

UCLA

Program on International Migration

Title

Survival and integration: Kachin social networks and refugee management regimes in Kuala Lumpur and Los Angeles

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9nw7w5tc>

Author

Palmgren, Pei

Publication Date

2016-11-19

Peer reviewed

Survival and integration: Kachin social networks and refugee management regimes in Kuala Lumpur and Los Angeles

Pei Palmgren

Graduate student

Department of Sociology, University of California, Los Angeles, USA

264 Haines Hall, 375 Portola Plaza, Los Angeles, CA 90095

peipalm@ucla.edu

Forthcoming in the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*

Acknowledgements: The author would like to thank Aya Fabros, Ching Kwan Lee, Ruben Hernandez-Leon, Andrew Herman, Kyle Nelson, Yotala Oszkay Febres-Cordero, Kevin Shih, Roger Waldinger, participants of the Political Sociology and the Global South working group and the International Migration working group at UCLA, and two anonymous reviewers for helpful comments on previous drafts of this paper.

Survival and integration: Kachin social networks and refugee management regimes in Kuala Lumpur and Los Angeles

How do refugees establish social networks and mobilise social capital in different contexts throughout a multi-stage migration process? Migrant social network literature explains how migrants accumulate social capital and mobilise resources in and between origin and destination but provides limited answers regarding how these processes unfold during refugee migrations involving protracted stays in intermediate locations and direct interaction with state agents. Drawing from ethnographic fieldwork with Kachin refugees in Kuala Lumpur and Los Angeles, I address these gaps by comparing refugee social networks in two sites of a migration process. Distinguishing between *networks of survival* and *networks of integration*, I argue that differences in their form and functions stem from their interactions with local refugee management regimes, which are shaped by broader state regulatory contexts. In both locations, these networks and regimes feed off each other to manage the refugee migration process, with key roles played by hybrid institutions rooted in grassroots adaptation efforts yet linked to formal resettlement mechanisms. Considering the refugee migration process as a whole, I show that Kachin refugees demonstrate their possession of social capital gained during the informal *social* process of migration to advance through institutionalised *political* processes of resettlement in each context.

Introduction

In this paper, I examine successive stages of social network formation along a refugee migration trajectory from Burma/Myanmar¹ to the United States. While the literature on migrant social networks offers valuable insight into migrant social capital accumulation and resource mobilisation in different settings, it provides limited answers regarding how these processes unfold during protracted refugee migrations. Many forced migrants stay in intermediate locations for indeterminate amounts of time during a multi-stage migration process, with over two-thirds

¹ While different people and institutions refer to the country by either Burma or Myanmar for political reasons, for this paper I follow the popular usage among the Kachin refugees and UN officers in the study.

of the world's refugees spending years in such limbo (Loescher et al. 2008). As the bulk of migrant social network literature has focused on their formation and reproduction in countries of *origin* and *destination*, including the social capital-producing feedback between the two locations, it lacks an analysis of these processes as they unfold along a migration trajectory that includes protracted situations of stalled migration after displacement and before settlement. Furthermore, with its focus on informal migration infrastructures, the literature rarely examines the relationship between migrant social networks and activities of state agents. Such analysis is particularly important for understanding refugee social capital accumulation, given their varied interactions with the state during claims-making and adaptation processes. Considering these circumstances, how do refugees establish social networks and mobilise social capital in different state contexts throughout a multi-stage migration process?

Between 2002 and 2014, over 130,000 refugees from Myanmar resettled to the United States from Malaysia or Thailand (APIASF 2014; ORR 2015), including many originating in Myanmar's Kachin State. Drawing from participant observation and in-depth interviews with Kachin refugees in Kuala Lumpur (KL), Malaysia, and Los Angeles (LA), California, I compare how they form social networks and deploy social capital while pursuing goals in each context. Distinguishing between *networks of survival* and *networks of integration*, I argue that differences in their form and functions stem from their interactions with local refugee management regimes, which are shaped by broader state regulatory contexts. In both locations, Kachin networks and the local refugee management regime feed off each other to manage the migration process in different ways, with key roles played by hybrid institutions rooted in grassroots adaptation efforts yet linked to formal institutional resettlement mechanisms. In addition to comparing the

activities and dynamics of the networks, I analyse the interaction between the social and political dimensions of refugee migration as it unfolds during a multi-step process entailing displacement, *protracted liminality* — a prolonged situation of insecurity and uncertainty regarding legal status, length of stay, and future moves — and settlement, focusing on the latter two steps. From this holistic perspective, I show that Kachin refugees demonstrate their access to social capital gained during the informal *social* process of migration to advance through institutionalised *political* processes of migration and integration in each context.

Migrant social networks, social capital, and refugee migration

The literature on international migration identifies migrant social networks — made up of interpersonal ties linking migrants, previous migrants, and non-migrants in origin and destination communities (Massey et al. 1987, 1998) — as important sources of social capital. This literature draws mainly from Bourdieu's definition of the concept as 'the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition' (Bourdieu 1986, 248). As Portes (1998, 3-4) points out, this definition contains two constitutive elements: the social relationships that bring about resources for individuals and the amount and quality of those resources. Bourdieu highlights this distinction by explaining that the 'network of connections' is not a given but is 'the product of an endless effort at institution...which is necessary in order to produce and reproduce lasting, useful relationships that can secure material or symbolic

profits' (Bourdieu 1986, 250). The network is thus a result of individual and collective investments in social relationships able to yield resources.

The concept of social capital is fundamental to social network theories explaining the persistence of migration as well as immigrant adaptation processes. According to these theories, social capital and material resources proliferate between home and destination via interpersonal and community channels, reducing the costs and risks of further migration (Massey et al. 1998, 42-50). This process becomes self-perpetuating as migration is increasingly accessible to a broader swath of the would-be migrant population. Certain internal dynamics of migration processes, however, can also produce feedback mechanisms that undermine self-perpetuating migration dynamics (de Haas 2010, 1602). Reproduced in the immigration context, networks afford newcomers access to information, employment, and adaptational support upon arrival (Boyd 1989; Massey et al. 1987, 1998), though distribution of support is often uneven depending on social position (Hagan 1998; Menjivar 2000). Network structures can transform, however, due to such broad social forces as state policies and labor market conditions, and under certain circumstances demands for help can exceed network capacities to provide it (Menjivar 2000).

