Global Research Partnerships: Beyond the North-South Divide?
A Literature Review

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Executive Summary

Acknowledging that North-South research networks can easily spiral into what Loren Landau refers to as "tyrannies of partnerships" – exacerbating inequalities they seek to reverse and disadvantaging research partners and stakeholders – this literature review examines the extent to which global research partnerships are/can be transformative (Landau 2012). It is written in support of the first phase of the initiative between the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the Local Engagement Refugee Research Network (LERRN) that aims to develop sustainable localized refugee research. One of the objectives of the first phase of the project is to map out literature exploring challenges that research partners face and the lessons they present as recommendations for other existing and/or new networks. This literature review presents three main findings. First, it demonstrates that despite the genuine interest in including and 'empowering' research partners in the global south, global research partnerships reincarnate neocolonial dynamics of inequality and "scientific colonialism" (Binka 2005: 207). This dynamic suggests that incorporating a southern partner, while glossing over the politics of inclusion and empowerment, should not be presented as an end in and of itself. Instead, forming a partnership with a southern partner needs to be framed as a first step towards a mindful, ethical and equal partnership. Second, this review examines some of the challenges that existing research partnerships have been navigating over the past two decades. It shows that logics of inequality and practicality, neocolonial tutelage and language play a major role in turning well-intentioned partnerships into tyrannies. Third, it explores different pathways for change as recommended by literature demonstrating that partnerships can be transformative. Finally, this review echoes the need to move beyond the North-South divide.

Introduction

This literature review frames the debates in the literature within Penny Weiss' vision and list/action-plan to influence social change. It brings her recommendations in conversation with discussion in the literature on global partnerships and research collaborations. Weiss asks researchers, who desire to bring about social change, amongst other stakeholders, to:

1. Be flexible
2. Use Multiple—Even Seemingly Contradictory—Tactics Together
3. Don't Jump to Conclusions About Your Opponents [in this context, southern/northern partners]
4. Understand Connections, Relationships, Coalitions
5. Be Vigilant
6. Follow the Path of Least Resistance
7. Make and Nurture Connections
8. Learn New Tricks from Everyone You Can
9. Be Creative
10. Pay Attention to Context (Weiss 2013: 134-145)

While Weiss' list is concerned mainly and broadly with social change, it offers a pathway of possibilities for research on global partnerships. It is methodologically useful to ground the guidelines for transformative global partnerships on forced migration – developed by Landau, Canefe, Kneebone, Giles and Dippo, Sanchez-Mojica, Clark-Kazak and McGrath –within Weiss' reflections. Doing so achieves two methodological goals. The first is that it reminds different stakeholders in these partnerships of the broader reason why these collaborations were initiated to begin with: to impact and influence (social) change in practice and policy for the betterment of living conditions for refugees and a for a more publicly and politically engaged academic writing (McGrath and Young 2019: 1). The second methodological goal that a grounding in Weiss' reflections achieves is one of the major recommendations in the literature: a conversation that is interdisciplinary and that bridges the gap between the academic communities and other communities whose participation is vital to the sustainability of these global partnerships and the well-being of refugees (Landau 2019; Canefe 2019; Kneebone 2019). In terms of relevance,

Weiss' list can be useful to all partners in the global partnerships. Bradley identifies four types of partnerships and seven partners in the literature:

1. Partnerships between individual researchers/research teams (potentially including community members) brought together to carry out a specific project
2. Capacity-building partnerships (no direct research component) (may be focused on individual or institutional levels, e.g. institutional twinning)
3. University chairs
4. North-South research networks (formal and informal) (Bradley 2007: 13)

These partnerships, according to Bradley, are initiated, sustained and developed by/between:

1. Individual Southern and Northern researchers
2. Southern and Northern research teams
3. Southern and Northern research organizations (universities and NGOs, particularly think tanks)
4. Communities directly affected by the research issue
5. Policymakers (local, national and international)
6. International organizations
7. Donors (bilateral donors, foundations, etc.) (Bradley 2007:5)

However, while useful to all partners, underlying Weiss' list is an assumption that there is a tension and a hierarchical relationship between the partners involved. Landau uncovers a similar tension as he argues that "power imbalances are intrinsic to every social relation" (Landau 2019: 25). These tensions or "imbalances" are the reason why Weiss asks scholars to be "vigilant," to resist, "to learn tricks," work with their opponents, and use multiple and contradictory strategies (Weiss 2013: 142-6). However, despite these tensions and antagonisms, Weiss still envisions the possibility of a collaboration that can bring about social change which is why she asks scholars to be flexible, to understand and nurture meaningful and mindful relationships and collaborations and to push for (social) change. This push and pull also implicitly underlie the relationships between global partners and is further unpacked by literature on research partnerships.

This literature review is structured around this tension. It is broadly concerned with the question: *To what extent are global partnerships transformative?* It starts with a section identifying the purpose behind establishing global partnerships. Then it shifts to review the literature on the challenges that partnerships face, when trying to meet their purpose. It grounds this discussion within the literature on the global north-global south divide. Finally, it directs the focus to the lessons learnt and what literature has proposed to overcome different challenges. In structuring the literature review around and beyond the tension presented by Weiss, multiple possibilities for future research are further explored in the conclusion. This literature review is written and presented in support of phase one of the IDRC-LERRN initiative/project to "develop a plan to support sustainable, localized research capacity to better influence discussions on refugee issues in local, national, regional and global contexts" (LERRN 2019). The review is part of the mapping phase that identifies recent debates, findings and recommendations in the literature that the project can use to build new and support existing localized and sustainable research capacities.

