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# From Refugee to Good Citizen: A Discourse Analysis of Volunteering

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This paper is concerned with how refugees who work as volunteers with a refugee organization talk about themselves and their work. A Foucauldian Discourse Analytic approach is employed in order to explore how participants construct themselves as both refugees and volunteers, the discourses they draw on, and how this impacts on the possible ways-of-being open to refugees. The findings indicate a meta discourse of good citizen; volunteering was constructed as a technology of self, a way of transforming the refugee into a 'good citizen'. Volunteering was also seen as a way of preparing for entry into the labour market and a means of self-improvement.

Keywords: refugees, Foucauldian discourse analysis, volunteering

## Introduction

This article is based on research carried out between 2008 and 2009 by the principal researcher (SYY) for her doctoral thesis in Clinical Psychology. The original study examined how refugees construct themselves and their work as volunteers in light of dominant discourses about refugees. There is a relative lack of psychological literature about refugees, and a discourse of trauma and pathology dominates the literature that does exist (Patel 2003). By interviewing refugees from a non-service-user population, the original study aimed to focus on refugees as active social actors rather than patients, and in doing so, open up a space to explore alternative constructions of refugees. This paper

focuses on one aspect of the wider thesis research and is interested in constructions of volunteering and the implications of such constructions.

Little is known about how refugees speak about themselves as this group have been largely ignored by discourse analytic research (Verkuyten and de Wolf 2002). Van Dijk (1996) highlights the correlation between social power and the level of access to discourse. Powerful social groups have 'speaking rights'; they may speak through the media, they may produce academic research, they decide who gets interviewed and who is studied. In this way, power and dominance are reproduced discursively. The lack of 'speaking rights' of refugees results in this group being more easily 'oppressed, discredited, and stigmatized' (Van Dijk 1991 in Lynn and Lea 2003: 447).

This paper views 'refugee' as a socially constructed identity, which is embedded in the media, political, social and psychological arenas. Along with government policy and debate, the media plays a pivotal role in influencing the public's perceptions of refugees (Patel and Mahtani 2007). Research that has examined how refugees are constructed in the British media and political arena concludes that words and phrases used to describe refugees are likely to elicit negative emotions such as fear, anger and disgust in the reader (ICAR 2004). Words such as *thieves*, *crime*, and *fraud* construct refugees as a threat to Britain as they are engaged in criminal activity. Words such as *scrounger*, *sponger* and *burden* present refugees as a drain on the economy, while the use of words such as *destruction*, *monsters* and *riot* construct the refugee as a threat to the security of Britain and British people (*ibid.*). In this way, the refugee is constructed as unwanted and undesirable.

The literature on volunteering is spread across a wide variety of disciplines including social psychology, anthropology, organizational psychology, political science, and community psychology (Omoto 2005). These multiple perspectives have resulted in a fragmented literature that is dominated by quantitative research. Volunteer motivation has been the main focus of volunteering literature from both organizational and social psychology to date.

Although volunteering is believed to have beneficial effects for individuals, the relationship between volunteering and psychological well-being has received surprisingly little attention (Thoits and Hewitt 2001). There is a small body of evidence documenting the mental health benefits of volunteering for older adults (over 65), for whom volunteering has been shown to protect against depression (Musick and Wilson 2003). However, the same study showed that volunteering provided no protective effects against depression for a younger population. This finding raises questions about why volunteering might be of special benefit to older adults. Fischer *et al.* (1991) showed that volunteering can lessen feelings of powerlessness that may accompany the transition to retirement. This hypothesis may be relevant to refugee volunteers, who may experience feelings of powerlessness caused by not being able to work in the UK. Okun (1994) suggests that volunteering is particularly beneficial to older people as it offers a way of gaining social approval. Thus, Musick and Wilson's (2003) findings support the significance

of role salience—volunteer work may be more significant among populations whose other roles have been diminished.

Wilson and Lewis (2006) note that little has been written about refugee volunteering in the UK. The few existing studies have focused on the practical benefits of volunteering. Volunteering has been shown to facilitate a route into work and to increase volunteers' confidence (Erel and Tomlinson 2005). Refugee volunteers reported that they benefited especially from the training, mentoring and English-speaking practice, and valued gaining a reference to prove their work experience (*ibid.*).

