A Deconstructive Approach to Refugee Self-Reliance:
The Case of the Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

CRRF   Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework

CSR 1951   1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees

DANIDA   Danish International Development Agency

GoK   Government of Kenya

GoTC   Government of Turkana County

IFC   International Finance Corporation

KISEDP   Kalobeyei Integrated Socio-Economic Development Programme

PRS   Protracted Refugee Situations

UNHCR   UN High Commissioner for Refugees

WB   World Bank

YIMBY   *"Yes" In my Backyard, The Economics of Refugees and Their Social Dynamics in Kakuma, Kenya*, World Bank report (2016)

Acknowledgements

Abstract

In the last decade, there has been a renewed interest in 'self-reliance' as a remedy for protracted refugee crises. While self-reliance has been articulated as a key policy objective, scholars have been preoccupied with a key question: what *is* self-reliance and what interests does such a policy ultimately serve? Drawing on Jacques Derrida's post-structuralist thought, this paper puts forward a deconstructive approach to examine how the concept of self-reliance is discursively constructed. Through an analysis of relevant policy documents, this paper examines the role that texts play in producing and reproducing the meaning of self-reliance. I argue that self-reliance is an inherently undecidable, or malleable, concept that is embedded in a system of binary oppositions within the refugee regime. In other words, self-reliance is constructed *relationally,* as it is defined by what it is and what it is not with reference to key concepts such as dependency, vulnerability, resilience, and entrepreneurship. Despite this ambiguity, self-reliance has a logocentric, or hegemonic, power, which makes it susceptible to be co-opted by various policy actors to suit their interests. I examine self-reliance within the context of the Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement in Turkana County, Kenya, to demonstrate the political implications of self-reliance's logocentrism. The paper proceeds as follows. In Chapter 2, I put forward a theoretical framework based on Jacques Derrida's thought and post-development literature. Chapter 3 then moves to deconstruct self-reliance on a meta-conceptual level by demonstrating how it is upheld by four key binary oppositions which ultimately make it simultaneously an undecidable yet logocentric term. Chapter 4 moves to examine self-reliance within the context of the Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement in Turkana County, Kenya. I argue that in the case of the Kalobeyei Integration Socio-Economic Development Plan (KISEDP), self-reliance's logocentrism has enabled its political mobilization to promote Turkana County's economic development, which is led by refugees. However, self-reliance's logocentrism obscures the fact that KISEDP does not adequately address refugee protection concerns, nor does it represent a meaningful attempt at local integration in Kenya. In the conclusion, I will revisit the question of what Derrida, and deconstruction more broadly, can contribute to critical understandings of self-reliance and to Refugee Studies more broadly. I will also outline the practical and theoretical implications of my argument and make some suggestions as to what a broadened conception of self-reliance can and ought to look like.

1 Introduction

The prospect of 'refugee self-reliance' has been articulated by many as a remedy for refugee crises globally. While self-reliance itself is not an entirely novel term (Easton-Calabria 2018), global initiatives, such as the 2016 New York Declaration and the 2018 Global Compact on Refugees, have re-asserted its importance as a policy objective, which is linked to key issues in the international refugee regime such as livelihoods programming, labour rights and local integration (Skran and Easton-Calabria 2020: 2). The renewed interest in self-reliance within the policy realm has also coincided with the mobilization of large-scale quantitative studies which seek to examine what impact contemporary self-reliance models make on refugees' welfare outcomes (e.g., Betts et al. 2018, 2019a, 2019b; DANIDA and UNHCR 2019; Samuel Hall 2018). Among these reports' major findings is the fact that self-reliance policies do not necessarily lead to self-reliance outcomes, despite being heavily marketed as being 'ground-breaking' and having the potential to transform refugee livelihoods and decrease the need for international donor funding (Betts et al. 2019a).

While self-reliance has been marketed in the policy realm as a key mechanism to catalyze the shift from care-and-maintenance based aid towards long-term development approaches to protracted refugee situations (PRS), the academic realm has been enthralled with a key question: what *is* self-reliance and what interests does such a policy ultimately serve? Easton-Calabria and Omata (2018) have argued that self-reliance is largely shaped by the interest of international donors that aim to create cost-effective exit strategies for PRS. Others have pointed out that the fascination with self-reliance represents the convergence between humanitarian and development agendas (Oliver and Boyle 2019) or the responsibilization of refugees who, through the discourse of self-reliance, become self-governing subjects responsible for their own successes and more importantly, their own failures (Ilcan and Rygiel 2015).

The continued relevance of this line of academic inquiry is evidenced by the publication of the 2020 Journal of Refugee Studies Special Issue, which focused on refugee self-reliance and entrepreneurship from a critical perspective. Although the concept has been examined critically, current approaches and analyses lack a strong metatheoretical basis which illuminates how self-reliance is discursively constructed. In particular, given its prevalence in policy documents and academic journals, self-reliance would benefit from a closer analysis of the role that texts play in producing (and reproducing) its meaning. It is with this focus on textuality in mind that this paper draws on post-structuralist thought, notably Jacques Derrida's work on deconstruction, to critically examine self-reliance's discursive production.

Derrida's work on hospitality has been influential in Refugee Studies (see Brun 2010; Darling 2009; Rozakou 2012), however, his iteration of deconstruction has remained marginally explored. As will be elaborated in the subsequent chapter, deconstruction questions the relationship between text and meaning and demonstrates how concepts are constructed not by what they are, but by what they are not, or simply put, in relation to other, often opposing, terms. As such, the analytical focus is on binary oppositions and how self-reliance is constructed by virtue of this relationship to juxtaposed terms. The subject of inquiry is not only which oppositions exist in a given text but how the hierarchies that are created through terms have political implications, which impact refugees' lived experiences. Deconstructive approaches have been taken up in Development Studies; however, such a theoretical approach has not been applied in relation to the concept of refugee self-reliance. Given self-reliance's ubiquity, a Derridean approach is particularly apt. As such, this paper asks: what does a deconstructive reading of self-reliance reveal?

Methods and approach

My approach to this question is twofold: 1) to examine self-reliance at a metaconceptual level, and 2) to apply a deconstructive approach to a particularly relevant case study: the Kakuma Refugee Camp and the Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement in Turkana County, Kenya. Kakuma has been researched extensively both in quantitative (e.g., Alix-Garcia et al. 2018; Betts et al. 2018, 2019a, 2019b; IFC 2018; Sanghi et al. 2016) and qualitative capacities (e.g., Aukot 2003; Jansen 2016; Lindley 2011; Oka 2014; Rodgers 2020). The prevalence of Turkana County as a research site is evidenced by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' (UNHCR) official visitors guide for Kakuma and Kalobeyei (UNHCR 2018d), which contains key information for journalists, filmmakers, researchers and other visitors. While there is a vast body of academic and non-academic literature on refugee dynamics in Kenya, it may not seem to be a typical case study for self-reliance. This is due to the country's reputation as a restrictive host, having limited refugees' right to move and work since it started hosting refugees in the 1990s (Lindley 2011). In contrast, most critical

approaches to self-reliance in East Africa have focused on analyzing the sustainability of Uganda's self-reliance strategy (Hovil 2018; Kaiser 2005; Krause 2013, 2016; Meyer 2006).

However, the recent establishment of the Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement presents an opportunity to explore the iteration of self-reliance in the Kenyan context. The Kalobeyei settlement was established in 2016 just a few kilometers from Kakuma and has been articulated as a shift away from encampment and care-and-maintenance aid programs, which have been key features of refugeehood in Kenya (Milner 2009). The settlement's primary objective is to foster self-reliance outcomes for refugees and the local Turkana host community through a variety of market-based opportunities (Betts et al. 2019b). An abundance of key policy documents have articulated Kalobeyei as Kenya's "new approach" to hosting refugees, particularly in relation to Kakuma's "old approach". This juxtaposition of the two sites is relevant for a Derridean analysis, which focuses on binaries. In addition, evaluation reports on 'the Kalobeyei model' have emerged recently which question its effectiveness and long-term sustainability (Betts et al. 2019b, 2020b; O'Callaghan et al. 2019; Samuel Hall 2018). It is for these reasons that the case of Kakuma and Kalobeyei is particularly well-suited for a deconstructive analysis of self-reliance.

It is important to outline that the deconstructive approach that I propose here cannot be divorced from its political implications. While Derrida's work has been criticized for not adequately addressing social relations of power (cited in Chouliaraki 2008:16), the concept of deconstruction has been taken up by a group of scholars who assert that deconstruction is a highly political tool. For example, in *Derrida and the Political*, Beardsworth (1996: xi) argues that "every strategy in which Derrida's thought is engaged carries political implications." While Derrida did not explicitly engage with politics until he wrote *Spectres of Marx* (1994), the context of structuralism in which his philosophical approach was articulated makes the origins of his work inherently political. This observation requires a distinction to be made between "politics" and "the political": in Derrida's work the former refers to his engagement with political ideas and texts while the latter refers to the *implications* of his ideas more broadly, regardless of their association to political ideas.

The political implications of deconstruction have been taken up by Marxist, Feminist, and post-colonial scholars who have incorporated Derrida's thought into their respective disciplines. Martin McQuillan (cited in Hirst 2015: 17), for example, suggests that deconstruction can be conceptualized as a form of 'textual activism': "an intervention takes place (a textual activism) which produces the movement, history and becoming of a necessary political analysis which links the political to critical thought today." In line with McQuillan, I articulate deconstruction as an inherently political act within the context of this paper, and I seek to examine what such an approach can reveal about self-reliance.

It is important to note that in essence, this paper is concerned with how self-reliance has been articulated within the international refugee regime. Since the entirety of this project is effectively an attempt to examine how self-reliance has been defined and constructed, I decline to include a formal definition of the term. As such, I treat 'refugee self-reliance' as an essentially contested concept (Gallie 1955), in line with Easton-Calabria (2018). Through the analysis that follows, I focus on the shortcomings of policies that, at first glance, have self-reliance as their primary objective. The lack of definitional clarity of many key terms within the refugee regime and its associated academic discipline, as well as the existence of stark binaries between key concepts, make Derrida's work on deconstruction highly valuable to better understand the discipline's ontological underpinnings.

