Problematizing Access to Higher Education for Refugee and Globally Displaced Students: What's the Problem Represented to Be in Canadian University Responses to Syrian, Afghan and Ukrainian Crises?

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Abstract

The UNHCR's *15by30* campaign to increase refugee student enrolment in higher education to 15% by 2030 is a lofty goal. Canadian higher education institutions have a role to play in contributing to this policy goal, along with advocacy efforts from refugee student groups, community-based organizations, government, and international organizations. The aim of this study is to look critically at how the issue of access to higher education for refugee and globally displaced people is represented through Ontario's universities' responses to federal government initiatives to crises in Syria, Afghanistan and Ukraine. In this study, we use Bacchi's (2009) "What's the problem represented to be?" approach to policy analysis and, drawing on Dillabough's (2022) critique of modernity in higher education, we argue that university responses related to refugee and globally displaced student access to higher education offer the possibility to reflect on the paradoxical tensions of the problem space in Canadian higher education. In our findings, we discuss how the problem of refugee and displacement crisis was represented differently in response to differences in geopolitical conditions and government policies, as we demonstrate how representations of material problems and categories of "citizenship" and "geographical location" in the universities' responses contributed to creating boundaries of inclusion and exclusion for access. Finally, we show how the creation of educational programs for "globally displaced people" during the period related to the Ukrainian crisis perpetuates the logic of colonialism in the universities' responses.

Introduction

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (2021) released the annual Education Report 2021 which indicated that enrolment for refugees in higher education (HE) has reached a peak of 5%, up from only 1% a few years ago. This is a positive outcome, but collaboration across public policy sectors, and even private actors, is necessary to reach the goal set by UNHCR's *15by30* campaign to increase enrolment to 15% by 2030. Canadian HE institutions have a role to play in contributing to this policy goal, along with advocacy efforts from refugee student groups, community-based organizations, government, and international organizations. Considering the role of HE institutions, this article considers the ways in

which the problem of access to HE for refugees and globally displaced people gets taken up and translated into policy knowledge in the Canadian higher education arena.

In this article, we review responses from Canadian universities to the federal government's initiatives to conflicts and humanitarian crises in Syria, Afghanistan and Ukraine, arguing that these responses are important sites for understanding the associations of universities with Canadian nation state political agendas. We start our article with a literature review on the problematizations of HE access for refugee and globally displaced students. Next, we discuss the field of critical policy analysis in which our research is located and the approach to policy analysis used in this study, Carol Bacchi's (2009) 'What's the problem represented to be' (WPR approach). Then, we present the methods undertaken in this study and describe how we conducted a policy analysis of the universities' responses to federal government initiatives for refugees and globally displaced people. We present our findings by answering the following two questions: how are the issues of access for refugee and globally displaced students to higher education problematized and what is the effect of these problematizations on how HE is governed?

Problematizing Higher Education for Refugee and Globally Displaced Students

As over half the refugees worldwide are under the age of 25, the question of how to secure access to higher education (HE) for those who have the ability and desire remains unanswered (Détourbe, 2018; Détourbe & Goastellec, 2018; Thompson, 2014; UNHCR, 2015; Viczko, Détourbe & McKechnie, 2021). In Canada, recent national data about the rates of participation in higher education is promising. Recent data from 2018 indicate that 51% of 20-year-old children from families admitted to Canada as refugees reported participating in post-secondary education (Statistics Canada, 2021), compared to 56% for the overall population of the same age and same year. In terms of university education, earlier data indicated that 32% of government assisted refugees and 33% of privately sponsored refugees who landed in Canada between 2000 and 2005 completed university certification (Statistics Canada, 2018), which was below national rates near 40%. Data from the 2014/2015 school year indicated just over 5,780 refugee students attended Canadian universities (Statistics Canada, 2017).

Advocates for HE often argue the importance of HE for increasing employment and raising standards of living, not only for refugee students but as a dominant discourse about the purposes of HE. Yet, HE serves a broader purpose in that it engages students as citizens in the public sphere, as knowledgeable and agential subjects (Brown, 2015). COVID-19 has brought additional barriers for travel and mobility, as well as resources. While the barriers for access to HE for refugee students are well-documented in the Canadian context (for example, see Anderson, 2020; Guo, 2009; Ferede, 2014; Hou & Bonikowska, 2016), this study takes a different perspective through the WPR approach to consider how access is constituted as a policy issue through the initiatives and responses from university institutions in Canada.