In relation to refugees, there is some preliminary evidence to support a positive relationship between volunteering and psychosocial well-being. Bowdenleigh (2006) found that working as a volunteer reduced isolation and boredom in refugees and contributed to their well-being. Similarly, community groups have been shown to play a role in countering feelings of isolation in refugees (Taha and Cherti 2005). Burnett and Peel (2001) assert that reducing isolation and dependence, and spending time at work activities can often relieve depression and anxiety. Lack of family and community support, social and cultural isolation, and lack of occupational status have all been shown to have compounding negative effects on well-being (Palmer and Ward 2007).

It is timely to investigate the area of refugees and volunteering as since the conception of the original thesis research, the concept of active citizenship for refugees has been proposed (Home Office 2008). Active citizenship will be a means to speed up the process of obtaining citizenship and refugees who do voluntary work will be able to apply for citizenship or permanent residency sooner than those who do not. The green paper 'The Path to Citizenship: Next Steps to Reforming the Immigration System' proposes that volunteering with a recognized charity will be seen as evidence of 'active citizenship' (*ibid.*).

Even prior to this explicit proposal that volunteering be seen as a measure of citizenship, government strategy on refugee employment encouraged volunteering as a way into the labour market and promoted volunteering as an activity that 'sustains employability' of asylum seekers (Department of Work and Pensions 2005).

## **Method**

This research adopts a social constructionist epistemological position and assumes that there is no single world to be described, but that multiple versions of the world are constructed (Willig 2001). From such a position, the results this research aims to produce are acknowledged to be one interpretation, one which is necessarily partial.

The method of Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA) is a type of 'top down' discourse analysis influenced by Foucault's ideas on discourse, power and the subject. FDA is concerned with the productive qualities of language, and what discourse allows people to do (Willig 1999). FDA looks at 'the

discursive worlds people inhabit' (Harper 2006) and how people are positioned within the discourse which then offers different ways of being.

Papadopoulos and Hildebrand (2002) warn that wider political dimensions should not be overlooked when conducting psychological research on refugees. FDA is well placed to respond to this caution, as it situates the research within the social and political context by exploring how participants talk about and construct volunteering and, in doing so, what culturally available discourses they draw on. FDA as a method is interested in how certain descriptions of the world permit certain patterns of social action and exclude others. It is concerned with examining how power and resistance are initiated and maintained within the discourse and serve to bolster or challenge certain social, economic, political, and historical spheres (Van Dijk 1996). In analysing the data, Willig's (2001) six stages of FDA approach were used. In addition, Parker's (1992) 20 steps also informed the analysis.

How volunteers talk about themselves and their work as volunteers was explored with reference to the research sub-questions: How do they construct themselves as volunteers? What discourses do they draw on? What are the implications of these discursive resources in terms of subject positions and opportunities for action for the refugee volunteer?

### *Participants and Data Collection*

Research was conducted with a voluntary organization that provides orientation and emergency provisions to refugees. These refugee units are staffed by volunteers and paid staff from both refugee and non-refugee backgrounds. Research was carried out with refugee volunteers from the London, Norwich and Portsmouth branches of the organization. To participate in the study, volunteers were required to currently hold refugee or asylum seeker status, or to have held these statuses at any point in the past. In addition, participants' volunteer role had to include face-to-face contact with other refugees. Such roles included case working and interpreting. Caseworker volunteers help clients to access primary health care, legal help and a variety of other services. Recruitment was carried out between May 2008 and January 2009.

Participants were self-selected in response to internal advertising in the volunteer organization newsletter, posters, and recruitment letters sent to all volunteers. The principal researcher (SY) attended social events and training days at the volunteer organization to publicize the research.

Nine volunteers participated in the study, five men and four women between the ages of 28 and 67 years from Kenya, Liberia, Iraq, Chad, Eritrea, Cameroon, and Zimbabwe. A semi-structured interview was used and interviews were recorded and transcribed. All names have been changed in order to maintain confidentiality. The figures presented after each quote refer to line numbering from original transcripts. As already noted, the principal researcher carried out this research as part of a doctoral thesis. She was not

employed by or involved with the voluntary organization beyond this research capacity.

## **Research Findings**

### *Volunteering as a Technology of the Self and the Meta-discourse of 'Good Citizen'*

Although all volunteers constructed volunteering in different ways, the meta level discourse of 'good citizen' was particularly well articulated, with volunteering constructed as a technology of self, a way of transforming the refugee into a 'good citizen'. This meta discourse of 'good citizen' included constructions of volunteering as a route to employment, and a way of self-improvement.

