; and Jordan has acted to ensure that it not become a substitute home for Palestinians. Those three factors have contributed to the perpetuation of the refugee situation.

Like the partitions in South Asia and Palestine, most of the refugee crises related to decolonization processes happened in the global South. Andrea L. Smith's chapter "A Matter of Definition: Institutional Inclusion and Europe's Postcolonial Migrants" (Chapter 6), examines large migration movements from former colonies to metropolises that were triggered by decolonization.³¹ Focusing on the main European cases, Smith sets the state's responses to these colonial "repatriates" and "returnees" in a comparative framework. These groups comprised several different categories of European expatriates as well as local "collaborators" or military auxiliaries and certain non-European minority immigrant groups. The colonial returnee migration to Western Europe varied from country to country, amounting to only a trickle in some cases, but constituting major refugee crises in others. Notably, France (1962) and Portugal (mid-1970s) had to grapple with the arrival of hundreds of thousands people within periods of a few months. Estimates of the total number of decolonization migrants who headed to Europe range from 3 to 8 million.

Together with World War II and decolonization, the East-West conflict is the central international macro-context that shaped the refugee crises examined here. The second part of the book brings together case studies closely related to the Cold War and its aftermath. To be sure, the Cold

³¹ For overviews and comparisons of decolonization migrations to Europe and Japan, see *L'Europe retrouvée: Les migrations de la décolonisation*, eds. Jean-Louis Miège and Colette Dubois (Paris, 1994); *Europe's Invisible Migrants*, ed. Andrea L. Smith (Amsterdam, 2003); Jean-Louis Miège, "Rapatriés," *Encyclopædia Universalis*, 4th ed. (Paris, 1996), vol. 19: 529–35.

War also played a role in some of the refugee crises of the early postwar period, but it was not the defining framework of those crises as it was in the case of the movements of refugees fleeing political persecution – whether from Communist or anti-Communist authoritarian regimes – in the period from the mid-1950s to the mid-1980s. In contrast to the crises of the postwar and decolonization times, during the Cold War the category of “refugee” as defined by the 1951 Geneva Convention played a central role in the ways states addressed refugee crises. In fact, it can be argued that the Geneva Convention and the early activities of Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) were deeply rooted in the East-West conflict.³²

Chapters 7–9 in this volume address three vastly different Cold War refugee crises. Christopher Adam (Chapter 7) considers arguably the most famous refugee crisis of the early Cold War in Europe, the flight of roughly 200,000 people from the Hungarian People’s Republic after the failed uprising of 1956. The Hungarian refugee crisis became the first real test of the newly created international refugee regime, which had been embraced by countries of the Western bloc and shunned by the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc. Adam highlights one of the major actors in the resettlement of Hungarians among Western countries, namely, Canada. It accepted 38,000 refugees, more on a per capita basis than any other country. The state’s response to the Hungarian refugee crisis, which was largely due to public pressure from the media and civil society groups, marked a crucial turning point for Canada. It signaled a break with the country’s long-standing reluctance to admit refugees and the first step toward what would eventually become one of the most liberal national refugee acceptance policies in the world.

In Chapter 8, Quan Tue Tran takes up another iconic refugee crisis of the Cold War: the more than one million Vietnamese who fled the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in the late 1970s. Comparing two of the main receiving countries in the resettlement of the “boat people,” the United States and West Germany, Tran demonstrates how in both cases, albeit in different ways, Cold War rationales colored the countries’

³² On UNHCR’s history and the Cold War context, see Gil Loescher, *The UNHCR and World Politics: A Perilous Path* (Oxford, 2001), esp. 50–80. On the increasing imprint of the emerging Cold War on the “refugee” category, see G. Daniel Cohen, *In War’s Wake: Europe’s Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order* (New York, 2012).