Using WPR, Vitus & Jarlby (2022) published a study about conflicting immigration policies for young refugees (YR) in Denmark. In this study, they interviewed local integration policy workers to understand their experiences of working with young refugees during a period of a mandatory municipal integration program. Policies existed in the Danish context for YR, and these policies were often informed by more global level agendas and priorities. The initiatives

to support YR often clashed as there were conflicting policies that were inconsistent, contradictory and in tension with the local realities of residency policy in municipalities in Denmark. The short-term immediacy for finding work and employment, referred to as being "economically self-sufficient", clashed with the long-term goals YR had for reuniting with their family members, who were often left in war zones. In some cases, they reported, young men refugees were particularly impacted by this, as they reacted with anger and frustration as they worried about their families far away. The binary of "integration as contributing citizens" while also being a national security threat was present in the reflections of the workers. As policy subjects, the YR were caught between the global policies and local Denmark restrictions.

Koblauch (2018) used the WPR approach to also speak to the ways in which binaries within border policies constitute processes and spaces of exclusion and inclusion through the sovereign border. The introduction of two immigration policies enacted by the Canadian government, namely the Electronic Travel Visa and the Interactive Advance Passenger Information, constituted a binary of "admissible" and "inadmissible" through governing practices of sovereign border policing. The results of Koblauch's study showed that these policies have altered Canadian border management by pushing screening processes outside of physical sovereign boundaries, as the responsibility for screening and checks were conducted by government or airline officials outside of Canada. Migrants became trapped in a web of offshore policing and securitization. The policies focus on problematizing security for refugees to enter Canada. The effect is the outside sovereign constitution of the admissible and inadmissible subject, whereby the inadmissible person is one who is constructed as a threat.

Phil Cole (2016) used the binary of "inside" and "outside" political order to frame the "Refugee Problem". His argument is that refugees are often framed as "outside" the political order, which constitutes them as a "problem" for the inside of nation-state life. In this way, the "Refugee Question" is framed as a problem that must be solved for peace and productivity in the nation-state. That is, the concept of refugee privileges the nation-state and treats the refugee as the object of that category of the nation-state. In this context, the refugee is "a passive object with no agency and no voice". Cole argues that we need to re-arrange the perspective so that refugees are the subject, not the object, of the refugee problem. That is, "The fact is that it is the rights of those who are already safe that are placing obstacles in the way of those struggling to escape danger" (para 9). In arguing for political theory to reposition refugees as subject, with their own agency for theorizing their worlds, Cole writes,

> This means that any solution to the Refugee Question framed within that discourse cannot be genuinely inclusive and egalitarian, because the negotiation on which that solution is based is not taking place on an equal basis. That negotiation will be between those on the inside, with refugees remaining on the outside of that process. They remain the passive objects of that negotiation, without a voice – and again that includes the process of political theorising. And so the Refugee Question is structured in such a way that the refugee is 'framed' as the problem, as the passive object of the question with no voice in answering it. But the cleverest conjuring trick of this discourse is that, far from being the one in danger, the refugee *represents* danger, a threat to the political

> order, security and wellbeing of members of the liberal democratic state. Reality is flipped around. We need to flip it back. (para. 10-11)