Deconstructing self-reliance both at the conceptual level and within the context of Kakuma and Kalobeyei requires an understanding of how this concept is articulated in key policy documents both at the global and the regional level. In order to do so, I conducted a qualitative, deconstruction-informed analysis of primary and secondary literature related to self-reliance, as well as Kakuma and Kalobeyei. Primary resources examined at the conceptual level include various reports, guidelines and documents produced by UNHCR which implicitly or explicitly refer to self-reliance. While these documents are also useful in relation to the case study, additional texts produced by Government of Turkana County (GoTC, the Government of Kenya (GoK) and international organizations were consulted in relation to Kakuma and Kalobeyei. The leading policy documents deconstructed in Chapters 3 and 4 are UNHCR's *Handbook for Self Reliance* (2005a) and the Kalobeyei Integrated Socio-Economic Development Plan (KISEDP, 2018), respectively. In addition, I consulted secondary literature related to self-reliance in a broad and theoretical sense and also more specific publications on Kenya as a refugee host.

A limitation of this paper is that its focus on the deconstruction of policy documents does not take into account the agency and experiences of refugees in defining self-reliance. This has been highlighted by Easton-Calabria (2018: 349) who calls for more extensive qualitative research into how refugees themselves conceptualize self-reliance. Such an approach would address the Eurocentric gaze which positions the voice of academics and policy makers as central in discussions on self-reliance and refugee livelihoods more broadly. While in-depth qualitative research was not feasible with the limited time and resources available for this project, this paper seeks to question self-reliance discourses and create space for more holistic conceptualizations of the concept, which take into account the perspective of various refugee populations. In doing so, I reiterate Easton-Calabria's call for more refugee centered research, which will only enrich the discipline and its associated practical outcomes for those who have been displaced. A second limitation is that, due to pandemic related library closures, this paper relies exclusively on electronic resources and other open-source materials.

Finally, I reject the view that since deconstruction highlights the unstable and changing nature of language, words ultimately have no meaning. Instead, I argue that the strength of deconstruction is that it acknowledges the varied interpretations of a single text that can occur based on the positionality of the author and the context within which the text reveals itself. It is not my intention to provide a dominant account of things but to offer one alternative interpretation of self-reliance which assists us in undoing the hegemonic idea of self-reliance as an apolitical goal for refugees. In addition, it is not my intention to undermine livelihoods initiatives but to cast doubt on who they are intended to serve, and the interests that are taken into account when they are conceptualized. As such, my research is not merely an academic exercise. Rather, my hope is that through interrogating the concept of self-reliance and its operationalization, this paper will highlight how such policies can be improved to be more refugee centered.

Argument and outline

My main contention in this paper is that self-reliance is an inherently undecidable term which is embedded in a deeper system of binary oppositions within the refugee regime and its associated academic discipline. The meaning of self-reliance is thus constructed *relationally*: it is defined by what it is and what it is not with reference to key terms such as: dependency, vulnerability, resilience, burden/benefit discourse, and the idea of entrepreneurship. In Derridean terms, while it is an undecidable term, its relationship with hierarchical oppositions simultaneously makes it logocentric, meaning that it is unequivocally accepted as a feasible and desirable policy objective. The political

implication of this logocentric power is that self-reliance discourse can be mobilized or exploited by a variety of actors in order to suit their interests and concerns. In the case of Kalobeyei, referring to self-reliance in key policy documents such as KISEDP has enabled the promotion of a regional development strategy which sees refugees as agents of development. The outcome has been the financing and promotion of a programme which is not protection-oriented or genuinely committed to refugees' integration in Kenya. This conclusion demonstrates the problematic nature of promoting self-reliance as a panacea when it fails to acknowledge key issues that refugees face in exile, such as rights infringements. Overall, I propose the need to revisit the concept of self-reliance and advocate for a more holistic conceptualization of the term, which includes non-economic and specifically legal dimensions.

This paper proceeds as follows. In Chapter 2, I introduce Derrida's concept of deconstruction and its connection to the political. I highlight three Derridean terms as particularly relevant to this paper: *différance*, undecidability and logocentrism. I then explore how deconstruction has been utilized in the post-development canon and make the case for a Derridean, text-based analysis of self-reliance. In Chapter 3, I deconstruct the concept of self-reliance on a meta-conceptual level by focusing on how it has been conceptualized and articulated in UNHCR policy documents. I demonstrate that self-reliance is upheld by four key binary oppositions which ultimately make it simultaneously an undecidable yet logocentric term. The chapter concludes by briefly exploring the implications of self-reliance's logocentrism. Chapter 4 then moves to examine self-reliance within the context of the Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement in Turkana County, Kenya. I explore Kalobeyei's discursive construction and highlight the role that Kakuma has played in legitimating it as a "new approach". Though not inherently binary oppositions, the creation of Kalobeyei has necessitated the re-framing of Kakuma as an "old approach". The latter half of the chapter returns to exploring the political implications of self-reliance's logocentrism within the context of the case study. I argue that in the case of KISEDP, self-reliance's logocentrism has enabled its political mobilization in order to promote Turkana County's economic development, which is led by refugees. However, self-reliance's logocentrism obscures the fact that KISEDP does not adequately address refugee protection concerns, nor does it represent a meaningful attempt at local integration in Kenya. In my conclusion, I will critically revisit the question of what Derrida, and deconstruction more broadly, can contribute to critical understandings of self-reliance and to Refugee Studies more broadly. I will also outline the practical and theoretical implications of my argument and make some suggestions as to what a broadened conception of self-reliance can look like.

2 Theoretical framework

This chapter seeks to introduce deconstruction and the key concepts that inform the analysis that follows in subsequent chapters. First, I will introduce Derrida's idea of deconstruction and its connection to the political. Then, I will demonstrate that deconstruction has been of crucial importance in Development Studies, specifically within the body of work referred to as post-development literature. Finally, I will outline what deconstruction can offer the study of self-reliance.

Derrida and defining deconstruction

Deconstruction is a complex term which, in line with Derrida's philosophy, does not have any stable, authoritative and singular definition. When asked how to define deconstruction in 1985, Derrida responded: "What deconstruction is not? Everything, of course. What is deconstruction? Nothing, of course" (Derrida 1985). While deconstruction is undoubtedly a complex term, this paper's approach is to 1) outline a broad conceptualization of the tenants of a deconstructive approach, and 2) introduce the concepts of *différance*, undecidability and logocentrism which will inform the subsequent empirical chapters.

Deconstruction is a process that occurs when reading texts slowly, paying particular attention to their "rhetorical strategies and ideological investments" (Culler 2007: Preface). As explained by Culler (2007: Preface), "deconstruction arises in philosophy as reading of philosophical texts against the grain of the philosophical tradition, contesting its hierarchical binary oppositions by exploring how they are already deconstructed – shown to be constructions – by the texts that assert or depend on them." The process of undoing a text is something that happens when you look close enough, according to Derrida, and not something that requires a strict methodological approach.

According to Critchley (2014: 23), deconstruction is best described as a process of double reading which first repeats the dominant interpretation and then, in a subsequent reading, opens up the text to the blind spots within the dominant interpretation. Veltmeyer (2001: 600) refers to deconstruction as the recognition that "language consists of relations among arbitrary signs whose meanings are defined by the differences that set them apart from one another." A Derridean approach is to see a text as a "limitless network of differentially ordered signs which is not preceded by any meaning, structure or *eidos* but itself constitutes each of these"; this enables its deconstruction to take place (Critchley 2014: 38). The idea that meaning is not fixed but inherently relational is at the core of deconstruction and consequently, this paper.

Deconstruction, therefore, offers an alternative reading of a text but does not provide an alternative that is meant to be hegemonic. Instead, it reveals a singular counter-narrative that is informed by the context and the positionality of the author. It emphasizes that every word is made up of an absence rather than a presence, meaning that it carries within it other concepts that readers are aware of as being different from the term being described. From a Derridean perspective, language is seen as an interconnected web of terms through which a plurality of meanings is constructed.

In the 1980s and 1990s, deconstruction became increasingly influential in humanities and social sciences as it enabled skepticism about objectivity and encouraged "a critique of categories taken as natural" (Culler 2007: Preface). For this reason, while Derrida has claimed in his own work that deconstruction is not a method and cannot be made into one (Derrida 1985), Feminist, post-colonial, post-Marxist scholars and others have drawn on his thought to inform their own work within their respective disciplines (for example Butler 1990, 1993; Laclau and Mouffe 1995; Spivak 1999). In terms of Refugee Studies, Derrida's approach illuminates the ambiguities that exist within the social and political world and how language plays a crucial role in ultimately privileging certain refugee populations over others.

One perspective that is particularly valuable to this paper is the body of literature that discusses Derrida's work and its relation to the political. While philosophers who accuse Derrida's work of nihilism will disagree with my approach, I align myself with those who have attempted to examine the relationship between deconstruction and politics (e.g., Beardsworth 1996; Hirst 2015; Peters and Biesta 2009; Ryan 1982; Zuckert 1991). To reiterate, I am not referring to Derrida's writings that

engage with politics such as *Spectres of Marx* (1994), but rather, the political implications of adopting a deconstructive approach.

I follow Zuckert (1991: 336) in arguing that the deconstruction of texts is essentially and emphatically a political act. In exploring the relationship between Derrida's thought and politics, Zuckert (1991: 336) argues that because deconstructive readings and writings constitute an entirely new conceptualization of "the world," deconstruction "necessarily has political consequences." Zuckert (1991: 338) emphasizes that the deconstructionist critic focuses on the "fundamental instability of meaning at the core of every text." Such an approach goes beyond Derrida's work as a contribution to philosophical thought and instead opens up the possibility of deconstruction lending itself to a radical politics which subverts the dominant interpretation of texts (Hirst 2015). From this perspective, it is impossible to maintain that deconstruction is a strictly philosophical concept which is divorced from the political realm. Deconstruction necessarily has political consequences. The value of such an approach will be further developed at the end of this chapter.