Within a framework of FDA, citizenship may be seen as 'less a legal category than a set of self-constituting practices in different settings of power' (Ong 2003: 276). Citizenship denotes full membership of a self-governing community (Driver and Martell 1998). In this sense, volunteering was constructed as a way for refugees to constitute themselves as 'good citizens', within a social and cultural context which constructs the refugee largely in negative terms.

This discourse of 'good citizen' draws on Foucault's (1982) ideas of governmentality. The concept of citizenship involves 'normalizing individuals by transforming them into subjects who actively participate' in the community and who 'take responsibility for their own subjective well-being' (Odih and Knights 1999: 130). Discourses about 'good' and 'bad' citizenship are disseminated through government policies and practices, which then shapes our conduct as citizens. For example, in secondary schools in the UK, citizenship is part of the curriculum. Citizenship is constructed around three ideals: social and moral responsibility, political literacy, and community involvement. The concept of active citizenship lies at the heart of this construction, and is achieved through voluntary community participation and the acquisition of the skills necessary for political and community involvement (Miles 2006). This construction of the 'good' norm, compared with the 'bad', shapes how we think about citizenship and what constitutes a 'good' or a 'bad' citizen. Such norms create and reinforce in our minds, standards of desirable behaviour within society. We incorporate these ideals of good and bad citizenship into our own behaviour, thereby positioning ourselves in relation to these discourses. We further perpetuate these ideals of citizenship by positioning others within the discourse (Warburton and Smith 2003). For example, constructions of citizenship offer different subject identities (e.g. citizen versus non-citizen), which then regulate how we view ourselves and the systems that operate around us, and how we should behave (Bristow 1997, cited in Warburton and Smith 2003).

Volunteering offered participants an opportunity to construct themselves as 'good citizens' and resist negative constructions of refugees. It offered a way

of living up to the norms of a ‘good citizen’, who is concerned about others, is law abiding, who contributes to the economy and to the community. In this way, volunteering was constructed as a technology of the self; volunteers work on themselves in particular, disciplined ways, in order to become good citizens. Foucault developed this term *technology of the self* to refer to practices that bring about a certain mode of existence, a certain form of subjectivity. Technologies of the self are the various ‘operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being’ that people make either by themselves or with the help of others in order to transform themselves to reach a ‘state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality’ (Foucault 1982: 18).

In this study, the ‘good citizen’ was constructed as, most importantly, a ‘good value’ citizen who is economically productive. This construction is supported by Morrison (2003) who dismantled New Labour’s ideas about citizenship, and concludes that citizenship is bound up with economic requirements to participate in the labour and consumer markets. Morrison (*ibid.*) outlines how the ‘bad citizen’ is constructed within New Labour discourse as someone on employment benefit and unwilling to work due to laziness. As a ‘good value citizen’ the refugee may expect certain benefits in return, which will be explored below.

### *The Refugee as ‘Good Citizen’: Volunteering as Route to Employment*

Volunteering was constructed as a way of getting into paid employment by improving English language skills, gaining experience in the workplace, and learning how to negotiate the transport system. By constructing volunteering as preparation for employment, this allows the refugee to resist dominant constructions of refugees as lazy and as a drain on the economy. Refugee volunteers are positioned as proactive, entrepreneurial individuals who are preparing themselves for the workplace. As such, refugee volunteers are operating on themselves to become ‘good (value) citizens’. This can be seen in the extract below from Francine, who came to the UK with a very basic level of English. She has been in the UK for eight years and has held British citizenship for the past four years. She is not in paid employment, but has volunteered for many refugee organizations for the past seven years. She is within the 31–40 age group and her ethnic background is Black African.

I like to do volunteering well because I need to build my experience. I need to build my skills, so I’m happy to meet people, talk to them, and then after that, I know how, I have this experience if I get job. (Francine 25-29)

Volunteering is constructed by the volunteer as a route into employment, something which is also apparent in government policies. However, it has been acknowledged that there are no clear pathways for refugees from volunteering to employment; a report by the Employability Forum (2005) highlights some of the barriers for employers in hiring refugees such as employer confusion over working rights of asylum seekers and refugees, and confusion

around Criminal Records checks. In participants' constructions of volunteering as a route into the labour market, these barriers are absent.