While explicating many facets of the social organisation of migration, this literature has two main limitations when considering refugee migrations. First, it focuses primarily on processes in and between an origin and destination, lacking analyses of network formation and social capital mobilisation in intermediate locations. While literature on transnational and diaspora migrant networks has emphasized their multi-sitedness (Ferguson et al. 2016, Ghorashi and Boersma 2009), it is with regard to “homeland” connections to various “host settings” and not transitions from intermediate (and tenuous) host sites to permanent ones. Works on refugee

immigration have also limited considerations of social networks to activities in immigrant destinations (Hein 1993a; Portes and Bach 1985; Zhou and Bankston 1995). As Menjivar (2000) states, ‘Conceptually, informal networks lose relevance for refugee migrations to countries of first asylum. The importance of social networks for this type of migration emerges when those involved cross several international borders — or oceans — to reach safe haven’ (Menjivar 2000, 233). Applied to all refugees, however, such thinking precludes attention to how they form and utilise networks during protracted periods of stalled migration following displacement and prior to arriving in a safe haven.

Second, given its focus on informal labor migrations, the literature on migrant social networks views them as forming and existing largely outside of state control (Massey et al. 1998, 45), neglecting the role of the state beyond policies and border control practices. Work on forced migration has emphasised the often violent relationship between the state and certain populations as compelling flight (Kunz 1981; Zolberg et al. 1986, 1989), as well as varied refugee-state interactions in countries of immigration (Bloemraad 2006, Brown 2011, Ong 2003). They have not paid enough attention, however, to the intersection between refugee-state interactions and processes of migrant social capital accumulation.

Two exceptions to the general focus on migrants in origin and destination offer ways forward for studying refugee migrations. Ackapar’s (2009) study of ‘transit’ migrants in Turkey identifies micro (gender, ethnicity, religion) and macro (immigration and asylum policies) variables affecting the structure of migrant networks in transit, prompting questions about the as yet unexplored implications of these dynamics for subsequent stages of migration and adaptation. Paul (2011) offers the notion of ‘step-wise’ migration trajectories, which ‘low-capital’

migrants use to work their way up a hierarchy of preferred destinations, spending years in ‘stepping stone’ countries and accumulating ‘migrant capital’ — a combination of human, financial, and social capital — along the way. While refugees’ ability to execute an overarching step-wise migration strategy is more constrained than that of the labor migrants in Paul’s study, her framework is useful for analysing refugee migrations involving multiple stages with dynamic adaptation and decision-making processes. In turn, a specific consideration of refugee migration adds to her framework by considering how refugee migrants mobilise ‘migrant capital’ in relation to refugee management regimes and broader state regulatory contexts.

I analyse a contemporary case of refugee migration to extend literature on migrant social networks by examining how these migrants accumulate and mobilise social capital during *successive stages* of a migration process and how they accomplish this *in relation to state and para-state² agents*. Central to this analysis is my conceptualisation of the intermediate period of protracted liminality — a stage in ongoing migrant trajectories characterised by prolonged periods of ambiguous legal status, or ‘liminal legality’ (Menjivar 2006), along with tenuous security and the temporal uncertainty of their stay. Rather than studying the structure and dynamics of social networks in the aggregate (Scott 2012), I analyze the interpersonal connections refugee individuals and their families form and utilize as they navigate their displacement and resettlement trajectories.

Methods

² By this I mean agents contracted by or working alongside, but not formally part of, the state apparatus.

I employed participant observation and in-depth interviewing to study Kachin social networks in KL and LA. I conducted fieldwork in LA between February 2014 and June 2015, focusing on the resettlement experience of five Kachin families within the first year of their arrival and two other families that arrived within the previous five years. I first recruited a family through a resettlement agency (RA) after inquiring about impending arrivals. I then met others at a Kachin church, and eventually church members informed me of the arrival of four other families.

Throughout the fieldwork, I accompanied family members to appointments with various offices affiliated with the social welfare system and spent several hours talking with them and their friends during church gatherings, in their homes, and while sitting in LA traffic going to and from appointments. In addition to these ongoing and open-ended conversations, I conducted seven in-depth interviews that were loosely structured around experiences of displacement from Myanmar, asylum seeking in Malaysia, and resettlement in the US. Through these sit-down interviews and hours of conversation, I aimed to achieve saturation of information rather than a representative sample of refugee migrant experiences. I also interviewed staff of two RAs about the resettlement process.

I conducted fieldwork in KL in July 2015 to follow-up on information obtained in LA. In KL, I met Kachin refugees through referrals from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Kachin Refugee Committee (KRC), and Kachin immigrants living in LA. While there, I accompanied Kachin refugees to their grassroots institutions (refugee committee, restaurants, learning centres, religious fellowship) throughout the city as well as to their residential areas. I also conducted small group interviews with Kachin refugees (totalling 14

people), representatives of the KL office of the UNHCR and three Malaysian NGOs working on migration/refugee issues, and staff of two refugee committees.

Using a ‘multicase ethnography’ approach (Burawoy 2009), I conceived of the KL and LA sites as cases of refugee social network formation and social capital mobilisation. I analysed fieldwork data to determine how various interactions among refugees, their social ties, and state and para-state agents, occurring within broader state regulatory contexts, constituted each case. In addition to comparing these cases, I analysed the networks as operating throughout a broader resettlement process connecting KL to LA.

Networks of survival

With varying details, common among the experiences of those in this study was the decision to escape state violence in Myanmar. While peace negotiations between the government and several ethnic minority armies have lessened civil conflicts that were active since the mid 20th century, sporadic fighting continues in Kachin and Shan states (Hogan 2016; Pwint and Nom 2016), as does forced labor, land confiscations, and other forms of state military oppression. After gaining advice from relatives, community elders, and acquaintances to go to Malaysia to work among the many Kachin/Burmese living in KL, those in this study procured the services of smuggling ‘agents’ to take them through Thailand — hiding in truck cargos, trekking through forests, and waiting in safe houses — to Malaysia. Upon arrival, they joined over 150,000 asylum seekers and refugees, mostly from Myanmar, living in Malaysia (UNHCR 2016).