Key terms: *Différance*, undecidability and logocentrism

Throughout his writings, Derrida uses a range of terms to express the idea that conceptual closure, or a reduction to a singular meaning, is impossible. Two key terms from Derrida's work are particularly helpful within the context of this paper and are related to one another: *différance* and undecidability. *Différance* is a neologism developed by Derrida based on the French verb *différer*, which translates as both 'to defer' and 'to differ' in English. By using the term *différance*, Derrida is referring to the dual spatial and temporal aspects of language. As best explained by Critchley (2014: 35):

> différer *in the sense of 'to defer' means that something is different from something else; it has a spatial sense and refers to the non-identical relations between phenomena.* Différer *in the sense of 'to defer' means to postpone the completion of an act; it thus has a temporal meaning, conveyed by the verbs 'to delay', or 'to put off.'*

In essence, *différance* demonstrates how meaning is always deferred and part of a constant process of signification (Norris 2002: 32). As a concept, its own instability provides an illustrative example of this process of deferral and difference at play (Norris 2002: 32).

If *différance* refers to the process by which meaning is constructed through text, then a related but less known Derridean term, *undecidability*, refers to the inherently unstable nature of texts themselves. According to Derrida, undecidability "[is] what preceded and therefore made possible the production of any of the determining meanings that then had to be 'decided' for meaning to unfold in any particular reading" (Bates 2005: 4). Laclau and Mouffe (1985), for example, take undecidability as the starting point to their post-Marxist deconstruction as they argue that it is structural undecidability that enables hegemony to be established when a decision on the text's meaning is made. "The multiplicity of meaning," as Bates (2005: 4) calls it, thus emerges not from lexical richness but from the formal praxis of undecidability.

The political implications of undecidability are evident in Derrida's later work in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s in which he began to explore the political and ethical implications of undecidability rather than simply describing the unstable nature of texts (Bates 2005: 5). As Critchley (2014: 199) has argued, demonstrating that a certain dominant political perspective, or hegemony in Laclau and Mouffe's terms, is based on a set of undecidables is a crucial step "in the

subversion of that perspective's claim to legitimacy." Deconstruction, then, is the practice that demonstrates that there is no way one meaning that could be given some privileged status over other terms (Bates 2005: 4). Ultimately, deconstruction can act as a powerful means of political analysis which illuminates how one particular meaning of an undecidable term, such as self-reliance, becomes hegemonic (Critchley 2014: 199).

The final term that is relevant to this paper is Derrida's notion of logocentrism. Logocentrism is a key term Derrida uses in his writings to describe the orientation of philosophy toward an order of meaning where, in oppositions such as positive/negative or presence/absence, "the superior term belongs to the logos and is a higher presence; the inferior term marks a fall" (Culler 2007: 93). In other words, logocentrism "assumes the priority of the first term and conceives the second in relation to it, as a complication, a negation, a manifestation, or a disruption of the first" (Culler 2007: 93). Although Derrida's discussion of logocentrism is primarily focused on the nature of philosophy and literary texts, Manzo has demonstrated how logocentrism can be a useful concept to understand development discourses. Building on Derrida's thought, Manzo (1991: 8) provides a somewhat modified definition of logocentrism which highlights the imposition of a hierarchy in Development Studies:

> *this term describes a disposition to impose hierarchy when encountering familiar and uncritically accepted dichotomies between West and East, North and South, modern and traditional, core and periphery, rational and emotional, male and female and so on. The first term in such oppositions is conceived as a higher reality, belonging to the realm of the logos, or pure and invariable presence in need of no explanation. The other term is then defined solely in relation to the first, the sovereign subject, as an inferior or derivative form.*

Manzo (1991: 8-9) has demonstrated that the prevalence of logocentric thinking in Development Studies explains why counter-discourses are not taken seriously: "anyone who rejects the logic of autonomy and growth as developmental objectives is assumed to be privileging their opposites, dependency, and stagnation, and is considered 'crazy.'" In terms of its political implications, Manzo (1991: 9) demonstrates that "it is not simply a question of reversing the hierarchy but of demonstrating what is at stake politically in the production and maintenance of that same dichotomy." She highlights the discourse of modernization theory as one example of a logocentric disposition and uses the example of 'First World' and 'Third World' to demonstrate that in Development Studies, the former represents the ideal model which the latter must aspire to (Manzo 1991: 14).

Similarly, Escobar discusses the logocentrism of modernity in *Encountering Development* (1995) and exposes the arbitrary nature of key concepts in Development Studies such as 'the South' and 'less developed' countries, in an attempt to deconstruct development discourse.

Deconstructive approaches in Development Studies

The theoretical framework I employ in this paper draws not only on Derrida but also on post-development literature. Beginning in the 1990s, the post-structuralist approaches formulated by French philosophes, notably Foucault, spread into the study of development. This approach, which became known as 'post-development', sought to problematize the idea of development both at the level of its discourse and practice (Veltmeyer 2001: 608). Without homogenizing the variety of post-development texts that have been written since the 1990s, a common thread that runs throughout the work of post-development theorists is a commitment to demystifying and discrediting the idea of

development through its deconstruction and ultimately dismantling the practice, which they see as embedded in broader structures of power and coercion (Veltmeyer 2001: 609).

Furthermore, many post-development texts have examined development discourse within the context of a particular policy area or country. Examples of this include Ferguson's (1994) work on Lesotho, Escobar's (1995) work on Colombia, and Mitchell's (1991) work on Egypt. Despite their distinct cultural contexts, all three of these works examine how development as a discourse constructs objects, problems and the contexts within which 'solutions' are thus 'applied' by states and international organizations.

Post-structuralist approaches have been prevalent in Development Studies, however, they have rarely taken Derrida's work as a starting point. According to Pincock et al. (2020: 19), post-development literature mainly adopts a Foucauldian approach, "being concerned with how institutional discourse constitutes the subject position of aid recipients, reinforcing power asymmetry." Notwithstanding interpreting his work in various different ways, a Foucauldian approach in post-development is evident in the aforementioned works of Ferguson (1994) and Escobar (1995), as well as Scott's (1998) study on the emergence of the state and Duffield's (2001) discussion of 'sustainable development'. While these texts are seminal within the post-development canon, Pincock et al. (2020: 19) draw our attention to the various risks that are associated with adopting a Foucauldian approach.

First, Foucauldian approaches to development risk perpetuating the local/global binary whereby the former is romanticized, and the latter is demonized (Pincock et al. 2020: 19). I mitigate this risk by adopting Derrida's skepticism of categories, which enables me to probe the binaries that exist in self-reliance discourse rather than reifying them. Second, and perhaps most relevant to this paper, is the fact that Foucauldian approaches to post-development "tend to underplay the role of interests" (Pincock et al. 2020: 20). Derrida alone does not necessitate a discussion of interests, nevertheless, my interpretation of deconstruction as an inherently political act enables an examination of the implications of how language is strategically constructed by actors. This will be the focus of Chapter 3, which will explore how self-reliance's logocentrism contributes to its mobilization in policy.

Post-development takes the definition of development as a discursive construct, which is how I understand the concept of self-reliance. However, this paper's interest in how the oppositional nature of language informs meaning necessitates employing Derrida as a theoretical starting point. Rather than deriving assumptions from Foucault's work on knowledge and power, I am interested in de-stabilizing discourse by exposing binary oppositions or dichotomies in texts. In proposing Derrida as an analytical starting point, I do not negate Foucault's important and relevant contributions to Development Studies or social science more broadly. If Foucault's work tells us that knowledge can act as a form of domination, then Derrida's work is particularly useful in illustrating how that knowledge is constructed *relationally*. Thus, given this paper's focus on self-reliance and how meaning is created through absence, Derrida provides a more apt starting point.

Deconstruction's relevance to self-reliance

Building on the post-development literature surveyed, a deconstructive approach is particularly useful for this paper due to the number of binary oppositions and tensions which arise in textual constructions of self-reliance. As will be developed in the subsequent chapter, self-reliance appears frequently in policy documents despite often not being explicitly, or adequately, defined. Instead, it appears alongside words such as development, dependency, resilience, entrepreneurship and

livelihoods which carry their respective connotations. In aligning myself with the post-development canon, I seek to demonstrate how self-reliance is discursively shaped by other concepts within Refugee Studies and refugee livelihoods research more broadly.

In particular, there are a variety of binaries within Refugee Studies which are central yet seldom adequately probed within the discipline. Key examples of this, some of which will be examined in the subsequent chapter, include Global North/Global South, refugee/forced migrant, self-reliance/dependency, resilience/vulnerability, burden/benefit, and entrepreneur/worker. In fact, as Chimni (1998) notes, the modern refugee regime itself is based on the core binary of those who were specifically considered worthy of protection versus those who did not fall within the Eurocentric definition of the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees (CSR 1951), and thus were not deemed worthy of protection. My observation is not to say that Refugee Studies is uncritical of its ontological underpinnings, but rather that the very binaries that uphold and shape the discipline are often taken for granted and not challenged in a Derridean sense. Therefore, beyond the specific focus on self-reliance, the deconstructive approach this paper employs contributes to a deeper understanding of how the discipline and the key concepts that shape it are structured.

The emphasis on a Derridean deconstructive approach, focusing on *différance*, undecidability and logocentrism, contrasts dominant deconstructive approaches that have informed post-development literature. These concepts are especially relevant for examining self-reliance as it is a term that carries with it a number of connotations which give it weight and influence. While my research revealed that Derridean deconstruction has not explicitly been used in Refugee Studies, a similar approach can be seen in the work of Zetter (1988, 1991, 2007), Malkki (1992, 1996), and Chimni (1993) among others, who question the categorizations which are foundational within the discipline and the refugee regime itself.