The construction of volunteering as preparation for employment offers the volunteer access to the position of 'good value citizen', which affords him or her certain opportunities. The volunteer can expect acceptance and/or approval from the British people. Below is an extract from an interview with Mohammed, who has a degree in physical education from his home country and has been in the UK for two years. He is learning English by attending language classes and practising his English through volunteering; he plans to study IT. He holds refugee status and falls within the 31–40 age group. His ethnic background is Middle Eastern Arabic.

People like me when I said to them my status and I am volunteering eh, support me and happy, because you want to work not to stay at home. (Mohammed, 392-4)

Volunteering is constructed as opening up different opportunities for the refugee; they can win approval from the host community. Francine constructed volunteering was a way of becoming more employable, and as a proof of industriousness, which is constructed as conferring acceptance by the British public. In her extract below, the British public are constructed as accepting of refugees if they are hard working or 'good value' citizens:

British people, they don't like lazy. So if you are lazy, you sit, you eat, they don't like, you need to do it as well. If you are doing good thing, if you hard worker, you are very confident with them, they like you. (Francine, 627-35)

The onus is on refugees to prove themselves, to earn the acceptance of British people by working hard. Within an economic discourse, acceptance is constructed like a business transaction, permitting other social and structural barriers to acceptance to be negated.

This construction of hard work as conferring acceptance was challenged by another participant, Kofa, who has been in the UK for seven years and has held British citizenship for five years. He falls into the 21–30 age group, is in full time paid employment, and volunteers in his spare time. His ethnic background is Black African. Kofa disputes Francine's construction of volunteering as conferring acceptance, and argues that despite voluntary work and, in his case, paid employment too, there are still barriers to acceptance of refugees by British people.

So I'm just a typical example, but there are a lot of people who have come to this country as refugees like me, who have done a lot of good things in this country, but they just never been recognized, it's because of the stereotypical ideology that people got in the back of their minds saying that maybe asylum seekers or refugee are less productive or they shouldn't be given like, to be treated as a second class citizen or something like that. (Kofa, 408-14)

He goes on to name one of these barriers as racism. As a Black African immigrant, Kofa sees himself as having a visible marker of difference, one that cannot be shed no matter how long he stays in this country.

As an African, as a black person, you'll always be an immigrant (Kofa, 548)

Kofa now has full British citizenship and is in full time employment; nevertheless, he constructs immigrants as being discriminated against:

There is no equality for somebody who came to this country as a refugee and as somebody who has been born here. (Kofa, 417-8)

Phoenix (2006, in Capdevila and Callaghan 2008) suggests that whiteness affords a flexibility to adopt and reject different identifications (e.g. immigrant, British) an option that is not open to black people by virtue of their visibility as non-white. The discourse of racism echoes Rutter's (2007) finding that many refugees report experiencing racial harassment.

### *Refugee as 'Good Citizen': Volunteering as Self improvement*

The construction of volunteering as self-improvement is also part of the meta construction of refugee as 'good citizen', and is articulated with the previous construction of volunteering as a route to employment. Volunteering is constructed as a technology of self; the volunteer is regulating him/herself, taking all the steps necessary to be a 'good (value) citizen'. The construction of volunteering as a means of self-improvement draws on a wider discourse of neo-liberalist philosophy where the subject is viewed as a free entrepreneur managing their own life (Traenor 2005). This freedom requires the self-governing capabilities of enterprise and autonomy. The enterprising self adopts self-betterment as its goal, and acts in accordance with this goal. Without any explicit State directive or instruction, Francine is acting in accordance with the wishes of the State by working on her language skills and trying to improve her employability; the onus is on her to act, not the State.

If you don't know the language, I have to catch up to do it. Do something. So why I have to sit down? Why for? It's not fair. If you are in good health, you know what to do, you have to do. You don't have to sit and wait some people to feed you. (Francine, 661-5)

This construction of volunteering as a form of self-improvement assumes a universal capacity for agency and silences an exploration of why refugees might be 'sitting'. Any potential barriers to striving to improve oneself are silenced; there is no recognition that it may be more difficult for others to mobilize themselves to volunteer or learn English for example.



