

NOWHERE PEOPLE

Making the Invisible, Visible

Greg Constantine
(student number: M00473409)

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United Kingdom

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ABSTRACT

This context statement presents a critical examination of my work as a documentary photographer, focusing on the long-term project *Nowhere People* (2005-2016). It reveals as well the impact statelessness has on individuals and communities around the world. Given the interdisciplinary nature of this topic, the statement will employ methods of auto-ethnography as well as theories of state, human rights, memory and identity in order to illustrate the significance of the visual in articulating the lives of stateless populations.

This statement attempts to connect my own experience and journey of working in the field of documentary photography with the growing discussion and debate related to the state, human rights, nationality and the rights of non-citizens. I will demonstrate how this portfolio of public works presents a multidimensional portrait of this issue in a way that contributes to filling in substantial evidence gaps in the context of human rights by making the various elements of this invisible condition, visible. In addition, I will survey photography's capacity to translate deficiencies inherent within human rights and international law and examine its role in challenging contemporary definitions of citizenship and identity.

I will discuss how I have navigated my work and the project *Nowhere People* through debates related to subjectivity, agency, representation, spectatorship and the interconnectedness between photographer, subject and viewer. I will also detail the pragmatic decisions I have made relating to the authorship and dissemination of the work to various audiences in relation to the tectonic shift in the access to information and use of the image within this shifting paradigm of visual culture.

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“I feel like nobody who belongs to nowhere. Like I don’t exist.”

Veronica, Ukraine, 2009¹

“It seems that a man who is nothing but a man has lost the very qualities which make it possible for other people to treat him as a fellow-man...they can live and die without leaving any trace.”

Hannah Arendt²

“How we remain connected depends on the function of pictures—increasingly the way that we process worlds unlike our own. The tool we marshal to cross our gulf is irrevocably altered vision. The imagination inspired by aesthetic encounters can get us to the point of benevolent surrender, making way for our new version of our collective selves.”

Sarah Lewis³

1. INTRODUCTION

This context statement presents a critical examination of my work as a documentary photographer, with a specific focus on the work I have produced from the long-term project *Nowhere People* (2005-2016), which investigates the impact the absence of citizenship and statelessness has on individuals and communities around the world. Given the interdisciplinary nature of this topic, the statement will employ methods of auto-ethnography as well as theories of state, human rights, memory and identity in order to illustrate the significance of the visual in articulating the lives of stateless populations.

This statement attempts to connect my own experience and journey of working in the field of documentary photography (gained while investigating the lives of stateless communities around the world) with the growing discussion and debate related to the state, human rights, nationality and the rights of non-citizens. It is not an exhaustive study of all of the work published in the project *Nowhere People*. Instead, this context statement presents three specific case studies (public works)

¹ Constantine, 2015, p. 259.

² Arendt, 1973, p. 300.

³ Lewis, 2016, p. 14.

that not only embody the project as a whole and the methodology applied throughout the project, but also examine the discoveries I have experienced throughout this project.

I have spent the past ten years working in the field investigating, observing, engaging with and documenting the lives of stateless people who through powers usually beyond their control, find themselves invisible to the world but still surviving regardless of their status as non-persons by the State. During these ten years, a dramatic change (some would say collapse) in the mechanisms supporting and delivering photojournalism and documentary photography has occurred.

Corresponding to this has been the democratization of images through vehicles of social media depicting human rights and distant others. These new vehicles have played a huge role in the proliferation of access to information creating a “competitive media ecosystem in which documentation of the quotidian competes for attention with documentation of global injustice and outrage.” that has perpetuated a ‘scarcity of attention’ (Zucherman, 2014). In response, I have also spent much of this time, developing a strategic framework of inter-related initiatives (books, exhibitions, films, public programs) aimed at seizing opportunity in what Irit Rogoff describes as today’s ever-expanding ‘arena of visual culture’, where the work from *Nowhere People* can interact with a witnessing public through, “a new narrative formed out of both our experienced journey and our unconscious...to provide the opportunity for a mode of new cultural writing existing at the intersections of both objectivities and subjectivities.” (Rogoff, 1998) This has resulted in the project, *Nowhere People*. It is through the visual narrative of *Nowhere People* that I will show a new context in which the lives of the stateless can be interpreted and placed into the discussions related to human rights and citizenship, and in extension, how this body of work can ‘galvanize public interest’ (Newton, 2015).

Since early 2006, I have worked in eighteen countries including: Bangladesh, Myanmar (Burma), Malaysia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Kenya, Ivory Coast, Kuwait, Iraq, Lebanon, Ukraine, Serbia,

Italy, Poland, Malta, The Netherlands and the Dominican Republic. I have produced long-form, photo essays that combine historical studies as well as first person, oral testimonies to articulate the human implications that the denial of nationality as well as the absence of the rights and protection afforded from citizenship have on the day-to-day lives of people from these countries.

Supporting a comprehensive and coherent portfolio of public works published and presented from 2006 – 2016, this context statement will examine how this body of work presents a multidimensional portrait of this issue in a way that contributes to filling in substantial evidence gaps in the context of human rights by making the various elements of this invisible condition, visible. Moreover, this context statement and public works will support how documentary photography, visual story-telling, oral testimonies and multimedia, intervene in the invisibility of statelessness and the lives of the stateless by successfully translating the multiple conditions constructing the issue of statelessness so that the representation of the human lives as well as the histories and cultures of stateless people and communities around the world are more understandable to those responsible for cultivating political, developmental, legal and humanitarian agendas.

Debates focusing on the association of the state, the extension of human rights and the absence of personhood are extensive. Discussions over the relationship between the medium of photography, the role of the photographer and the practice of documentary photography and photojournalism mirror these extensive debates. But, to date none has utilized documentary photography or visual ethnographic approaches to advance the understanding of exclusion based on nationality and situations of protracted vulnerability as a result of the denial of citizenship.

This concept statement will discuss how I have navigated my work and the project *Nowhere People* through these debates as well as the discourse related to subjectivity, agency, representation,

spectatorship and the interconnectedness between photographer, subject and viewer in what Ariella Azoulay describes as the “civil contract of photography”. I will show how the work created in *Nowhere People* and the methodology in how the work has been disseminated documents and interprets the cultural, political, economic and social impact of statelessness in a way that has not been made by previous authors.

To add, I will examine how the approaches employed in the project provide ‘evidentiary proof’ (Lewis, 2016, p. 13) which challenge the relationship between personhood, the State and the principles embedded in the universality of human rights, such as those found in the Universal Declaration for Human Rights and the two UN Conventions related to statelessness as well as other international human rights treaties. I will reflect on my trajectory as a documentary photographer and consider how my methods have developed and adapted in order to tell more meaningful visual stories. In addition, I will detail the pragmatic decisions I have made relating to the authorship and dissemination of the work to various audiences in relation to the tectonic shift in the access to information and use of the image within this shifting paradigm in visual culture.

From early 2006 to late 2015, the project *Nowhere People* produced over 35 international exhibitions, three books, an e-Book for iPad, publication in over 40 magazines and newspapers, more than twenty lectures and presentations and widespread use in collaboration with international NGOs and civil society organizations. This contextual statement does not present a complete and exhaustive look at all of these public works and publications, but will examine three specific public works, each of which consists of an assemblage of a book, exhibitions, online website and lectures.

The first public work encompasses the project: *Kenya’s Nubians: Then & Now*. This project focuses on the stateless Nubian community in Kenya and the connection between national recognition with that of colonialism and land rights. It explores the role photography plays in memory and national

identity and as a vehicle of agency and active voice of the subject. The second public work reviews the project: *Exiled To Nowhere: Burma's Rohingya*. From 2006 to 2015, this project documents the impact that the denial of citizenship and subsequent deprivations of any number of rights has had on the stateless Rohingya community from Myanmar (Burma). With this project, I explore themes related to representation, spectatorship, violence and photography as a visual tool for advocacy. The third public work, *Nowhere People*, appraises the collective body of work during the ten-year, eighteen-country project as I recorded personal stories, histories and day-to-day challenges. This resulted in a public work that not only identified those characteristics unique for stateless people within each country but also simultaneously exposed those characteristics of the condition of statelessness that are shared among the stateless, regardless of geographic location. With this project I examine photography's role in challenging contemporary definitions of citizenship and identity and survey its capacity to translate deficiencies inherent within human rights and international law.

2. BACKGROUND

The first project I worked on as a photographer was a self-assigned story exploring and documenting the lives of North Korean refugees seeking asylum in Southeast Asia. Videos of groups of North Koreans storming foreign embassies in Beijing, along with rising tensions surrounding North Korea's nuclear program, had propelled stories related to North Korea into the news cycle. But even with the increased news attention, I felt very little was being done to investigate the harsh realities of life for those living inside North Korea or to understand what had driven these people to flee their homeland and take such risks.

After years of relative security living in China, North Korean refugees were being hunted down and many were finding their way to Southeast Asia through a clandestine and informal underground railroad created by intrepid human rights activists and church groups.

When I began the project in late 2002, I was an unproven, unpublished photographer with no formal training in photography or journalism. I was living in Tokyo, teaching English part-time, wandering the streets of Tokyo and, in my spare time, teaching myself the craft of photography. I had no relationships with editors, agencies, mentors or other photographers.

After months of researching the story, I spent the next eight months working on the project, *A Matter of Exposure*. I made several trips to South Korea and met with human rights activists, humanitarians, academics and a small community of North Korean defectors living in Seoul. I familiarized myself with the wider story and the dynamics of the Korean peninsula. On these 'reconnaissance' trips, I was then introduced to people who served as my gatekeepers to the story. I travelled to Thailand twice and met with North Koreans who had recently been smuggled out of China and were hoping to somehow make it to South Korea.

I completed my project in late 2003. The project resulted in a series of portraits and testimonies—one of the first to investigate and share the stories and struggles of North Korean refugees—and was my introduction to the field of documentary photography. With the project, I realized I wanted to pursue this long-term, immersive approach toward projects of my own interest instead of taking a more traditional approach through news or editorial assignments. Parts of the project were published online through the BBC and in the Korean edition of *Newsweek Magazine*, and much of the project was used throughout the ground breaking report, *Acts of Betrayal: The Challenge of Protecting North Koreans in China* published by Refugees International in early 2005. I partnered with several small non-profit organizations that helped organize exhibitions of the project. Exhibitions were held at the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles, the Rotunda at the Frick Museum of Art in Pittsburgh and at the National Assembly Building in Seoul. During ‘North Korean Freedom Day’ in April 2004, an exhibition was held at the Dirksen Senate Office Building in Washington DC. It was during this time that I met Maureen Lynch, one of the foremost researchers on the issue of global statelessness.

Throughout the process of my fieldwork during *A Matter of Exposure*, I met with and interviewed several North Korean women. Their journey had been long, arduous, filled with insecurity, and the lingering trauma of the abuse they had endured (and fled from) in their homeland. After escaping North Korea—most leaving family behind to an uncertain fate—they lived in China. Many of the women developed relationships with Chinese men—relationships that often turned abusive. While in these relationships, several had given birth to children. In fear of arrest and deportation back to North Korea, the women made the decision to flee. With the help of activists, they spent days or sometimes weeks dodging police on buses and trains. They stayed in safe houses along the way, eventually crossing illegally into Laos and then Thailand. In Thailand they spent months, even

years, hiding from Thai authorities as activists searched for ways to transport them to another country, ideally South Korea.

I met several women days or weeks after they had crossed into Thailand. Along this journey, the women travelled with their children. During my interviews, I asked if they still possessed any form of documentation from North Korea. Nearly every woman carried her North Korean ID card. Eventually the conversation would turn to the children, and it became apparent that the children lacked all forms of identification, including: birth certificates and passports. They had no legal identity. I asked the mothers about their dreams, and while they were happy to have escaped from North Korea, they all expressed grave concern for the future of their children, primarily because they lacked documents. Without documents, how could the child enrol in school? How would they be permitted to travel? If the child became ill, how would he/she obtain medical care? Without a birth certificate, how would they access any of these rights? More importantly, what country did the child legally belong to? They were not recognized as citizens of North Korea or China or Thailand. Each question led to another question that on almost all occasions resulted in a bleak outlook.

Years later, in late 2004, when I shared these stories with Maureen Lynch, she informed me that my work in *A Matter of Exposure* had introduced me to an invisible and global phenomenon that very few people (especially journalists or photographers) were paying much attention to: statelessness. As we talked, she also presented a clear case as to why statelessness, in due time, would become a topic of widespread interest.

From late 2003 until late 2005, I was living in Los Angeles, working on my second, long-term project, one that focused on women living in a group home in Watts, Los Angeles. The program was called A New Way of Life and helped women navigate out of the cycle of addiction and

incarceration that had afflicted them for most of their lives. My project, *Road to Re-Entry*, demanded an immersive approach that could only come through building mutual respect and trust and required that I spend long periods of time with them. I shadowed their daily lives and was present as they experienced intense moments of personal joy as well as frustration and pain. Frequently, I was required to make immediate ethical calculations related to representation and my role as a witness and documentarian while in the domestic interior (Pink, 2007, p. 28) of those whom I was photographing.