The paradox presented by Cole (2016) aligns well with the conditions of the modern university as highlighted by Joanne Dillabough (2022) in her recent examination of HE as a "problem space" in the rise of populism. Through engagement with political theorists such as Honig, Mbembe, and Mouffe, Dillabough draws on Scott's (1997, 2004) notion of the problem space, whereby the political paradoxes of "conflicted national politics, moralising state practices, and scientific rationalities" (p. 178) reconstitute the governing rationales of HE. While writing about HE as a problem space for the rise of populist politics, Dillabough's cautionary assertion of the complexity of the geopolitical situatedness of university institutions in transnational and national knowledge politics warrants attention. She argues the representation of populism in HE is not merely one form of domination overtaking a current mode of operation. Rather, we ought to give attention to how such representation "involves a more complex set of forces emerging out of the bureaucratic machinery of modernity and the fundamental paradoxes of liberal democracy itself that positions the university as a testing ground for the tasks of politics and governance" (p. 179). In these conditions, HE is both a space for experimentation of its modernity in its role to engage geopolitical conflict through bureaucratic techniques and visioning of the "supranationality of state power", while also being pulled into the test of modernity itself in response to "violent sovereign spaces" (p. 179). Situated in these paradoxical tensions, HE evolves itself as a "problem space" ripe for investigation of the state's growth within HE, whereby the political paradoxes embedded in governing practices allow for exploring the ways in which "liberalism, territorialism, biological life as a feature of sovereignty and modern nation-building are conflated, energising new power formations" (p. 184). Our argument in this paper is that university engagement in initiatives to support refugee access to HE provides an opportunity to consider the paradoxes of the problem space for universities in the Canadian context.

Situating Problematizations through WPR

This paper draws on Carol Bacchi's (2009) approach to policy analysis named "What's the Problem Represented to Be?" (WPR), which uses a critical form of discourse analysis to identify problematizations in governing practices. In the WPR approach, the focus shifts away from more traditional approaches to policy analysis that examine the consequences or outcomes of a *given problem,* to instead consider how *problems are constituted through policies*. That is, the WPR post-structural analysis doesn't aim to understand how policies respond to problems, but rather how policy responses constitute the problems through their solutions (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016). One consequence of this analytical move is to consider problems as they are constituted through policies and to attend to "the heterogenous practices, in particular the knowledge practices, that produce hierarchical and inegalitarian forms of rule" (p. 3). For us, this approach aligns with concerns from critical policy studies scholars about access in education, inclusions and exclusions in policy processes, and how socially just policies can improve education for those most marginalized in societies (Young & Diem, 2018).

Informed by Foucauldian notions of governmentality, the WPR post-structural approach examines the solutions or proposal offered for/within policy in order to consider the ways in

which problems are constituted through policy. Instead of accepting the classification of a phenomenon as a problem, the concern moves to how this phenomenon came to *be a problem* through policy (Bacchi, 2009). In other words, how do policies make people, objects, spaces and subjects? In our study, this is particularly important to understand how the issue of access to higher education for refugees is represented by university actors in the Canadian higher education landscape, not through formalized texts carrying the name of institutional policy documents, but by considering policy through an examination of "how order is maintained through politics, understood as the heterogeneous strategic relations that shape lives and worlds" (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016, p. 6).

The WPR Approach

Drawing on the WPR approach, we conducted a discourse analysis of the problematizations of policy in our data. The data included initiatives of 10 universities in Ontario that are commonly placed on lists of top 10 universities in the province. In relation to the Syrian refugee crisis, we collected data from June 2017 to August 2017.The data includes universities' initiatives taken by universities from October 2015 to August 2017. As for the Afghan refugee crisis, we collected data from November 2021 to April 2022. This set of data consists of initiatives taken by universities in September and October 2021 following the refugee crisis after the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan. Regarding the Ukrainian refugee crisis, we collected data in March and April 2022. The data includes initiatives taken by universities from February to April 2022 after the Russian military action in Ukraine in February 2022. Our data set is not a full representation of all the responses from each university. This means that our data set is delimited by what was publicly available at the time of data collection. We performed searches using Google and the universities' main website. Search words included the name of each university (in Google), "scholarships", "refugees", "Syria", "Afghanistan", "Ukraine", and synonyms. We used news articles and releases published online on the universities' responses, such as Universities Canada (2022a), and universities' public announcements, such as statements, webpages containing information for the community, and news articles published by the institutions (see Appendix). We did not have access to internal communications of the universities. In spite of the study's methodological delimitations, this research adds to our understanding of how the universities responded to federal government initiatives for refugees.