decisions about admission.³³ Whereas the US government saw the generous admission of Vietnamese refugees as a necessary consequence of its involvement in Southeast Asia, an initially hesitant center-left government in West Germany adopted a generous resettlement policy in response to pressure from the conservative opposition, the media, and humanitarian activists. The West German case shows that the boat people crisis led to the creation of new state administrative tools and new forms of nonstate humanitarian intervention, most notably the “mercy ships” sponsored by groups like the Cap Anamur Committee.³⁴ The case of the estimated 500,000 Salvadorans who crossed the US-Mexican border during the 1980s, addressed by Patrick Scallen (Chapter 9), represents the flip side of the Vietnamese boat people in the United States. Fleeing civil war and a US-backed anti-Communist military regime, the Salvadoran migrants were treated very differently than the Vietnamese and Cubans admitted in large numbers to the United States as refugees – as victims of Communism – at that time.³⁵ The Reagan administration’s refusal to recognize the Salvadorans as refugees was countered by civil society – based assistance provided by the Sanctuary Movement and networks of Central Americans throughout the United States.

Chapters 10 and 11 examine two major refugee crises following the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s. Barbara Franz takes up the case of the more 2.2 million people displaced during the Bosnian War between 1992 and 1995 (Chapter 10). Along with other refugee movements during the Yugoslav Wars, the Bosnian refugee crisis coincided with a trend among Western states to curb the number of incoming refugees and immigrants.³⁶ Comparing two of the major host countries, Austria and the United States (which accepted about 130,000 and 120,000 refugees,

³³ For a larger panorama of this particular kind of migration and the perceptions it engenders, see *Migration by Boat: Discourses of Trauma, Exclusion, and Survival*, ed. Lynda Mannik (New York, 2016).

³⁴ See also Michael Vössing, “Competition over Aid? The German Red Cross, the Committee Cap Anamur and the Rescue of Boat People in South East Asia,” in *Dilemmas of Humanitarian Aid in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Johannes Paulmann (Oxford, 2016), 345–70; Patrick Merziger, “The ‘Radical Humanism’ of ‘Cap Anamur’/‘German Emergency Doctors’ in the 1980s: A Turning Point for the Idea, Practice and Policy of Humanitarian Aid,” *European Review of History* 23 (2016): 171–92.

³⁵ On the broader history of US refugee policy after 1945, see Gil Loescher and John L. Scanlan, *Calculated Kindness: Refugees and America’s Half-Open Door, 1945–Present* (London, 1986); Carl J. Bon Tempo, *Americans at the Gate: The United States and Refugees during the Cold War* (Princeton, 2008).

³⁶ B. S. Chimni, “The Geopolitics of Refugee Studies: A View from the South,” *Journal of Refugee Studies* 11, no. 4 (1998): 350–74.

respectively), Franz shows that, despite restricted access to social welfare programs (in the United States) or to the labor market (in Austria), Bosnian refugee communities managed to integrate themselves rather successfully. In her chapter, “Rwandan Refugees in Tanzania, 1994–1996” (Chapter 11), Jill Rosenthal revisits one of the most rapid refugee movements in recent history. Within a few days after Tanzania opened its border to those fleeing genocide in neighboring Rwanda on April 28, 1994, more than half a million people arrived in Tanzania’s Ngara district. They were quickly followed by an army of relief workers sent by dozens of international and local humanitarian agencies. For the next two years, the border region was home to a large “humanitarian complex.” The consequences for Ngara and its inhabitants were immense. Benaco, where the refugee camp was initially located, grew during this time into Tanzania’s second-largest city. The Tanzanian government’s forcible removal of the refugees in late 1996 had lasting consequences not only for the refugees but also for Tanzania itself, the Ngara district in particular.

RESPONSES TO REFUGEE CRISES: TOWARD A COMPARISON

The common thread linking the case studies assembled in this volume is their focus on responses to refugee crises and their attention to long-term consequences. In the following section, we will flesh out four topics for comparison: the actors who tried to influence responses to refugee crises; the way refugee crises were framed in public and political discourse; the ways responses to refugee crises figured in state and social cohesion-building processes; and the ways “success” in responding to refugee crises has been defined. In the Afterword, “Recalibrating Refugees: Global and Historical Perspectives” (Chapter 12), Leo Lucassen elaborates further on these and other points of comparison in the case studies in this volume.