1. Global Partnerships: Reasons and Rationales

The term North-South predominantly marks/refers to the geographical divide between the global north which represents the "richer countries" and the global south which represents the "poorer majority of countries" (Binka 2005: 207). As a result of the historical economic inequalities underlying the term and the 'reality' it describes and is associated with, the global north is often presented as the donor whereas the global south is parochially perceived, framed and engaged with as the beneficiary (Binka 2005: 207). This automatically instigates a tension where particular roles and expectations are ascribed to the north and the south, which underlies and informs how their 'partnership' proceeds. In addition to the tension, the term also instigates a conceptual hierarchy and a paternalistic logic that obscures and reframes the debate from 'actual' historical asymmetries and power inequalities that went beyond the perceived child-like traits ascribed to the global south (Barnett and Finnemore 1999; Barnett 2011; Said 1977).

Bradley traces the academic turn to study North-South research partnerships in the field of international academic development to the 1970s highlighting that there was 'moderate' progress until the 1990s marked an increase in the interest in the nature of the collaborations, the challenges

faced and the steps for going forward, which culminated in Gaillard's 1994 partnership guide (Bradley 2008; Zingerli 2010: 221). A significant proportion of these studies were in the sciences and in the field of education and it also (simultaneously) transcended into development, as an interdisciplinary field (Lansang and Olveda; Maina-Ahlberg et al. 1997; Costello and Zumla 2000; King 2007). The transition into the field of forced migration was yet to be taken. Chimni, taking issue with the north-south divide, explains how the field was largely occupied with the new approach and the myth of difference and as a result overlooked other major conversations such as the turn to form and study research partnerships (Chimni 1998).

In the realm of policy and practice, in a 2008 United Nations (UN) report, the authors establish that "a global network must operate primarily for the empowerment of its southern membership" (Boano and Addison 2008; McGrath 2019: 289-9). This empowerment, according to the report, is achieved when "structural equivalence" is maintained between all members and when the network is participatory and primarily reflective of grassroot efforts and goals (Boano and Addison 2008; McGrath 2019: 299). A decade later, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) issued a discussion paper under the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) presenting findings and recommendations that are not radically different from those in the 2008 report. The 2018 paper recommends that the interests of scholars from the global south be well supported. Similarly, it emphasizes that this goal needs to be achieved through equitable engagement and ethical participation (UNHCR 2018; McGrath 2019: 299). The partnership, according to the report, has to be "built upon already existing relationships between institutions and individuals" (UNHCR 2018; McGrath 2019: 299). It should not strive to start from scratch or reshape these relationships. Instead, it is advised to "support, nurture, and strengthen already existing networks in a complementary manner" (UNHCR 2018; McGrath 2019: 298-9). In this sense, networks and partnerships, according to the UN are to be mobilized towards incorporating southern partners through ethical, equitable and collaborative activities (McGrath 2019: 297-9).

This vision was not diametrically different from how literature in the field of forced migration envisioned research partnerships between the global north and the global south. The purpose of research partnerships and networks, according to McGrath and Young, is to produce and disseminate knowledge in two ways. Knowledge is expected to be "accessible to multiple audiences," achieving policy reflexivity and relevance, and it has to be ultimately geared and

contributive to "the well-being of refugees" (McGrath and Young 2019: 1). The social change that Weiss envisions and that is pursued in this context is "wide-ranging and progressive impact on refugee research and policy" locally, regionally and globally (McGrath and Young 2019: 2). These partnerships are designed to promote just and equitable relationships and connections in the field between scholars from the global north and their counterparts in the south (McGrath and Young 2019: 3). Giles and Dippo add that these partnerships and cross-disciplinary connections embody engaged scholarship where "knowledge gained about displacement [is turned] into knowledge transformation of both students and teachers" (Giles and Dippo 2019: 87). The literature shows that research partnerships are not exclusive to scholars, but they also are expected to be pedagogically effective, to be policy reflexive and to contribute largely to the wellbeing of the refugee communities with whom they work.

Giles and Dippo further argue that "a successful partnership can support and meet different goals for the partners, but that success is contingent on the partnership valuing this diversity of goals" (Giles and Dippo 2019: 89). This diversity also manifests itself through regionality or the call for "more branches and less roots" (McGrath 2019: 299). The GCR echoes this in paragraph 43 as it calls for efforts to be "made to ensure regional diversity and expertise from a broad range of relevant subject areas" (UNHCR 2019: 1 para. 43). The purpose of partnerships, according to the literature, is not to create one-size-fits-all solutions/recommendations but rather to acknowledge diversity of partners, the tensions between the different partners – particularly those trapped in the global north-global south divide – and the diversity of their goals, expectations and interests.

Landau contributes another layer to the purpose behind research partnerships. He asserts that these collaborations may unintentionally "legitimize the presence, perspectives, and budgets of relatively empowered scholars and institutions" (Landau 2019: 25). Avoiding this outcome is dependent on scholars in the partnership being cognizant of their privileges and of the power imbalances implicit in the collaborations they form, gearing their work and efforts "towards equity in ways that erode long-standing structural and institutional constraints" (Landau 2019: 25). Speaking to this issue, two of the four ethical challenges that Gombert, Douglas, McArdle, and Carlisle identify in their study on the ethics of refugee research are the issues of trust and power-relations. While they focus particularly on the dynamics of inequality reproduced between researchers and refugees, building/establishing trust and being aware of the power-relations

reproduced are significantly important for an ethical partnership between global north-global south research networks.