Based on our data set, we conducted a policy analysis answering some of the questions Bacchi (2009) proposes. First, we used the question 'what's the problem represented to be?' to examine the problem represented to be in the universities' responses related to refugee and globally displaced student access to higher education. Second, we considered the question 'what presuppositions or assumptions underlie this representation of the problem?' to analyze the binaries that operate in those responses. Third, based on the question 'how has this representation of the problem come about?', we looked at how different practices related to our problem representation evolved over time. Last, we look at the question 'what effects are produced by this representation of the problem?' to analyze the impact the problem representation has on refugees, education and the conditions of access to education. In respect to our analysis, we present what we considered to be the key categories among the initiatives taken by the universities. Our purpose in this paper is not to provide a comprehensive analysis of all the universities' initiatives, nor delve into individual institutions and the individual geopolitics of their situatedness in the mix of multi-scalar governing regimes (e.g.

national and provincial political realms). Rather, in this paper, we engage with some of the categories and key words that we analyzed in the discourse analysis across the institutions to bring forth an initial discussion of how universities' responses constitute their relations in national politics of international engagements, and the ways in which they open a window for exploring the problem space of HE.

Representing the Universities' Responses

In the Canadian context, we saw three different kinds of programs to support refugees to access higher education. The first kind of program we can describe is a type of initiative that connects access to higher education to the resettlement of refugees in Canada as permanent residents. The second kind of higher education program we can outline in Canada provides funding for higher education opportunities for forcibly displaced people who are already in Canada or who are eligible to come to Canada. The third kind of program is the in situ one. According to Crea and Holdcroft (2020), this kind of program offers online or hybrid education for refugees in their current location, which can be camps or urban contexts. In this article, we focus on programs provided by universities to offer access to education for refugees in Canada.

Over time, the universities' responses have emerged following the initiatives for refugees taken by the Canadian federal government. In January 2015, responding to the UNHCR's call for the resettlement of 100,000 refugees across the world, Canada announced the resettlement of 10,000 more refugees through government-supported or private sponsorships over three years (Mas, 2015). As part of its response to the Syrian refugee crisis, the Canadian government created an emergency relief fund in September 2015 in addition to its humanitarian assistance funding (CBC News, 2015). Between November 2015 and February 2016, Canada received 25,000 refugees through government-supported or private sponsorships in 100 days with the help of visa processing centers set up in Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada [IRCC], 2019; IRCC, 2020). In 2015, according to Universities Canada (2015), universities across Canada were responding to the Syrian crisis with funding, scholarships, and partnerships with programs that assist refugees. Across our data, the most common response by some universities in Ontario was providing scholarships for Syrian students. Since people fleeing Syria were being resettled as refugees in Canada, the emphasis of the universities was in providing support for the resettlement of these refugees and the responses included different initiatives such as English language learning, flexible admissions, legal advice, and private sponsorships. Table[1] 1 presents key categories of responses found across the data related to the Syrian refugee crisis.

Universities	Key categories of responses found across the data related to the Syrian refugee crisis
• University of Guelph • McMaster University • University of Ottawa • Queen's University	• Scholarships, bursaries, awards • Flexible admissions • English language scholarships

[1] All the tables in this article are not intended to be a thorough representation of all the responses from the universities. Rather, they show some of the predominant responses selected by the research team. Moreover, not all responses were directly supported by the universities themselves, but we are using the universities' names to refer to the responses taken by schools and institutes housed at these universities.

• Ryerson University[2] • University of Toronto • University of Waterloo • Western University • York University	• A post-secondary certificate program that offers onsite and online learning to Syrian refugees in Lebanon • Program to raise funds to privately sponsor refugees • Partnerships with World University Service of Canada (WUSC) Student Refugee Program • Legal advice to refugee sponsorship groups • Refugee health initiatives • Research projects • Fundraising events

Table 1: University responses to Syrian refugee crisis

In relation to the Afghan crisis, according to IRCC (2022b), Canada made a multi-year commitment to receive 40,000 Afghan refugees. These refugees are being resettled through three main programs. First, there is a permanent residence option for extended family members of former Afghan interpreters. Second, there is an immigration program for Afghans who assisted the Canadian government. Third, there is a program to receive Afghan refugees through government-supported or private sponsorships. The Canadian government is also analyzing alternatives to bring Afghans to Canada. Despite the existence of these programs, according to Marchand (2022), outside aspects have limited the number of arrivals, such as the need to be referred by the UNHCR. According to our data analysis, overall, the Afghan crisis had fewer clear initiatives than the Syrian and Ukrainian crises. An aspect that differs from the response to the Syrian crisis is that the categorization of students and scholars became clear with different initiatives tailored to each of these two groups. Table 2 shows the different kinds of support for students and scholars.