Drawing on semiotic theory, Cole (2017: 19) argues that "systems of meaning, determined through social, historical and political contingency, can thus inform the interests that actors wish to pursue even while eluding their powers to shape them." Though her analysis focuses on the "refugee" label, Cole (2017: 19) reminds us that "just as refugees themselves are subjected to a number of connotations, so too is the label and the word itself." Self-reliance similarly carries a number of connotations and by following Zetter (1988, 1991, 2007), I illuminate how linguistic meaning, albeit radically indeterminate at its core, has serious political and practical implications. I focus on the case of the Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement, which is particularly ripe for analysis due to its recent inception and the vast literature associated with refugee livelihoods and self-reliance in Turkana County.

Some post-development scholars adopt the position that the development project should be abandoned entirely and avoided at all costs (Veltmeyer 2001: 609). However, my approach in this paper is not to suggest that self-reliance should be abandoned entirely as I do believe that such a concept can be valuable. For example, promoting self-reliance can support the case for formal economic inclusion in host states and can also play a crucial role in mitigating the psychological impacts of forced displacement, such as the loss of confidence and sense of purpose (Jacobsen and Fratzke 2016: 10). My objective, instead, is to demonstrate how the instability of texts allows different actors to call-upon self-reliance within a variety of contexts in order to suit their interests and concerns, often at the expense of refugees' well-being and rights. In doing so, I illuminate the interests that self-reliance currently serves and suggest broadening the current approach to take into account non-economic dimensions.

While I acknowledge that Derridean deconstruction is typically associated with a close reading of a single philosophical text, this paper's approach is to deconstruct self-reliance as a concept through key policy documents which give it its meaning, both in a general sense and within the context of Kakuma/Kalobeyei. I begin by deconstructing UNHCR's articulation of self-reliance at the global level.

3 Self-reliance deconstructed

This chapter deconstructs the concept of self-reliance by demonstrating that it is defined and upheld by a series of binary oppositions which appear in key UNHCR policy documents. The objective is to analyze four key binaries to argue that self-reliance is simultaneously an undecidable yet logocentric term. This logocentric power hinders the possibility of re-conceptualizing self-reliance in a less individualistic, economic way.

At a cursory glance, self-reliance broadly refers to the process and outcome through which refugees are equipped with the skills to survive and thrive independently of humanitarian assistance. Self-reliance's leading philosophy is the idea that refugees have the skills and potential to "help themselves", if they are enabled to do so (Jacobsen 2005). The outcome of such an approach is expected to be a "triple-win situation for donor states in the North and host countries in the South, as well as refugees themselves" (Krause 2017: 2). As such, some may argue that self-reliance is an apolitical goal that is not linked to any single normative political agenda.

However, emergent literature has demonstrated that self-reliance is deeply entrenched in material and political interests (Easton-Calabria 2018; Easton-Calabria and Omata 2018; Krause and Schmidt 2020). In addition, despite being articulated as a novel and innovative approach, historical research has also demonstrated that developmental approaches to PRS were employed throughout the 20th century (Betts 2009; Crisp 2001; Easton-Calabria 2022; Gorman 1987). With a record number of people displaced in the 21st century, there has been a renewed interest in self-reliance in recent years. Self-reliance has become somewhat of a 'buzz word' among practitioners and global initiatives such as the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF, 2016), which lists "to build refugee self-reliance" as one of its four objectives. Despite continuously being highlighted as a panacea for PRS, it continues to be poorly defined or theorized, and its meaning seldom probed.

The most detailed definition of self-reliance comes from the UNHCR *Handbook for Self-Reliance* (2005a, hereafter 'the Handbook'), which defines it as:

> *the social and economic ability of an individual, a household or a community to meet essential needs (including protection, food, water, shelter, personal safety, health and education) in a sustainable manner and with dignity.* (Book 1: 1).

Although the Handbook provides a useful starting point to understanding how self-reliance is constructed in praxis, subsequent policy documents have overwhelmingly failed to do so. Instead, while maintaining their influence in shaping programmes, self-reliance has often been left inadequately defined despite being referred to repeatedly within the context of livelihoods and economic development. Despite being highlighted in the Handbook, the non-individual, non-economic dimensions of self-reliance have become marginalized in key self-reliance related policy

documents. Instead, emphasis on individual economic independence and contributing to the host country's development has become the main focus.

In recent years, there have been a multitude of academic works which explore the concept of refugee self-reliance. Work by Easton-Calabria and Omata (2018), Skran and Easton-Calabria (2020), Hunter (2009), Krause (2016), Kaiser (2005), Krause and Schmidt (2020), Oliver and Boyle (2019) and Meyer (2006) has critically interrogated both self-reliance policies and the assumptions upon which they are premised. While a rich body of literature regarding self-reliance and its policy implications exists, there remains a need for more critical approaches to understanding what self-reliance *means* within the refugee regime. A textual analysis of how self-reliance is represented is particularly apt given the term's prevalence in policy documents both at the global and the regional levels. As such, this chapter asks: how does self-reliance gain its meaning through text? What are the key concepts that frame or support the notion of self-reliance? Employing a Derridean approach, I propose that self-reliance is an undecidable term which is given meaning in relation to other key terms within Refugee Studies such as: dependency, resilience/vulnerability, burden/benefit, and entrepreneur/worker. While the construction of self-reliance is not limited to the aforementioned terms, this chapter highlights their role in the term's discursive construction.

I take the UNHCR *Handbook for Self-Reliance* (2005a) as my starting point for the analysis that follows. In addition, I draw on key texts which have been foundational in UNHCR's approach to self-reliance, such as *Promoting Livelihoods and Self-Reliance* (2011b), *Encouraging Self-Reliance* (2011a), and *Guide to Market-based Livelihood Interventions for Refugees* (2017a), among others. These texts were selected as they have been particularly influential in informing contemporary articulations of self-reliance in policies and programmes. I begin my analysis by examining four key binaries which shape the idea of self-reliance, beginning with its relationship to 'dependency'.

Self–reliance versus dependency

Self-reliance has little meaning independent from its relationship to the notion of 'dependency'. In particular, the key policy documents examined for this paper are riddled with allusions to self-reliance as the ultimate 'cure' to the problem of refugee 'dependency' on humanitarian aid. The Handbook is the most detailed in stressing that self-reliance is crucial in order to 'avoid dependency':

> *Traditional humanitarian/relief assistance is increasingly viewed as undermining the capacities of individuals to cope with crisis. It leads to* dependency... (UNHCR 2005a Book 1: 2).

Building on this view, the Handbook frames self-reliance and dependency as having a linear relationship where the former is the vehicle through which the prevention or redress of a 'dependency mentality' can be ensured (UNHCR 2005a, Book 2: 65). This idea that dependency, notably on humanitarian aid, is inherently negative and that there is a need to 'undo' the dependency mentality of refugees is highlighted throughout the text and establishes a fundamental 'need' for self-reliance. This linear narrative also features in *Promoting Livelihoods and Self-Reliance* (2011b), which argues that the goal of a self-reliance strategy "is to create a path out of poverty and away from *dependence* on humanitarian aid and to promote an attitudinal shift towards *self-reliance*" (24). The *Evaluation of UNHCR's Livelihoods Strategies and Approaches* (2018b: 23) goes further as it provides a specific example of how this narrative is constructed within the Gambian context: "Prior to 2009, all the refugees were *dependent* on handouts and relief, but as of today the majority are *self-reliant* and have integrated themselves into host societies." These examples demonstrate the

juxtaposition of self-reliance vis-a-vis dependency and how the former is elevated to the realm of the 'logos' in relation to the latter.

While self-reliance is privileged over the notion of dependency, the relationship between the two is mutualistic in terms of how meaning is constructed. In particular, while being a central concept in constructing the necessity of self-reliance, 'dependency' as it is articulated is not defined throughout the examined texts separate from its relationship to self-reliance. Easton-Calabria and Omata (2018: 1463) highlight this relationship between both terms and suggest that while dependency itself is ill defined, it typically refers to "constantly relying on others to make a living, to make decisions and to take action to address challenges." The connotation thus becomes that being individually self-reliant is idealized while being 'dependent' is highly stigmatized.

Although the idea of dependency is stigmatized, some scholars have demonstrated that relying on social networks and capital is crucial for individuals to thrive. Fineman (2006, cited in Easton-Calabria and Omata 2018: 1464) for example, argues that "a state of dependency is a natural part of the human condition," making reference to the complexity of human relationships. Research by Betts et al. (2020a: 81) within the context of the Kalobeyei settlement contributes to Fineman's view by demonstrating that social networks are a central basis for refugee self-reliance in Turkana West. The implications of Betts et al.'s research in Kalobeyei is that current articulations of self-reliance, which are highly individualistic, do not reflect the lived reality of many refugees, who leverage their social assets in order to survive and, in some cases, thrive. This finding thus invites a re-opening of who the "self" in self-reliance refers to and challenges traditional notions of dependency within Development Studies (Manzo 1991).

While dependency in a broad sense is referred to pejoratively throughout UNHCR self-reliance documents, not all forms of dependency are equally stigmatized. More specifically, it is dependency on humanitarian aid, rather than dependency on community, that is judged in UNHCR policy documents (Easton-Calabria and Herson 2020: 58). The policies thus read as: "rely on each other, not on us." This is reflected in the fact that the Handbook highlights "individual, household and community" levels of self-reliance, thus acknowledging the merits of strong social structures and cohesion. Echoing Ferguson (2013: 237), this demonstrates that "the task is not to eliminate dependence but to construct desirable forms of it." Notably, forms of self-reliance that are independent from international donor funding and are instead encouraged for refugees to look towards their own communities for support. Overall, the twin concepts of self-reliance and dependency are mutually constructed through UNHCR policy documents where the former is elevated to the realm of the 'logos', or superiority, and the latter is seen as stigmatized and represents an undesirable state of being for refugees.