Throughout the months working on *Road to Re-Entry*, I witnessed the challenges the women experienced in overcoming a variety of bureaucratic and administrative obstacles from the frustrations of re-acquiring vital documents (revoked while incarcerated) to the challenge of securing a permanent residence, which is required to apply for and receive many of these vital documents. Laws and processes embedded in the State system, as well as negative stereotypes attached to their socio-economic status and history of incarceration, pushed the women to exist on a plane of citizenship consisting of an abridged set of rights considerably different from most others in society.

Road to Re-Entry was never published. My photographs and segments of the audio interviews I conducted with the women were used to create an online multimedia film that was utilized by the local organization in their advocacy efforts. To add, an exhibition was held at a public library in South Central, Los Angeles.

My entry into documentary photography (and a career as a photographer) was self- engendered, driven by curiosity and developed through instinct, enterprise and a process of calibrating and recalibrating my own methods of research and approach to the work and the story. I recognized

that creating my own identity, specifically through the selective and strategic decisions of the projects I worked on, would be vital to my success as a photographer.

The themes shared between *A Matter of Exposure* and *Road to Re-Entry* such as: access to rights, identity and State power were not immediately apparent at the time but crystallized for me over a period of months. After my first conversation with Maureen Lynch, I realized statelessness was a natural extension of the work from these two previous bodies of work, and that both provided the framework I needed for my next project. In late 2005, I made the decision to embark on *Nowhere People*. Originally, I intended to spend one year constructing a photo essay about stateless communities in Asia, but I soon came to recognize the true magnitude of the issue and how so little was actually known of the paralyzing impact it made on the lives of people.

3. Statelessness and Discourse in Human Rights

In principle, all people have human rights, but in practice, these rights are not accessible to everyone. The world is constructed of states that are governed by laws which empower and protect the state and its citizens with rights. Those who are deprived or have lost their connection and relationship to the state—their affirmation to a place—have in essence, been expelled from belonging to the very fabric in which the organized world today administers and governs itself. This connection to the state and, by extension, to any number of rights, comes through the form of citizenship.⁴ It is with this very connection where laws and access related to human rights begin. Yet, these two ‘traditions’, citizenship and human rights, have historically competed against one another: “anchoring rights in membership versus disconnecting them from membership and thus universalizing them” (Shafir, 2004, p. 11).

Today, men, women, children, families and entire communities around the world have been deprived of the fundamental right to a nationality and are not recognized as citizens by any country. They are stateless. "Statelessness is a condition of a person who is not considered as a national by any state under the operation of its law".⁵ According to the United Nations, some 10 million people worldwide are stateless. Most stateless people are not refugees. Most stateless people have resided—often for generations—in the country of their birth but are denied or are without citizenship. Around the world, some States cannot guarantee, have failed or in many instances have arbitrarily deprived or chosen not to extend the person this relationship. As a result, a person’s right to be legally recognized by a state that can guarantee the ‘right to have rights’ (Arendt, 1973, p. 297) has been severed.

⁴ For the purpose of this contextual statement, I use the terms ‘citizenship’ and ‘nationality’ interchangeably.

⁵ UNHCR. 1954 Convention Related to the Status of Stateless Persons.

Statelessness has been a long-neglected issue on the global agenda (Guterres, 2011) and the conflict between State sovereignty and the actualization of an individual's rights have consigned statelessness to politically sensitive territory. One reflection of this rests in the lack of international engagement and extensive research on the subject of statelessness prior to 2006. More importantly, it is illustrated by the lack of support for the two primary legal frameworks addressing statelessness: the 1954 UN Convention relating to the Status of Stateless People and the 1961 UN Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness⁶.

Embedded within international law, including the two UN conventions related to statelessness as well as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and several other human rights treaties, are guarantees extending rights and protections to non-citizens. However, with the sovereign State being the intermediary by which rights are extended and implemented to the person, "...citizenship creates a giant loophole in the international human rights framework..."(Goldston, 2006).

"The existence of stateless populations challenges some of the central tenets of international law and the human rights discourse that have developed over the past sixty years" (Blitz/Lynch, 2009). Today there is a massive hole and protection gap in human rights law in relation to stateless people and their access to fundamental rights. Globalization, transnational migration and in the absence of global governance and enforcement of human rights laws, the legal connection between a person and the State and the mechanisms constructed to ensure the legitimacy of this connection are inadequate (Brysk/Shafir, 2004, p. 5). These laws do not account for the changing characteristics and elements that define personhood and this relationship both in the eyes of the State and in line with international human rights norms. As Selya Benhabib describes, "...a series of internal contradictions between universal human rights and territorial sovereignty are built into the logic of the most comprehensive international law documents in our world" (Benhabib, 2004, p. 11).

⁶ To date, 88 countries are party to the 1954 Convention and 67 countries are party to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

Yet, statelessness is not solely isolated to gaps or deficiencies in international law. The broader issue of statelessness is collectively constructed of a complex web of numerous legal, social, political, economic and cultural conditions and deprivations that effectively deny millions around the world from accessing or enjoying the rights enshrined in citizenship (referred to as *de facto stateless*). As well, statelessness is not isolated to one distinct accelerant, such as discrimination, race, religion or event in history. As a consequence, the composition of these various conditions and the inherent nature of statelessness and of non-personhood creates a condition which to many is indecipherable and have made it even more challenging for policy makers, the legal community and academics to define, portray and represent who stateless people actually are and what the condition of statelessness looks like, hence adding to their invisibility.

It is in this sphere between the recognition and principles of human rights law and the postponement of them, most often times by the State, that millions of stateless people are positioned in the world today. In addition, it is also within this space that I have placed myself as a documentary photographer.

Within the past decade, practitioners in academia, the legal and human rights community, sociology, political studies and diplomacy have intensified their exploration into the issue. Several studies are seen as producing some of the most comprehensive research on the broader issue of global statelessness: *Nationality Matters: Statelessness under International Law* by Laura Van Waas (2008), *Lives on Hold* by Maureen Lynch for Refugees International (2005), *Statelessness and Citizenship: A Comparative Study on the Benefits of Statelessness* by Brad Blitz and Maureen Lynch (2011) and the *World's Stateless* by the Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion (2015). Political theorists such as Seyla Benhabib's *The Rights of Others: Aliens, Residents and Citizens* (2004) and *Dignity In Adversity: Human Rights in Troubled Times* (2011) have expanded on the

works of Hannah Arendt and others by examining statelessness through the contemporary creation of new “boundaries of political membership” (Benhabib, 2011, p. 1). Practitioners such as James Goldston, the work of Open Society Justice Initiative and David Weissbrodt’s *The Human Rights of Non-Citizens* (2008) have expanded the understanding of statelessness and its placement in international human rights law. Within all of the aforementioned disciplines, there has been an ever-expanding range of research related to statelessness and the rights of non-citizens in nearly every region of the world over the past ten years: from Africa to Southeast Asia, Eastern Europe to North America. Lastly, organizations like the UNHCR have dramatically increased the amount of research being conducted on the issue of statelessness and its implications throughout the world. Still, even with the explosion of literature and research, there has been a considerable deficiency not only in humanizing the issue of statelessness but also in articulating through tangible proof the impact statelessness and denial of citizenship have on the human condition.

A person can find themselves stateless under a number of circumstances. Conflict, the shifting of borders, the collapse of colonialism and the breakup of states like the Soviet Union and the creation of new ones have resulted in millions of people becoming stateless. Inconsistent and inadequate citizenship laws cause people to find themselves in a legal no man’s land. The lack of documentation such as birth certificates, marriage certificates and other forms of identification can contribute to statelessness and can often result in the inheritance of statelessness from one generation to the next. But as my work has focused on, most situations of statelessness in the world today are rooted in discrimination and intolerance.

The determination between who has access to resources and who doesn’t, who can participate and who can’t, who belongs and who doesn’t, commonly creates a conflict where identity is manipulated. Rather than embracing a shared identity, “others” are created and the differences exploited between “us” and “them.” That leads governments and people in power to use citizenship

as a weapon to disenfranchise those who they feel threaten their political, ethnic or personal interests. Citizenship, the connection that should link each and every one of us to a state, is synonymous with empowerment, inclusion and belonging. While ever increasingly, the citizenship is used to do the very opposite: exclude marginalize, and cast aside (Shafir, 2004, p. 24).

While some stateless people are forced to flee their homes because of conflict or persecution, most stateless people are not refugees. Most have never left the country of their birth. They have a deep connection to the country they call home and where they have lived, often for generations. The tragedy for most stateless people is not that they do not have a home. The tragedy for most is that the country that they call home has rejected them, and the denial of citizenship is the tool that has been used to reject them. Today, entire communities are denied an identity, and millions of talented, hardworking, intelligent stateless people are trapped within the exotic landscape of their own borders, excluded from participating in and contributing personally and culturally to these places they call home.

Without citizenship, most stateless people find they do not have the protection of laws, and they are frequently refused most social, civil and economic rights and are vulnerable to any number of human rights abuses. Stateless people are often denied legal employment and access to education and affordable healthcare. They are restricted in the freedom to travel and commonly live in fear with the constant threat of arrest and detention. They are often denied those state-issued documents that are required to enrol in school or receive a diploma or be issued a driver's license or a passport or ID. They have problems registering their marriage, which is often required to have a birth certificate issued for their child. Statelessness creates overwhelming challenges that plague almost every aspect of life. It is a condition where individuals find they are unable to navigate through life as equal citizens and are pushed to live invisible lives on the edge of society.

My work over the past ten years has been framed by any number of evolving questions such as: How fragile are an individual's fundamental rights when the caregiver of those rights comes in the form of the absolute power of the state. What consequences can discrimination, intolerance and racism, when manifested through the arbitrary denial of citizenship, have over the human condition? Who are these stateless people, and who needs to not only become more aware of their existence but also to understand the deprivations that create and perpetuate their plight? This leads me now to discuss the role of photography in elevating the visibility of stateless people, enriching the understanding of the complexities in their lives and how my work has been placed in a human rights context where it can be more effectively interpreted and contribute to the growing legal, political and humanitarian dialog related to statelessness.

4. Photography and Creating a Human Rights Context

As mentioned earlier, debates focusing on the association of the state, the extension of human rights and the absence of personhood have been extensive. Within the realm of statelessness and international human rights law, there exists a tenuous triangular relationship among that of the state, the individual and the moral duty of others to ensure that vacancies in human rights are filled (Benhabib, 2004, p. 57). Mirroring these extensive debates also rests a historical dialog over the equally tenuous triangular relationship among the photographer, subject and viewer. It is important to examine how discussions over identity, representation and agency have evolved over time and also to look at the history and heated debates related to photojournalism and the practice of documentary photography, the role of the photographer and the placement of the image within the changing visual landscape of the past sixty years. In doing so, I will provide a better understanding of how my work over the past ten years and decisions made throughout the project *Nowhere People* intersect with both.

Since the 1930s, there has been a dramatic shift in the role of photography in visual culture, as well as scepticism and criticism surrounding the social and political makeup of the image and the means in which images are disseminated and consumed. To add, the role of the photographer within this image-dominant shift in 20th century communication has also evolved. Fred Ritchen, former picture editor of the *New York Times Magazine* as well as author and lecturer on the future of photography, describes the role of the photographer in the early-mid 20th century as one that focused, "...on straightforward seeing, not interpretation, and least of all on personal expression. The photojournalist was simply an all-purpose witness and messenger, conveyor of an exotic, seemingly unmediated reality through the marvelous technology of photography..."(Ritchen, 1997, p. 23).

The central idea of most early American documentary photographers such as those working for the Farm Security Administration (FSA) and of the early photographers at the mass-market photo magazines like Life Magazine (e.g. Alfred Eisenstaedt and Margaret Bourke-White) was based on the premise of ‘neutrality’, ‘objectivity’ and ‘truth’. While a photographer’s images had the certainty of being seen by an enormous mass-media viewership, they worked almost entirely within a singular channel of distribution: magazines or newspapers. Within this singular channel, they had almost no control over the photos they produced and the context in which the photos were placed. Any attempt by the photographer to develop a subjective point of view was ‘neutralized’ by the rigid hierarchy of editors (Mora, 1998, p. 12).

In the late 1950s and 1960s, this paradigm began to shift. Photographers like W. Eugene Smith started to demand more control over the visual narrative of the stories they worked on as well as the sequencing and editing of photos for publication. Photographers like Smith would pave the way for a new generation of photographers who saw their role not only as that of documentarian but also as one with a responsibility to interpret and employ photography as a means to a ‘moral truth’. As Gilles Mora writes in the introduction to the book *W. Eugene Smith Photographs 1934-1975*, this demanded, ‘...the combination of personal vision and intervention...’ (Mora, 1998, p. 14).