Universities	Key categories of responses found across the data related to the Afghan refugee crisis
• Carleton University • Ryerson University • University of Toronto • Western University • York University	• Scholarships • Support for students including housing, mental health, language, social, academic, and financial aspects • Family sponsorships • Fellowships • Salary and housing for scholars • Resettlement support for scholars and their families • Partnerships with Scholars at Risk • Partnerships with Scholar Rescue Fund

Table 2: University responses to Afghan refugee crisis

In response to the Ukrainian crisis, the Canadian government created the Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel (CUAET), which is a temporary residence program that enables Ukrainians to come quickly to Canada to work or study (IRCC, 2022a). This program

[2] Ryerson University's name changed to "Toronto Metropolitan University" in April 2022 (Rancic, 2022). However, we kept the name "Ryerson University" because that was its denomination at the time of data collection.

offers a temporary stay in Canada so that Ukrainian nationals can return to Ukraine when it is safe. They also have the option to apply for permanent residence at the end of their temporary stay. According to Universities Canada (2022b), Canadian universities have been supporting the members of their communities who were impacted by the crisis. According to our data, some of the responses included support for students with connections to Russia and Ukraine, emergency funds for current students affected by the crisis, and initiatives for visiting students. The focus on both current and incoming students was specifically emphasized in this crisis. Additionally, some universities created global-oriented initiatives that included not only Ukrainian students and scholars, but "globally displaced people" who can participate in the programs regardless of their nationality. In the universities' responses, there was emphasis on the importance of partnerships with other institutions and actors, such as WUSC and Universities Canada. Table 3 shows some initiatives that were similar to the other crises and also responses that were unique to the Ukrainian situation.

Universities	Key categories of responses found across the data related to the Ukrainian refugee crisis
• Carleton University • University of Guelph • McMaster University • Queen's University • Ryerson University • University of Toronto • University of Waterloo • Western University • York University	• Financial support, bursaries, and grants for new and current students impacted by the crisis • Support for students include mental health aspects, academic advising, and visa and immigration support • Support for different categories of students: students with Russian and Ukrainian citizenship, students who have connections to Ukraine and Russia, students who were studying or had plans to study in Ukraine, international students who had plans to return to Ukraine and other countries in the region, and forcibly displaced students • Sponsorship and financial support for forcibly displaced students • Flexible admissions for forcibly displaced students • Flexible admissions for students who were studying or had plans to study in Ukraine • Research opportunities to visiting students who were forcibly displaced • Local or remote employment for forcibly displaced scholars • Financial support for forcibly displaced scholars • Support for community members who had their academic activity affected by the crisis • Partnership with Academic Without Borders • Partnership with WUSC • Partnership with Scholars at Risk • Partnership with Universities Canada • Partnerships with other Canadian higher education institutions • Partnership with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada • Partnership with Global Affairs Canada

	• Fundraising events • Art auctions

Table 3: University responses to Ukrainian refugee crisis

Discussion

The WPR approach draws attention first to the solutions offered through policy responses. Throughout each of the three periods of response from universities, scholarships, support for healthcare and social services, and other types of materiality dominated the problem of access. Without a doubt, material resources are essential for ensuring the opening of university spaces to refugee students, especially as the neoliberal university privileges economic value and return on investment on governing decisions (Brown, 2015). Yet such responses represent access as a material problem that shields the university from its position as engaging in political conflicts. It is worth noting that most of the responses came about in the wake of international governments' moves for humanitarian initiatives, including initiatives from the Canadian government such as #WelcomeRefugees as a response to the political turmoil in Syria. That is, most of the university responses are deeply embedded in geopolitics of diplomacy and humanitarian aid, yet the focus on materiality represents access for refugee students as a neutral, compassionate offering. Furthermore, most of the material responses were reactionary, temporary and seemingly attached to federal government aims for resettlement and rescue. The temporality of the material responses is important, as refugee students note the inadequacies of education systems to recognize prior learning through degree credential restrictions, the racist and ignorant conditions in which their classes are embedded, and the categorizations of "other" that they are subject to when other students and instructors learn of their status (Ghadban, 2018; Guo, 2021; Vitus & Jalby, 2022). The effect of this representation renders the growth of the nation state within HE as neutral in such a way that, as Dillabough (2022) argues, "HE can sometimes be absorbed into the political philosophy of the state" (p. 189). The effect of this neutrality focuses attention to the limited thinking of access, rendering institutions somewhat blind to the ways their responses create spaces for these kinds of exclusions.