Through its migration policies, the Malaysian state enforces a ‘hierarchy of rights’ privileging skilled ‘expatriates’ over ‘foreign workers’ and, at the bottom, ‘illegal’ migrants (Nah 2012). Lacking any formal refugee policy, the state lumps refugees in with this ‘illegal’ category, leaving them susceptible to intermittent roundups and expulsions (Cheung 2011; Hedman 2008). In this context, the UNHCR determines refugee status, intervenes in detention cases, and administers resettlement procedures without written agreement from the government (Cheung 2011, 59). While representatives of the UNHCR and NGOs told me that government officials have verbally agreed to not arrest refugees, this agreement is not codified in law, and local officials often deviate from it. In this section, I examine how Kachin refugees in KL form and use *networks of survival* during a stage of protracted liminality and show how these networks and the local refugee management *regime of relocation* are interdependently geared toward refugee protection and onward migration.

Seeking protection and accessing the refugee resettlement system

Most in this study arrived in KL with few existing contacts. The siblings Seng Lu and Zau Tu,³ for example, had cousins already working in KL; La Aung knew an acquaintance in a KL suburb; Seng Kaw, went to where his mother and younger brother had been living since they arrived a year prior; La Nau stayed with the friends of a Kachin man he met on his journey to Malaysia. While living in shared apartments in co-ethnic/co-national neighborhoods throughout the city,

³ All names in this paper are pseudonyms.

they all expanded their social networks to include varied interpersonal ties and connections to grassroots institutions such as religious fellowships,⁴ the KRC, and a few hideaway restaurants.

Resettlement from Malaysia to the US requires a series of interviews with the UNHCR, its partners, and US immigration officials, followed by US Department of Homeland Security approval, pre-departure health checkups, and a cultural orientation, all occurring in several month intervals for a total of at least five years. Access to this formal process, for those in this study, began with information from fellow migrants. Many arrived without knowledge of the resettlement possibility but ended up applying with the UNHCR after others advised them to. As La Aung described:

From Mae Sot [Thailand], I just went to Malaysia to live. I didn't know about the UNHCR until I was in Malaysia. Then I started to get more friends, and they were talking about the UNHCR. They said, 'Hey, why don't you go apply?' ...something like that. I asked them what it was. They told me about it. When I heard it, I thought it was more better for me, to live in a big country legally.

His experience corresponds to a refugee committee staff's assertion that 'life is difficult' due to insecure legal status, and those who come to KL primarily to work hear from other migrants about the resettlement process as they seek to adjust.

On the advice of fellow migrants, newcomers first went to the KRC after arriving in KL for help coping with their new circumstances. The committee has registered over 8,000 Kachin refugees with their organisation since it was established in 2003, about 4,000 of which have resettled.⁵ They have seven staff who administer registration, health referrals and translations,

⁴ The Kachin are predominantly Christian due to American missionary activity dating back to the 19th century.

⁵ Interview with KRC president, July 17, 2015.

‘security’ work (described below), and educational services for children in return for a monthly membership fee of 10 Malaysian Ringgit (about \$2.40). The KRC is one of 62 ‘refugee committees’ of varying size and capacity that emerged ‘organically and informally,’ according to UNHCR officers, over the past decade to provide support to their communities. These committees are a valuable source of resettlement-oriented social capital given their direct link to the UNHCR, which attempts to build their capacity through financial and logistical management training and in turn relies on them to register asylum applicants, to ‘contact the uncontactable,’ and to serve as focal points for communication regarding policies and services.

It was the newcomers’ ties to the KRC that ultimately enabled them to begin the formal resettlement process. According to refugee committee and UNHCR representatives, refugees from Myanmar must first register with their co-ethnic committees, and then the UNHCR contacts the committees to obtain lists of arrivals. The UNHCR then carries out mobile registrations at the committee offices, which they did in 2009, 2010, and 2013. This was the experience of La Nau, who registered with the KRC two years before the UNHCR summoned him for an interview, and, a month later, gave him a refugee status card. The requirement of KRC membership to access the UN resettlement system and the working relationship between grassroots committees and the UNHCR suggests that migrant social capital is integrated into, as well as bolstered by, the refugee management regime in KL.

Maintaining livelihoods and security

Jalan Alor is a busy tourist road in KL offering a mishmash of Asian food. Several of the young workers pushing menus in front of passersby, appealing them to sit and eat at the outdoor tables, have light yellow thanaka paste — a bark-based cosmetic distinctly common in Myanmar — smeared across their cheeks. Most of these restaurant servers, as well as many working retail jobs in the surrounding commercial district, are refugees from Myanmar. ‘In Malaysia it is very easy [to get a job]’, Zau Nan told me. ‘Just show your skills and you can work.’ Most adults in this study found manual labor and service jobs through the help of other migrants. Seng Kaw worked in a restaurant ten hours each day, with one day off every two months, before a Kachin man recruited him to succeed him in a job installing electrical wiring in new homes. La Aung described his experience:

I had many jobs there. In Malaysia, there are big restaurants outside, and the boss rents out space to sell food. I worked at one [a stall] that sold fried chicken. Then I worked selling rice, carrying big packets of rice. That’s how I got strong. I sold rice in the mall, in the farmers market. Morning market, we call it. I did deliveries. I always found a job from Burmese people.

UNHCR officers and Kachin refugees alike told me that employers prefer refugee labor to that of citizens and authorised migrants because refugees are cheaper, desperate to work, and will do so outside of labor law stipulations. The city’s low-wage informal labor market is thus accommodating to refugee job seekers, providing subsistence and bolstering their survival efforts.

While refugees are able to sustain livelihoods, police and thieves alike threaten their security. Several of those I talked to described the constant risk of locals targeting vulnerable migrants carrying cash wages. A resettled refugee at a Burmese church in LA once showed me a

gruesome picture of his stabbed and bloodied brother, who was in a KL hospital after being robbed for his mobile phone. Seng Kaw described the security situation as such: 'It is very hard in Malaysia because there are bad people...there are young people who rob you.' When I asked him if they could report robberies to the police, he responded, 'No, the police also rob you.'