In his critique, Landau explores the reproduction of power-relations through an analysis of the neo-imperialist, paternalistic and the scholarly motivations underlying the partnerships. He looks at how partnerships might be geared to identify possible "migration prevention interventions" (Landau 2019: 25). Other partnerships, that are more critical of neo-imperial motivations, aim to reverse that by "enabling marginalized partners to shape a global research agenda" (Landau 2019: 25). However, he cautions against them unconsciously falling into a paternalistic trap (Barnett and Finnemore 1999; Barnett 2011; Said 1977; Landau 2019: 25). He makes the distinction that despite the gains and "benefits," of partnerships between the global north and the global south, and teaching collectives, they come at a cost, where the "imbalances can be acute" (Landau 2019: 25). He calls for the reshaping of partnerships where a dual imperative is achieved. This "means confronting the political economy of knowledge production and recognizing the limits of scholarship in achieving changes in policy and practice," which should give partnerships their transformative edge (Landau 2019: 36).

2. Global Partnerships: Challenges and Tensions

This section groups the literature under three overarching themes. The first explores what Landau cautions against: power asymmetries underlying the logics of partnership. The second theme studies the (neo-)colonial tutelage that subliminally shapes collaborations between the north and the south. The third looks at the logistical challenges that linguistic barriers pose.

2.1. Politics of Partnerships

It can be evidently argued that the aims of these partnerships genuinely seek a transformative outcome and that neither the vision for nor the purpose of research partnership, presented above, are intrinsically problematic. Researchers and research institutions in the north envision a global partnership that is inclusive and representative which means that the partners are selected "across the so-called north/south divide, with different resources and capacities." While this selection should contribute to an inclusive dynamic, McGrath and Young, in their assessment of the progress that the Refugee Research Network (RRN) achieved, add to Landau's critique and argue that RRN might have (unconsciously) created a dynamic where researchers in the global south "risk being

"simply producers of data for the theory mills of the North" (McGrath and Young 2019: 5, Appadurai 2000: 5). This hierarchy/power asymmetry is exacerbated by global north donors, who determine the research agenda to fit global north policy (and interests) (McGrath and Young 2019: 2; Bradley 2007; Landau 2012). One of the major issues is that despite the genuine belief in partnership and the attempt to bridge the gaps between the global north and the global south, the underlying dynamics of these partnerships subliminally silence research in the global south that is not relevant for policy in the global north. This silencing is inherently problematic but also costs the research team potential areas for transformative research from which the field could benefit.

This review agrees that "however well meaning, research partnerships also come with substantial risks of heightening inequality and becoming complicit in global strategies of migrant containment," which is one of the realities they are trying to reverse (Landau 2019: 26; McGrath and Young 2019: 3; Barnett and Finnemore 1999). Another reason why this literature review starts with an analysis of purpose and rationale is because it evidently shows that despite the compassion implicit in the purpose behind the partnership and commitment to the vision of social change, the outcome is largely determined by a power imbalance implicit and intrinsic in every social relation – an imbalance of which partners must be cognizant (Weiss 2013). This awareness is even more critical when literature shows that in some contexts, even if the partners are cognizant of the power asymmetry and effectively trying to reverse it, it may still subliminally reproduce itself in multiple forms (McGrath and Young 2019: 5, Appadurai 2000: 5; Landau 2019: 25).

The power asymmetry might be implicated in other challenges that make it difficult for northern and southern partners to achieve what they strive for and simultaneously dismantle the hierarchy, bridging the gap between them. These include "insufficient funding, administrative hiccups, shifting interests, or an ill-informed choice of partners" (Landau 2019: 25). Bradley shows how funding is mobilized by donors, who are likely to be based in the north, to exert "indirect influence over agenda-setting processes … [to meet donors'] programme priorities" (Bradley 2008: 675). Literature has also shown that under conditions of emergency, and in precarious situations where funding is scarce and where it is challenging to run the partnership logistically and administratively (in places of conflict and mass violence/political unrest), it is significantly challenging to maintain an equitable relationship where the northern partner trusts and delegates equally to the southern partner.

Zingerli contributes another significant reason why power asymmetries are reproduced. She argues that part of the problem lies in how scholars and practitioners in the field conceptualize and frame research partnerships. She cautions that "research partnerships are not an easy remedy for inherent asymmetries and inequalities" (Zingerli 2010: 222). This is a powerful and necessary distinction because it suggests that if they are framed and mobilized as such, which literature shows is the case, they risk the reincarnation of existing power inequalities, even if they are cognizant of these asymmetries. Zingerli presents an argument that has been subject for debate for decades on the question of quotas and activism partnerships as remedies for the politics of exclusion (Beckwith 2005; Mouffe 1997; Krook 2008; Bush 2011; Vickers 2006; Hogg 2009).

Another example of how power asymmetries reincarnate themselves is how dynamics of asymmetry remain implicit in how some authors are writing about global partnerships. For instance, Landau explores and prescribes the needed steps for a serious responsible effort in "building African capacity" (Landau 2019:36). However, these steps gloss over the fact that there is an African capacity, already existing. It does not need building. It needs to be recognized on its own terms. Scholars interested in establishing these partnerships are presented with a challenging tension and an ethical task: to investigate how to establish partnerships without reincarnating asymmetries and violence in both writing and in practice.