Actors and Agency in Refugee Crises

Historian Michael Schwartz has characterized the secret behind the successful socioeconomic integration of more than 12 million expellees in the two postwar Germanys as the combination of two “long-term factors: economic growth plus time.”³⁷ Although deliberately simplistic, Schwartz’s formula points to the structural forces that had a major impact

³⁷ Michael Schwartz, “Vertreibung und Vergangenheitspolitik: Ein Versuch über geteilte deutsche Nachkriegsidentitäten,” *Deutschland-Archiv* 30, no. 2 (1997): 191.

on how host societies and the international community responded to refugee situations, and on the consequences the sudden arrival of large numbers of refugees had on host societies. Economic booms and busts had enormous consequences for the states' room to maneuver as well as for the ability of national labor markets to absorb sudden increases in the size of the labor force. As the chapters in this book by Ahonen, Thum, and Smith suggest, the three-decade economic boom in Europe following World War II stood in a mutually reinforcing relationship with the integration of large numbers of expellees, resettlers, and repatriates: expanding labor markets needed workers, the migrants needed jobs, and allowing them to work increased the number of contributors to state social welfare programs. The economic recession following the 1973 oil crisis, by contrast, made it considerably harder for returnees from the Portuguese colonies in the mid-1970s to enter the job market.³⁸ Macropolitical contexts had similarly decisive impacts. In the cases of the Hungarians, the Vietnamese boat people, and the Salvadorans, the Cold War was decisive in determining whether the refugees would be admitted by Western countries. Likewise, the micro-context of refugee lives always mattered. Whether refugees lived among the host population or separated from it in camps had a large influence on processes of integration and identity formation.³⁹

Although time and place mattered greatly, the studies in this volume also make a strong case for the importance of human agency. Each chapter identifies a specific set of societal and political actors who sought to influence the decisions and measures taken to address the situation. Their actions – and inaction – did in fact make a difference. They shaped the development of crises and their short- and long-term consequences, both for the refugees and for the host countries. The interaction between

³⁸ See also William J. Carrington and Pedro J. F. de Lima, "The Impact of 1970s Repatriates from Africa on the Portuguese Labor Market," *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* 49, no. 2 (1996): 330–47. The impact of these migrants on the job market remains the subject of debate. See George J. Borjas and Joan Monras, "The Labor Market Consequences of Refugee Supply Shocks," NBER Working Paper, no. 22656, URL: www.nber.org/papers/w22656; Michael A. Clemens and Jennifer Hunt, "The Labor Market Effects of Refugee Waves: Reconciling Conflicting Results," NBER Working Paper, no. 23433, URL: www.nber.org/papers/w23433.

³⁹ See the classical study by Liisa H. Malkki, *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania* (Chicago, 1995). On the history of refugee camps, Michel Agier, *Gérer les indésirables: Des camps de réfugiés au gouvernement humanitaire* (Paris, 2008); *Un monde de camps*, ed. Michel Agier (Paris, 2014).

refugees and their host states constitutes a central axis in all the cases considered here. Although humanitarian discourse and some scholarly literature still tend to reduce them to helpless victims, refugees played an essential part in the case studies in this volume.⁴⁰ That was true not only of the refugee groups who quickly acquired citizenship or political rights and became influential voter blocs – as, for example, in West Germany, France, and Pakistan – but also of less-favored groups who had to rely on their own support networks when state support was lacking or inadequate. Tran and Scallen underscore the importance of self-help among Vietnamese boat people and Salvadoran refugees, the latter linked with Central American migrant networks throughout the United States. In her chapter on the Bosnian refugees, Franz attributes their rather successful integration less to limited assistance by the host states than to the refugees' own ability to adapt to the situation and develop strategies. Women, Franz notes, were especially quick to enter both the formal and informal sectors of the labor market. As this example suggests, refugees never acted as monolithic blocs, and the degree of agency they exercised varied from person to person according to circumstances and factors such as age and gender.