In his own words, Smith goes even further. "Those who believe that photographic reportage is 'selective and objective, but cannot interpret the photographed subject matter', show a complete lack of understanding of the problems and the proper workings of this profession. The journalist photographer can have no other than a personal approach, and it is impossible for him to be completely objective. Honest -- yes! Objective --no!" (Mora, 1998, p. 14).

Smith’s approach would herald in a ‘new face of photojournalism’. The work of photographers like Bruce Davidson, Philip Jones Griffiths, Eugene Richards, Don McCullin, Susan Meiselas, Donna

Ferrato, Gilles Peress, Sebastião Salgado, James Nachtwey as well as many others investigated a spectrum of subjects and themes from war, disaster and poverty, to racism, inequality and identity. They recognized how achieving ‘the truth’ was unobtainable given the constraints inherent within the medium of photography in addition to the competing commercial and journalistic agendas of the traditional print and broadcast media at the time. Through a ‘*filter* of subjective viewpoint’ (Mora, 1998, p. 14) and a personal visual aesthetic, their work interrogated those boundaries between the objective and subjective. Within their work was a personal awareness ‘not uninfluenced by a history of private experience’ (Coles, 1997, p. 88). Woven within photography’s interpretations of reality were the inextricable elements of subjectivity. Their work presented a ‘negotiated version of reality’ (Pink, 2007, p. 24) that challenged the traditions of visual storytelling and the dialog over representation, agency and spectatorship.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, post-modernist critics like Susan Sontag (1977), John Berger (1980), Roland Barthes (1981), John Tagg (1993) and several others attacked photography’s claim to objective truths (Linfield, 2010, p. 8). In varying degrees they expressed their hostility toward the medium as objectifying, voyeuristic, manipulative and exploitative. As Barthes says, “Ultimately, photography is subversive not when it frightens, repels, or even stigmatizes, but when it is pensive, when it thinks.” (Barthes, 1980, p. 38), or as Tagg remarks, “Like the state, the camera is never neutral. The representation it produces are highly coded, and the power it wields is never its own” (Tagg, 1993, p. 64).

In *On Photography*, Sontag sums up the post-modernist disdain toward the medium, “The knowledge gained through still photographs will always be some kind of sentimentalism, whether cynical or humanist. It will be a knowledge at bargain prices—a semblance of knowledge, a semblance of wisdom; as the act of taking pictures is a semblance of appropriation, a semblance of rape.” (Sontag, 1977, p. 24), and specifically toward documentary and photojournalism, she

elaborates, “In these last decades, ‘concerned photography’ has done at least as much to deaden conscience as to arouse it” (Sontag, 1977, p. 21).

Their criticism fuelled fatigue and distrust in the photograph. I have questioned much of the post-modernist stance toward the hollowness of photography, while at the same time I have come to appreciate their stance in questioning photography’s claim to objectivity and ‘close cousin, neutrality...’ (Linfield, 2010, p. 8). While exploring ‘a truth’ was central to the above mentioned photographers, what constituted the foundations of their work, and have always been principles of my own, was a deep belief in authenticity, respect and integrity and the need to be humanistically driven and rooted in social responsibility.

From documentarians like John Coles to ethnographers like Sarah Pink, subjectivity within the documentary practice is inescapable. As with many photographers, I have had to make my own calculations to balance the work I produce and how it is influenced by my own subjectivity. What do I choose to include within the frame and why? Conversely, what do I choose to leave outside the frame and why? Why am I drawn more to one element or detail of a specific situation than to another? How will my own fixed characteristics such as sex, race, nationality, appearance and otherness limit my accessibility to subjects and to other important constituent pieces of the story needed for a more satiated understanding of the larger story? These calculations are made not only during the process of making pictures but also (and probably more critically) in the process of how and in what form those images are to be shared with viewers.

Whether in Myanmar or Iraq, Serbia or the Dominican Republic, one of the primary ambitions (and challenges) of my work during the project *Nowhere People* has been to harness the visibility of the struggles and daily lives of stateless people as a means to cultivate a visualization of those

antagonistic characteristics that are essentially absent: denial of legal identity, deprivation of rights, power of the State.

Linfield talks about this absence in *The Cruel Radiance*. “The philosophies that undergrid ideas about human rights are, then, built around absence. And photographs, I would argue, are the perfect medium to mirror the lacunae at the heart of human rights ideals... what photographers can do, and do particularly well, is to show how those *without* such rights look, and what the absence of such rights does to a person” (Linfield, 2010, p. 37). I’ve always believed this statement from Linfield is most appropriate when applied to photography’s contribution to illuminating the lives and struggles of stateless people. Moreover, I have also believed that photography and visual storytelling presents the greatest opportunity for constructing the most accurate portrayal of the lives of the stateless so as to elicit reflections and responses from any number of viewers, whether legal, political, civil, humanitarian or otherwise.

To achieve this, I have had to consolidate the work produced in the field—visuals, audio and testimonials—using my own experiences, understanding and interpretations. Throughout this project, I have come to better understand how just as my own subjectivities are woven into the fabric of any work I produce so are the subjectivities of the viewer and how they translate the information provided (or not provided) by the photographs—as well as other auxiliary materials. As Coles explains, “...non-fiction embraces fiction: the (imagined, observed) ruminations on our concrete reality that make up fiction have their parallel in the variations on concrete reality that make up documentary expression...through selection, emphasis and the magic of narrative art, the reader or viewer gets convincingly close to a scene, a subject matter, and sees the documentary as one of many possible takes, not *the* story, but *a* story” (Coles, 1997, p. 250). As a result of this process of consolidation, the presentation of the work and the facts woven throughout my images would provide a point of departure where the imagination of the viewer could potentially recognize

this negative space and hopefully interrogate this negative space more rigorously. The intersection of these subjectivities bring viewers (particularly those with a vested interest in change) not only into a space that holds the capacity to contract the proximity between the imagined and the incomprehensible nature of statelessness but also into a position that can potentially encourage viewers to then untangle and challenge existing versions or accounts of histories or representations of the stateless.

In an essay within the book of photographs from Bob Adelman, *Mine Eyes Have Seen*, documenting the civil rights movement in the 1960s, Charles Johnson writes, “While a photograph can capture a moment, freezing it in time for eternity, it cannot reveal the condition and causes that are the background for the image” (Adelman/Johnson, 2007, p. 2). Berger asserts that in the absence of context, a photograph ‘becomes a dead object’ (Berger, 1980, p. 56). While this view is extreme, I believe this sentiment has grown to be increasingly more relevant today as photographs are easily abandoned as they ‘enter the morass of images swirling in the public sphere’ (Newton, 2001, p. 97) via the digital page space and social media. No one will argue the ability of the digital space to facilitate in photographs ‘reaching’ wide audiences. Yet, it is also within this space where the photograph today is at greatest risk of being unhinged from context, left alone and where I would agree with Berger, ‘lends itself to any arbitrary use’ (Berger, 1980, p. 56).

Anchoring the work throughout *Nowhere People* in a context has been pivotal in initiating this point of departure and rests at the foundation from which all three public works included in this contextual statement are built. The anchorage of context ensures a framework in which the photographed subjects can be authentically placed and represented as well as interpreted and given meaning. As Stuart Hall explains, “We give objects, people and events meaning by the frameworks of interpretation which we bring to them...we give things meaning by how we *represent* them—the words we use about them, the stories we tell about them, the images of them we produce, the

emotions we associate with them, the ways we classify them and conceptualize them, the values we place on them” (Hall, 1997, p. 3). How we communicate these meanings is achieved through the vehicle of a shared language. For my work, photography, though embedded in context, has constructed that language for which I have chosen to prompt this conversation about the lives of those I have photographed. As Berger illustrates, “The aim must be to construct a context for a photograph, to construct it with words, to construct it with other photographs, to construct it by its place in an ongoing text of photographs and images...” (Berger, 1980, p. 60).

With today’s digital space possessing the power to easily threaten the meaning within a photograph into that of irrelevance, I labour under the belief that there has never been a more crucial time for the photographer (specifically those working on stories of suffering, catastrophe, injustice and human rights abuse) to exhaust all means to assure this requisite context remains attributed to his/her work. Fortunately, photographers today have a multitude of new and expanding platforms in which to command the dissemination of his/her work, which allows them to retain an unprecedented level of authorship over the use of the photographs and stories they create.

As I will explain, throughout the entire project *Nowhere People*—including these three public works—I have accepted subjectivity as essential to ‘...knowledge, interpretation and representation’ (Pink, 2007 p. 23) while at the same time adhering to those principles of honesty, respect and humanism that create the foundations of my work. I have embraced the position of the photographer as more than an image-maker, and I have exploited the unprecedented level of authorship afforded to photographers today in an effort to regulate the dissemination of the work, consistently placing priority more on ‘strategy’ than on ‘scope’ as a means to fortify the contextualization of the photographs. In doing do, I believe this has made it possible for a more meaningful encounter between the ‘actants of the photograph’—photographer, photographed and

spectator (Roberts, 2014, p. 6) and has effectively advanced a subsequent negotiation of political, civil and ethical responsibilities among all three, especially in relation to the citizen and non-citizen.

Throughout the ten years of working on *Nowhere People*, my notion of what ‘citizenship’ means has consistently been challenged by the stories of the people I have met, the circumstances I have witnessed and the lack of progress (some would even say indifference) made in providing or even restoring ‘citizenship’ to millions of stateless people around the world. Time and again, I have found myself asking several questions. What is *citizenship*, when the caregiver of this ‘status’—the nation-state—has so much power to control it, manipulate it, exploit it and do so arbitrarily and with impunity? With the nation-state possessing such entrenched power, to what end can the increased visibility provided by photography translate into improving the lives of the stateless? With the modern discourse over *citizenship* and solutions for the stateless intertwined so closely with that of jurisprudence and legal remedies, what actions can the individual within the greater polity take to acknowledge and activate a stateless person’s claim to citizenship and access to rights?

From this point, it is necessary to examine *Nowhere People* and the theoretical intersection between photography and citizenship, specifically within the framework of Ariella Azoulay’s ‘The Civil Contract of Photography’. Where citizenship is commonly attributed to be a ‘status’ that is acquired or possessed, Azoulay argues citizenship is rather, “...an interface or point of contact between all of the governed and the government. It is nothing more or less. Anything that increases its value and turns it into a form of national belonging, for example, or reduces its value and turns it into a form of behavior is injurious to its sole function” (Azoulay, 2008, p. 79).

For Azoulay, all individuals living under the nation-state system share the equally fundamental position of being ‘governed’ and within this position, the sovereign power partitions the ‘governed’

into those who belong (citizens) and those who are others (non-citizens). The stateless are placed in a sphere where rights, recognition and legal identity are not accessible; where within the nation-state system they are not legally tethered to the State by ‘citizenship’. The stateless exist as a consequence of an act made by the State where they are placed in what Giorgio Agamben describes as a *state of exception*—where law is suspended and the human stripped to bare life, void of legal identity and rights—‘a no man’s-land between public law and political fact, and between judicial order and life’. While the State’s action has denied them a legal place within it, the State equally holds the sole license to authorize their acceptance. For Agamben as with Azoulay, the very decision to let them remain in this ‘state of exception’ constitutes their belonging to the State, even in bare life: *Being outside, and yet belonging* (Agamben, 2005, p. 35). Citizen or stateless, Azoulay claims this dimension of being equally ‘governed’ ‘allows a rethinking of the political sphere as a space of relations between the governed, whose political duty is first and foremost a duty toward one another, rather than toward the ruling power’ (Azoulay, 2008, p. 17).

Fundamental to Azoulay’s civil contract is the relationship between the photographer, subject and spectator. Just as the governed, they hold an equal relationship with each other to create a ‘cizenry of photography’ (Azoulay, 2008, p. 85). As a result, photography creates an alternative civil political space that is ‘not dominated by the pole of sovereignty’ (Azoulay, 2012, p. 70) and ‘can be put forward and read as a non-meditated complaint attesting to situations in which citizenship has been violated’ (Azoulay, 2008, p. 132). Within this space, those within the cizenry of photography play an active role in the ‘event of photography’. Each is held accountable and takes responsibility for their role in this new political space. Because “...photographs have no single, individual author...they allow civic negotiations about the subject they designate and about their sense” (Azoulay, 2008, p. 13). This civil contract Azoulay proposes, welds photographer, subject and viewer together in an encounter that is free from boundaries of entry, where none can exclusively possess authority, where inclusion is safeguarded and where “an obligation to others to struggle

against injuries inflicted on those others, citizen and non-citizen alike—others who are governed along with the spectator” is demanded of the viewer (Azoulay, 2008, p. 14).

As will be illustrated throughout the discussion of my public works, this ‘obligation’ of and ‘demand’ of the viewer to take responsibility for this encounter with the subject in the photograph was driven by the inclusion and participation of the photographed subject through storytelling via the act of photography then strengthened (and protected) by the deliberative contextualization of the photographs and stories for the viewer to engage with across a variety of platforms. Because the work from *Nowhere People* was free from the constraints of deadlines, unattached from daily or breaking news and more importantly, liberated from editorial demands, it was possible to spend extended periods of time talking with and interviewing subjects, recording their unique histories and situations. This provided them with a better understanding of my work, the project, my intentions for the work and their position within the storytelling process. More importantly, this would provide an invitation—through being photographed and in sharing their private story—they could enter into the public space, calling on their claim to rights, identity and belonging to a witnessing other.