Even though these scholars make necessary distinctions, the literature reviewed in this section does not provide empirical analysis of the implications and the day-to-day navigation of these asymmetries and structural violence. In her recommendations, Weiss asks the less privileged partner to use multiple, contradictory tactics to achieve the desired change, suggesting the possibility of conflict and 'resentment' between the partners. This recommendation redirects the focus of this section to identify other challenges that partnerships face, when the research partner in the global south does not trust their 'counterpart' in the global north.

Similar to refugee participants/subjects, researchers from the global south may also be "reluctant to share information," if they mistrust the partner from the global north. They may also be reluctant to engage fully if they are working under precarious security conditions where they are subject to state violence and know that their northern partner is only there to excavate and mine knowledge while not being on the state's radar. They could show the same response if both partners are on

the state's radar and could be harmed (Fujii 2012; Guillemin and Gillam 2004). In other contexts when the research partner from the global south internalizes the feeling that they are not an equal partner but rather an add-on, they may only share information/findings that they know the northern partner wants to hear to maximize on their gains from the partnership, because they know it is not an equal partnership and that it will not bring about their vision of desired change (Haggerty 2004; Halse and Honey 2005).

Furthermore, the tension could arise because researchers in the global south view themselves as gatekeepers which can constitute a hindrance, when they "see themselves as refugee protectors— from outsiders and from institutional practices and forms of power that would do them harm" (Gifford 2013: 51; Sørensen, and Glasdam 2016). This role creates a dual tension. In presenting themselves as the community gatekeepers, researchers in the global south contribute positively to the partnership as they bridge the gap between academia and the community. They are likely to understand and represent the community better than the global north partners especially as the refugee members of their community may feel more comfortable about participating (Bloch 2004). However, this role also means that sometimes, refugee communities lose the space to voice their needs when they are trapped between a northern partner who knows it is more dominant and strategically important because it has access to funding and a southern partner that presents itself as the gatekeeper and the community spokesperson (Marmo 2013: 96; Obijiofor, Colic-Peisker and Hebbani 2018: 222).

The literature reviewed in this section explored the how power asymmetries shape the partnership and how these inequalities present researchers with day-to-day ethical challenges that they have to navigate. However, none of the articles/texts so far situate the discussion in a historical analysis, particularly one that looks at how (neo)colonialism decisively shapes how power impacts global north-global south partnerships. The following section turns to explore the literature that uses neocolonialism in its conceptual framework. While recognizing the major differences in the literature on neocolonialism and neoliberalism, methodologically, both are grouped under one section, because of the scarcity of literature on neocolonialism.

2.2. Neocolonial Tutelage

Appadurai situates research and academic imagination, as a "force in social life," and capacities for partnerships within the larger context of globalization and northern development agencies (Appadurai 2000: 2). He urges scholars to move beyond academic imagination as "a matter of individual genius [or] escapism from ordinary life," but rather as "a faculty that informs the daily lives of ordinary people" (Appadurai 2000: 2). Appadurai asks "[d]oes Northern aid really allow local communities to set their own agendas?" (Appadurai 2000: 6). He analyzes the politics of collaboration, arguing that "critical voices who speak for the poor, the vulnerable, the dispossessed, and the marginalised in the international fora … lack the means to produce a systematic grasp of the complexities" and inequalities implicit in globalization (Appadurai 2000: 18).

While Appadurai's analysis offers new pathways for understanding collaboration under the conditions of globalization (and neoliberalism, although not explicitly mentioned), it does not directly speak to the area study of forced migration specifically and it glosses over the colonial tutelage underlying the notion of globalization. Canefe situates the discussion within an analysis of how neoliberalism and the human rights discourse shapes partnerships and neocolonial conceptions of justice and collaborations that aim to *empower* researcher capacities in the global south. She argues that

> despite recurrent calls for a more locally rooted and politically engaged approach to rebuilding "capacities," internationally funded transitional justice projects … remain heavily influenced by … [a] neoliberal mindset spiced with a tinge of neocolonialism and a dash of old-fashioned Orientalism (Canefe 2019: 54).

Gregory makes a similar argument as he studies how neocolonialism impacts knowledge production (Gregory 2004). Binka examines how research collaborations and partnerships between the global north and the global south are often perceived as "scientific colonialism" where researchers in the global south have a minimal role in shaping the research agenda or contributing findings that are of relevance to the objectives as set by the northern partner (Binka 2005: 207).

Schmidt and Neuburger assert that "North-South partnerships and participation thereby rather become a label of a rhetorical modernisation and legitimization of action, while a prevailing

postcolonial, hierarchical, academic knowledge order is preserved" (Schmidt and Nueburger 2017: 67). Rizvi, Lingard and Lavia offer a more situated argument as they study how education and other knowledge production sites act as a double edged sword where they can be complicit with the neocolonial status quo (neoliberal order) reproducing Eurocentric discourses and language, and at the same time, offer an opportunity to resist, rewrite and emancipate knowledge from the tutelage of the neocolonial (Rizvi, Lingard and Lavia 2006). Cognizant of this tension, Giles and Dippo emphasize the importance of understanding and presenting the Borderless Higher Education for Refugees (BHER) partnership "in relation to the historical legacy of colonialism" (Giles and Dippo 2019: 93). This understanding manifests in a "learner-centered" approach, which places the global south partner in the center of the project. The project is also geared towards a "curiosity-driven curriculum that includes local, traditional, and scientific/academic knowledge, a participatory, inquiry-based engaged pedagogy, and an approach to course design and assignments that emphasized "purpose-ful activity" (Giles and Dippo 2019: 93). With these commitments, the BHER project attempts to resist the reincarnation of neocolonial discourses and agendas.