Despite the growing importance of international commitments and of nonstate actors over the course of the period under scrutiny, nation-states jealously asserted their prerogative to decide whom they would accept as refugees and under which conditions. State action – or inaction – proved central in all the cases considered here. With only a few exceptions, the host states in these cases were the main providers of assistance and relief. Probably even more important for long-term integration were measures such as land redistribution (Pakistan, Poland, the German Democratic Republic, Finland); easing access to the labor market; and granting citizenship rights (as with expellees in Germany, Finland, and Poland; post-colonial migrants in the Netherlands, France, and Portugal; and some of the Palestinians in Jordan). The example of Jordan illustrates the broad range of possible state responses to refugee populations and the consequences for individual refugees. Over the decades, the Jordanian state has granted a variety of legal statuses to Palestinian refugees, depending on when they arrived in Jordan and from where they had come. Some Palestinians hold Jordanian citizenship and enjoy full access to the labor market; others are residents with tightly restricted rights and employment

⁴⁰ See the important critique against the disempowerment of refugees by Malkki, "Speechless Emissaries," note 22 above; Gatrell, *Modern Refugee*, note 5 above, 8.

opportunities. Some are part of Jordan's political and economic elite; many others reside in cramped refugee camps.

Along with the refugees and state authorities, a broad range of non-state actors shaped the course of each refugee crisis, either by putting pressure on national governments or by taking action on their own. As Adam argues in his chapter, sympathetic international (Western) broadcasting and national media proved crucial in pressuring the Canadian government to play a more active role in the resettlement of Hungarian refugees. The plight of the Vietnamese boat people turned into a similarly mediatized event. Media reports and images sparked humanitarian activism, and some journalists turned into activists. The responses to the Vietnamese boat people in the late 1970s and to the Salvadorans in the 1980s were marked by an upsurge of civil society activism and grassroots humanitarianism in the Western world, as described in Chapters 8 and 9.⁴¹ In these two cases, as in the case of the Canadian response to the Hungarian refugees, humanitarian and civil society activism engaged actors from across the political spectrum, and religious groups played a prominent part.⁴²

International nonstate actors such as international organizations and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have increasingly played a decisive role in shaping the course of refugee situations since 1945. In Africa, international agencies have steered the responses of many host countries, not least because the international community considered refugees in Africa to be a problem of underdevelopment awaiting a solution in a mixture of emergency aid and development aid, imposed if need be.⁴³ The 1994–6 refugee crisis in western Tanzania became a microcosm of this international humanitarian complex, displaying its mechanisms and its pitfalls. In this instance too, international media attention was a central

⁴¹ The importance of the 1970s in this regard is emphasized by Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge, MA, 2010); *The Breakthrough: Human Rights in the 1970s*, eds. Jan Eckel and Samuel Moyn (Philadelphia, 2014). In the cases considered in this volume, media coverage tended to increase the willingness of civil societies and/or states to provide support; it can, however, have very different impact. See, e.g., the cases examined in *Oxford Handbook of Migration Crises*, eds. Menjivar, Ruiz, and Ness.

⁴² See also the points raised by Frank Bösch, "Engagement für Flüchtlinge: Die Aufnahme vietnamesischer 'Boat People' in der Bundesrepublik," *Zeithistorische Forschungen* 14, no. 1 (2017): 13–40.

⁴³ See the seminal anthropological critique of the humanitarian complex and its effects on refugees and host societies by Barbara Harrell-Bond, *Imposing Aid: Emergency Assistance to Refugees* (Oxford, 1986).

factor that fueled aid and profoundly shaped the ways in which it was provided.⁴⁴ Media attention and public pressure did not necessarily work to the advantage of the new arrivals, as some of the cases in this volume attest. Authorities and aid workers were always confronted with refusal, indifference, and resistance to the admission and/or integration of refugees. In some cases, this had sweeping effects – for example, when the Rwandan refugee crisis became a central topic in Tanzania’s first multi-party electoral campaign, resulting in the refolement of the refugees by Tanzanian state authorities.