Unlike common robbers, the police wield power to arrest and detain unauthorised migrants, resulting in regular and widespread extortion practices. According to the president of the KRC, authorities call them 'kosong,' meaning 'zero' in Bahasa Malaysia. 'They say, "You are nothing, you are kosong case" and tell us they can do anything they want to us,' he told me. Several in this study said that police often stop(ed) them at night and at the beginning and end of the month when workers are paid, demanding upwards of 1,000 ringgit (about \$240) per person. Refugees (among all 'illegal' migrants) must pay the fees to avoid being taken to a police station, where they can then be transferred to an immigration detention centre and eventually deported. Fearing this outcome, Kachin refugees call the KRC to negotiate their release. The KRC president told me their security unit is the busiest of their organisation, with the few staff with Bahasa Malaysia skills regularly negotiating with police when members are stopped. The president of the Rvwang Refugee Committee (RRC), a sub-ethnic offshoot of the KRC, told me that the committee often calls its members to collect loans to pay the police. One Kachin man told me that police are happy when they see a refugee committee card because they know someone will come with money. 'Bank card!' another man interjected.

In a state context that renders refugees vulnerable to 'coercive social regulation' (Ellerman 2009), those in KL seek out ways to subsist and maintain security while awaiting resettlement. Whereas migrant social network literature emphasises the social functions of networks, here,

social network connections are a source of protection directly related to their political status as unauthorised migrants and the state's coercive policies aimed at such migrants. Those deciding not to access refugee committees and the UNHCR can still draw from various social ties and the labor market to survive in KL, but they face constant risks of expulsion without the protection, however tenuous, of refugee status and committee affiliation. It is worth noting, however, some indications of internal power dynamics and fragmentation that may impact the cohesiveness of, and access to, the networks. Most notably, in 2015, Rvwang members split from the KRC to form the RRC, stating that leaders of the more populous Jingphaw ethnicity had marginalised other Kachin sub-ethnicities during support activities and had acted as exclusionary gatekeepers to UNHCR-funded assistance programs. Tensions over control of resources points to fragmentation based on ethnic divisions and relationships of domination rooted in the homeland and translated into the KL context. Despite internal conflicts over implementation, networks of survival do provide social capital for the immediate purpose of survival and the ultimate goal of onward migration, often in direct relation to state and international resettlement officials.

Networks of integration

Immigration to the US constitutes a settlement stage in the refugee migration process, during which the state promotes refugee self-sufficiency through social welfare and labor market integration. In contrast to undocumented migrants who immigrate 'outside the law' (Motomura 2014), including those who seek asylum through judicial procedures *after* arriving in the US (Hamlin 2014), refugees arrive with pre-determined status affording them cash, food, and

medical benefits unavailable to other immigrants. Whereas the Malaysian state is inhospitable and at times predatory toward refugees, my observations show that the US state is bureaucratic and managerial. The refugee management regime in LA, consisting of state and para-state institutions, manages the refugee population by disciplining behaviour and compelling immediate wage income. In contrast to networks of survival in KL, made up of displaced migrants who help newcomers survive while pursuing resettlement, *networks of integration* in LA are made up of legal residents and citizens who help newcomers navigate welfare bureaucracies and establish state-mandated self-sufficiency. In this section, I examine how Kachin refugees in LA form and use these networks and how they interact with the local refugee management *regime of economic integration* to facilitate both immigrant adaptation and state regulatory goals.

Integrating into immigrant communities

The US government manages refugees through a series of assistance delegations. The Department of State contracts national non-profit RAs to resettle newcomers, and these RAs assign ‘reception and placement’ procedures to their local offices, which in turn delegate assistance to Ethnic Community-Based Organisations (ECBOs) and/or ‘anchors’ — family or other ‘US ties’ of refugees who sign an ‘affidavit of support’ with the RA affirming assistance capacity. While RAs are officially tasked with settlement assistance, such support is limited and fleeting. As a soon-retired caseworker told me, after ensuring that refugees have apartments and are registered in the welfare system, ‘we wash our hands’ and ‘tell them in DC that the case is

closed.’ Another caseworker told me that RAs prefer taking on cases with US ties (as opposed to ‘free cases’), as they lack the capacity to resettle those without a support network.

One of two co-ethnic/co-national pastors serve as the ‘anchor’ for the resettled Kachin in LA, playing a critical role of plugging the families into immigrant church communities and informally extending support responsibility to other members. The families in this study all settled in suburban neighbourhoods throughout LA’s San Gabriel Valley, considered an ‘ethnoburb’ (Li 2009) for its high concentrations of Asian and Latino immigrants. Almost immediately upon arrival, the pastors brought the newcomers to a Kachin Baptist church and/or a mixed-ethnic Burmese Christian church, the members of which came to the US through various immigration processes using student visas, diversity visas, family reunification, or refugee resettlement, forming a membership base more rooted and conducive to higher community-wide levels of social capital than those in KL migrant communities.

Church ties provided assistance at the early stages of refugee settlement, as described by Gam, the 19-year-old son of La Nau:

When we receive mail, we don’t always understand everything, so we bring it to our pastor’s house. Sometimes church members help us. Before we had food stamps, church members brought us food and took care of everything, gave us things. One time, at DPSS [Department of Public Social Services] there was a mistake with the cash aid because my mom and dad didn’t understand everything. Something was wrong with the application. We didn’t have cash aid for over a month.

Without their cash disbursement, the family borrowed money from church members. Weeks later, they still had not been able to procure the lost benefits, and since no one in his family had a job yet, church members donated them \$300.

La Aung's arrival in LA also illustrates immediate adaptational benefits of the Kachin church network. Resettled to Sacramento with his wife and two children a year earlier, La Aung moved to Georgia and Texas before finally settling in LA. Along the way he worked several jobs, learned how to apply for welfare in each state, and he and his wife had another son. In his words:

Each time I moved, I had to apply for welfare. I know how to do that. I came to LA in March. I drove with my family and checked into a hotel for five days. I didn't know *anybody* here. I did a search online for a Kachin church. Everywhere we go, we look for Kachin people. I found Pastor Hka's number and called him and went to his house. I told him why I'm here. He told me I was crazy. I have three kids, a wife, and I move to LA this way? He never saw this, not even with American people! He brought me to this apartment because Seng Yaw lives here.

With no ties in the city, La Aung found Pastor Hka, who immediately plugged him into his social network, resulting in immediate benefits — an apartment in a building with another Kachin family and later a job working with Seng Yaw driving an airport shuttle. On several other occasions I observed church members helping newcomers by translating mail, giving rides, and procuring used cars.