As Azoulay suggests, “Through the act of photography the photographed subject and photographer assume the existence of a hypothetical spectator who would take an interest in the image and be aroused by it to show responsibility... toward the ongoing injustice evidenced...” (Azoulay, 2008, p. 23).

While of a different generation of theorists like Sontag and Barthes, Azoulay shares their view of the photographic act as an antagonistic relationship between photographer-photographed-viewer. I would argue that rather than being one of violence, of appropriation, of voyeurism and exploitation, within the context of *Nowhere People*, this relationship is built more on the acknowledgement of

shared ethical and moral responsibilities toward each other in the act of photography. I believe that when and because these ethical and moral responsibilities rest at the centre of this relationship, the works from the project *Nowhere People* have had the potential to: produce a more enriched interpretation of human rights, strengthen this sense of accountability toward each other and instill the subject with an agency that, through this newly activated sense of solidarity, elevate the stateless from that of the excluded 'other' to 'us', from belonging 'Nowhere' to being 'Now Here'.

"The exercise of photography," as Azoulay asserts, "...is actually the exercise of citizenship—not citizenship imprinted with the seal of belonging to a sovereign, but citizenship as a partnership of governed persons taking up their duty as citizens..." (Azoulay, 2008, p. 104). Through this relationship of the governed within the citizenry of photography, equally sharing this new space, Azoulay claims citizenship can be 'rehabilitated' for those who have been denied or stripped of it and citizenship can 'regain its essence' (Azoulay, 2008, p. 132).

"The civil contract of photography assumes that, at least in principle, the governed possess a certain power to suspend the gesture of the sovereign power seeking to totally dominate the relations between us, dividing us as governed into citizens and noncitizens thus making disappear the violation of *our* citizenship" (Azoulay, 2008, p. 23). Within the context of Azoulay's civil contract, the encounters within the event of photography by those of the citizenry of photography provide the stateless with a visibility that situates them into a public gaze where the viewer holds an ethical responsibility to the subject in the photograph, acknowledging their civil claims and endowing them with a recognition that interrupts and contradicts the actions of the State.

For Arendt, this action into the public space is essential to the fulfilment of human experience. The transformation from the 'deprivatized and deindividualized', of one's presence into the public space also translates into one's visibility and affirmation of identity. "Each time we talk about things that

can be experienced only in privacy or intimacy, we bring them out into a sphere where they will assume a kind of reality which, their intensity notwithstanding, they never could have had before. The presence of others who see what we see and hear what we hear assures us of the reality of the world and ourselves..." (Arendt, 1998, p. 50). This action from the private to the public space, from the invisible to the visible supports Arendt's notion of agency. Storytelling is one such tactic employed for transforming the private into the public. As she notes, "...the most current of such transformations occurs in storytelling and in artistic transposition of individual experiences" (Arendt, 1998, p. 50).

Michael Jackson expands Arendt's notion of agency in his book *The Politics of Storytelling*, by claiming this action from private to public comes from the, "...human need to imagine that one's life belongs to a matrix greater than oneself, and that within this sphere of greater Being, one's own action and words matter and make a difference" (Jackson, 2002, p. 14). Storytelling "...reworks and remodels subject-object relations in ways that subtly alter the balance between actor and acted upon, thus allowing us to feel that we actively participate in a world that for a moment seemed to discount, demean and disempower us" (Jackson, 2002, p. 16). For Jackson, storytelling and this action within the public space, has the capacity to reinstate the legitimacy of one's relationship with others and "...reaffirm collective ideas in the face of disparate experiences" (Jackson, 2002, p. 18).

For many, including policy makers and the public, the mere existence of statelessness is incomprehensible and commonly invokes a reaction of utter disbelief. Often, this disbelief further isolates the stateless and widens the distance between the inner realities of their day-to-day lives and a meaningful empathetic response from others.

In the introduction to a collection of essays *Pictures in Progress: Early Photography and the Making of African American Identity*, Maurice O. Wallace and Shawn Michelle Smith write how

19th century African-American orator and abolitionist, Frederick Douglass, embraced the photograph and its viewing as a catalyst vital for self-reflection, self-criticism and social progress. "It is the picture of life contrasted with the fact of life, the ideal contrasted with the real, which makes criticism possible. Where there is no criticism there is no progress--for the want of progress is not felt where such want is not made visible by criticism" (Wallace/Smith, 2012, p. 6).

As Jackson expands, "...stories may confound or call into question our ordinarily taken for granted notions of identity and difference, and so push back and pluralise our horizons of knowledge...critique becomes pivotal, with the possibility glimpsed that there may be no human experience that does not exist *in potentia* within every human being and within every human society" (Jackson, 2002, p. 25).

While the project *Nowhere People* and associated public works do not claim to resolve one's statelessness—just as Azoulay's 'Civil Contract of Photography' does not claim to reconnect one's legal citizenship with the State, it does present an opportunity where photography and storytelling can serve to bridge this gap of disbelief and make a vital contribution toward elevating the visibility of the stateless, making their lives more comprehensible so that deficiencies in the legal and political discourse over this issue can be challenged.

5. Public Works

5.1 Kenya's Nubians: Then & Now

“The British would give you a plot number and would say, ‘That’s your place. This is your identity.’ But now, all I can do is say to myself, ‘Where did this land go?’ We are being squeezed into extinction...I’m a Kenyan by paper only, but it has been easily teared.”

Ramadhan, Nubian elder, 2008⁷

After two years of working exclusively on situations of statelessness in Asia, I expanded my project in 2008 to include stateless communities in Africa. Through prior research, I knew significant situations of statelessness existed in Kenya, Zimbabwe, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mauritania and the Ivory Coast. Statelessness in Africa consisted of several elements including: gender discriminating nationality laws, complexities related to naturalization, conflict between citizenship acquired through right of descent (*jus sanguinis*) vs. right of the territory one is born in (*jus soli*) as well as discrimination. In Africa, the arbitrary denial of citizenship or denationalization of unwanted ethnic groups was widespread, and it was a common practice for African leaders to use the denial of citizenship as a political tactic to eliminate opposition. As a consequence, denial of citizenship could be directly linked to any number of conflicts on the continent, such as civil wars in Ivory Coast or the Democratic Republic of Congo. Yet, more than anything else, the crises of citizenship in Africa were largely attributed to the continent’s colonial heritage. As Bronwen Manby described in her book *Struggles of Citizenship in Africa*, “It is not a coincidence that the countries where citizenship has been most contentious are often the countries that saw the greatest colonial-era migration; migration not only of Europeans and Asians to the continent, but in even greater numbers of Africans within the continent” (Manby, 2009, p. 3).

Central to my motivation for expanding the project *Nowhere People* to Africa was to attempt to articulate this connection between statelessness and tribalism, identity as an extension of land rights

⁷ Constantine, 2010, p. 109.

and the legacy of colonialism. Collectively, these three contributing factors were not only shared among all of the locations where statelessness was prevalent in Africa, but they were also unique globally, especially the degree to which the historical legacy of colonialism influenced contemporary situations of statelessness.

In November 2008, I travelled to Kenya to create a photo essay about the struggles of the Nubian community in the country, particularly Nubians living in Nairobi. While the statelessness of the Nubian community had been widely referenced in legal, academic and human rights literature, there was almost no visual representation of the Nubian community in this conversation.

As I will show in this section, my work related to the Nubian community showed how the lack of national recognition as well as the deprivation of land rights negatively influenced the community's access to citizenship and other rights. I will discuss the development of various public works of the project *Kenya's Nubians: Then & Now* (2008-2010), including a book, historical photo archive, multimedia feature and a series of exhibitions. I'll place the project among other contemporary works such as Susan Meiselas's *Kurdistan: In the Shadow of History* (1997), which utilizes the synthesis of personal work, archival photographs, text and testimony with that of the active participation from the subjects of the project. The outcome challenges accepted historical narratives and helps give shape to the collective memory of a threatened community. I will show how through these decisions, *Kenya's Nubians: Then & Now* created a unique human rights context for the work to be placed and interpreted both domestically and internationally.

In the 1880s, Sudanese *askaris* (soldiers) were incorporated into the British East Africa Company armed forces and brought from the Nuba Mountains in Sudan to the territories of Kenya and Uganda. They helped secure territories during the British expansion in Africa and provided security during the construction of the Uganda Railroad from Mombasa to Lake Victoria. Upon completion

of the railway in 1902, the soldiers were incorporated into the King's African Rifles. They fought for the British in numerous campaigns during WWI and WWII and played an important role in the defence and development of East Africa. Most Nubian soldiers travelled with their families and after they were decommissioned from their service, the colonial authorities did not permit them to return to Sudan (Manby, 2009, p. 123). In 1915, the colonial government began categorizing Kenyan tribes and settling them on "Native Reserves." The British intentionally classed the Nubians as 'detrribalized natives' or a tribe not indigenous to Kenya. Denied a Native Reserve and unable to return to Sudan, the Nubians had nowhere to go. In 1918, the colonial authorities designated 4,197 acres of land outside of Nairobi as a military reserve for the settlement of the Nubians. They named the land *Kibra*, or "land of forest" in Nubian and were issued special *shamba* passes which enabled them to create homes on this land, grow food and graze cattle.

In the following decades, many Nubians carried British colonial passports and ID cards and had access to education. In addition to their service in the military, they held public and private sector jobs such as security guards or worked for the police, Kenya Bus Service or Forestry Department. After World War II, the British no longer needed the Nubians, yet little had been done to safeguard their future. Prior to Kenyan independence in 1963, no efforts were made by the British to legitimize the Nubians as a recognized community in Kenya, and land rights to Kibra were not secured. Upon independence, most Nubians were not recognized as citizens of Kenya and became stateless. In 1950, three thousand people lived in Kibra. After independence, Nubian claims to land went unrecognized and the Kenyan government changed Kibra's status to an "unauthorized settlement," rendering the Nubians squatters. In the 1970s and 1980s, hundreds of thousands of Kenyans moved from the countryside into Nairobi, and politicians from Kenya's larger tribes encouraged them to settle in Kibra. By 2000, several hundred thousand people from almost all tribes in Kenya had settled on the Nubian's land. Kibra became Kibera, the largest slum in Africa.

Today, tens of thousands of Nubians live in Kenya. In Kibera, their Muslim identity and vibrant cultural identity dominates entire areas and commands respect, but they are radically outnumbered. Politically speaking, the Nubian community has been a voiceless minority. Until 2009, they were not included in the Kenyan census as one of the forty-two officially recognized tribes indigenous to the country, but were instead considered “Other Kenyans,” or simply “Others”. Since independence, the census confirmed popular perception of a tribe’s acceptance into the national family. Because the lack of a specific categorization in the census for the Nubians, popular and political claims of non-recognition fostered the invisibility of the Nubians within the country.

For years, Nubians faced challenges obtaining the National ID cards required for nearly every aspect of daily life in Kenya. Like all youth in Kenya, they were required at age eighteen to apply for a National ID card. But unlike almost every other tribe in Kenya, Nubian youth were put through an identity verification process called vetting, where they needed to provide documentation to prove their connection to Kenya. The vetting procedure lacked rules, oversight or regulation, causing a system of discrimination toward Nubians (Sing’oei, 2009, p. 38). As a result, Nubians were denied National ID cards or had to wait years for their IDs, and they missed opportunities at a pivotal time in life.

While a National ID might be the legal representation of Kenyan citizenship, wider acceptance of Kenyan nationality has been closely tied to the recognition of one’s tribe and the origin of the tribe’s rural homeland in Kenya. To most Kenyans, the Nubians were “ethnic strangers” (Balaton-Chrimes, 2013, p. 331) living on borrowed land, a legacy from colonial days that was perpetuated by the complex tribal politics of the country. In addition, most people in Kenya were completely unaware of the history of the land that became the infamous Kibera slum and that the Nubians were the original inhabitants of that land over a century ago.

The denial of land rights and identification documents were just two of the tools successive Kenyan governments used to marginalize the Nubian community. Subsequently, they were also responsible for the denial of citizenship and hence the deprivation of any number of other rights. However, the ‘otherness’ manufactured by the British and perpetuated by leaders of the more influential Kenyan tribes—formally supported through the lack of inclusion on all the national censuses since Kenyan independence—had become the accepted narrative in Kenya and led many across the country to view the Nubians with suspicion (Manby, 2009, p. 123). The problem was not that the Nubian community did not have a history in Kenya. They did. The problem was that many Kenyans did not recognize or even know about their history, and this could be attributed to the near absence of any form of visual representation of their history in Kenya. “These facts dominate perceptions of the Nubians, placing them in a position of having to find grounds on which to articulate first their visibility (as opposed to invisibility in the category of ‘other’), and second their Kenyanness” (Balaton-Chrimes, 2011, p. 209).