Yet, while aiming to represent access as neutral, there are tensions in how the university is constituted as a knowledge producing institution. While the universities' responses during the Syrian and Afghan refugee crises spoke about trauma, stress, and loss of family support, our analysis showed that these problems were represented as external to the university and the members of its community. This representation of the problems as external contributes to the categorization of refugees as outsiders or, as Cole (2016) states, a "problem" for those inside the nation. In discussing the admission of refugees to Canada and Australia with an identity perspective, Dauvergne (2005) states that the admission of economic migrants is based on what they can contribute to the nation, but refugees are admitted according to their loss of state protection. By emphasizing the role of Canadian universities to contribute to this need of protection, the universities' discourse related to both crises can be associated with the benevolence of Canada and its institutions. This parallels with the discussion by Tyyskä et al. (2017) who argue, within postcolonialism and orientalism frameworks, that the media content on the Syrian crisis portrayed Canada as a "saviour" and marginalized refugees as "others". Our analysis demonstrates that the universities' discourses related to the Syrian and Afghan crises reproduce the idea of the divide between insiders and outsiders, with the university being represented as saving an outside problem.

In contrast, in our analysis of the discourse related to the Ukrainian refugee crisis, the responses connected with the experiences of trauma and loss represented these issues as needing an internal response. Different from the discourses related to the Syrian and Afghan crises, the discourse connected to the war in Ukraine represents the problem of the conflict as affecting not only those in Ukraine but people in surrounding areas as well as the members of the universities' communities who have connections to Russia and Ukraine. This different kind of response constitutes the problem to be one related to the "global community" and to the value attributed to certain crises over others. Just like economic migrants are valued according to their contribution to the nation's economy (Dauvergne, 2005), in this particular response, the members of the universities' communities affected by the war in Ukraine are valued on the basis of their contributions to the institutions. Faculty, staff and current students impacted by the war are represented as deserving of compassion. This response addressing both refugees and members of the universities' community blurs the boundaries of binaries of us/them, but still maintains university practices in technologies of saving (Shultz & Viczko, 2021).

While material responses dominated across the three crisis periods, the responses from universities varied during each period in how categories of "citizenship" and "geographical location" constituted the boundaries for inclusion and exclusion. During the responses to the Syrian and Afghan crises, citizenship status of refugee students was privileged as necessary for inclusion to university programs. That is, the responses were targeted for students from Syria or Afghan nationals, aligning with federal government initiatives for resettlement of displaced Syrians and Afghan nationals that assisted Canadian government military operations such as translation services. Yet, during the Ukraine crisis, the primacy of the categorization of citizenship shifted as "geographical location" of displaced people became more prominent to open the boundaries of inclusion. For example, university programs included initiatives for students with Russian and Ukrainian citizenship, students who have connections to Ukraine and Russia, students who were studying or had plans to study in Ukraine, and international students who had plans to return to Ukraine and other countries in the region. In this way, rather than citizenship defining inclusion, association with Ukraine as *an obligatory point of passage* (Callon, 1984) organized who could participate in programming and who could not. For example, in one Canadian university, students in Ukraine were able to access this institution's initiatives regardless of their nationality, sending a message that it did not matter where you were from, but rather where you have been. Such shifts in the privileging of geographical location open the possibilities for interrogating how university responses denote engagement in nation state building. While the association of HE to national government agendas through university internationalization strategies is not unique to situations of refugee access to HE (Viczko & Tascón, 2016), issues of refugee access to HE are often framed in political realities of "forced internationalization" (Unangst, Ergin, Khajarian, DeLaquil, & de Wit, 2020), whereby forced migration and displacement of people are concepts used to underpin the ways in which internationalization in HE is, indeed, tied to geopolitical conditions. This categorization shift makes visible the boundaries of inclusion and exclusions, all the while maintaining privilege of nation state boundaries, by calling into question who is impacted by war and conflict, and ostensibly, how universities are complicit in boundary setting.