Resilience versus vulnerability

Related to the juxtaposition between self-reliance and dependency is the binary opposition of refugee resilience versus vulnerability. Similar to the concept of dependency, vulnerability carries a negative connotation which, as constructed through the text, is presented as a state of being that can only be addressed through self-reliance. For example, the Handbook (UNHCR 2005a, Book 1: 1) argues that "self-reliance, as a programme approach, refers to developing and strengthening livelihoods of persons of concern, and reducing their *vulnerability* and long-term reliance on humanitarian/external assistance." The incompatibility of self-reliance vis-a-vis vulnerability is apparent as the Handbook (UNHCR 2005a, Appendix 1: 130) outlines that "extremely *vulnerable* individuals who are dependent on others for their daily living are not suitable candidates for

microfinance," which is highlighted in the text as a key tool to promote self-reliance. Almost identical language is found in *Promoting Livelihoods and Self-Reliance* (UNHCR 2011b: 15), which defines self-reliance's programmatic approach as "developing and strengthening livelihoods of persons of concern (PoC) and reducing their *vulnerability* and long-term reliance on humanitarian or external assistance." Elsewhere, the lack of livelihoods opportunities is linked to the prevalence of child labour and is said to generally make people vulnerable to exploitation (UNHCR 2011a: 55). The main suggestion in these policy documents is therefore that there is an inherent incompatibility between self-reliance and vulnerability as the former is designed to prevent and address the latter.

By contrast, in recent years self-reliance has been linked to resilience, the logical opposition to vulnerability, within both academic and policy documents (ExCom 2017; Oliver and Boyle 2019; Schmidt and Krause 2020; UNHCR 2017b). Although both terms share great similarities, self-reliance mainly refers to refugees' ability to support themselves while resilience indicates their ability to absorb and respond to difficult situations and crises (Krause and Schmidt 2019: 23). Oliver and Boyle (2019) and Krause and Schmidt (2020) have argued that resilience represents a policy ideal that brings together divergent humanitarian and development agendas. However, even texts that highlight the nexus between self-reliance and resilience, and portray refugees as resilient agents of change, maintain references to vulnerability while doing so (Krause and Schmidt 2020: 29). This relationship between the two terms is evident in various UNHCR documents, such as the *End of Year Report for Syria* (2017b: 103) which makes reference to "*vulnerability* reduction and *resilience* building" for refugees as key to enhancing self-reliance in communities. As Krause and Schmidt (2020: 29) have demonstrated, the maintenance of vulnerability and resilience and self-reliance policies creates a dichotomized meaning which distinguishes between refugees who are resilient and self-reliant versus those who are vulnerable and dependent. Self-reliance becomes aligned with resilient, neoliberal subject individuals who are able to overcome challenges in order to thrive on their own, entirely independent from aid or the notion of vulnerability (Ilcan and Rygiel 2015: 334).

As Omata (2017: 157) notes, while we should recognize refugees as active, capable and resilient actors, over-emphasis on their resilience, agency and capacity will "continue to disguise the flaws of existing humanitarian responses to [PRS]." By contrast, continuing to reference and emphasize refugee vulnerability "prohibits the creation of alternative narratives about refugees who can cope with conditions well without humanitarian aid" (Krause and Schmidt 2020: 30). The tension between categorizing refugees within either of these juxtaposed categories is thus evident, however, the importance of resilience vis-a-vis vulnerability in order to give each term meaning remains crucial within self-reliance literature. In the policy documents analyzed, being vulnerable is framed as an undesirable quality for refugees to have and a state of being that must be mitigated at all costs. Self-reliance is articulated as the ideal remedy to vulnerability. A similar discourse between refugees as burdens or benefits has an analogous effect.

Burdens versus benefits

Related to the notion of resilience versus vulnerability is the dichotomized discourse of refugees as either benefits or burdens to their host communities. Refugees have historically been framed as a burden to the international community, which is evidenced in the Preamble of the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees: "the grant of asylum may place unduly heavy burdens on certain countries" (CSR, 1951). This view of refugees as burdens has endured and is evident in *Promoting Livelihoods and Self-Reliance* (2011: 10), which highlights one of self-reliance's key objectives as "alleviating the burden on government services." Despite dichotomized discourse on whether refugees are a benefit or burden to the host state, which is fraught with methodological and ethical

challenges (see Omata and Weaver 2015; Ruiz and Vargas-Silva 2013), livelihoods research has generally provided 'scattered evidence' on refugees' economic impacts, both on their host states and on their countries of origin (Chambers 1986; Maystadt and Verwimp 2014).

Notwithstanding historically mixed empirical findings, the twin moves of 1) re-framing refugees as benefits to their host communities, and 2) articulating self-reliance as a means to alleviate the burden of host communities, has been central in self-reliance discourses. The former is evident in both academic and policy publications which discuss displacement as an 'opportunity' and highlight how the assets and knowledge refugees bring with them to their host countries make them a benefit, rather than a burden (Dick 2003; Jacobsen 2002; Turk and Garlick 2016; Zetter 2014). The view that refugees are beneficial to host states is articulated in the Handbook: "Refugees and returnees can be agents of economic development locally, benefiting not only themselves but also strengthening the local economy" (Appendix 1: 29). This idea features in a vast range of regional self-reliance policies as well and will consequently be examined in the subsequent chapter in relation to Turkana County.

Secondly, the idea of self-reliance as a means to "alleviate the burden of poor countries of asylum" also features in the introductions of both *Encouraging Self-Reliance* (2011) and *Promoting Livelihoods and Self-Reliance* (2011), making reference to the strain on government services that accompany hosting large numbers of refugees and the situation of host communities who struggle to meet their own needs. While some scholars and practitioners have advocated for a more nuanced understanding of refugees as burdens or benefits (Jacobsen 2002; Gottwald 2015), the dichotomized language has persisted in policy documents which inform UNHCR's approach to self-reliance.

Overall, polarized language between refugees as either burdens or benefits has been core to discussions on self-reliance. More specifically, it is a re-framing of refugees as benefits to the host community which has become central to supporting self-reliance funding and policies. The traditional view of refugees as burdens has simultaneously fallen into the background.

Entrepreneurship versus work

The final concept that is crucial to the construction of self-reliance is entrepreneurship. Specifically, self-reliance is not necessarily promoted through advocating for refugees' right to work in host states, but with emphasis on innovation and through the idea of the 'refugee entrepreneur'. This narrative features throughout UNHCR policy documents related to self-reliance and livelihoods. For example, *Promoting Livelihoods and Self-Reliance* (2011b) argues that UNHCR should "support entrepreneurs and skilled refugees through targeted interventions" (16) and makes references to entrepreneurship training as a way to protect and build human capital (26).

Similar to the construction of self-reliance as a panacea for dependency and vulnerability, entrepreneurship training is articulated as key to "provide a means of livelihood and lead to self-reliance" (UNHCR 2017a: 3). Despite generally being limited to individual economic activities, local entrepreneurship is articulated as having the "potential to expand job opportunities for refugees and host communities, improve services, provide more choices, reduce prices, and contribute to self-reliance" (KISEDP 2018: 6). Overall, self-reliance policies articulate entrepreneurship as a part of a larger self-reliance strategy which is designed to benefit whole communities rather than solely individuals.

In contrast to entrepreneurship, the prominent references to work allude to incentive work schemes, which are a way around restrictive regulatory environments in which refugees reside. An example

of such an approach is Food-For-Work programmes, which feature in Annex 1.13.5 of the Handbook. According to the Handbook (UNHCR 2005a, Appendix 1: 98) Food-for-Work "refers to short temporary employment, where workers receive up to 50% of their remuneration in kind" and the rest in cash. In contrast to entrepreneurship, which is promoted as a desirable way to foster self-reliance for individuals and create economic opportunities for communities, incentive work is often characterized as "volunteering", rather than employment, and continues to carry the connotation of being connected to aid dependency (Morris and Voon 2014: 3).

Betts et al. (2016) argue that innovation drives economic change and highlight refugees' potential for generating new ideas; however, UNHCR's focus on promoting entrepreneurship is not devoid of politics. The decision to promote entrepreneurship is a response to the many constraints on refugees' legal right to work in host countries (Skran and Easton-Calabria 2020; Turner 2015; Werker 2007). The same policy documents which are disproportionately concerned with entrepreneurship and innovation do little to address rights' violations which refugees are subject to in many host states. Rather than explicitly privileging entrepreneurship, it is the lack of recognition of the policy and isolation distortions (Werker 2007) that refugees face which enables a virtual non-discussion of refugees' legal right to work employed or to exercise this right.

Entrepreneurship features as a central term in discussions of self-reliance. Nonetheless, there are limitations on its viability as a strategy for all refugees. The first limitation, as highlighted by Skran and Easton-Calabria (2020), is that entrepreneurship does not necessarily provide a direct path to self-reliance because such efforts always include a high rate of new enterprise failures. This is evident in Omata's (2017: 39) research in Budubaram refugee camp in Ghana, where he observes that camp businesses were not as successful as they appeared, despite UNHCR's tendency to see a causal link between refugees' businesses and their economic prosperity, or self-reliance. The second limitation is related to the generalized view that entrepreneurship is a desirable path toward self-reliance for all refugees, notwithstanding gender, age, or other constraints. In particular, normalizing entrepreneurship as a path towards self-reliance marginalizes those who are not typically able to engage in such activities, such as children, women, the elderly and others who face constraints owing to their identity intersections. The protection implications of emphasizing entrepreneurship over advocating for refugees' legal right to work is that only certain refugees, notably only those who adequately 'perform' entrepreneurship, are highlighted as contributing to the host community while others remain a 'burden.' Furthermore, by promoting entrepreneurship and innovation over the right to work, UNHCR is able to advocate for self-reliance without meaningfully challenging the rights violations that refugees endure when they are not permitted to work. Without such an effort, refugees will unfairly be expected to become self-reliant while living in an environment which continuously restricts them from doing so.

In sum, self-reliance privileges entrepreneurship at the expense of marginalizing refugees' right to work. While the former is praised for heralding innovation and is linked to the image of refugees as benefits to host communities, the latter is reduced to a shallow discussion of incentive work and its associated constraints. UNHCR's characterization thus reifies the idea that it is entrepreneurial skills, rather than integration into local labour markets, that is crucial in order for refugees to "develop a stronger sense of economic independence" (UNHCR 2011a: 58). Consequently, rights protection fades into the distance.