In 2008, over the course of one month and with the financial support of the UNHCR, I travelled to Kenya and immersed myself into the daily life of the community. I spent time talking with elders, women and youth and shadowed their daily routines. I observed their cultural traditions, their connection to the land of Kibera and their interaction with members of other tribes living with them in Kibera as well. Initial access was achieved by following a protocol of meetings with various members of the community--first, through a series of emails and long-distance phone calls with representatives of local human rights and civil society groups who already possessed established relationships with the community. This led to introductions to and a series of conversations with a young Nubian man advocating on behalf of his community. He would ultimately act as my gatekeeper to the community. He arranged a meeting with a group of ten men from Nubian Council of Elders at the Makina Mosque in Kibera upon my arrival in Nairobi.

At this meeting, I formally introduced myself, stated my background as a photographer, spoke of my history of working on statelessness, my relationship with the UNHCR, my motivation for travelling to Kenya and, most importantly, why I was interested in the Nubian community. I expressed what I hoped to achieve during my time there, how they might be able to facilitate in my research and what my intentions were for the work I would produce. The meeting acted as my formal request to be permitted access to the community. To add, it established my ethical transparency as a photographer and acknowledged my respect for their cultural, social and internal-political protocols. It also invited the establishment of a mutually beneficial collaborative approach toward the work I would produce during my time there.

I received permission from the Nubian Council of Elders, which held a considerable amount of currency. I also realized I would need to calibrate a balance between my own observations with any agendas the members of the community (especially the Nubian Council of Elders) might impose on me. Acceptance from the Elders led to more introductions, each providing my work with a stronger degree of legitimacy in the eyes of the people I would need to meet. During my first week, I was invited to attend and photograph a traditional Nubian wedding in Kibera. The Nubians took great pride in their strong and unique cultural identity, and I seized the invitation to the wedding as my ‘calling card’ to achieve a rapid entrance into the community. My presence photographing every stage of the wedding exposed a wide demographic of potential subjects to the work I was just beginning and increased their interest to participate or learn more. Fourteen hours of photographing the wedding produced a wealth of knowledge and a significant supply of mobile phone numbers of people willing to talk with me, introduce me to extended family and expose me to the social strata of the Nubian community in Kibera.

In Kenya, I worked from the exterior to the interior. I chose this approach as it corresponded with two common themes revealed during many of the interviews I conducted at the initial stage of my

research: the community's pride of their history in Kenya, particularly for those who served bravely for the British as soldiers in the King's African Rifles, and the deep sense of loss (and connection) they felt for the land that was Kibera.

These perceived historical and physical connections conversely shaped national recognition and acceptance in Kenya. I felt the visual narrative should reflect this. I photographed the landscape of Kibera, the various structures within the slum and areas of Kibera that were once Nubian-dominated but lost due to land expropriations. Kibera was a huge geographic area constructed of enclaves defined by tribal affiliation. The slum was a point of transit for many of the inhabitants who flowed in and out of Kibera, but not for Nubians. An example of this would be a photograph taken of a row of mud-walled, one-room structures in Kibera where mostly, non-Nubian rural-migrants slept (Constantine, 2011. p. 94). Nubians built the structures in the plots their families had occupied for generations in Kibera and then rented them out to the rural-migrants. Several forced evictions and the mass migration of non-Nubians into Kibera had stripped Nubians of any farmable land. Constructing temporary structures and renting them out to rural-migrants became a primary source of income for many Nubians.

With time, I then worked into the interior of the story. This was facilitated mostly through conducting longer interviews in homes, places of worship or inside their social clubs. This approach slowly produced a more meaningful 'cultural inventory' of the Nubian community and began to introduce visuals that, when sequenced with my previous work on the exterior, undermined the accepted narrative of the Nubians being codified as 'foreigners'. A second example would be a portrait taken of a Nubian elder sitting in a large chair inside his family home (Constantine, 2011. p. 111). Behind the man is a large, wooden and glass cabinet spanning the length of the wall. Displayed inside the cabinet was an extensive collection of dishware, glasses, electronics and other family possessions. His family had lived in Kibera for over 100 years, yet the government

considered them, as well as everyone else in Kibera, ‘squatters’. The command of the elder in his chair and the presence of the filled cabinetry convey connection, permanence and legacy as well as status: characteristics that conflict with the accepted narrative.

My conversations with youth confirmed the devastating impact the denial of documentation had in their lives. Most of the youth I met were either waiting for their ID or had been denied an ID. Without an ID, the progression of mobility in life (education, employment, marriage) had been put on hold. I attempted to reflect this sense of idleness through details in the photographs, such as posture, gesture and body language (Constantine, 2011, p. 130). On several occasions, situations occurred when the historical and physical overlapped, such as when I was permitted to attend the burial of a Nubian elder (Constantine, 2011, p. 146). While the bodies of other deceased who live in Kibera are transported to their rural homelands for burial, Nubians have been buried in the Muslim cemetery located in Kibera for almost one hundred years. To Nubians, being laid to rest in the soil of Kibera is a decisive assertion of their connection not only to the land of Kibera but also to the citizenry of Kenya.

Occasionally during my fieldwork, those whom I interviewed would share old family photographs with me. Their descriptions of the photographs provided details, texture and emotions that made huge contributions to my research and toward building stronger relationships within the community. In addition, I was shown expired colonial-issued identification documents, *shamba passes*, as well as a large and old survey map of Kibera created by British authorities in the 1940’s. The sharing of these old photographs, map and texts presented an invaluable opportunity in eliciting information from people. ‘Photo interpretation’ has been a widely used method of engagement in visual anthropology. In asking questions about the photographs, the questions were directed to the subjects or details in the photograph, not at the person I was interviewing. As a result, those I interviewed were, “relieved of the stress of being the *subject* of the interrogation” (Collier/Collier, 1986. p.

106). Their role had changed from that of the informant to that of my guide. This inclusion of ‘found’ photographs and text came about organically and only while conducting my research. I was unaware of the existence of such old photographs before my arrival in Kenya, and I found that most Nubians were unaware of the existence of such photos as well; yet, they would play a vital role in the future development of my work on the Nubians and the larger global project *Nowhere People*.

After I completed my fieldwork, I reflected back at these old photographs (Figure 1.6) and realized they made an important contribution toward the expansion of what I felt would be a more complete narrative. They provided a unique historical portrait of the Nubians; a portrait of a proud, empowered, confident community of people who had a strong sense of connection to the land where they lived and who, at one point in time, had contributed to a greater society. Most people in Kenya had no idea of this history as well as the various levels of exclusion Nubians had experienced in their day-to-day lives. Only a few families shared old photographs with me. Most families had kept the photographs in dusty shoeboxes and had never shared the photos with the wider community. I realized that in these dark closets and cluttered drawers of Nubian families throughout Kibera, a visual history of the Nubian community existed and was waiting to be exposed.

In 2009, I received an Audience Engagement Grant from the Documentary Photography Project of the Open Society Institute. The grant provided me with the funding needed to collaborate with the Nubian community and the UNHCR on the next phase of *Kenya’s Nubians: Then & Now*. Over the course of several months, a team of Nubian youth went door to door in Kibera asking Nubians to loan their family photographs to this project as a way, both individually and collectively as a community, to actively participate in telling others the story of their past. A photo questionnaire was created that expanded my experience employing ‘photo interpretation’ and helped in gathering details about each of the photos that could be used for captioning and cataloguing. An archival

system was developed where after the photos were gathered and catalogued, high-resolution digital scans were created and the photos then returned to their owners. A total of 354 photographs were collected, archived and catalogued. The oldest was a photograph of a Nubian soldier in the King's African Rifles taken in 1910.

Mirroring my own work, the old photographs documented the exterior and interior of the community. They showed large homes, open fields, duty and service to greater society, cultural vitality, economic, social and political status and an unmistakable confidence in their sense of identity and belonging. Not only did they show what this community once had, but, when juxtaposed with my work, *Kenya's Nubians: Then & Now* provided evidence on what the Nubian community had lost. The old photographs filled in the negative spaces outside the frames of my work that until then were left to imagination.

The decision to recruit the team of Nubian youth in the collection of the old photos created a new perspective in which the Nubian story could be translated and shared. It harnessed 'memory work' with the intention of using those photographic materials to create what I describe as a 'community family album', which can then be utilized by the community to share their story. This album (as Martha Langford has described in her book, *Suspended Conversations*) projects memories and stories in the same way as the spoken word. 'Our photographic memories are used in a performative oral tradition' (Langford, 2001, viii). The involvement of the youth in collecting the photos and the calculations and censorship made by the owners in selecting what photos were to be loaned and included in this project provided a platform and active voice for several hundred individuals from the community to shape *their* historical narrative of the Nubian community in Kenya. It was a narrative that Kenyans, as well as many Nubians, had never seen before.

"Gradually, I understood that what I actually tried to archive was not photographs as documents of past events, but photographs as generators of events in which I, and others, participate" (Azoulay, 2014, p. 53).

Once the historical archive of photos was complete, a website was created www.nubiansinkenya.com to serve as an online portal for the work to be displayed and to extend the accessibility of the project to more distant audiences. More importantly, several exhibitions were organized juxtaposing my own work with photos from the archive. The exhibitions were held to address several questions fundamental to the triangulating relationship between photographer, subject and spectator. Who needs to be exposed to this story? And, will this new visibility and visual representation when placed within a human rights framework intervene in the antagonistic relationship between that of the state, the witnessing other and the recognition of the stateless?

The first two exhibitions were launched in Nairobi during the summer of 2010. The first exhibition was held at the Go Down Arts Centre in the downtown area of Nairobi (Figure 1.5–1.6). Go Down was recognized as a hub for artists, activists and political and social debates. The primary audience of this exhibition was comprised of NGOs, government officials, humanitarian organizations, academics, civil society and the general public. For the opening reception, a caravan of *matatus* (privately owned vans/shared taxis) was hired to bring a large contingent of Nubians from Kibera to the Go Down. A traditional Nubian dance was performed and most of the Nubians in attendance, especially women, wore traditional Nubian dress. Representatives from the Nubian community as well as the UNHCR made opening remarks. Over 2000 people visited the exhibition during the month, and the exhibition received significant media coverage, including coverage in the Kenyan daily newspaper The Standard, as well as VOX television, CNN and several blogs.

The second exhibition was held at the Kibera Secondary School located in the Makina section of the Kibera slum (Figure 1.3-1.4). This three day outdoor exhibition/installation included fifteen large format photographs displayed in the schoolyard and over seventy additional photographs displayed on the outside walls of the school. In addition, a classroom was converted into a theatre where a multimedia film was screened once every forty-five minutes. The multimedia film combined the voices of Nubians talking about their history with my work and the archival photographs. The primary audience of this public exhibition was the Nubian community itself and people from other tribes who lived in Kibera.

Over 2500 people attended the exhibition in Kibera. For older Nubians, the exhibition was a mixture of nostalgia and vindication for the efforts made by them and those before them to secure the Nubians rightful place as members of Kenyan society. It presented a version of *their history* in which generations of Nubians had spent years advocating. For the younger generation of Nubians, while it was understood that the exhibition did not present a complete visual history of their community, it provided enough significant visual evidence to validate many of the stories that had been passed down from one generation to the next. To add, it provoked a renewed sense of responsibility to continue the work of the older generation and move it forward. For those from other tribes who lived in Kibera, the exhibition demystified decades of stories about the Nubian community and their presence in Kenya.

A third exhibition was held in late 2010 at HOST Gallery in central London (Figure 1.1-1.2). Special lectures and presentations of the work on the Nubians were conducted at the School of Oriental and Africa Studies (SOAS) at the University of London and at the Refugees Studies Centre at the University of Oxford. The motivation for the exhibition in London was to place the work and the story of the Nubians within the context of colonial legacy in Africa. The primary audiences for this exhibition were academics, parliamentarians and the African community in London.

Since the London exhibition, smaller exhibitions of *Kenya's Nubians: Then & Now* have been held in Uganda and as part of the Open Society Institute's prestigious group exhibition, *Moving Walls 19*, which was shown at their offices in New York City and Washington, DC.

The successful response to the exhibitions in Kenya led to the publication of the book, *Kenya's Nubians: Then & Now* (2011). The book follows a similar format as the exhibitions: juxtaposing a selection of photos from the archive with my own work. I conceptualized the layout and design as well as the selection and sequencing of the final images in the book. Quotes and testimonies gathered while doing my fieldwork in 2008 were interspersed through the book, as well as a comprehensive timeline of the community's history, providing a narrative constructed from multiple layers of voices and texts. Kenya's most prominent Constitutional scholar, Yash Pal Ghai, contributed the Foreword to the book and a well-known lawyer and minority rights activist, Korir Sing'oei, contributed an introductory essay. The book was self-published with the support of grants from the Open Society Foundations and the UNHCR. Several hundred copies of the book were provided to the UNHCR as well as the Nubian community. Copies of the book were placed in over twenty-five libraries across Kenya as well as several bookstores in Kenya and Uganda.