Furthermore, during the response to the Ukraine crisis, the category of "refugee student" was somewhat disrupted, as other categories such as trainees and globally displaced people were newly brought to policy responses. Such shifts are not disconnected from federal government policy decisions, as the CUAET did not require Ukrainian citizens to travel as refugees, giving way to the emergence of categorizations of Ukrainian students or Ukrainian trainees, such as in the federal government's Tri-Council special response fund to support trainees impacted by the conflict in Ukraine (Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, 2022). While this initiative is funded from the federal government, university institutions are the sites in which the program is administered, emphasizing a significance of "trainees" to research knowledge production. This trainee support initiative is ongoing at the time of writing this paper, and the effect of such categories in opening university institutions may be better understood in the future. The paradoxes of inclusion and exclusion of university education boundaries rendered through these programs remain a key area for future exploration.

Finally, the emergence of the category of "globally displaced people" during the period of the Ukrainian crisis warrants attention. In March 2022, news media reported on the dehumanizing and racist discriminations towards people from African countries who were in Ukraine, with journalists reporting how white Ukrainian women and children were given access to trains and transportation outside of conflict zones while Black women and children were purposefully barred and prevented from access even though trains departed with empty seats (see for example, Galloway, 2022). While such reporting made visible long standing discriminatory and racist beliefs and practices in Europe (Howard, Chan Yen Johnson, & Ah-Sen, 2022), the emergence of programs to support "globally displaced people" brings to light the deeply embedded practices of colonialism and imperialism in how Canadian university systems that reflect responses to particular conflicts that align with Canadian federal government foreign policy engagements. While this program was just announced at the time of writing this article, and little is known about its effect on the lived experiences of students and scholars faced with forced migration, its very emergence calls into question the assumptions that underpin university responses to refugee crises, related to access to higher education programs. While the university program did not indicate its intention to address the mediatization of racism, the paradox of the benevolent institution that maintains colonial hierarchies through its efforts to save are striking. Policy scholars and critical educators must keep university policymakers attentive to how their engagements in internationalization serve to constitute education as a particular kind of space that values and devalues knowledges, experiences and people, and their role in nation building.

Conclusion

In this article, we reviewed responses from Canadian universities to conflicts and humanitarian crises in Syria, Afghanistan and Ukraine, using a post-structural approach to policy analysis that examines how such responses constitute the problem of access to higher education for refugee students. While the collection of data was limited to particular time periods, the overall view of the responses showed some common responses that focused mostly on material resources, which constitutes the problem of access as a lack of resource. Additionally, by considering the responses across the three periods, we were able to show that new responses emerged over time, some related to particularities of the crisis, or to shifting visa requirements or even likely due to more experience from those within

institutions. There is little doubt that the material problematization of refugee access to HE constitutes pathways for students who might not have otherwise have access. However, through the post-structural approach offered in Bacchi's WPR approach, we also argued that university responses to the crises are more than benevolent ventures in humanitarian practice. These responses deeply intertwine university institutions with the political activities of nation states, and such engagements are complicated, as different problem representations emerge, sometimes at the same time. Material problematization co-exist with nation building activities in the neoliberal university. Furthermore, the rise of "globally displaced people" exists side-by-side with programs aimed specifically at trainees from one nation. Across these problem representations are the continual forming and reforming of boundaries of inclusion and exclusion that perpetuate colonial and racist hierarchies. In this way, Dillabough's (2022) attention to the problem space of HE is promising as it beckons vigilance about the ways HE serves as a space for neoliberal nation state growth and the hierarchies of knowledge production, even in the face of humanitarian and saving practices aimed at access. The promise of the problem space is that controversies and paradoxes may not yet be settled, leaving space for those engaged in refugee education within HE institutions to consider the problems of access that are constituted through their involvement. That is, universities do not merely respond to problems of access; the policy issue of access is constituted through institutional responses themselves. There is no neutrality in engagement, and as we move closer to the target of 15by30 set by the UNHCR for 15% of refugees having access to HE, university institutions might consider the problems constituted through their initiatives.