2.3. Language (and Culture)

However, despite its promising commitment to learner-based and engaged pedagogy, one of the other major challenges that the BHER project and other similar projects face is language Obijiofor, Colic-Peisker and Hebbani 2018: 217). Mackenzie, McDowell and Pittaway argue that dilemmas arise predominantly because of the cultural and linguistic differences between the researchers and the participants. (Mackenzie, McDowell and Pittaway 2007; Obijiofor, Colic-Peisker and Hebbani 2018: 220). While they particularly focused on the research dynamics between global north researchers and non-English speaking refugee communities, literature has suggested that this issue also implicates global southern research partners.

The challenge that language poses manifests itself in a myriad of ways. First, linguistic barriers can make it difficult to establish effective communication. Dubrowski and Norcéide argue that valuable time was lost during their exchanges due to translation and the communication problems that arose as a consequence (Kinnard 2016: 8). Mackenzie et al. assert that in some instances, "weak translation," which is when interpreters and "cultural insiders" (unconsciously) influence the data collected by reproducing their prejudices, can undermine and compromise the quality of the research and its findings (Mackenzie, McDowell and Pittaway 2007: 304; Obijiofor, Colic-

Peisker and Hebbani 2018: 220). Ganassin and Holmes argue that there are significant implications in the collapsing of cultural meaning through inequivalent words or phrases (Ganassin and Holmes 2013). Jacobsen and Landau suggest that questionnaires that are translated should be translated to English, even if this is not the language it was conducted in, for "linguistic equivalency" and accurate translation (Jacobsen and Landau 2003: 193).

Another way language can be a barrier to a transformative collaboration or partnership is that "in most cases…northern partners become the voice for southern actors whose language is too fragmented and particularistic to be globally legible" (Landau 2019: 27). In their respective studies, Marmo and Gombert et al. assert that the logic of universality – particularly the universal guidelines that shape the interaction between researchers, participants or partners in this context – subliminally reflects Western conceptions of the ethical and the universal, including what constitutes as "globally legible" (Landau 2019: 27). Western conceptions of the universal, which are communicated in English, are said to help stakeholders avoid fragmentation of voice and language and provide the needed universality and uniformity of claim. These conceptions shape the interaction, the dynamics of the partnership and the outcome. As a result, "the worldviews of many cultural and ethnic groups may … not necessarily [be] taken into consideration" because they are too particularistic and are communicated in fragmented language that will not help the partnership secure the required funding to maintain the survival of the partnership (Marmo 2013; Gombert et al. 2016). Researchers in the global south often cannot "package" their work or findings in "shiny, cleverly, packaged solutions" and their recommendations are likely to "get overshadowed by global perspectives," which compels them to delegate their voice to partners in the global north (Landau 2019: 32).

Furthermore, language can be complicit in logics of inequalities. In most partnerships, English is *the* language of instruction and communication. Obiiiofor, Peisker and Hebbani analyze the multitude of challenges involved in "partnering for refugee research—working with 'industry partners' and bilingual assistants as 'cultural insiders'" (Obijiofor, Colic-Peisker and Hebbani 2018: 218). They engage with Lawrence, Kaplan, and McFarlane's recommendation that respecting cultural and linguistic differences has to come first because "failing to navigate it successfully may translate as lack of respect and prevent building rapport with respondents" (Obijiofor, Colic-Peisker and Hebbani 2018: 220; Lawrence et al. 2013). In terms of practice, Giles

and Dippo reiterate Dyrden-Peterson's conclusions in the 2011 UNHCR report where she argued that "in contexts of forced migration where the language of home and the host community is different, the language of curriculum, instruction, and examination is often politically and culturally contentious and a challenge to achieving positive learning outcomes" (Drydsen-Peterson 2011; Giles and Dippo 2019: 95). Language may be a barrier to accessibility, limiting benefit of the partnership to a particular (elite) audience, which is why the RRN emphasized the importance of having a website that is accessible in five languages, as one of its main strategies (McGrath and Young 2019: 7).

3. Moving Forward

Similarly, to overcome accessibility and linguistic barriers, the BHER project recommends working towards a bilingual curriculum and a cooperation/action plan with universities regarding the language in which the BHER courses are delivered. Clark-Kazak calls for the development of a "comprehensive research and evaluation training program" that includes all stakeholders: university, community and government. Simeon studies how the Canadian Association of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies (CARFMS)'s Online Research and Teaching Tools and Practitioners Forum (ORTT&PF) called for highlighting the educators' efforts "by posting their publications on the ORTT&PF website," organizing a symposium to share the developments in the field and publishing an "edited volume, based on the best papers delivered at our proposed annual symposium" (Simeon 2019: 164). Clark-Kazak recommends the formation of a collective where annotated bibliographies and literature reviews that identifies the gaps, are collected and made accessible "in an edited volume and/or special journal issue" (Clark-Kazak 2019: 283). The Emerging Scholars and Practitioners on Migration Issues (ESPMI) Network calls for developing "a directory of migration-related education programs and courses" which will make comprehensive information about ESPMI courses accessible to a wide range of audience (Wheeler and Molnar 2019: 227). Literature envisions that through opening publication and accessibility of findings to all levels amongst all partners, research partners can overcome some of the deeply entrenched structural barriers.