The Power of Framing

The perception of a refugee situation as a crisis has important consequences. The case studies in this book suggest that the way a given refugee situation is framed has important consequences for its eventual outcome. Most of the refugee movements discussed here were made up of highly diverse groups. For example, each of the following populations – the partition refugees in Pakistan, the German expellees, the resettlers in western Poland, and the postcolonial migrants in Western Europe – was internally divided on ethnic, linguistic, religious, and class lines. Likewise, the refugee movements from El Salvador and Rwanda included individuals from all conflict groups: victims, bystanders, and perpetrators. The processes by which groups are categorized – political processes that become part of seemingly apolitical, objective bureaucratic procedures – have been a controversial topic in refugee studies. Scholars have thus far grappled mainly with the consequences of the creation of the category “refugee” as defined in the 1951 Geneva Convention. The case studies presented here demonstrate, however, that many other categories and subcategories have been used to frame and respond to refugee movements. Partly due to the absence of adequate international law categories, partly as a means to avoid international scrutiny or involvement, state actors have created new categories and made distinctions, often tailored to one specific refugee crisis.

New categories and situation-specific statuses and labels proliferated during the postwar moment. The common concept behind the different statuses coined for expellees in the two Germanys, Finland, and Poland, as well as for most partition refugees in Pakistan, was that of the forced

⁴⁴ For a more systematic exploration of the interactions between relief agencies and media coverage, see Jonathan Benthall, *Disasters, Relief and the Media* (London, 1993).

“returnee.” These returnees were considered members of the national community immediately upon their arrival in the country of relocation even though they were no less alien to the host societies than other migrant groups. Most of them had never lived before in the host country. They stood out on account of the languages or dialects they spoke, their religious practices, their cuisines, and their cultural traditions. Like most other groups of refugees, they experienced rejection and were the target of negative stereotypes. Nevertheless, state authorities in each instance left no doubt about the returnees being part of the national community and made efforts to influence perception of the place of the returnees in that community. Given the refugees’ particular legal status (which was hereditary in West Germany) and migration regimes created for them, returnees could be described as “privileged migrants.”⁴⁵ The states not only stipulated their full equality as fellow citizens, but also enacted special measures to compensate them for their losses and to improve their socioeconomic situation. Framing the responses to the refugee crises as a question of national compassion toward destitute fellow citizens allowed authorities to take sweeping redistributive measures in favor of the refugees: a comprehensive “burden-sharing” law in West Germany; a considerable increase in public expenditure in Pakistan; land reform in East Germany, Finland, and Poland. Most of the repatriates and returnees who came to Western Europe as a result of decolonization were likewise granted special status and privileges not extended to other migrant and refugee groups. In their case, special treatment was also a consequence of the colonial powers’ insistence that decolonization struggles were strictly domestic affairs, not international conflicts.

But even in the cases where specifically national categories were not created and the category of “refugee,” as regulated by international law, was applied, host states successfully defended their authority to determine who would be granted that status and under what circumstances. Over the decades, being a Palestinian refugee, itself a particular category in

⁴⁵ For comparisons between different cases, see Manuel Borutta and Jan C. Jansen, “Comparing Vertriebene and Pieds-Noirs: Introduction,” *Vertriebene and Pieds-Noirs in Post-war Germany and France: Comparative Perspectives*, eds. Borutta and Jansen (Basingstoke, 2016), 1–31; Jasna Čapo Žmegač, “Ethnically Privileged Migrants in Their New Homelands,” *Journal of Refugee Studies* 18, no. 2 (2005): 199–215; Rainer Ohliger, “Privileged Migrants in Germany, France, and the Netherlands: Return Migrants, Repatriates, and Expellees after 1945,” in *The Nation, Europe, and the World: Textbooks and Curricula in Transition*, eds. Hanna Schissler and Yasemin Nuhoğlu Soysal (New York, 2005), 35–60.

international law under the responsibility of a particular UN agency (the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, UNRWA), started to comprise a broad range of very different statuses in Jordan.