Applying theory

Although formal definitions of self-reliance have been articulated by UNHCR and researchers such as Betts et al. (2020b), from a Derridean perspective self-reliance can be referred to as an inherently undecidable term. Its undecidability is evident in the fact that it is part of a complex chain of signification in relation to the key binaries and terms highlighted in this chapter. As such, self-reliance carries with it the connotations of resilience, refugees as benefits and entrepreneurship, all of which have been demonstrated in this chapter. By contrast, self-reliance is presented in the same policy documents in juxtaposition to the logical oppositions of the aforementioned terms: vulnerability, refugees as burdens and non-entrepreneurial work. This chain of signification by which opposing elements, or terms, relate to one another is an example of *différance,* which is the foundation of self-reliance's undecidability.

Furthermore, the key binaries and terms highlighted in this chapter represent an example of logocentrism in discussions of refugee self-reliance. For example, the twin concepts of self-reliance and dependence are mutually constructed through UNHCR policy documents whereby the former is elevated to the realm of the 'logos', or superiority, and the latter is seen as stigmatized and represents an undesirable state of being for refugees. This is the case for resilience/vulnerability, burden/benefit and entrepreneur/worker as well, where the former term is found in text alongside references to self-reliance, which is articulated as the solution. The creation of a hierarchy, and thus the pervasiveness of logocentric thinking in the field of self-reliance, explains why alternative conceptualizations of self-reliance are not taken more seriously.

Similar to Manzo's (1991: 8) discussion of Development Studies, anyone who rejects the logic of resilience, refugees as benefits and entrepreneurship is assumed to be privileging their opposites of vulnerability, refugees as burdens and incentive work, and is considered "crazy", in Manzo's terms. The effect of this logocentric power is that there is hesitation in terms of re-opening what self-reliance can and should mean conceptually and in practice. Instead, any reference to 'self-reliance' becomes unequivocally accepted as a desirable, leaving little room to critically examine which interests self-reliance policies truly serve. In particular, self-reliance's logocentrism allows us to overlook the fact that its contemporary articulations overwhelmingly represent it as an individualistic and economically driven concept. Since self-reliance is a core policy objective which shapes praxis and the lived experiences of refugees, there remains a serious need to re-conceptualize it in a more holistic way.

The Derridean analysis presented in this chapter illuminates how language has been crucial in giving self-reliance its meaning and connotations. In particular, employing a deconstructive approach has allowed me to demonstrate the active role that policy documents play in constructing self-reliance through reiterating key ideas and concepts. Not only does self-reliance gain its meaning through binary oppositions in text, but self-reliance is itself a logocentric term which carries power. Policy documents maintain self-reliance's logocentrism, while its weight subsequently shapes interests and policies. In sum, Derrida's work on deconstruction has illuminated the structural conditions within texts that enable self-reliance to become a logocentric term. This power subsequently influences how policies are rationalized and implemented, which will be the focus of the following chapter.

4 The case of the Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement

This chapter focuses on self-reliance within the context of the Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement in Turkana County, Kenya. I begin by exploring the discursive construction of Kalobeyei through its relationship with Kakuma and then move to examining the political implications of self-reliance's logocentrism. I argue that self-reliance's logocentrism has made it value-laden which, in the case of KISEDP, has enabled its political mobilization in order to promote regional development in Turkana County. Consequently, while the approach has attracted donor funding and gained legitimacy, its logocentrism obscures its major shortcomings, such as protection and integration concerns.

Despite hosting hundreds of thousands of refugees since the early 1990s, Kenya is not known to be a generous and rights protective host (Betts et al. 2020b). A notable feature of its approach to PRS is its 'encampment' policy, which severely infringes upon refugees' rights to work and move freely (Carrier 2017; Lindley 2011; Milner 2009). In 2015, UNCHR announced the creation of the Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement, which sought to integrate the economic and social lives of both refugees and the Turkana host population. The conceptualization and implementation of the Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement is informed by KISEDP, a 122-page policy document which outlines the settlement's rationale, objectives and intended outcomes. Most importantly, KISEDP articulates its primary objective as promoting the self-reliance of both refugees and the Turkana host community through co-habitation in the settlement. Notable features of the approach include "cash-based interventions to meet housing, nutritional, and other material needs, specific training to support the entrepreneurial potential of refugees and hosts, and agricultural projects to promote dryland farming and household 'kitchen gardens'" (Betts et al. 2019b). It is important to note that while KISEDP highlights self-reliance for refugees (and hosts) as its key objective, it fails to define what exactly this entails.

Despite being located only 3.5 kilometers from the older Kakuma camps, Kalobeyei has been articulated by UNHCR, GoK and GoTC as a radical departure from Kenya's traditional approach to PRS which has the potential to be scaled up globally, depending on the model's success (Betts et al. 2020b). While Kalobeyei is aligned with policy frameworks and strategies at the international level, such as the CRRF, it is important to note that the settlement's creation was also necessitated by growing concerns of overcrowding in many parts of Kakuma, due to the sustained rate of new arrivals from neighbouring countries (UNHCR 2012). As such, Kalobeyei serves the dual purpose of creating more living space for refugees and serving as an 'innovation hub' for programs to promote self-reliance. However, the discursive construction of Kalobeyei as a radical new approach relies on the existence of the older Kakuma camps, which makes Derrida's thought on binary oppositions an apt analytical tool.

The previous chapter demonstrated that self-reliance's logocentrism is value-laden within the international refugee regime. In particular, its discursive construction through a series of binary oppositions has given self-reliance a positive connotation of something that should be aspired to and prioritized. In other words, self-reliance has become unequivocally accepted as the dominant approach to PRS. Taking this idea further, this chapter asks: What are the implications of self-reliance's logocentrism in praxis? In the case of Turkana County, this chapter argues that self-reliance's logocentrism has made it ripe for political mobilization, or even exploitation, in order to advance particular interests or concerns. At first glance, KISEDP is articulated principally as a self-reliance strategy for refugees, in line with the international refugee regime's concerns and interests. However, a deconstructive reading of KISEDP reveals that by making reference to self-reliance discourse, the policy has been able to mobilize international donor funding in order to ultimately

promote regional development in Turkana County. Furthermore, self-reliance's logocentrism has obscured KISEDP's major shortcomings to address the situation of refugees in Turkana County, particularly with respect to protection and integration.

The structure of this chapter differs from the previous empirical chapter as it is split into two sections. First, I demonstrate how Kalobeyei is constructed as a "new approach" and is legitimated through its relationship to Kakuma, which becomes a key point of comparison. I draw primarily on KISEDP as well as two key reports produced by the World Bank (WB) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) which highlight Kakuma as a vibrant economy under otherwise restrictive conditions. Employing my theoretical approach, the latter half of the chapter engages in a deconstructive reading of KISEDP in order to highlight an alternative narrative that the text illuminates. More specifically, I challenge the idea that KISEDP is truly a self-reliance strategy for refugees and instead demonstrate that it is a regional development strategy that views refugees as the primary agents of development. However, by making various references to self-reliance, which is a logocentric term, KISEDP has been used to leverage donor funding and legitimacy. Lastly, I explore the implications of self-reliance's logocentrism by arguing that it obscures KISEDP's major shortcomings in its ability to improve outcomes for refugees. The chapter concludes by reiterating that the way self-reliance is constructed has practical implications on refugees' well-being and their potential to live full and rights protected lives.

Kakuma versus Kalobeyei

The construction of Kalobeyei as an 'innovative settlement' that promotes refugee self-reliance is only possible through its relationship with the older Kakuma camps. This is evident both in policy documents and through comments made by UNHCR officials. In terms of policy, KISEDP makes several references throughout the report to the fact that Kalobeyei represents a "new model" by referring to it as a "settlement" or an "integrated settlement". By contrast, Kakuma is articulated as a "refugee camp" or "camp" more broadly. UNHCR has also been active in constructing a narrative of difference between Kakuma and Kalobeyei, where the former represents the old, care-and-maintenance based approach to PRS while the latter is a new, innovative and self-reliance focused settlement:

> *There is the* old part *of Kakuma. And then there is the* new part*, called Kalobeyei. And that's something we really wanted to highlight here. It represents our new approach that is going global to refugee response* (Fleming, cited in Betts et al. 2020b: 190).

The labelling of Kakuma as a camp, or a series of camps, and Kalobeyei as an integrated settlement may appear to simply be a semantic shift, however it is not insignificant. While a settlement and a camp are not necessarily binary concepts, the way in which Kakuma and Kalobeyei are constructed crystallizes their difference. In particular, through this type of discourse, Kakuma becomes associated with the antiquated, care-and-maintenance based programs that support vulnerable refugees while Kalobeyei becomes associated with self-reliance and praised for its 'innovative projects' (UNHCR 2020). This is particularly noteworthy due to the fact that prior to KISEDP's inception, Kakuma was referred to as a site of innovation and articulated as a vibrant economic site. This is evidenced by both the WB and IFC reports which demonstrate how the refugee presence in Turkana County presents an economic development opportunity for the County. In their report *Yes in my Backyard?* (YIMBY), the WB characterizes Kakuma as a "vibrant economy" (Sanghi et al. 2016: 3,12,55) and discusses the fact that there was an "uproar among the host community" when there was talk about closing the camp in the early 2000s (3). The IFC (2018: 86) similarly supports

this image by articulating Kakuma as a 'marketplace': "Kakuma presents a significant informal economy built on entrepreneurship. Refugees are active as employers, consumers, and producers." Ironically, it was these very same reports that were key in the story of conceptualizing the creation of KISEDP.

The development of Kalobeyei, however, has necessitated its articulation as a "new approach" and its superiority in contrast to Kakuma, which has been reduced to synonymous with Kenya's old approach. This idea of Kakuma and Kalobeyei being twin narratives is in line with Rodgers' (2019) observations as he has argued that the "dissociation of the security and self-reliance narratives in Kenya…have been anchored spatially in Dadaab and Kakuma/Kalobeyei." I add to this finding by demonstrating that KISEDP has necessitated a further dichotomization between Kakuma and Kalobeyei, which is how Kalobeyei gains its positive connotations, and specifically, relationship to self-reliance.