Integrating into the social welfare system and labor market

The Refugee Act of 1980 emphasises the core objective of facilitating 'economic self-sufficiency among refugees as quickly as possible' (US Congress 1980), dovetailing with priorities of neoliberal 'workfare' programs aimed at hastily placing poor people into low-wage jobs and off of welfare rolls (Peck 2001). In exchange for benefits, all adult refugees in California are thus required to participate in a program stipulating 30 weekly hours of language training, job search,

and/or volunteer ‘activities.’ Failure to fulfil welfare program requirements results in benefit reductions.

The experience of La Nau, Nang Mun, and their son, Gam provides an example of how caseworkers in the social welfare system readjust family plans in order to fit the state’s objectives. During an appraisal appointment with the parents, the caseworker presented the program agenda with the help of a call-in translator, stating that the program will help ‘in order [for them] to become more productive, more healthy, and self-sufficient people.’ Notes from the appointment illustrate the process further:

The caseworker asks what Nang Mun’s goals and job plans are. Nang Mun answers that she still has young kids at home but when they are older she intends to work. When the translator relays this, the caseworker says, ‘OK, what kind?’ Nang Mun answers that she will do any job. The caseworker says OK and then says that she must be prepared, starting with ESL classes. She then asks what her goal is for the next 3-5 years. The caseworker is inputting information on her screen and scrolling through a drop-down menu. Nang Mun says she would love to work in an environment with cooking or a job working with people. The caseworker, looking at her screen, asks, what about manicure, massage, cosmetology? Nang Mun says that she has some experience with manicure and pedicure in Malaysia. The caseworker confirms that Nang Mun would like to do a manicure job or something related to food, such as a cook, server, or food prep person, and says, ‘very good.’ Before moving on, she says (for translation), ‘She will still be a good mother when she does the activities.’

Nang Mun first expresses plans running counter to state priorities, namely the intention to put off work until her sons are older. In response, the caseworker refocuses the discussion to employment plans and, after finding appropriate job categories for Nang Mun, she assures her that she will still be a good mother while completing the activities.

The caseworker also asserted program objectives during La Nau's appraisal. She approved of his desire to do manufacturing or 'routine work' ('OK, great, it will be very easy to find this job') but quickly countered his second goal of learning English and becoming a writer ('Oh, really? How nice...but practically he needs to bring money home'). In his appointment, Gam, the 19-year-old son in the family, expressed long-term career ambitions to his caseworker, who translated these goals (pursuing higher education to become a chemist) into short-term objectives more immediately attainable to someone with limited education (medical or dental assistance). Appraisal appointments with other refugees invariably included this process of managing refugee 'career goals' in a system seeking market-based pathways to immediate self-sufficiency.

In this regulatory context, Kachin church ties helped newcomers fulfil welfare system requirements. When Nang Seng had her cash aid reduced after failing to mail a children's school enrolment form, for example, Pastor Hka called the caseworker to reestablish the previous payment amount. In addition, she fulfilled her required 'activity' hours by doing community service in the church (cooking, cleaning, and sewing), with Pastor Hka signing a timesheet to send to her caseworker. Other examples are found in the resettlement assistance La Aung provides to newcomers. One evening at La Nau and Nang Mun's apartment, a few days after they arrived, La Aung gave them a breakdown of what next to expect — acquisition of social security cards, medical check ups, cash aid disbursements, etc. On another night, La Aung scolded Zau Tu and Seng Lu for not telling him they didn't know how to get to an upcoming welfare appointment. Zau Tu also had questions about the medical insurance packets DPSS had sent them, and La Aung told him and his sister that he would come back another day to help fill them out. Without working in any official capacity, La Aung essentially fills gaps in the

resettlement system, namely those of translation, explanation, and hands-on assistance, while also instructing the newcomers to abide by state requirements.

Perhaps the most valuable support co-ethnic social ties offer newly arrived refugees is the facilitation of employment. Two months after Seng Kaw arrived with his mother and three siblings, La Aung drove him to a job interview at an airplane part assembly plant, which a church member helped set up (this interview did not yield a job). A month later, La Aung told me that another church member had found him a job rolling sushi at a cafeteria-style market downtown, where the man had been working. La Aung only worked there for two days, however, since he heard back about a job driving a Fedex truck, which he had applied to online. After Fedex hired him, he referred Seng Kaw to take his place at the sushi stand, where he now works. These examples highlight a common experience of gaining employment through church referrals. Of the ten refugees in this study who began looking for employment upon arrival, nine found jobs through contacts they met at one of the two churches, and one woman gains some income from sewing clothing for church members. Pointing to the possibility of emergent ethnic niches (Waldinger and Der-Martirosian 2001), four of these refugees found assembly jobs at a 3M factory, where several immigrants from Myanmar work. As La Aung told me, people at his church jokingly call 3M a ‘Burmese company.’

As the above examples show, networks of integration anchored in immigrant churches are sources of social capital that Kachin immigrants use to achieve benchmarks for successful integration, as defined by the state. As with networks of survival in KL, these networks have their own internal power dynamics and possible lines of fragmentation that can affect individual experiences. Interpersonal dynamics between church ties, for example, can influence the quality

of refugee assistance. About a month after arriving in LA, Beng, for example, seemed reluctant to ask Pastor Hka for assistance dealing with the welfare office and other settlement tasks (setting up internet, bank account, etc.) because, as she told me, he was getting annoyed with her, pointing out that other families didn't have as much trouble settling. She also seemed hesitant to ask another church member for advice (when I suggested it), even though she lived nearby. Such varied, or a lack of, relationships can impact integration goals such as job attainment, enrolling children in school, or maintaining welfare assistance, among others, highlighting the limitations of resettlement assistance being greatly dependent upon the ability of individuals to secure and harness social relationships.

Kachin social network dynamics in comparison and in connection

As the previous sections show, the respective policy contexts in KL and LA shape interactions among refugee migrants, resettlement professionals, and migrant/immigrant institutions, directly impacting how migrant social networks accumulate and utilize social capital. While networks of survival serve some (temporary) integration functions in KL, and networks of integration also help refugees survive in LA, they are each mainly geared toward purposes corresponding to local refugee management regimes and broader regulatory contexts: protection and relocation in KL and settlement and integration in LA. In this section, I summarise the comparison (table 1) between these networks, focusing on their internal dynamics of social capital mobilisation. I also analyse the networks holistically — in relation to each other — and with consideration of possible changes over time.