When evaluating and assessing whether a partnership is transformative and whether it meets its objectives/purpose, Koehn and Obamba urge scholars and practitioners to move beyond

quantitative and qualitative metrics and instead evaluate the extent to which the partnership is built on a shared vision and a shared commitment to the partnership's objectives (McGrath and Young 2019: 8). They recommend that collaborators' consider "relationship dynamics, mutual capacity building and [measures of and commitment to] sustainability" when evaluating the effectiveness of the partnership (McGrath and Young 2019: 8). Sustainability in particular is one of the pivotal 'decisive' shapers of partnerships. Literature emphasized the importance of sustainability in 1994, in 2008 in the Boano and Addison Report and it remains even more relevant today. It is recommended that research partnerships institutionalize mechanisms that can sustain the outcomes of the collaboration after the partnership ends (Binka 2005: 208; Gaillard 1994: 2; Swiss Commission for Research Partnership with Developing Countries 2000). However, southern partners have to navigate ongoing collaboration with caution because it can create a path dependency, if the partnership was established on exploitative terms.

To establish and maintain ethical and transformative partnerships that do not exacerbate inequalities or reinforce the asymmetries underlying the global north-global south divide, Landau provides scholars with eight "practical steps" (Landau 2019: 37). The first advice is to "take small steps wisely" (Landau 2019: 37). He reiterates that scholars often assume that their partnerships can largely influence policy and practice, which results in them burdening themselves and local scholars, especially given the financial and logistical constraints governing the partnership. He argues that small steps offer them a better starting point. He also argues that in focusing on small scale steps, the southern partners will not be burdened with the high expectations motivating the northern research agenda. However, he dismisses the shortcomings of focusing on small steps, which is foundational in literature on development and aid-work. One of which is that small steps often instigates a checklist, where scholars become too focused on a to-do list of 'small-scale,' steps to take and, which diverts their attention from the bigger picture and romanticizes the process of small-scale achievements.

Nevertheless, Landau's emphasis on small steps is still valuable to the debate. The Nairobi Report's suggestion that "small-scale collaborations can be the base for broader projects" (Landau 2019: 37). This suggestion is significant because it shifts the partnerships from being global south oriented to global south centered. Moreover, investing in an already existent research project is more likely to yield a positive outcome, because even if said project is not successful yet, it already

identified what is not working for this project (as opposed to starting from scratch, and falling into the same mistakes that the existing projects cannot overcome given logistical constraints). Small scale projects also achieve what Landau refers to as living "within our means" (Landau 2019: 38). He asserts that smaller projects are cost and time effective, because they "require less ongoing participation" (Landau 2019: 38). This gives southern partners the opportunity to work on other projects as well. It strategically prevents the cooptation of either partners' time and/or resources.

The second advice that Landau gives is to "open the gates" (Landau 2019: 37). He argues that "the close connection of policy and the field" limits the pool of resources, the connections and the impact of the project, reproducing the hierarchies of knowledge production that the partnership is trying to reverse (Landau 2019: 37). He stresses the importance of establishing connections with practitioners outside the field and consulting them when faced with technical and logistical challenges (Landau 2019: 37). These connections are particularly important because even though scholars may know how to navigate some of these challenges, other potential stakeholders – such as project management practitioners, soft-ware engineers and/or social media experts – may provide valuable insights and highlight what scholars and policy makers may not prioritize. Canefe reinforces this point by mobilizing a similar argumentative logic, asserting that it is necessary to bring the fields and practitioners of transitional justice and forced migration in conversation (Canefe 2019: 45). She shows how combining both fields' approaches to displacement helps in locating multiple possibilities. Kneebone, similarly, emphasizes the importance of cooperation beyond research institutions. She argues that research networks should bridge the gap between academia and advocacy through "workshops and direct engagement with refugee advocacy groups" (Kneebone 2019: 81). Wheeler and Molnar also speak to the theme of opening gates, as they highlight the importance of broadening the "geographic (not only the disciplinary) scope of membership and increase multi-perspective knowledge production" (Wheeler and Molnar 2019: 227). They also call for developing and sustaining "new research clusters to foster critical reflection and innovation in migration studies" (Wheeler and Molnar 2019: 228). Clark-Kazak, similarly, calls for the broadening of ethical guidelines to include what lies beyond the Canadian context, particularly the International Association for the Study of Forced Migration (IASFM) (Clark-Kazak 2019: 283). In calling for broadening and opening the gates, the literature emphasizes the significance of what Weiss refers to as establishing connections and relationships

that are not restricted to one field/network/space which brings all stakeholder one step closer to their shared vision for social change.

Thirdly, Landau asserts that "fences make good neighbours" (Landau 2019: 37). He criticizes the absence of transparency and accountability from the onset of some projects under the guide of "political correct language of partnership" (Landau 2019: 37-8). He blames this absence on the lack of a critical evaluation of the resources to which each partner has access and the objectives that they want to achieve through the partnership. He emphasizes the importance of each partner defining "their roles from the beginning" (Landau 2019: 38). If these roles have not been defined, he recommends that partners walk away from projects where their objectives are not met, as opposed to maintaining the collaboration and securing partial gains. Landau shows that maintaining a partnership where partners are burdened and overwhelmed working on a project that does not reflect their interests drains resources and reproduces inequalities. This conclusion speaks directly to Gaillard's 12 principles, which are published as the Swiss Commission for Research Partnership with Developing Countries guidelines and presented in the literature as the "charter" of North-South partnerships (Binka 2005: 207). Gaillard emphasizes the importance of transparency as the "golden rule" (Gaillard 1994; Binka 2005: 208). He urges partners to share their objectives, their vision for the project and developments in the research (Gaillard 1994: 2; Swiss Commission for Research Partnership with Developing Countries 2000). He also highlights the importance of transparency in relation to budgets. Gaillard asserts that the northern partner must discuss how budgets are allocated and spent, and ensure that the southern partner is informed about the salaries and their (in)availability (Gaillard 1994: 2; Swiss Commission for Research Partnership with Developing Countries 2000).