The Cold War narrative was central to the ways in which Western states framed the Hungarian, Vietnamese, and Salvadoran refugee movements. The Hungarians and Vietnamese were accepted by the United States as political refugees escaping Communist repression; the Salvadorans, on the other hand, were deemed “irregular” economic migrants by the Reagan administration and denied refugee status. Because few of the Salvadorans in the United States were covered by later immigration reforms, not being recognized as refugees had long-lasting consequences that, for some, have persisted up to the present. The cases of the Hungarians, Vietnamese, and Salvadorans also show that nonstate actors, like governments, recognized the power of framing and tried to change the official policy by challenging official narratives and public perceptions. It is certainly no accident that Western states became more hesitant about granting refugee status in the early 1990s, following the end of the Cold War, and began to develop new means to circumvent the Geneva Convention, including the imposition of complex and stricter vetting procedures and the creation of temporary residence or protection statuses.⁴⁶

State-Building and Refugee Crises

Refugees were never just helpless objects of state action; they were also important agents of change. As historian Peter Gatrell puts it, “states make refugees, but . . . refugees can also make states.”⁴⁷ The case studies in this volume provide ample evidence of state- and society-making by refugees. Particularly during the postwar years, state-building processes and refugee crises were inextricably connected in many countries. In Central and Northern Europe, expellees and refugees arrived in host states and societies in the midst of postwar recovery and reconstruction. Given the extent of wartime destruction and displacement in the two

⁴⁶ On these more recent processes, see Chimni, “Geopolitics,” note 36 above; Roger Zetter, “More Labels, Fewer Refugees: Remaking the Refugee Label in an Era of Globalization,” *Journal of Refugee Studies* 20, no. 2 (2007): 172–92. For a long-term perspective, see *Définir les réfugiés*, eds. Michel Agier and Anne-Virginie Madeira (Paris, 2017).

⁴⁷ Gatrell, “Refugees,” note 20 above, 6. For a compelling case from an earlier period, see Benjamin Thomas White, “Refugees and the Definition of Syria, 1920–1939,” *Past and Present* 235 (2017): 141–78.

Germany, one can hardly speak of stable or cohesive host societies into which the expellees could be integrated. Even more dramatically, the expellees and refugees in Poland's new western territories were to build an entirely new society, a society of refugees. In neither of these cases, it appears, was the absence of a stable receiving society a major impediment to the refugees' successful settlement; that absence, one could even argue, might have facilitated their settlement and becoming active members of society. In these cases, responses to the refugee situation went hand in hand with state-rebuilding. For example, expellee integration can be considered an important driving force behind the rise of the welfare state in postwar Europe.⁴⁸ Attenuating the threat of social conflict and political unrest was one of the central rationales behind the expansion of many social welfare programs, whether those programs targeted expellees or served other groups as well.

Jordan is another case where a host state and society were profoundly transformed by the inflow of refugees. Some Palestinian refugees have joined the ranks of Jordan's social, economic, and even political elite, but fears that the native Jordanian population might lose its majority status have led to the imposition of countervailing measures to ensure that Jordan would not become the refugees' new home.

Of all the refugee crises examined in this volume, none had as far-reaching or as long-lasting an impact on an emerging state's structures and political culture as the crisis accompanying the partition of British India. As Talbot argues in Chapter 4, the responses of the nascent Pakistani state to the massive inflow of refugees strengthened the army and bureaucracy as pillars of government, contributed to the emergence of ethnic nationalism, and reinforced Pakistan's centralized, top-down approach to nation-building.

Other cases discussed in this volume reveal less obvious yet important interconnections between refugee crises and processes of nation-building. The reception and integration of colonial repatriates and returnees was a central element in a new phase in Western European nation-building: nation-building by contraction.⁴⁹ After decades – in many cases, centuries – of imperial orientation toward the outside world and emigration, the former colonial metropolises saw themselves reduced once again to strictly European nation-states. In France, for instance, the organization

⁴⁸ Borutta and Jansen, "Comparing Vertriebene and Pieds-Noirs," note 45 above, 3.