By constructing volunteering as a means of self-improvement, a hierarchy of refugees was invoked, with volunteering seen as a way of getting ahead of other refugees:

It mean I rather than the other refugee, he didn't have eh, he didn't have full driving licence or studies, just take, took benefit and sleep. When they are heard of me, as refugee status, and I want to study, I want to be volunteering, I'm going to have my full driving licence certificate, it means I am in the top. (Mohammed, 480-5)

This extract contains two opposing constructions: other refugees as lazy, versus the refugee volunteer who is determined and motivated to get ahead. In this way, Mohammed reproduces dominant discourses about refugees as lazy, but resists this construction for himself by positioning himself as a volunteer who is active and enterprising. The British public are positioned as a group that hold the power to judge 'when they are heard of me', which is echoed in the following extract:

I took two of my clients to housing benefits because they have a problem for their accommodation. And then the lady asked me 'Which organization you are working with?' And I say 'No I'm not working with any organization, but I'm volunteering'. So they say ah, 'How long have you been in this country?' And I explain to her, I say 'I'm still asylum.' 'How come you, you are still asylum, you are doing this thing, and that person is here, he has his stay for long time, and he can't explain himself, he can't do nothing'. (Francine, 440-49)

Here the refugee client is constructed as passive, voiceless, and helpless. By contrast the volunteer is competent, active. Volunteering positions the volunteer in a more favourable light with the host community. The construction of a hierarchy of refugees implicit in both of these extracts positions refugees in competition with each other for the acceptance of the British people. The norm of 'good citizen' is the goal for the refugee, which is contrasted with the bad refugee who is lazy, lacking in enterprise and motivation.

### *Refugee as Good Citizen: Volunteering as Helping*

Volunteering is constructed as a helping activity, helping to improve the welfare of others. This draws on a humanitarian discourse and positions the volunteer as a caring person who has other people's welfare at heart. It also draws on the discourse of good citizen, as it touches on current ideals of citizenship such as community involvement and social responsibility (Miles 2006). Ellen, a mother and a fluent English speaker who has been in the UK for five years and has been working as a volunteer for as long, constructed

volunteering as a helping activity. She currently holds asylum seeker status. She falls within the 31–40 age group.

I like the fact that I'm helping people and yeah, to see them, to see their problem solved and to see them leave happy, that gives me good, good feeling, good sense really . . . .to know that you're helping someone. (Ellen, 54-57)

This construction of volunteering allows the volunteer to occupy a position of benefactor, helping others; as a benefactor, the volunteer can feel appreciated and valued. The construction of volunteering as a humanitarian act is contrasted with other volunteers' constructions of volunteering as social change. A discourse of social change, by contrast to a humanitarian discourse, is politicized, and involves tackling systems-level determinants of the problem. Within such a discourse, the volunteer is positioned as activist. From this position, the volunteer may challenge the construction of refugee as criminal, and the systems which reinforce this construction.

Hakim has been in the UK for 10 months and holds refugee status. He is active in two voluntary organizations including an organization which works closely with refugees held in detention and removal centres. He spoke at length about the injustices of the immigration system, in particular detention and removal centres, which he constructed as abusive of human rights. For him, volunteering is a way of trying to effect change and a form of social action.

I think everyone has the right to a fair life and a fair opportunity to have this life, and also, a fair way of dealing with this case. According to the rules, and according to the law. And that's why I'm doing it. (Hakim 1212-1215)

This construction of volunteering as social action offers the refugee a way of resisting the power of the asylum system. The volunteer is positioned as active, advocating for others, trying to address injustices within the system and effect change from within. In this way, volunteering offers a way for refugees to exercise their power. In examining these contrasting constructions of volunteering as helping versus volunteering as social change, it is interesting to compare the different backgrounds of the participants. Hakim has first hand experience of being detained on arrival in the UK, whereas Ellen has not. In addition, the status of both participants was different, which brings with it possible power imbalances. Ellen, an asylum seeker, may be more likely to reproduce less politicized discourses of humanitarianism. By contrast, Hakim holds the more secure leave to remain, and so may be more likely to take up a politicized discourse of activism.

There were tensions and contradictions between this construction of volunteering as a means of social change and volunteering as a technology of self. The two have contrasting implications for a refugee identity; the former assumes the importance of holding on to the politically constructed identity of refugee, whereas the latter implies an eventual dissolving of the label of refugee.