Several years after the publication of *Kenya's Nubians: Then & Now*, I was introduced to Susan Meiselas's book, *Kurdistan: In the Shadow of History* (1997), which was developed into the *akaKURDISTAN* online project launched in 1998. Meiselas had established her career as a documentary photographer through personal projects like '*Carnival Strippers*' (1976) and her award-winning work documenting civil wars in Central America, particularly in Nicaragua. After the first Gulf War in 1991, Meiselas joined a team of researchers sent by Human Rights Watch to Iraqi Kurdistan to collect evidence that built a legal case against Saddam Hussein and the atrocities committed against the Kurds. Meiselas was tasked to make photographs of the destruction of

villages and of mass graves. As Meiselas states in the Introduction of the book, “I was coming in at the end of the story. I had no connection to the Kurds and even less sense of the why these killings had occurred. I felt strange, photographing the present while understanding so little about the past.” Meiselas would work for several years to gather, curate and present a visual history of the Kurds, which combined her own work with old photographs, maps and other texts. The project would produce a book, a series of exhibitions and, with the advent of the internet, the online project, *akaKURDISTAN*. The website is an extension of the book, but invited Kurds to submit their own photographs and stories which would then contribute to creating their own collective history.

As I have examined, the work produced through the project *Kenya's Nubians: Then & Now*, and the collaborative approach and active involvement of members from the Nubian community shaped a new narrative that dismantled prevailing stereotypes and presented a contradiction to the existing representations of them. It empowered all of those involved in the project with a sense of shared commitment and agency. As Pink describes, “If ethnography is seen as a process of negotiation and collaboration with informants, through which they too stand to achieve their own objectives, rather than as an act of taking information away from them, the ethical agenda also shifts. By focusing on collaboration and the idea of ‘creating something together,’ agency becomes shared between the researcher and informant” (Pink, 2007, p. 57). By utilizing the various public works mentioned above, the project established a human rights framework for the images and the story to be seen and interpreted by an invested audience. It successfully contributed to a new visibility of the Nubian community and in doing so, intervened in their invisibility as ‘ethnic strangers’, void of a place in the Kenyan polity or deficient in an indigenous connection to the land of Kibera.

In the 2009 census, Nubians were listed as a tribe for the first time. In 2010, provisions in Kenya’s new Constitution promised several hoped-for changes. However, for most Nubians, these provisions are still empty words. Waiting times for National IDs have been greatly reduced, but

Nubians are still required to go through the vetting process, which has become even more rigorous in recent years. Many cases relating to citizenship and statelessness remain unresolved. Nubians are still not represented in mainstream Kenyan politics and unanswered claims to land still rest at the heart of the Nubian struggle for acceptance.

5.2 Exiled To Nowhere: Burma's Rohingya

“...because we don't have citizenship, we are like a fish out of water, flapping and unable to breathe. If we were given citizenship in Burma, we would be like the fish you catch and then throw back into the water where he belongs. We are still out of water and when a fish is out of water, he suffocates to death. We have been out of water for such a long time and we are suffocating. We are suffocating to death.”

Jafar, Rohingya man, 2010⁸

Before embarking on the early fieldwork for this project, I spent several months researching the existence of statelessness in Asia. Unable to secure funding to support the launch of my project, I decided to self-fund as much as I could. Asia was my starting point as it was home to some of the most well-known situations of statelessness in the world, including: the stateless Urdu-speaking community (Bihari) in Bangladesh and most notably, the stateless Rohingya community in Myanmar (Burma).

The Rohingya loomed large not only in the literature of statelessness but more so in literature related to gross violations of human rights. The history of ruthless authoritarian rule and human rights abuses by the Burmese junta was well documented. While knowledge was abundant about human rights abuse related to political dissent and ethnic conflicts throughout the country, little had been done to visually document what was (and still is) cited as ‘one of the most persecuted people on earth’: the Rohingya.

From the very beginning, I felt that for my work in Asia to be authentic and representative, it would have to include the Rohingya. At the time, references applied nearly every human rights theme to the situation of the Rohingya, yet the denial of citizenship and statelessness were presented more as footnotes than as primary agents linked to and contributing to these abuses. Moreover, no one had used documentary photography to explore this connection between statelessness and human rights abuse against the community.

⁸ Constantine, 2012, p. 23.

Over a period of nine years (2006-2015) I travelled to Bangladesh and Burma on twelve different occasions, specifically to investigate and photograph the story of the stateless Rohingya. For the exception of one trip in 2012, which was supported by the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting, all of the trips were self-funded. My work developed over the nine years. Initially, it was driven by pure journalistic investigation. In time, events propelled the Rohingya into the attention of the international media, appearing over the course of several years in bursts within the news cycle but disappearing just as easily. It was during this time that I took a more forensic approach in my work. From 2012-2015, the work was driven by a deep sense of responsibility and commitment toward assembling visual evidence that could be utilized in strategic ways to provide a broader degree of context to the ‘story of the Rohingya’ that had been ebbing and flowing through the news cycles of the traditional media. Equally important was the recognition that this evidence served as one of the most extensive contemporary visual records of the Rohingya. This situated the project prominently within a narrative of historical abuse toward the Rohingya that dated back almost fifty years yet had lacked significant visual translation.

In this section, I will discuss my work on the stateless Rohingya community and the development of public works from the project, *Exiled to Nowhere: Burma’s Rohingya* (2006-2015), including a book and a series of exhibitions and lectures. I will show how the work examines the arbitrary deprivation of citizenship as an accelerant in the susceptibility of the stateless to any number of human rights abuses and how it has led to the erosion of an entire community displaced across multiple international borders. In addition, I will discuss how the work addresses power and ‘absence’ in relation to stories of human rights and, what Azoulay calls, ‘regime-made disaster’ (Azoulay, 2012, p. 244). I will explain how the work mediates the representation of violence and suffering, and given the questionable impact stories of human rights can achieve in today’s saturated media landscape and hyperactive visual culture, I will assess the strategies taken to embed

these public works in context so as to cultivate a more ethical response and solidarity between the viewer and the suffering subject. This will lead me to discuss the discourse over the photograph as a tool for advocacy and the photographer as that of activist. As a result, this assessment of public works from *Exiled to Nowhere: Burma's Rohingya* will show how this project contradicted the efforts made by the authorities and others in Burma and beyond to entrench the invisibility and exclusion of the Rohingya, while at the same time, creating opportunity for alternative sites of recognition, agency and belonging.

The Rohingya are a Muslim minority from the Rakhine state in western Burma, historically known as Arakan. It is located adjacent to Bangladesh. Rohingya communities can be found throughout Rakhine, including in the capital of the state, Sittwe. However, of the one million Rohingya living in Myanmar, the predominant concentration reside in the townships of north Rakhine (NRS), which is geographically isolated and for much of the past thirty years, has been almost completely closed off to the world by the Burmese authorities. Coincidentally, NRS has also been the epicentre where most human rights abuse toward the Rohingya has occurred.

While the Rohingya have lived in Burma for generations and their origins in Burma can be traced back hundreds of years, successive Burmese governments and local groups have claimed the Rohingya are not originally from Burma, but are from neighbouring Bangladesh and illegally settled in Burma during British colonial rule. Over the past fifty years, the Burmese government has refused to recognize the Rohingya and has systematically stripped or denied the Rohingya of any number of fundamental rights, including citizenship. They are subjected to religious persecution, forced labour, arbitrary arrest, detention and land seizure, child labour, physical violence, heavy taxation and extortion and the destruction of property. They cannot travel freely, are required to obtain permission from the authorities to get married or start a family and are allowed only a restricted number of children. For most Rohingya, their daily lives have been paralyzed by

discriminatory laws and administrative measures imposed specifically upon them. As Burma/Rohingya expert Chris Lewa described in a 2009 issue of *Forced Migration Review* dedicated to the issue of statelessness, “Deprivation of citizenship has served as a key strategy to justify arbitrary treatment and discriminatory policies against the Rohingya” (Lewa, 2009, p. 11).

Troubles for the Rohingya pre-date Burma’s independence in 1948, but most of their struggles began when General Ne Win came to power in 1962. Under Ne Win, a series of pogroms were launched against the Rohingya in an effort to push them out of the country. In 1978, mass arrests as well as violence and widespread human rights abuse against Rohingya in NRS caused 250,000 Rohingya to flee into neighbouring Bangladesh. In 1979, the Rohingya were forced back to Burma in a repatriation agreement.

Less than three years later, Burma’s junta enacted the 1982 Burma Citizenship Law, which created three categories of citizens. In practice, the Law provides ‘full’ citizenship only to those from Burma’s 135 recognized ‘national races.’ This list intentionally omitted the Rohingya. Timed so closely to the return of displaced Rohingya in 1979, it “strongly suggests that it was specifically designed to exclude the Rohingya” (Lewa, 2009). The law effectively made the Rohingya a stateless people.

In 1991/92, more widespread abuse occurred across Rakhine, sparking another exodus of 250,000 Rohingya into southern Bangladesh. That same year, Burmese authorities established the border security/military force Nay-Sat Kut-kwey Ye or *NaSaKa*, who operated only in Rakhine and who were the main perpetrators of human rights abuse against the Rohingya in north Rakhine for over 20 years. NaSaKa disbanded in mid-2013 but still operates today under a different guise.

In Bangladesh, up to 300,000 stateless Rohingya continue to live throughout the southern part of the country. Most of them have been denied refugee status and receive little or no humanitarian assistance. Vulnerable, exploited, harassed and frequently the targets of mistreatment and abuse, stateless Rohingya in Bangladesh have had no choice but to turn to each other for protection, creating makeshift camps for security that ultimately become rife with disease, malnutrition and abject poverty.

In early 2006, I travelled to southern Bangladesh for the first time. Access to north Rakhine was not possible. Out of sight from the eyes of journalists and the media and accessible only to a few international humanitarian organizations operating under heavy restriction and surveillance from the authorities, Rohingya in north Rakhine lived in a near vacuum. At the time, a steady flow of Rohingya, fleeing persecution or broken after years of abuse, consistently filtered out of Burma into southern Bangladesh where they were unwanted and unwelcome, albeit tolerated. For the exception of 26,000 Rohingya who were officially recognized as refugees in the early 1990s and who lived in two UNHCR-run camps, most of the 300,000 Rohingya in Bangladesh were unrecognized.

My strategy in Bangladesh took on a dual purpose. First, to create a series of portraits and photo stories of Rohingya in Bangladesh as well as personal stories detailing the circumstances behind their exit from Burma. In doing so, I believed this extrinsic approach served as a means of opening up a window into Burma itself and could create connections between the power and action of Burmese authorities depriving Rohingya of rights—both of which were concealed by the inaccessibility to north Rakhine—and the enduring consequences these actions had on the Rohingya in relation to psychological trauma and sense of recognition and identity. To add, even if I had been permitted access to north Rakhine, my presence there would have undoubtedly put the security of anyone I met at greater risk than my own. As a result, I believed the research I collected in Bangladesh, especially related to new arrivals, had the capacity to present an equally (if not more)

authentic and accurate representation of the situation for Rohingya inside Burma than if I had travelled to north Rakhine. Second, to create a series of photos and testimonies documenting the struggles and vulnerabilities Rohingya faced in Bangladesh. With hundreds of thousands of Rohingya being forced to flee their homeland into other countries, they are one of the largest stateless communities in the world who are also ‘refugees’.

For stateless Rohingya who have fled Burma, they appeal—and in many ways surrender themselves—to the wider international community, not only for the opportunity to live life but also to be accepted and recognized. With Burma rejecting the Rohingya’s claim to membership and rights, how then would the wider international community and its web of international human rights treaties and universalist decrees intervene in the state of exception imposed upon and travelling with the stateless Rohingya within this global system of nation-states yet irrespective of national borders? Placing the Rohingya within Arendt’s words, lacking a government of their own and falling back upon the minimum rights of mankind, was there no authority left to protect the Rohingya and no institution willing to guarantee them? (Arendt, 1973, p. 292)

Having spent several months researching and talking with humanitarian and human rights groups before my first trip to Bangladesh, nothing could have prepared me for what I encountered. Disease, malnutrition and sickness (especially with children and the elderly) permeated throughout the Rohingya communities I visited. Living conditions were inhumane and exploitation and harassment from locals or Bangladesh authorities an everyday occurrence. I had never encountered this degree of human suffering, nor had I seen a community of people pushed so far into the margins of society. While this first trip might have provided an initial view into the lives of Rohingya and the persecution they endured in Burma, it provided only a broad survey. It became apparent the situation demanded a more intense investigation. This could only be produced with time. From 2006 to 2012, I returned to Bangladesh seven more times. Year-by-year, the situation for the

Rohingya in Burma and Bangladesh changed and deteriorated, which attached new dynamics to the development of their story as a community and to my work. While each of my trips was motivated by a primary research objective: from documenting stories about the denial of marriage in Burma, land seizure and forced labour by NaSaKa, to investigations about survival, exploitation and the denial of humanitarian assistance in Bangladesh, in the process, I left space to discover and explore unexpected stories that could then provide the framework for future trips.