Kachin in KL form networks of survival, made up of pre-existing interpersonal ties from Myanmar, new ties found in migrant communities, and grassroots institutions, to subsist and to cope with the vulnerabilities of protracted liminality. In this location, the insecure legal status of refugees compels the accumulation of social capital in the form of institutionalised co-ethnic relationships and the resources they offer to survive and relocate. Key to the form and function of such networks are their institutionalisation in relation to the local refugee management regime of relocation, itself a byproduct of the state regulatory context. In carrying out resettlement, the UNHCR and partner organisations manage refugees for the Malaysian state, which prohibits refugee integration and has no codified responsibility to assist them. The KRC's position as a hybrid institution rooted in informal, grassroots level adaptation processes yet integrated into the UNHCR resettlement system is essential to both refugee and UNHCR endeavors. KRC leaders' motivations to assist refugees appear both solidaristic and self-interested. By supporting co-ethnic members, they foster 'bounded solidarity' among refugee migrants affected by 'common events in a particular time and place' (Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993, 1327), in the Kachin case a delimited solidarity cultivated by longstanding experiences of oppression in Myanmar and insecurity in Malaysia. At the same time, the KRC is dependent on membership fees to exist, and the leaders are also refugees benefitting from control of resources and direct access to the UNHCR.

Kachin refugees in LA rely on networks of integration, made up of fellow refugees, legal permanent residents, or citizens who gather in co-ethnic/co-national immigrant churches. Whereas refugees in Malaysia face an inhospitable and at times predatory state, those in the US encounter a managerial one. The Kachin in LA thus accumulate social capital in the form of

relationships to US ties and the resources they offer to settle in accordance with state directives. RAs and social welfare offices, constituting a refugee management regime of economic integration, prescribe behavioural obligations conducive to immediate self-sufficiency through low wage employment. Kachin networks play a crucial role in facilitating such integration, with the pastor ‘anchors’ linking the refugees’ grassroots adaptation efforts to formal institutional mechanisms of resettlement and integration. Motivations to assist refugees reflect a desire to reproduce ‘bounded solidarity’ in a new context, as the pastors and their churches have an interest in building their congregation to foster Kachin identity and broader diaspora relations. On several occasions, I observed events with members singing Kachin songs, dressing in traditional attire, and eating homeland cuisine, often with fundraising goals to help those in Kachin state. Pastor Hka also frequently attended meetings with what he referred to as ‘Kachin diaspora’ leaders in other states, and he had been recruiting La Aung to be more active in these networks. Assisting with refugee integration helps these causes, as immigrants are better able to cultivate transnational solidarity and contribute humanitarian assistance once they establish their economic and social footing in a new home (Eckstein and Najam 2013).

[Table 1 here]

Viewed holistically, social networks in KL and LA are constitutive parts of a refugee resettlement process consisting of connected, vertically integrated systems, the output of one (UNHCR resettlement) serving as the input of the next (US social welfare integration). Some points of connection between the two networks/locations are worth considering. First, the ties refugees establish with fellow migrants in KL can persist in LA, as was the case with Seng Kaw and Gam’s families, who became and remain close since living in the same KL apartment

building. Some merely recognised fellow Kachin from migrant spaces in KL, and as La Aung's assistance with Seng Kaw's job search shows, these acquaintanceships can translate into stronger support in the resettlement context. Second, the expansion of ties in KL can feed into the process by which US officials finalize resettlement decisions. According to accounts of the immigration interview stage of resettlement, officials ask the family to identify a contact living in the US who can assist them upon arrival. As an RA officer told me, proof of these "US ties" can determine whether a local office accepts a family. While some had ties from earlier periods in Myanmar, several met people in KL who subsequently resettled to the US and could then link them to the LA community. Nang Seng, for example, acquired Pastor Hka's information from a Kachin friend who resettled from KL to LA the previous year. Third, many in LA maintain transnational ties to the community of displaced Kachin in KL. Seng Kaw, for example, was married and had a daughter in the middle of his resettlement process but was unable to add them to his application. During his indeterminate wait for their arrival, he sends them remittances via Western Union.

A look at the entire resettlement process shows that Kachin refugees demonstrated their possession of social capital — in the form of social relationships — gained during the *social* process of migration to advance through institutionalised *political* processes of resettlement and integration. In the first instance, Kachin asylum seekers needed affiliation with the KRC to access the UNHCR resettlement system, with membership in the co-ethnic committee serving as proof of social capital required to advance through a formal migration process. While surviving in KL, making a plausible claim to be able to mobilise resources through the KRC also gave individuals leverage with police when trying to avoid arrest. The identification of ties during US immigration interviews is a pivotal instance in which evidence of particular relationships to

people in the US finalized resettlement acceptance and determined placement in a particular location. Providing proof of church volunteer activities to welfare caseworkers is another example in which refugees asserted their ties to advance in political settings, in this case showing church participation to maintain welfare benefits. As these examples show, while Kachin refugees used social capital in the form of informational and material *resources* gained throughout the migration process to adapt in similar ways as other migrants, they also activated social capital in the form of particular social *relationships* to advance through political processes of resettlement and integration.

Networks of survival and integration thus operate through a combination of informal, grassroots adaptational efforts and institutionalized resettlement mechanisms available to specific refugee populations in specific locations, all operating in distinct state contexts that shape the internal dynamics of the networks. Looked at from a connected, holistic perspective, the refugee social networks have some resemblance to transnational or diaspora networks. However, the ties of individuals connect not only various “hostlands” to the “homeland” but also to the tenuous communities in KL. Furthermore, these are respective networks that are connected through individual and family migration trajectories rather than a web of coordinated institutions, as is the case with, for example, diaspora charity networks (Ghorashi and Boersma 2009). Though broader, more interactive transnational networks may exist, as Pastor Hka’s Kachin network activities and the web presence of Kachin support groups, churches, and news organizations indicate, they do not appear to be integral to the resettlement process in question. Thus, rather than a coordinated transnational network of people, spaces, and institutions spanning multiple locations, it was interpersonal social networks, developed during a transitory period of protracted

liminality in KL and loosely connected in a complex of refugee assistance and resettlement, that facilitated survival, onward migration, and immigrant adaptation. The interaction of the social with the political dimensions of migration had the effect of harnessing the connections to benefit both refugees and those managing them throughout the migration process.