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Appendix: List of consulted documents

Refugee crisis	Title of document	Year of publication of document	URL
Syrian	Queen's expands awards for refugees from Syria	2015	https://www.queensu.ca/gazette/stories/queens-expands-awards-syrian-refugees
Syrian	McMaster and McMaster Students Union partner to aid student refugees	2015	https://cou.ca/articles/mcmaster-and-mcmaster-students-union-partner-to-aid-student-refugees/
Syrian	University of Ottawa creates new fund to assist refugees	2015	https://cou.ca/articles/university-of-ottawa-creates-new-fund-to-assist-refugees/
Syrian	Donation launches fund to provide university level English instruction for Syrian refugees	2016	https://uwaterloo.ca/renison/news/donation-launches-fund-provide-university-level-english
Syrian	Fundraiser at Renison to benefit Syrian refugees	2016	https://uwaterloo.ca/renison/news/fundraiser-renison-benefit-syrian-refugees
Syrian	Universities helping refugees reach the potential they see for themselves and their families	2016	https://ontariosuniversities.ca/universities-helping-refugees-reach-the-potential-they-see-for-themselves-and-their-families
Syrian	U of T Responds to Crisis in Syria	2017	Link no longer available from utoronto.ca
Syrian	Help Syria	2017	Link no longer available from uwo.ca
Syrian	Community relations refugee resources	2017	Link no longer available from uoguelph.ca
Syrian	Ryerson University Lifeline Syria Challenge (RULSC)	2017	Link no longer available from ryerson.ca
Afghan	Universities, faculty gearing up in response to Afghan refugee crisis	2021	https://www.universityaffairs.ca/news/news-article/universities-faculty-gearing-up-in-response-to-afghan-refugee-crisis/
Afghan	Toronto launches resettlement fund for Afghan refugees	2021	https://ontherecordnews.ca/toronto-launches-resettlement-fund-for-afghan-refugees/
Afghan	Western offers scholarships to Afghan refugees	2021	https://news.westernu.ca/2021/09/scholarships-afghan-refugees/
Ukrainian	Untitled (a message from the president)	2022	https://students.carleton.ca/2022/03/message-from-the-president-love-in-a-time-of-pandemic-and-war/

Ukrainian	U of G stands in solidarity with Ukraine	2022	https://news.uoguelph.ca/2022/03/u-of-g-stands-in-solidarity-with-ukraine/
Ukrainian	McMaster pledges $800,000 to support forcibly displaced students, scholars and researchers	2022	https://dailynews.mcmaster.ca/articles/mcmaster-pledges-800000-to-support-forcibly-displaced-students-scholars-and-researchers/
Ukrainian	University working to support those affected by invasion of Ukraine	2022	https://www.queensu.ca/gazette/stories/university-working-support-those-affected-invasion-ukraine?utm_source=Gazette+Newsletter&utm_campaign=f969d1326d-2022-ur-qgt&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_a59e82e8e1-f969d1326d-521856638
Ukrainian	Queen's increases support for forcibly displaced students, faculty, and researchers	2022	https://www.queensu.ca/gazette/stories/queens-increases-support-forcibly-displaced-students-faculty-and-researchers
Ukrainian	From the President: Statement on the conflict in Ukraine	2022	https://www.ryerson.ca/news-events/news/2022/02/from-the-president-statement-on-the-conflict-in-ukraine/
Ukrainian	U of T to accept displaced students from Ukraine with significant boost to its Scholars-at-Risk fund	2022	https://defygravitycampaign.utoronto.ca/news-and-stories/u-of-t-to-accept-displaced-students-from-ukraine-with-significant-boost-to-its-scholars-at-risk-fund/
Ukrainian	Waterloo's response: Ukraine	2022	https://uwaterloo.ca/international/news/waterloos-response-ukraine
Ukrainian	Western commits new funding for globally displaced students, scholars	2022	https://news.westernu.ca/2022/03/western-invests-600k-for-globally-displaced-students/
Ukrainian	Special Response Fund for Trainees (Ukraine)	n.d.	https://www.uwo.ca/research/funding/external/special_response_fund_for_trainees_ukraine.html
Ukrainian	Statement from President Lenton on the conflict in Ukraine	2022	https://yfile.news.yorku.ca/2022/03/03/statement-from-president-lenton-on-the-conflict-in-ukraine/