Over time, this more intensive understanding of the complex historical, social and cultural elements influencing the larger story helped refine the way I approached the project. I revisited individuals, families and small communities of Rohingya. This paved the way for deeper access into the community, which resulted in more intimate and meaningful photographs. It also resulted in the willingness of Rohingya to have more sincere conversations with me and share more delicate and personal stories of loss, abuse and trauma, as well as impressions on larger themes such as citizenship, identity and belonging.

A series of photographs was created of Rohingya youth (mostly young women) who had been denied permission to marry by the authorities in Burma. The accompanying captions and text contextualize the images by detailing how bribery, extortion, the threat of the arrest of their partners (if they were caught marrying through Islamic tradition instead of state sanction) and even forced abortions were common among their stories. A series of photographs were created of men who had had land arbitrarily seized by the military. Unable to receive permission to travel from one village to the next to find work, many had no choice but to leave. Other photo essays were produced of men who experienced or were injured during forced labour in Burma, or women who suffered physical abuse from NaSaKa. For decades, the exclusionary stance toward the Rohingya was carried out through a regime of discriminatory administrative procedures, many of which did not

take on the form of physical violence. Rather, they were meant to dehumanize and strip away the human dignity of the Rohingya to the point where they had no choice but to leave the country.

One of these administrative tactics was the imposition of strict family household registrations on Rohingya in north Rakhine. At least once each year, NaSaKa took photographs of Rohingya families so they had a detailed record of each household. The photographs were used to visually verify identities and hold families accountable for any unauthorized changes to the household (primarily unauthorized marriages or births). Punishments for discrepancies usually resulted in heavy fines, seizure of possessions and harassment. On one occasion, a Rohingya man shared with me several family registration photos taken by the authorities in Burma. They were just a few of the meagre possessions he carried with him when he fled Burma. In the photographs, families stand together, tense, staring into the camera with stoic expressions. Written in chalk and displayed on a small blackboard at the feet of each family were family details, including the number of men, women and children. I made my own images of the photographs and included them within the developing visual narrative of my work (Constantine, 2012, p. 4). These were used as a means of drawing the viewer into the act so that the viewer “becomes both the receiver of the object’s enigmatic message and the carrier of its affective resonances” (Sliwinski, 2009, p. 305).

Azoulay describes how the photographic act reduces the ‘violation of human rights *in itself*’ down to that which is only shown in the victim as a ‘carrier of the violation’. “But the *regime* rather than the *policy* responsible for the violation...remain outside the framework of legibility...” (Azoulay, 2012, p. 245.) She then continues by calling on the viewer to treat the photograph as the, “basis for reconstructing the photographic situation, whose boundaries never correspond to the frame of the photograph” (ibid).

These images of the Rohingya in Bangladesh from 2006-2012, including the family household registration photo, ask the viewer to recognize the repercussions of these actions. Furthermore, they also call on the viewer to expand the borders of the photograph and through this process of reconstruction, to acknowledge the presence of the perpetrator outside of the frame and to implicate the perpetrator into the violation. Incorporating found or contributed visual materials (particularly expired or invalid pieces of identification) into my work proved to be an effective approach which I used on numerous occasions throughout my ten-year project *Nowhere People*.

The growing inventory of photographs, testimonies, audio recordings and observations began to take on a more coherent form from the one that was originally constructed of more fragmented materials produced in response to limited access, to one constructed of multiple layers of interconnected and interrelated experiences, actions and situations accumulated over a period of time. In addition, with the assembly of this inventory, the on-going and unseen abuses and deprivations perpetrated in north Rakhine started to take on a representative shape. As a result, it provided a point of departure so that the imagination of others could then interpret and enable, "...the coming into being of a synthesis between the particularity of the thing and its conceptual form" (Azoulay, 2012, p. 4).

In showing the ways in which the stateless Rohingya were forced to live in Bangladesh, I was confident the project created a heightened awareness of the ineffectiveness of international legal norms pertaining to nationality and access to rights and protection. Conversely, I was also confident the project had served as a lens into Burma, facilitating in *a visibility* of the deprivation of rights and citizenship experienced by the Rohingya and reinforcing the claim that the root cause of the Rohingya's plight rests with these violations in Burma as well.

By early 2012, the international community began lifting years of sanctions and easing condemnations over human rights abuse in Burma (including abuse against the Rohingya) as a reward for democratic reforms. In the scramble for political voice and a place in the country's changing identity, political parties in Rakhine state intensified their indictment of the Rohingya. Identity politics driven by 'unexamined prejudices' and 'historical injustices' (Benhabib, 2004, p. 178) re-established the Rohingya as an undesired, alien community. Yet, it felt as if the international community as well as those inside Burma were experiencing a bout of political and historical amnesia.

Accompanying photographer Josef Koudelka's work, *Prague 68*, documenting the Soviet Union's invasion of Czechoslovakia in *Aperture Magazine* in 1984, Milan Kundera writes about the memory of State crimes committed by the 'Russian empire' against Crimean Tatars, Poles and Lithuanians, "[these State crimes] remain in our memory, but no photographic documentation exists; sooner or later they will therefore be proclaimed as fabrications" (Kundera, 1984, p.10). Collier also reflects on the role photography can play in preserving memory, "Impressions gained with the eye alone grow dim, fuse with other impressions, and with time fade away" (Collier, Collier, 1986, p.36). With rights abuse still being perpetrated against the Rohingya amid such celebrated change, the book, *Exiled to Nowhere: Burma's Rohingya* (Constantine, 2012) was published.

Like *Kenya's Nubians: Then & Now*, the book was self-published with funding received from human rights organizations, such as Refugees International. *Exiled To Nowhere: Burma's Rohingya* was conceptualized as a means to insert the marginalized voices of the Rohingya and my documentation of their situation in Bangladesh into an on-going (and rapidly developing) discourse over the future of Burma. I collaborated with the same designer used for *Kenya's Nubians: Then & Now* and had artistic and editorial authorship over how the book was designed, edited and

disseminated. The structure of the book followed much of my strategy when working in the field and was organized to reflect the life trajectory of the Rohingya I met: exposing the origins of the abuse in north Rakhine, displacement to Bangladesh and neglect and abandonment of the international community, followed by the ensuing search for sanctuary and belonging. Short testimonies and poignant (and often poetic) excerpts and quotes from the interviews I collected were placed thematically to correspond to the sequencing of photos and to add punctuation to the narrative running through the book.

To add context to the book, a historical timeline detailing the history of abuse toward the Rohingya as well as a map were included. Additionally, I approached prominent figures from human rights, humanitarian and Burma-related organizations, such as Human Rights Watch, the Open Society, Euro-Burma, Refugees International, the United Nations and the Arakan Project to contribute small testimonies to a section at the beginning of the book called *Voices*. I felt the inclusion of these voices provided additional legitimacy to the purpose of the book. More importantly, they confirmed the urgency of the story of the Rohingya and provided a pathway so the reader, if desired, could then refer it to their organizations as a vehicle for action.

In her book *Regarding the Pain of Others*, Sontag writes, “Those who stress the evidentiary punch of image-making by cameras have to finesse the question of the subjectivity of the image-maker” (Sontag, 2004, p. 26). Some would even argue that even those who do consent to having their photograph taken or story told do so without informed consent or knowledge of the true intent of the photographer. (Pink, 2007, p. 52) During all of my work in Bangladesh, nearly every Rohingya I spoke with expressed a deep desire to return to their homeland, but Rohingya were fully aware of the significant implications the new reforms in Burma could have on their future. They also felt their statelessness (as well as displacement in Bangladesh) left them with almost no voice. Not only was this sentiment commonly shared amongst Rohingya I met and spoke with, it was also one of

the primary reasons for their consent to be photographed and included in my work. Azoulay writes how most experiencing extreme situations of suffering presume, “the existence of a civil space in which photographers, photographed subjects, and spectators share a recognition that what they are witnessing is intolerable” (Azoulay, 2008, p. 18).

I viewed the book as contributing a counterweight to all the international praise and euphoria over the reforms taking place in the country. I also wanted the book to serve as some form of evidence that these abuses were still taking place. I would not argue with Sontag’s claim of subjectivity within the image, but I do argue with the underlying stance of questioning the motives of the image-maker. Instead of seeing the photographer as one driven by self-serving exploitation, I view the photographer (especially those conducting long-term documentary work related to human rights) as being driven by loyalty. As Robert Coles wrote, “The point is loyalty to ‘the thing itself’ --and to the task of sharing what has been witnessed with others’ (Coles, 1997, p. 250). *Exiled to Nowhere: Burma’s Rohingya* was a product of loyalty (and responsibility) to those I had photographed, and it was also evidence. When placed within the ongoing narrative of Burma, it brought the history of abuse of the Rohingya into the present; lent the Rohingya a degree of agency and in doing so mediated in the ‘function of meaning’ (Grossberg, 2000, p. 156). Little did I know at the time of the publication of the book, the crimes against the Rohingya and systematic exclusion and disenfranchisement of the community were about to reach unprecedented levels.

In June 2012, just as the book was going to print, violence erupted between the Buddhist Rakhine (Arakanese) community and the Rohingya. The International Crisis Group assessed the root cause of the violence as a result of “...a toxic mixture of historical centre-periphery tensions, serious inter-communal and inter-religious conflict with minority Muslim communities, and extreme poverty and under-development” (ICG, 2014, i). A second wave of violence followed in October 2012. Of the October violence, a report by Human Rights Watch cited, “[the attacks] were

organized, incited, and committed by local Arakanese political party operatives, the Buddhist monkhood, and ordinary Arakanese, at times directly supported by state security forces” (HRW, 2013, p. 4). Throughout Rakhine, Rohingya villages and neighbourhoods were levelled to the ground and Rohingya were segregated from local Buddhist communities. Businesses and property were confiscated. The violence forced almost the entire population of Rohingya out of the capital city of Sittwe. Over 140,000 Rohingya were displaced and have since lived an apartheid-like existence in isolated internment camps for internally displaced people (IDP) where they cannot leave to find work, go to school or receive proper medical care and are dependent on international humanitarian assistance.

In late October 2012, I travelled to Burma. Access to north Rakhine was still prohibited, but much of the violence toward the Rohingya occurred in the state’s capital of Sittwe, which was accessible. Images of burning homes, destruction and mobs of people from the Rakhine community, as well as traumatized Rohingya, had already appeared in the international media. But as I have already mentioned, it was at this time when my work shifted to include a more forensic approach. From 2012 to late 2014, I made four trips inside Burma to document the aftermath of the violence. Sittwe was known for having vibrant Muslim and Buddhist communities. Both communities were economically co-dependent, yet the violence shattered any sense of peaceful co-existence. Initially, I focused my attention on the remnants of the violence, photographing burnt or destroyed mosques and levelled Rohingya neighbourhoods. I then spent time in areas commonly shared by both the Buddhist Rakhine and Rohingya communities, specifically the Sittwe central market. Once home to over 200 Rohingya shops, the market was now void of any Rohingya businesses, this due to nearly all Rohingya being forced to abandon their belongings and leave Sittwe. I took photographs of boarded up Rohingya shops and stalls in the central market. Many had the words ‘Confiscated’ or ‘Already Sold’ written in Burmese on the outside walls—a designation made by the local authorities. I also spent time inside the last inhabited Rohingya neighbourhood in Sittwe, Aung

Mingalar. Located in the heart of Sittwe, the 8,000 Rohingya who remained in Aung Mingalar were unable to leave the neighbourhood, go to work or attend school. The neighbourhood was closed off with barricades of barbed wire and Burmese police manned the entry and exit points. With mosques destroyed, the market empty and not even the sound of the Muslim call to prayer heard in the city, the inhabitants of Aung Mingalar were the last remaining evidence of a Muslim community in the historic port town.

News of the violence in Rakhine set prominently in the international media. Having already spent six years documenting the situation of the Rohingya in Bangladesh, I realized that while the immediate displacement of the Rohingya solicited a more humanitarian response from the international community, the removal of Rohingya from Sittwe followed a historical pattern and tactic used by the Burmese authorities against the Rohingya for decades. My focus then turned to creating images that visually registered this gradual shift from one of a temporary displacement, to that of a permanent segregation. From 2012 to 2014, the photographs offered what John Collier described as, “time slices that can be measured and compared” (Collier/Collier, 1986, p. 82).

The work from 2012 to 2014 ranged from images of cluttered fields of tents and primitive huts made of straw and bamboo to landscapes of sprawling, systematically organized barrack-like buildings with metal roofs; from pools and streams of open sewage next to family huts (immediately after the violence) to the presence of areas filled with latrines; from only a few guards loosely monitoring the periphery of the IDP camps in 2012 to the constant patrolling and residency of NaSaKa and entire units of police within the IDP camps (in late 2013 and 2014). The work documented the lack of healthcare and its impact on the community and the absence of schools and access to education for the children. Yet, it also revealed the resourcefulness and determination of the community to adapt and persevere. My work in Burma culminated by attending and

photographing a large anti-Rohingya demonstration held in Sittwe by various factions from the Rakhine community in November 2014.