Despite KISEDP's privileging of Kalobeyei and the so-called "new approach" in contrast to Kakuma, recent research and evaluation reports have de-bunked the myth of difference. In particular, while one of the two main building blocks of KISEDP (2018: X) is that it "aims to create an enabling environment", evidence from independent research and evaluation reports has cast serious doubt on Kalobeyei's efficacy as a "new approach". For example, Betts et al. (2020b: 201) have noted that refugees in both Kakuma and Kalobeyei "have the same regulatory environment" with regards to restrictions on movement and the right to work, while O'Callaghan et al. (2019: 11) highlight that KISEDP's current budget does not include provision for basic needs. Lastly, although a key component of KISEDP is to support agriculture and livestock activities, a joint evaluation conducted by the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) and UNHCR (2019: 16) has highlighted the fact that water supplies for such activities are still a major limitation.

Overall, despite being articulated as a new and novel approach to PRS, in contrast to Kakuma, research findings suggest that Kalobeyei faces serious obstacles which hinder its ability to foster a so-called 'enabling environment' to promote refugee self-reliance. Nevertheless, Kakuma's existence and its reduction to an example of Kenya's "old approach" has been key in Kalobeyei's articulation. Not only has meaning between Kakuma and Kalobeyei been deferred, in a Derridean sense, but the difference between the two sites has also been consolidated through their physical distance from one another. As such, it literally embodies Derrida's idea of *différance,* as he discusses "deferring meaning" in a spatial sense.

Kalobeyei is still a relatively new project which has the potential to improve over the coming years, however, the consequences of articulating it as a site for self-reliance to flourish must not be overlooked. In particular, highlighting Kalobeyei as an enabling environment responsibilizes refugees by directing "the focus away from governmental measures for changing structural problems towards the individual's responsibility to finding solutions", or in this case, the individual's responsibility for fostering self-reliance (Krause and Schmidt 2020: 36). Consequently, KISEDP reifies the idea that self-reliance is an attainable and desirable goal for all refugees which, as has been explored at length in the previous chapter, is not the case. This is particularly concerning since while the initial phase called for the relocation of up to 60,000 refugees from Kakuma, in reality Kalobeyei received new arrivals fleeing outbreaks of violence in South Sudan and Burundi (Betts et al. 2020b: 194). Not only were these new arrivals suddenly part of Kenya's self-reliance approach but they were expected to do so while facing additional obstacles having been newly displaced. Therefore, establishing the exception as the norm within a continually restrictive environment sets refugees up for failure and then enables the host state to rid itself of any responsibility for having

contributed to refugees' predicament. Having explored the construction of the Kakuma/Kalobeyei binary, I now turn to deconstructing KISEDP in order to examine the consequences of self-reliance's logocentrism.

KISEDP deconstructed

Self-reliance's logocentrism has given it weight within the policy and funding world. As such, it is ripe for mobilization, or even exploitation, in order to suit political interests. In the case of Turkana County, KISEDP has been able to gain significant financial support by making several references to self-reliance and aligning itself with broader international objectives. This is evident throughout the report, in which it explicitly aligns itself with policy frameworks and strategies at the international level such as the New York Declaration and its CRRF. Consequently, KISEDP has attracted the support and interest of over 48 donor governments and many implementing actors, including a 15 million dollar investment by the European Union Trust Fund (EUTF), which, among other factors, is motivated by a desire to curb onward migrations to Europe (O'Callaghan et al. 2019: 12).

Although KISEDP is articulated as a strategy to promote refugee self-reliance, a deconstructive reading reveals an alternative narrative. It reveals that KISEDP is primarily a regional development project that seeks to capitalize on the refugee presence in Turkana County in order to promote economic growth. As such, it suggests not only that refugees should be self-reliant, but also that they should be 'agents of development' (Hovil 2007; Kaiser 2005; UNHCR 2002) to contribute to their host community. This approach is informed by KISEDP's allusions to two socio-economic studies by the WB and the IFC, whose findings provided the rationale for Kalobeyei's creation. YIMBY's objective was to explore whether or not refugees can benefit the host community in Turkana County: "These analyses instead focused on whether host communities might also benefit from the refugees' presence through economic exchange" (Sanghi et al. 2016: 23). While the report acknowledges the nuanced economic and social impacts that hosting refugees has on host communities, it reifies the binary of refugees as either benefits or burdens. It does so by asking: "are refugees a boon or bane? Benefit or burden?" (Sanghi et al. 2016: 25). One of the main takeaways of the report indicates that the refugee presence in Kakuma has an overall beneficial and permanent impact on Turkana's economy and can thus be characterized as "more boom, less gloom" (Sanghi et al. 2016: 53).

By contrast, both YIMBY and KISEDP characterize Turkana County as a generous and resilient host (Sanghi et al. 2016: 7, 12; KISEDP 2018: X, 9) and highlight refugees' potential in supporting the overall goal of boosting the local economy (KISEDP 2018: 19). It is not intrinsically negative to highlight refugees' skills and capacities as a benefit to the host society, nor are development and refugee self-reliance approaches entirely incompatible. However, YIMBY and KISEDP's reification of refugees as benefits rather than burdens, which is a crucial component of self-reliance discourse, has had serious practical implications in how self-reliance is constructed in the case of Kalobeyei.

By being articulated as a self-reliance initiative, KISEDP could be viewed or marketed as a progressive policy which seeks to improve refugee welfare. Consequently, by aligning itself with international policy frameworks and interests, it has been uncritically promoted and funded by international donors such as UNHCR and the EUTF. However, self-reliance's logocentrism has obscured the fact that KISEDP does not genuinely promote better welfare outcomes for refugees. In order to illustrate this point, I focus on two major shortcomings which cast doubt as to how genuine its approach to refugee self-reliance truly is.

First, KISEDP presents an extremely weak commitment to protection, which does not adequately address the rights infringements that refugees are subject to in Turkana County, and Kenya more broadly. Protection has been referred to by Goodwin-Gill (1989: 6) as a "term of art, obscuring the scope of an activity that ought to be fundamentally clear." However, KISEDP's articulation of protection does not align with UNHCR's core view that the provision of assistance and the protection of rights are fundamentally interconnected (UNHCR 2005b: 1). Although 'protection' is highlighted as a key component of KISEDP's self-reliance strategy, the chapter focusing on protection issues is mainly concerned with the prevention of and response to sexual and gender-based violence, child protection and Kenya's refugee status determination process. While these are pertinent issues, KISEDP fails to adequately address the structural barriers that hinder refugees' abilities to live fulfilling economic, social and even political lives, such as their right to work and move freely. As such, KISEDP ignores Kenya's responsibility to ensure that refugees' rights are protected per its obligations as a signatory to the CSR 1951 and its 1967 Protocol, as well as the 1969 OAU Convention.

It is particularly concerning that KISEDP promotes entrepreneurship and the creation of employment opportunities without any discussion of work standards or labour rights. Its advocacy for an enabling environment without addressing Kenya's maintenance of a restrictive environment falls on deaf ears. KISEDP's approach to rights is thus similar to Uganda's Self-Reliance Strategy which has marginalized the protection of refugees' legal and political rights and instead focused on promoting the fulfillment of their material needs (Kaiser 2005: 362). As Kaiser (2005: 351) argues with regards to Uganda: "while developmental approaches promise a number of advantages in protracted refugee situations, ways must be found of ensuring that the protection needs, as well as the socioeconomic needs, of refugees are assured."

The second shortcoming that is obscured by self-reliance's logocentrism is that KISEDP superficially promotes refugee integration, exclusively for economic purposes, while maintaining repatriation as the final objective. Evident through its title, KISEDP is articulated as an integrated socio-economic development plan. In particular, the delivery of integrated services such as healthcare and education is intended as a means of increasing social cohesion between refugees and hosts (Betts et al. 2019b: 16). In reality, however, KISEDP only promotes integration insofar as it enables economic development in Turkana County. This is supported in the report's rationale which cites YIMBY's finding that "full *economic* integration [generates] the highest economic benefit for both refugees and host communities" (Sanghi et al. 2016: 5). KISEDP thus articulates a vision of *economic* integration, rather than decampment or a more fulsome socio-political and cultural integration.

A closer examination of YIMBY, however, casts doubt on the nature and depth of the integration proposed. In particular, YIMBY clarifies that references to "integration" refer to "economic integration, whereby refugees are viewed as economic actors participating in the economy (as opposed to being made permanent citizens of Kenya)" (Sanghi et al. 2016: 55). Thus, the Kalobeyei settlement is "integrated" insofar as it promotes refugees' economic productivity, but it stops short of providing an opportunity for meaningful social-cultural or political integration in Kenya. With this information in mind, an alternative reading of KISEDP demonstrates that integration is only superficially mentioned in order to appeal to international donors such as the EU who are more interested in local solutions to PRS to curb onward movements. In reality, with reference to durable solutions, KISEDP (2018: 56) promotes "repatriation and third-country solutions." More specifically, the report's 'phased approach' highlights the fact that during phase three of KISEDP (2028-2030):

the situation in South Sudan will eventually improve and create the right conditions for the return of refugees. *While the majority of refugees will start returning, there will be a few refugees opting to remain in Kenya for various protection-related and economic reasons* (21).

As Dryden-Peterson and Hovil (2004) have demonstrated in the case of Uganda, the settlement model encourages partial economic integration while maintaining a degree of physical and social segregation from surrounding communities. While Kalobeyei has promoted the co-habitation of refugees and host community members, it follows Uganda by promoting a degree of *partial* economic integration. Borrowing from Kibreab (1989), it is clear that while Kalobeyei may be a local settlement, this is not synonymous with true local integration. Instead, continuing the vision of early refugee settlements in Africa throughout the 1980s, Kalobeyei is a "temporary site where refugees are provided with assistance by the refugee support systems to become self-supporting until the circumstances that prompted them to flee cease to exist" (Kibreab 1989: 468). In the contemporary, however, the expectation of achieving self-reliance is coupled with the expectation that refugees should 'give back' to their host community through being agents of development. Reminiscent of early settlements in the 1980s, Kalobeyei has intentionally been designed in such a way as to prevent integration (see Kibreab 1987, 1989). However, in the same way that protection legitimates traditional refugee camps, the discourse of self-reliance has legitimated the Kalobeyei settlement. The idea for an integrated settlement in which refugees and host community members cohabitate is motivated by the prospect of leveraging international aid for Turkana County rather than by a sincere commitment to local integration.