Speaking to that, Landau emphasizes the importance of ensuring that the southern partner is financially reimbursed for their involvement and participation in a timely manner. He highlights that southern partners' contribution to research partnerships is equally motivated by "securing financial resources [and] … intellectual inquiry or policy impact" (Landau 2019: 38). Financial reimbursement should not only cover salaries but also "provide the research infrastructure required to conduct the work" (Landau 2019: 38). Budgets, as mentioned earlier, should be determined before the start of the collaboration. In their pledge to transparency and accountability, donors have to make budgets available to southern partners, so that the latter can determine how they want

to navigate the project and whether they want to pursue other projects parallel to it or not. However, while it is very important, Landau overlooks what Bradley highlights as southern scholars prioritizing their "scholarly reputations and integrity … [as] more important than funding," which significantly shapes the dynamics of the relationship between the northern and the southern partners (Bradley 2008: 679).

One of the other important recommendations that Gaillard makes is the importance of equal participation. He asserts that both research institutions have to be equally involved in all stages of research and that publications issued by both institutions should be written jointly. Landau reiterates that in his critique of how senior partners may have monopolized research in some contexts. He calls for the participation of "early career scholars" arguing that this will diversify, "replenish," and multiply the research (Landau 2019: 39). He asserts that "care must also be taken as such arrangements are potentially paternalistic and risk creating imbalances where senior scholars in the north are working with less established scholars elsewhere" (Landau 2019: 39) While this collaboration is valuable, it overlooks power inequalities between global south scholars, collapsing them into a uniform group. Nevertheless, while Gaillard and Landau do not deliberately make that distinction, their advice to "replant and replenish" can still be used to navigate the tensions between southern scholars who belong to different, sometimes contradictory, political factions and represent different interests (Landau 2019: 39).

Finally, Gaillard urges partners to "meet regularly" to evaluate their collaboration as they develop the project and renegotiate their duties and expectations (Binka 2005: 208; Gaillard 1994: 2; Swiss Commission for Research Partnership with Developing Countries 2000). Landau's view is slightly different where he encourages southern scholars to only commit to what they negotiated and agreed on from the beginning. This difference partly stems from how both scholars conceptualize power relations and asymmetries shaping the partnership. Landau engages with partnerships as fundamentally exploitative and violent, not just logistically unequal which is how Gaillard perceives them (Binka 2005: 208). As a result, Gaillard prescribes logistical reforms in the shape of meetings and evaluations, whereas Landau is more distrustful of the dynamics and how asymmetries are subliminally reproduced. Landau highlights how southern scholars "often underestimate their importance to northern researchers' legitimacy, research funding, and ability to do research" (Landau 2019: 39). As a result, southern scholars often are complicit in reproducing

the hierarchy and the power asymmetries, relegating themselves to a subordinate position as opposed to maximizing their identity as equal partners. He makes a significant distinction where he argues that "we must … ensure that even the most unequal relationships become mutually beneficial" (Landau 2019: 39). This is a powerful statement because it provides scholars with a possibility to conduct "responsible research" and form transformative partnerships even when and possibly because "power imbalances are intrinsic to every social relation" (Landau 2019: 25). It allows scholars to work beyond structural inequalities and find a way to make the most unequal relations beneficial. In doing so, he pragmatically shifts the focus from the call to make unequal relationships equal to a call to try to mobilize them and make them beneficial (as opposed to remedying them), which is emancipatory and can be transformative, to an extent.

While powerful, Landau and Gaillard's recommendations reinforce the global north-global south divide, which can be problematic. Perrotta and Alonsa argue that the idea of a subordinate south "proved not to be productive to understand contemporary dynamics of the geopolitics of knowledge" (Perrotta and Mauro Alonsa 2019: 2). Most literature reviewed in this draft focuses on how to fix the relationship between the global north and the global south, to reverse the historical inequality and to 'empower' the south. However, that overlooks the politics of empowerment. It glosses over southern partners mobilizing their agency. It does not fully engage with what lies beyond the divide as a concept and what the silences it reinforces. Beigel contributes the concept of "academic dependency" showing that the global north-global south divide collapses asymmetries to export-import relations, encouraging scholars to look beyond the divide (Beigel 2014: 746). Beigel's work raises the question is this is a constructive tension? In other words, should scholars be concerned about the methodological use of the divide, as an analytical concept, or rather focus their efforts, as the literature shows, on its implications?

Conclusion

This literature review shows that in the past 15 years, there have been major developments in the field to theorize about research partnerships and networks that envision equitable research and generate pathways for research findings that would ultimately lead to the betterment of living conditions for refugees. One of the major contributions that the reviewed literature offers is

(empirical) solutions to the structural challenges that researchers face. This review was written thematically where all reviewed texts were grouped under three main themes that started with exploring the purpose and the motivations that sustain a global interest in research partnerships. It then explored how the literature navigated and presented the different challenges that might make it difficult for researchers to achieve their vision of social change despite their genuine commitment to the purpose of partnerships. The third and final section explored what the literature prescribes as the solutions or the going forward steps.