⁴⁹ Jan C. Jansen and Jürgen Osterhammel, *Decolonization: A Short History* (Princeton, 2017), 173–4, 183–5.

of repatriation from Algeria went hand in hand with the buildup of the presidential system of the Fifth Republic, and the state's embrace of the repatriates (initially hesitant, then enthusiastic), combined with the exclusion of Muslim Algerians, broke with a deep-seated universal idea of French nationality and further pushed the "Europeanization" of France.⁵⁰ Postcolonial nation-building, if of a different kind, also played a central role in the case of Canada. Although the country had gradually gained independence from the British Empire, political, cultural, and intellectual processes of nation-building were still underway in the decades after 1945. The Hungarian refugee crisis became an exercise in Canadian nation-building as the debate over responses unfolded along the lines of inner Canadian cultural and ethnic conflicts.

Mythmaking and Myth-Breaking

In hindsight, most of the refugee crises discussed in this volume count as "successfully" resolved. Some have given rise to myths of national achievement that serve as recurring points of reference, sometimes invoked with amazement and rarely without a certain measure of self-congratulation. But what does "success" mean in these cases? Action taken by governments and agencies, activists, and, not least, by the refugees themselves managed to end the initial emergency, and in most of the cases the refugees were eventually integrated as residents, or even citizens, of the host societies. Indeed, some, like the Vietnamese, came to be seen as "model migrants," and many host societies clearly benefitted from the inclusion of the new residents as full participants.

These success stories may be a source of hope and comfort (even if a cold one) for refugees and host societies alike amid ongoing crises; they may serve as source of inspiration for those working to resolve them. It is no surprise that many of these cases reappeared in public discussion in the wake of the 2015 European refugee crisis. But casual retelling of success stories – retelling that disregards context and leaves out the hardships those most affected endured and the tremendous effort involved – can nourish false expectations about the challenges to be addressed.⁵¹ Taken

⁵⁰ Todd Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization: The Algerian War and the Remaking of France* (Ithaca, NY, 2006).

⁵¹ Some scholars in migration studies see a general tendency to stress past integration achievements, combined with an overtly pessimistic view on the present situation. See Leo Lucassen, David Feldman, and Jochen Oltmer, "Immigrant Integration in Western

together, the case studies in this volume present a complicated picture that stands as a warning against taking success stories at face value. They remind us that each crisis and the responses to it have to be seen in a specific context, and that solutions that worked in one case cannot necessarily be transferred to another. They also demonstrate how “success” remained fragile and relative for a long time. Even in the case of the expellees in West Germany, who benefitted from the largest redistribution of wealth by a German state before reunification, economic integration was a slow, uneven process that lasted not years but decades. Well into the 1960s, unemployment rates were considerably higher among expellees in many regions of West Germany than among the native population. Casual reference to success stories can also obscure the fact that “success” could create losers as well as winners, among both migrant and local populations. The integration of postcolonial repatriates, for example, went hand in hand with the tightening of restrictions on other migrant groups, including migrants from the very same colonies. The refugee crisis in Tanzania’s Ngara district shows the broad range of impacts a refugee emergency can have on the host society. Whereas some residents of the region benefitted from new economic opportunities and improved infrastructure, others had to cope with severe shortages of basic necessities and an increase in violent crime.

Finally, short-term and long-term effects often mix in a complicated picture, with some consequences becoming apparent only at a distance of several decades. Some of the postwar crises appear to have cast a much longer shadow on the host societies than was apparent at the time. From the vantage point of the late 2010s, the ways in which Pakistan’s partition refugees, the West German expellees, and many postcolonial returnees to Western Europe were framed and integrated seems over the long run to have strengthened ethnonationalist identification and concepts of homogeneity in those receiving countries. These myths of ethnic homogeneity, glossing over the refugees’ otherness, became the cornerstone of the widespread idea that integration would work successfully only with one’s own kind. In this respect, too, earlier refugee crises reverberate in today’s debates.