Finally, to further evaluate the internal dynamics of these social networks, I consider how they might change over time, and with what implications for the refugees in each location. As the development of these networks are tied to broader political and economic forces, changes will most likely hinge on larger structures of the state, market, and international humanitarian assistance. In KL, UNHCR and KRC assistance, along with tenuous promises of non-refoulement⁶ at the national level, currently provide room to negotiate security with coercive state agents locally. As more Kachin arrive in the city, we can expect their social networks to strengthen with an expanding membership, a larger pool of resources, and thus growing assistance capacity. Social networks are susceptible to shifts in UNHCR priorities, however, and should the agency withdraw their support from Malaysia to focus on refugee crises originating in the Middle East (as officers in KL have indicated), the KRC would lose the capacity to help their members access resettlement channels. In addition, the ability to maintain informal employment currently enables refugees to subsist and to pay police bribes, but if the labor market tightens as more Kachin arrive, competition for jobs will increase, raising the possibility of exclusionary practices found in other migrant networks (de Haas 2010; Portes 1998).

In LA, the Kachin refugees' clear legal status brings stability to their social networks, but broader factors such as shifting UNHCR priorities and changing conditions of the US political

⁶ *Non-refoulement* is a principle of international law that prohibits sending those at risk of persecution back to where they fled from.

context could threaten network growth. In contrast to both the situation that the Kachin faced as unauthorised migrants in KL *and* to the experiences of undocumented migrants in the US, their clear legal status in LA allows them to find work in the above ground, formal sector, as demonstrated by their employment in high visibility companies (e.g., Supershuttle and 3M). These job prospects combined with the educational opportunities of the second generation raises the prospects for upward mobility and an increase in church resources put toward local and diaspora network purposes (assuming this remains a concern for subsequent generations). In addition, as the network grows with further resettlement (and family reunification), more US ties will exist for prospective refugee immigrants waiting in KL. This prospect, of course, depends upon the state of resettlement programs in KL as well as the variable political context of the US and its response to broader debates over refugee acceptance and integration.

Conclusion

In this paper, I compared Kachin social networks in Kuala Lumpur and Los Angeles, showing that while the social experience of navigating an unfamiliar environment and finding succour among kin and co-ethnic ties gets reproduced from one setting to the next, the structure of those ties and their capacity to solve practical problems are significantly shaped by the status receiving states afford the migrants as well as by the local power contexts within which such status manifests. Put differently, social networks in each location interact with local refugee management regimes while serving as a source of social capital for refugees to accomplish goals pursued in relation to those of the regimes. By enforcing policies around migration and

integration, the state sets the parameters of refugee social network and management regime actions and interactions. In addition, throughout the migration process, Kachin refugees demonstrated indicators of social capital gained through the social organisation of migration to advance within formal institutional processes of resettlement and integration.

This paper contributes to the study of refugee migrations, migrant social networks, and migrant social capital. First, the findings elaborate the notion that official refugee status is primarily a relationship to the state (Hein 1993b), showing that this relationship is variable, interdependent, and mediated by social networks of different form and function. In addition, while supporting Menjivar's (2000) notion that migrant social networks are fluid and shaped by broader political economic forces, this study shows that refugee networks develop with significant implications during a prolonged transition period between departure and immigration. Knowledge of such development in the Kachin case contributes to discussions of social capital activation in 'diasporic networks' (Akcapar 2010; Ferguson et al. 2016; Ghorashi and Boersma 2009) by showing that social capital is not just transferred from the homeland to be reconstructed in a host setting, but refugee migrants can mobilise social capital in an intermediate setting to use in a subsequent host setting. Furthermore, the Kachin case shows that social capital can be activated into not only financial or human capital, as other studies detail (Ferguson et al. 2016), but also into access to and status within state immigration and welfare systems. More generally, these findings suggest that researchers should devote more attention to understanding how refugee (and other) migrant social networks are formed and reproduced during periods of protracted yet temporary settlement in intermediate locations (e.g., Jordan, Hong Kong,

Thailand, Turkey), how these networks interact with the state, and how such processes impact subsequent periods of settlement.

Finally, this study can inform policy debates regarding refugees in various contexts. While the analysis of Kachin social networks demonstrates that displaced people have the capacity to work together to survive and adapt to conditions of displacement, such capacity is greatly contingent upon national policy and local power contexts, local labor market conditions, and the ability of refugees to accumulate social capital. Without a policy assurance of concrete legal status and baseline standards of protection, refugee well being is far too dependent upon the ability of individuals and families to harness social ties and associated resources to survive. As these ties vary in their strength, capacity, and individual willingness to help, refugee protection in the absence of legal status is uneven and inconsistent. The Kachin case also supports calls to consider migrant work schemes as part of responses to refugee crises (Long 2013). In the Southeast Asian context, the countries receiving the most refugees — Malaysia and Thailand — have significant labor shortages that migrants fill. There is thus room for refugee ‘right to work’ policies that would greatly benefit refugee communities prior to (or instead of) resettling to another country. In short, the findings in this paper support the construction of national policies creating an environment conducive to sustenance livelihoods and stable security vis-a-vis the state, in which social networks play a facilitating role.

References

Akcapar, Sebnem Koser. 2009. “Re-Thinking Migrants’ Networks and Social Capital: A Case Study of Iranians in Turkey.” *International Migration*. 48 (2): 161-196.