However, despite the comprehensive list of recommendations that the literature presents as *the* solutions to more transformative partnerships, there are still major silences and gaps that could be addressed further. The identified issues are:

1. There is little scholarly work written from a feminist perspective on the gendered nature of partnerships in the field of forced migration. Heron explores how white liberal feminist researchers are complicit in the perpetuation of racial and gendered domination and oppression, globally (Heron 2004). Cottrell, Lord, Martin and Prentice published a seminal edited volume on feminist approaches to research partnerships between communities and universities (Cottrell et al. 1996; Cottrell and Parpart 2004). In their respective work, they offer insights that are crucial for the conversation that is missing in the literature reviewed. The reason why their prescribed (feminist) solutions are perceived as transformative is that they mobilize a different approach to questions of power and unequal partnerships compared to how the reviewed texts conceptualize power asymmetries. A critical feminist approach to the question of power can navigate the tutelage of patriarchy (and other intersectional markers of oppression) without glossing over the violences happening in the global south by the global south practitioners. In other words, it does not overlook or apologize/defend the injustices committed by global southern partners (in their dismissal of refugee voices, in their culpability and reproduction of inequalities), something which every reviewed text in this literature review is complicit of doing.

2. The emphasis of language in the literature is interesting, because it assumes that the partner institution/research center has a bilingual capacity and that the problem is the audience. While the focus on linguistic barriers in the literature is still contextual and methodologically useful, the fact that not all research centers have a bilingual research capacity (which redirects the conversation to literature on capacity building) suggests that the partners are representative of

a particular class and political faction. This position of partners is not fundamentally problematic. It is only a problem when it is glossed over and when the southern partner presents itself as the gatekeeper (where the northern partner is oblivious to the tension/violent intersectional silencing that this partnership is sustaining on a local level, between the local partners).

3. Another gap is the scarcity of literature using a postcolonial-decolonial approach in their theoretical framework. The literature reviewed suggested that partnerships are embedded within a funding-driven regime. They situate their critique within an analysis of neoliberalism but perhaps a postcolonial/decolonial approach might be more constructive in terms of understanding the pervasiveness of the structure and the extent to which it is (in)escapable. Grounding the reincarnation of the "power imbalances [that are] intrinsic to any social relations" within an analysis of Albert Memmi's *The Colonizer and The Colonized* and the undying colonial structure, which is structurally entrenched and governs any interaction, partnership or otherwise, between the global north and the global south, might be useful for the debate. Frantz Fanon similarly offers a powerful framework to study internalization of inferiority, for which southern partners are often criticized. Some of the reviewed texts framed it as the responsibility of the northern partner to establish the trust without critically examining the logics and complexities of inferiority that the colonized subject navigates.

4. Building on the earlier two points, one of the other gaps is an examination of the interests and motivations shaping research institutions' behaviour and vision for social change. These need to be studied more critically. Partnerships need funding to survive and as a result, there are some instances where partners are coerced into supporting the status quo, something that applies to both partners across the divide. It explains why the southern partner maintains a subordinate position, and how it navigates conflict reproducing the inequality. This point reiterates the need to turn to a feminist approach to studying research partnerships. There is extensive literature on how feminism offers a critical guide to navigating the tutelage of the status quo, without compromising the needs, identities and interests of the vulnerable community/partner. This gap also suggests the possibility of using Barnett and Finnemore's analysis of pathologies and institutional interests to explain how research networks navigate their partnerships based on their interests.

5. The literature also overlooks the importance of looking beyond the global north-global south divide in relation to institutional interests. Bradley reflects in her 2008 article on the need to move beyond the divide in relation to funding, but I have not found literature analyzing the dangers of the divide in relation to essentializing (and Orientalizing) southern voices and interests. Lila Abu Lughod's work is pertinent here, as well as Joseph Masaad and Amr Shalakany's debate. Southern partners' interests may not necessarily be in the interests of the wellbeing of refugees in the global south. In some cases, researchers and institutional interests might be aligned with the status quo. Essentializing the partnership (as a necessity between the global north and the global south) risks resembling a quota system/checklist where the global north's success/guilt is guaranteed/remedied by including a southern institution/researcher. What happens when the southern partner (who is responsible for representing the local experience) is only representing an elite group/interest (even more critical in contexts where there are civil wars and ethnic conflicts)? Partnerships are, to an extent, and despite the focus on power and asymmetries, represented in the literature as depoliticized spaces, but they are significantly political. The literature reviewed glosses over how southern partners are sought because, methodologically, they offer the 'critical' perspective. It becomes a problem when they fail to do so and instead reinforce inequalities they were recruited to end and navigate into an equal partnership.

6. The final gap raises the question of counterhegemonic blocs. To what extent can global partnerships be transformative if the partners are representing different and, in some contexts, conflicting interests? Landau suggests that partnerships should only be formed between partners who agree from the beginning about the objectives and methodology of the projects (otherwise, the partnership is likely to be unequal and not transformative). Weiss and Gaillard, on the other hand, suggest that there is a possibility and hope in a partnership between "opponents" where Weiss, in particular, asserts that using contradictory tactics is not counterproductive to the effectiveness of the partnership. This is an important tension. Schmidt and Neuburger call for "fundamental reorientation in the academic and funding system in order to challenge existing knowledge hegemonies" (Schmidt and Neuburger 2019: 54; Weiss 2013: 134-5). However, this reorientation is a massive task and until/if that happens, partnerships still need to be maintained. It is implausible to imagine conflict-free partnerships, which begs

the question: can opposing interests work towards a shared vision of transformative social change?

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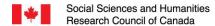
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