Revisiting theory

This chapter first focused on how Kalobeyei has been legitimated as a "new approach" through its relationship to Kakuma, which has become reduced to the "old" approach. The latter half of the chapter deconstructed KISEDP and demonstrated that it is first and foremost a regional development strategy that capitalizes on refugees presence in Turkana County. I then moved to examine the political implications of KISEDP's alignment with self-reliance, which carries certain connotations and is ultimately a logocentric term. Self-reliance's logocentrism has given it power to influence funding decisions and policies, which shape refugees' lives in Turkana County. KISEDP has leveraged self-reliance's logocentrism by connecting its strategy to broader international policy frameworks and objectives to gain donor funding and legitimacy. In reality, self-reliance's logocentric power obscures the fact that it is not a rights-protective policy and does not genuinely promote refugees' local integration in Kenya. Instead, KISEDP is a regional development strategy which seeks to capitalize on the presence of refugees in the region, both through their physical presence and role as agents of development.

The argument I have put forward is similar to how 'issue-linkage' has been developed in Refugee Studies (for example, Betts 2008, 2009; Tsourapas 2017), however, I posit that it is self-reliance's logocentrism, or power, that creates the structural conditions under which issue-linkage is ultimately possible. In the case of Turkana County, the outcome has been the legitimation of the *status quo ante*: more funding for UNHCR and Turkana County but little change in outcomes for refugees. Having deconstructed KISEDP, it is not my intention to assert that developmental approaches to improve the conditions of refugees are not feasible nor desirable. Developmental approaches will surely continue to be designed and implemented to address PRS. Instead, as Kaiser reminds us: "developmental programming for refugees needs to include a remedial component that redresses any disadvantages experienced by them by virtue of their refugee status (Kaiser 2005: 364)."

5 Conclusion

The central argument of this paper has been that self-reliance is simultaneously an undecidable yet logocentric term. In particular, self-reliance gains its meaning through its relationship with a series of binary oppositions such as self-reliance/dependency, resilience/vulnerability, burdens/benefits and entrepreneurship/work. It is through these relationships in texts, notably policy documents, that self-reliance acquires certain connotations and ultimately becomes a logocentric, value-laden term. The political implication of this logocentrism is that self-reliance can, and has been, called on by a variety of actors in order to suit their interests and concerns. In the case of Turkana County, the outcome has been an outpour of funding and support for fostering self-reliance through KISEDP, which has only marginally improved the lives of refugees thus far. However, a deconstructive reading of KISEDP reveals that while it articulates itself as a self-reliance strategy, in reality it is a regional development plan which seeks to benefit from refugees' presence in Turkana County. Self-reliance's logocentrism, however, obscures the fact that KISEDP is not a rights-protective policy and does not promote refugees' local integration in Kenya.

The theoretical approach put forward in this paper highlights the fact that just as 'labels' have consequences (Zetter 2007), so too do policy documents and the discourses they create and reproduce. Employing a Derridean lens has demonstrated the active role that texts play in conceptualizing self-reliance and influencing policies that, at a cursory glance, seek to improve the lives of refugees. Consequently, this paper has challenged the idea of self-reliance as an apolitical 'triple win' (Krause 2017). By situating my work within the broader post-development canon, I have highlighted the relevance of Critical Development Studies in interrogating self-reliance and refugee livelihoods programs more broadly. Beyond the study of self-reliance, this work has demonstrated the relevance of Jacques Derrida's post-structural thought in order to 'deconstruct' key concepts which shape Refugee Studies' epistemological and ontological underpinnings. As such, I have demonstrated that Derrida's work has a wider applicability within Refugee Studies and is not limited to the concept of hospitality.

Throughout this paper, I have highlighted the fact that despite being a key pillar within the international refugee regime, self-reliance, as it is currently iterated, does not adequately address non-economic, non-individualistic aspects of refugeehood. Therefore, I wish to reiterate the importance of exploring the social, political and cultural aspects of self-reliance in order to inform policies and programmes. Doing so, however, requires a deeper understanding of how refugees within various contexts understand the idea of self-reliance. To this end, I follow Easton-Calabria (2018: 349) in suggesting that more qualitative research on how refugees define self-reliance would contribute to this area of study and praxis. Overall, in designing policies to improve refugees' welfare outcomes, we must re-visit what self-reliance can and should mean.

My contention that self-reliance needs to be revisited is echoed by Omata and Easton-Calabria who argue that there is a need to re-examine "how to genuinely promote refugee self-reliance in ways that strengthen refugees' ability to meet essential needs with sustainability and dignity" (2018: 1469). This includes imagining self-reliance "beyond a purely individualistic or economic perspective" (Betts et al. 2020b: 64). In line with these perspectives, it is my contention scholars and practitioners interested in improving the lives of displaced peoples should promote the re-conceptualization self-reliance in a more holistic way, particularly considering its non-economic dimensions. If self-reliance continues to be articulated as a panacea for PRS, a more holistic

conceptualization could lend itself to more rights protective policies by taking into account social, political and cultural aspects of refugeehood.

In order to begin to theorize what a more holistic conceptualization of self-reliance could look like, and thus attempt to move beyond self-reliance's logocentrism, we can turn to the very same policy documents analyzed in this paper, beginning with the Handbook. Despite the Handbook's problematic allusions to 'dependency syndrome' and articulation of self-reliance as a one-size-fits-all solution, it presents a surprisingly broad conceptualization of the term. In particular, the Handbook emphasizes the importance of *social self-reliance*, which it defines as:

> *the ability of a community to function with a level of cohesion, social accountability and mutual dependence-taking decisions, mobilising resources, and building and maximising interpersonal capacity to address issues and initiatives for mutual benefit* (UNHCR 2005a: 2).

The emphasis on social self-reliance is articulated throughout the text, particularly in Annex 1.1, which defines the concept and its role in providing a firm basis for economic self-reliance. In contrast, Chapter 3 demonstrated that policy documents which followed the publication of the Handbook have failed to account for non-economic, non-individualistic conceptualizations of self-reliance. Instead, they are deeply entrenched within the neoliberal paradigm which responsibilizes refugees for their own successes and failures (Ilcan and Rygiel 2015).

In making this observation, it is not my intention to romanticize the Handbook or the concept of "social self-reliance" because it too is deeply embedded within a framework that sees refugees as inevitably having a "dependence mentality", which can be rectified through social, and subsequently, economic, self-reliance policies (UNHCR 2005a, Appendix 1: 65). However, the crux of my argument here is that the foundational text which theoretically and practically defines self-reliance could provide a strong foundation to move beyond economic conceptualizations of self-reliance which are linked to neoliberal subjectivity. Recognizing self-reliance's logocentrism and its discursive construction thus enables a critical first step in challenging the concept's dominance in order to ultimately advocate for more refugee-centered iterations and policy design.

I wish to briefly highlight two ways that self-reliance can and should move beyond its exclusive focus on promoting refugees' economic self-reliance vis-a-vis aid. First, self-reliance would benefit from the integration of the body of literature that examines the political self-governance of refugees within camp and non-camp spaces. Lecadet (2016), for example, has written on the various ways that Togolese refugees in Agame Camp in Benin self-organize politically. While her work refers to refugee 'self-organization' in relation to politics, there is significant overlap between the type of self-governance she explores and the definition of social self-reliance which is articulated in the Handbook. Focus on the 'political self-reliance' of refugees, which can otherwise be described as the political self-governance of refugees, would be a significant contribution to scholarship on the political lives of refugees, which remains under researched (Bekaj and Antara 2018).

Second, it is imperative that any genuine articulation of self-reliance include legal rights and refugees' ability to exercise these rights in a meaningful way. This will not be a popular suggestion with host communities where rights are severely restricted, such as Kenya. However, self-reliance fundamentally means nothing if it does not include refugees' ability to exercise enabling rights such as the right to work or move freely.

In her discussion of legal empowerment for refugees, Purkey argues that enabling refugees to use the law and legal mechanisms to protect and advance their rights and to acquire greater control over their lives could lead to positive outcomes (Purkey 2013: 263). These include improving the administration of justice within refugee camps, increasing host state accountability, encouraging transitional justice, and facilitating local integration (Purkey 2013: 267-273). More fundamentally, however, and regardless of the ancillary benefits, it is necessary for refugees to be able to exercise their legal rights and legal tools for them to be able to achieve the outcomes that self-reliance policies hope for. It is also necessary for refugees' to be able to exercise their legal rights as this is a key aspect of what makes individuals autonomous (or as close to autonomous as possible, given that we are social creatures).

Political self-governance and refugees' ability to access and exercise their legal rights is crucial to any vision of holistic conception of self-reliance. Self-reliance cannot and ought not be limited to refugees' abilities to economically provide for themselves. It must include non-economic dimensions and the examples provided herein serve merely as examples of how the concept can be broadened to improve refugees' lived experiences.

Without negating the positive outcomes that self-reliance as a guiding principle and policy goal can enable, it has been my objective to question and demystify the idea that self-reliance, as it is currently articulated, is a panacea for refugee crises. Examining the Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement and its shortcomings reminds us of the grave protection costs that can be associated with policies that superficially align themselves with self-reliance to attract funding, resources and legitimacy. The key lesson from this case study is that self-reliance can and must not be divorced from its relationship to refugees' rights, as codified in the CSR 1951 (and its 1967 Protocol), as well as regional instruments such as the 1969 OAU Convention. As long as refugees' rights, such as the right to work and move freely, continue to be restricted, any attempts at promoting self-reliance remain shallow and designed to fail.

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