## Discussion

By opening up a space for the voices of refugees to be heard, this research provides valuable information about how refugees construct themselves and their work as volunteers, how they are positioned within the discourse, along with the implications for ways of being. In this way, this research adds to the pool of culturally available ways of talking about and understanding refugees. The constructions of the refugee identified in this research challenge the homogenizing discourses presented in the media about refugees. For example, some participants' constructions of themselves as enterprising individuals who are working towards entering the labour market contrast significantly with dominant constructions, discussed in the introduction, of refugees as a burden on the economy.

In relation to volunteering, the qualitative approach of discourse analysis has allowed a broader perspective from which to view the experience of volunteering and has situated this experience within the discursive context of the refugee. Much of the existing research on volunteering has been conducted from a positivist epistemological viewpoint, relying on quantitative methods. It examines volunteering in a cultural and social vacuum, and does not take into account the societal discourses that influence volunteering. At one level, the current research showed positive benefits for individual refugees of engaging in voluntary work, thus supporting findings from existing literature of the benefits of volunteering. However, a discursive analysis was able to get behind these individual benefits and look at the wider implications of refugee volunteering.

One of the striking findings of the research was the construction of volunteering as a technology of self and the meta discourse of 'good citizen'. By exploring this construction of volunteering, it was apparent that although volunteers do gain benefits from volunteering, there are many political and ideological implications of such a construction. By constructing volunteering as a technology of self, refugee volunteers are positioned as autonomous and, in line with neo-liberalist discourse, as holding responsibility for taking control and planning to achieve their needs (Rose 1996). In this way, the autonomy of the self is an instrument of governmentality, a discourse employed by governments to produce the governable citizen (*ibid.*). The onus is on the refugee to become the 'good citizen'. Constructions of the moral and humanitarian duty of the State to look after the welfare of refugees are silent. Refugees must improve their skills and achieve certain goals to be accepted and earn approval. Thus the volunteer becomes self-governing: the way they conduct and evaluate themselves is brought into alignment with the political objective of becoming a 'good citizen'.

A meta discourse of 'good citizen' in relation to volunteering also serves to bolster the status quo regarding dominant constructions about the refugee. Constructions of the refugee as an economic burden, discussed in the introduction, remain unchallenged within this discourse, and indeed are bolstered

by it, as volunteering is constructed as an activity that will repay the State for its financial assistance.

Government proposals of active citizenship for refugees (Home Office 2008) may serve to further strengthen the construction of volunteering as a technology of self, bolstering a 'good citizen' discourse. At a broad level, active citizenship has implications for how we think about asylum and would further bolster an economic discourse of asylum by constructing citizenship as something that must be earned through labour. This is contrasted with a humanitarian construction of asylum where it is the moral duty of the State to provide refuge to seekers of asylum.

A construction of volunteering as evidence of active citizenship also clearly has implications for the subjective experience of refugee volunteers. As discussed in this paper, the construction of volunteering as self-improvement offers different subject positions to refugees, and ideas about a hierarchy of refugees were apparent in some participants' accounts. It is possible that volunteering as evidence of active citizenship would reinforce such ideas of a hierarchy of refugees, with some refugees seen as more deserving of citizenship than others. By formalizing the link between volunteering and citizenship, it is possible that volunteering may become another obstacle for refugees to overcome in the long process of resettlement, such as obtaining a British driving licence, and taking English language classes. This again may have implications for humanitarian constructions of volunteering, which may be lost if volunteering comes to be perceived by refugee volunteers as obligatory.

Although this article has mainly explored the construction of volunteering as a technology of self, there were other constructions of volunteering articulated which have been mentioned briefly such as volunteering as a means of activism and social change. It may be that such a plurality of constructions would be lost should the concept of volunteering as active citizenship be enforced. In relation to humanitarian constructions of volunteering, if refugees are effectively forced to volunteer in order to obtain citizenship, it is likely that this may change attitudes to volunteering. There may be tensions between volunteering for humanitarian reasons, and volunteering in order to gain citizenship.

In addition, the practicalities of regulating such proposals would have implications for possible constructions of volunteering. For example, will refugees who volunteer with organizations which explicitly work and campaign to police institutions of the state such as Detention and Removal Centres be permitted to count this voluntary work as proof of active citizenship? If so, how will politicized constructions of volunteering sit within duties of active citizenship?

Should such proposals come into effect, it will be interesting to revisit refugees' constructions of volunteering within such a climate.

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