- APIASF (Asian and Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund). 2014. *Invisible Newcomers: Refugees from Burma/Myanmar and Bhutan in the United States*. Asian and Pacific Islander Scholarship Fund.
- Bloemraad, Irene. 2006. *Becoming a Citizen: Incorporating Immigrants and Refugees in the United States and Canada*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Boyd, M. 1989. "Family and Personal Networks in International Migration: Recent Developments and New Agendas." *International Migration Review* 23 (3).
- Brown, Hana E. 2011. "Refugees, Rights, and Race: How Legal Status Shapes Liberian Immigrants' Relationship with the State." *Social Problems* 58 (1): 144–63.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1985. "The forms of capital." In *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, edited by JG Richardson, 241-258. New York: Greenwood
- Burawoy, Michael. 2009. *The Extended Case Method: Four Countries, Four Decades, Four Great Transformations, and One Theoretical Tradition*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Cheung, Samuel. 2011. "Migration Control and the Solutions Impasse in South and Southeast Asia: Implications from the Rohingya Experience." *Journal of Refugee Studies*. 25 (1): 50-70. doi: 10.1093/jrs/fer048
- de Haas, Hein. 2010. "The Internal Dynamics of Migration Processes: A Theoretical Inquiry." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. 36 (10): 1587-1617.
- Eckstein, Susan and Adil Najam, Eds. 2013. *How Immigrants Impact Their Homeland*. Durham: Duke University Press
- Ellermann, Antje. 2009. *States against Migrants: Deportation in Germany and the United States*. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Ferguson, Julie, Egle Salominaite and Kees Boersma. 2016. "Past, present and future: how the Lithuanian Diaspora in the Netherlands accumulates human capital from social capital." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. Published online, April 4, 2016.
- Ghorashi, Halleh and Kees Boersma. 2009. "The 'Iranian Diaspora' and the New Media: From Political Action to Humanitarian Help." *Development and Change*. 4 (4): 667-691
- Hagan, Jacqueline Maria. 1998. "Social Networks, Gender, and Immigrant Incorporation: Resources and Constraints." *American Sociological Review* 63 (1): 55–67.
- Hamlin, Rebecca. 2014. *Let Me Be a Refugee: Administrative Justice and the Politics of Asylum in the United States, Canada, and Australia*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hein, Jeremy. 1993a. *States and International Migrants: The Incorporation of Indochinese Refugees in the United States and France*. Boulder: Westview Press.
- Hein, Jeremy. 1993b. "Refugees, Immigrants, and the State." *Annual Review of Sociology* 19: 43–59.
- Hogan, Libby. "Kachin conflict reaches five-year mark with calls for govt action." *Democratic Voice of Burma*. 9 June 2016
- Kunz, Egon F. 1981. "Exile and Resettlement: Refugee Theory." *International Migration Review* 15 (1/2): 42–51.

- Li, Wei. 2009. *Ethnoburb: The New Ethnic Community in Urban America*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Loescher, Gil, and James Milner. 2005. *Protracted Refugee Situations: Domestic and International Security Implications*. Adelphi Papers, no. 375. Abingdon: Routledge for the International Institute of Strategic Studies.
- Long, Katy. 2013. "When Refugees Stopped Being Migrants: Movement, Labour and Humanitarian Protection." *Migration Studies* 1 (1): 4–26.
- Massey, Douglas S., ed. 1987. *Return to Aztlan: The Social Process of International Migration from Western Mexico*. Studies in Demography 1. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Massey, Douglas S. et al. 1998. *Worlds in Motion: Understanding International Migration at the End of the Millennium*. Oxford, U.K. : New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press.
- Menjívar, Cecilia. 2000. *Fragmented Ties: Salvadoran Immigrant Networks in America*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Menjívar, Cecilia. 2006. "Liminal Legality: Salvadoran and Guatemalan Immigrants' Lives in the United States." *American Journal of Sociology* 111 (4): 999–1037.
- Motomura, Hiroshi. 2014. *Immigration Outside the Law*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Nah, Alice M. 2012. "Globalisation, Sovereignty and Immigration Control: The Hierarchy of Rights for Migrant Workers in Malaysia." *Asian Journal of Social Science* 40 (4): 486–508.
- Ong, Aihwa. 2003. *Buddha Is Hiding: Refugees, Citizenship, the New America*. California Series in Public Anthropology 5. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). 2015. "Refugee Arrival Data." <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/resource/refugee-arrival-data>
- Paul, Anju Mary. 2011. "Stepwise International Migration: A Multistage Migration Pattern for the Aspiring Migrant." *American Journal of Sociology* 116 (6): 1842–86.
- Peck, Jamie. 2001. *Workfare States*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Portes, Alejandro. 1998. "Social Capital: Its Origins and Applications in Modern Sociology." *Annual Review of Sociology* 24 (1): 1–24.
- Portes, Alejandro, and Julia Sensenbrenner. 1993. "Embeddedness and Immigration: Notes on the Social Determinants of Economic Action." *American Journal of Sociology* 98 (6): 1320–50.
- Portes, Alejandro, and Robert L. Bach. 1985. *Latin Journey: Cuban and Mexican Immigrants in the United States*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Pwint, Nan Lwin Hnin and Nang Seng Nom. "Burma Army Airstrikes Bombard Kachin, Shan States." *The Irrawaddy*. 19 May 2016
- Scott, John. 2012. *Social Network Analysis*, 3rd Ed. Sage Publications Ltd
- UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees). 2016. "UNHCR - Malaysia, Global Focus page" <http://reporting.unhcr.org/node/2532?y=2015#year>
- Waldinger, Roger and Claudia Der-Martirosian. 2001. "The Immigrant Niche." In *Strangers at the Gates*. Ed. by R. Waldinger. Berkeley: University of California Press.

- Zhou, Min, and Carl Bankston. 1998. *Growing up American: How Vietnamese Children Adapt to Life in the United States*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Zolberg, Aristide R., Astri Suhrke, and Sergio Aguayo. 1986. "International Factors in the Formation of Refugee Movements." *International Migration Review* 20 (2): 151–69.
- Zolberg, Aristide R. 1989. *Escape from Violence: Conflict and the Refugee Crisis in the Developing World*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Table 1: Kachin social networks in Kuala Lumpur and Los Angeles

	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	Los Angeles, United States
Migration stage	protracted liminality	settlement
State regulatory context	“illegal” migration control	social welfare management
Refugee management regime	regime of relocation	regime of economic integration
Refugee social networks	networks of survival	networks of integration
Composition	displaced Kachin refugee migrants	immigrants; permanent residents and citizens
Social capital -- relationships and resources	migrant ties and institutions helping with subsistence, security, and onward migration	immigrant ties and institutions helping with social welfare and labor market integration
Mobilised through what institutions	Kachin Refugee Committee, Christian fellowships	Kachin and Burmese immigrant churches
Motivations for assistance	bounded solidarity, control of social capital distribution, privileged access to UNHCR	bounded solidarity, building church congregation, fostering Kachin identity and broader diaspora networks
Hybrid institutions and network connection to refugee management regime	KRC fulfills communication and logistical tasks for UNHCR	Church pastors designated as support anchors by Resettlement Agencies
Refugee mobilisation of social capital in political/institutional arenas	proof of KRC membership to access the UNHCR; KRC membership to stave off arrest; provision of US tie to US immigration official	support anchor (US tie) validates relationship to refugee with RA; proof of church volunteer activities to fulfill welfare obligations