The photographs, audio and video of Buddhist monks, Rakhine youth, women's groups and civil society organizations protesting through the streets of Sittwe contributed a significant dimension to the work I had conducted over nine years. When the Rohingya spoke of persecution and human rights abuse, their stories implicated two primary characters. First, an antagonistic character shared by 'the governed' across Burma (citizen or noncitizen): the authoritarian power of the central government. My work already included photographs representative of this character, whether they were inside the frame as NaSaKa soldiers or police inside the IDP camps or as an extension just beyond the frame, tethered to the psychological or physical scars seen in the eyes or bodies of the Rohingya I had photographed. The other character was even more sinister and distressing yet unique to the Rohingya. It was the collapse, rather betrayal, of solidarity. These photographs of Rakhine citizens chanting racist slogans, denouncing the existence of the Rohingya—a fellow community among the 'governed' in Burma—exposed what the face of discrimination, racism, bigotry and ethnic nationalism looked like. During this time of democratic change in Burma, this character was inflicting equal, if not more, damage on the Rohingya, than the government. It was a character that, until then, had eluded my work.

When assembled together, the work showed the agonizing degradation of the Rohingya in Burma after the violence, but also complemented and expanded upon the work produced in Bangladesh. The photographs not only created a visual chronology of exclusion and violence toward the Rohingya, they also constructed a conceptual and geographical map attesting to the various mechanisms and ramifications of the systematic abuse imposed upon them. By documenting the story on both sides of the border, I felt the work was unified. Though deprived of rights, freedom, a place and (even amid the most pervasive subjection and suffering), the Rohingya's survival from

one day to the next, one year to the next—however achieved and regardless of the soil under their feet—was in itself, an act of protest against those rejecting their existence. I felt the collective body of work from *Exiled to Nowhere* served as a testimony.

The statelessness of the Rohingya and violence perpetrated by invisible systems of oppression, such as the state, through the manifestation of discriminatory policies and deprivations of rights is what Johan Galtung categorized as ‘structural violence’ (Galtung, 1968). Noted anthropologist, Paul Farmer, expands the thought by describing structural violence as, “historically given processes and forces that conspire...to constrain agency” (Farmer, 1996, 263). Seen specifically through the lens of citizen/non-citizen relations, Azoulay similarly describes it as ‘regime-made disaster’: where the subjugation of one population is perpetrated within the presence of another privileged population, yet the violence is not necessarily acknowledged as violence. Regime-made disaster is, “part of an organized, regulated and motivated system of power that is nourished by the institutions of the democratic state, which in turn is sheltered under their umbrella” (Azoulay, 2008, p. 2).

Photography as a vehicle for social change rests not only as one of the most contentious debates involving the medium but also as one of its most revered characteristics. The work of photographers like Lewis Hine, Jacob Riis, Dorothea Lange paved the way for generations of photographers, including myself, who felt the documentary practice could contribute to change. In her book *Photography as Activism*, Michelle Bogre considers the use of the photograph as activism might begin “at the point that a photographer thinks beyond the photograph, or when the photograph is not the end, rather the means to be a solution even if the solution is nebulous” (Bogre, 2012, p. xv).

Between 2006 and 2013, photo essays from my work appeared in international publications such as the New York Times, International Herald Tribune, CNN, BBC and Al Jazeera. Essays also appeared in regional and national magazines such as the Irrawaddy (Thailand), Southeast Asia

Globe (Cambodia), South China Morning Post (Hong Kong), DATUM (Hungary), Stern (Germany) and many others. But, with the rising popularity of social media and publications reducing page-space for photography features and moving into more online-based platforms, it became increasingly difficult to find outlets to publish the work. Even if published, the limitations inherent within the traditional channels of publication (as well as online and through social media) could only present a limited view of the complexities of this much larger story as well as the breadth of the work I had collected. Though the work was exposed to a large (and unseen) viewership through these prestigious publications, the short-lived exposure did not meet my expectations for what I felt the story demanded or for what I felt the work could achieve, particularly given the history, severity and scale of the Rohingya's plight. As Lillie Chouliaraki expresses in her book, *Spectatorship of Suffering*, "The *capacity* of technology to deliver immediacy is simultaneously the *failure* of technology to establish connectivity" (Chouliaraki, 2006, p. 26). With the proliferation of technology today, how then does one establish this connectivity?

In 2014, Susan Meiselas was interviewed in *Aperture Magazine*. Remarking on the digital age, today's visual culture and the challenges placed on photography and storytelling. She said, "There's so much visual noise that it's hard to make work that is distinctive and focuses the attention of the crowd in a sustained way" (Meiselas, 2014, p. 27). Seventeen years earlier, in 1987, (again in an interview in *Aperture*) Meiselas discussed similar challenges of disseminating her work through the traditional avenues of publication. She said, "What do you do when there are no magazines willing to publish your work, no pages to have turned--at least there still are walls..." (Meiselas, 1987, p. 32).

With the book *Exiled to Nowhere: Burma's Rohingya* published and yet considering this new wave of violence directed toward the Rohingya and the numerous limitations presented by new technology as well as traditional publications, I looked beyond the photograph. Rather than the

scale of viewership, seeing the work was inserted into a larger conversation driven more by connectivity with viewers took on greater importance for how I proceeded with my work. As a photographer, what can I do to create a space that will effectively mediate and elicit a more meaningful connection between the work and the viewer? How can I slow the viewer down, remove them from the hyperactive visual culture and sustain their gaze? How can I navigate and reconcile what Linfield says as the "...fatal gaps that exist between seeing, caring, understanding and acting" (Linfield, 2010, p 60).

In her book, Chouliaraki examines the relationship between western spectators and 'distant sufferers' and the dynamics of the media (specifically television) in this relationship. Central to her study is the placement of the media in the concept of mediation. Posing a number of paradoxes, whether through distance, action, politics or technology, mediation examined by Chouliaraki, "...makes the world visible and audible to spectators and invites them to engage with it" (Chouliaraki, 2006, p. 30). Yet, fundamental to this invitation presented to the viewer is what Chouliaraki describes as the 'practice of viewing' or as Linfield stresses, the 'ethic of seeing' (Linfield, 2010, p. 60). Essential within this relationship between the suffering subject in the photograph and the viewer must be the pull of ethical responsibility. For many, the Rohingya might be portrayed as an obscure story of suffering in an exotic landscape. Overestimating a viewer's natural capacity to possess this ethical responsibility or overestimating the effectiveness in the vehicle used to present a photograph or story to the assumed ethically responsible viewer—which is what I felt I had done with the traditional media and online—can sabotage the claim of the subject in the photograph and can easily jeopardize photography's role as a visual tool for advocacy. With the Rohingya, I had to share the work in a manner that pre-established the need for this ethical responsibility. Following what media and journalism professor Donna Schwartz wrote, "meaning is actively constructed, not passively received" (Schwartz, 1989, p. 120), I had to situate the work within a context for the viewer, which would impart more meaning to the images and stories and

facilitate in 'the closing of moral distance' between the viewer and the subject (Chouliaraki, 2006, p. 19). I believed this could create an alternative site that opposed the regime-made disaster, where solidarity could be reconstructed and agency extended to both the subject and the viewer. Ultimately, I was confident this approach could help neutralize the Rohingya's invisibility and in some small way, command the restoration of the Rohingya's position (Azoulay, 2008, p. 143). What was being shared, how it was being shared and with whom it was being shared became central to how I expanded *Exiled to Nowhere* beyond the printed page of the book. Like Meiselas mentioned, I turned to the walls.

In late 2012, a website dedicated to the project was created (www.exiledtonowhere.com) and an exhibition of *Exiled to Nowhere* was held at The Atrium Gallery at LSE in London (Figure 2.2-2.3). The exhibition featured only my work from Bangladesh, as I had not yet travelled to Burma. Reforms in Burma were receiving significant attention and the violence in Rakhine had just occurred. Interest in the exhibition, the book and the situation in Burma were strong. With Refugees International, LSE Arts and the LSE Centre for the Study of Human Rights (CSHR) as my partners, the exhibition was able to reach a targeted audience that consisted primarily of viewers invested in Burma and human rights-related issues. With these partners a human rights context was established for the photographs to be placed and seen. Additionally, on the opening night of the exhibition, a panel discussion was organized by CSHR on campus at the Hong Kong Theatre. Moderated by esteemed human rights activist and scholar Margo Picken, along with myself and Burma-Rohingya expert Chris Lewa of the Arakan Project, the discussion presented the audience with research related to the recent violence, the history of abuse and the connection between this abuse and the denial of citizenship of the Rohingya. Over 300 people attended the panel and the launch of the exhibition and hundreds more visited over the next month. The exhibition at LSE in 2012 and the connectivity it achieved with an invested audience, established a model that I would then spend the next three years, refining and replicating.

A series of international exhibitions of *Exiled to Nowhere* was launched in late 2013. Most were supported by grants I received from the National Endowment for Democracy. These exhibitions served as a centerpiece for a series of side events focusing specifically on the Rohingya, Burma, human rights and the issue of statelessness. They also provided a point of departure for broader conversations about local issues. The exhibitions consisted of images from both Burma and Bangladesh. Like the book, quotes from Rohingya were displayed and woven throughout exhibition, inserting and enhancing the Rohingya's voice into the narrative. Opening text and captions accompanied the photographs. In several exhibitions, a timeline detailing the history of abuse against the Rohingya was incorporated into the display and a multimedia feature consisting of Rohingya voices, music or environmental sounds from the camps or the protest was screened as a projection. More importantly, on as many occasions as possible, the Rohingya diaspora and relative Rohingya community organizations at each exhibition were invited to participate and lend their voices.

Exhibitions were held in Washington, DC at the US Holocaust Memorial Museum (Figure 2.20-2.21), in Brussels in the European Parliament (Figure 2.18-2.19), in Jakarta (Figure 2.16-2.17), Bangkok (Figure 2.14-2.15) and Tokyo (Figure 2.12-2.13). Each location was strategically chosen as a means of introducing a more immersive version of the Rohingya story with invested, target audiences. Washington, DC was chosen because of the increase in US policy with Burma, Brussels was selected to engage EU Parliamentarians, Jakarta due to the location of the ASEAN Secretariat, Bangkok as a result of the many United Nations agencies, international NGOs and embassies using Bangkok as a springboard for policy in the region and Tokyo because of all the Japanese economic and developmental investment pouring into Burma. The physicality of the exhibition space varied from one location to another, from a traditional gallery, to an old, decrepit abandoned bank, from an unused shopping mall to a high profile public park.

In each city, I collaborated with domestic and international human rights organizations: Human Rights Watch, The Open Society, the Jesuit Refugee Service in Indonesia, Tenaganita in Malaysia and The Statelessness Network in Japan. I utilized their local experience and knowledge to create a human rights framework in which the work would then be presented. I also utilized their position to identify key actors who could be invited or mobilized to attend the exhibition. Similarly to the *Voices* section in the book, as the ‘carriers of global civil society values’ (Chouliaraki, 2008, p. 22) and as agents defending the ‘ethical cause of suffering’ (Chouliaraki, 2006, p. 198), these human rights organizations added legitimacy and urgency to the exhibitions and the story of the Rohingya as well as a channel for viewers to respond and take action. Chouliaraki quotes Craig Calhoun’s concept of social solidarity as *a bond of mutual commitments* that connect with “the vision of a ‘better future’ for people who, because they remain undefined, can in principle come to consider any distant other as a humane sufferer (regardless of religious or racial background) and thereby expand their care beyond people like ‘us’” (Chouliaraki, 2008, p. 23).

Like the exhibition in London, additional panel discussions, special lectures and slideshows of my work on the Rohingya were organized in each location. These were used as a strategy to extend the visibility of the Rohingya beyond the physical exhibition itself and were usually coordinated in partnership with local universities, mostly through Schools of Law, Global Studies and International Relations or through Institutes for the study of human rights. The presentations situated the story of the Rohingya and the issue of statelessness into their studies and also into their field of knowledge as they moved forward with their careers, often into positions with civil society.

More exhibitions followed over the next two years including an exhibition in Kuala Lumpur during the ASEAN Summit and Asia People’s Forum meetings (Figure 2.8-2.9), in Geneva during the Human Rights Council Meetings (Figure 2.10-2.11), as well as in New York City (Figure 2.6-2.7),

Yogyakarta and Istanbul. By the end of 2015, this series of exhibitions had travelled full circle when a more extensive version, including the work conducted inside Burma, was exhibited in London at the launch of a ground breaking report conducted by The International State Crime Initiative of Queen Mary University claiming, “the process of genocide against the Rohingya population is underway...” (Green *et al.*, 2015, p. 13).

As I have expressed, the work produced from the project *Exiled to Nowhere: Burma's Rohingya* addresses one of the most extreme, complex and protracted situations of statelessness in the world today. The project navigated themes that rest at the core of statelessness and often contribute to the intractable nature of this issue. Through these public works, the project provided alternative pathways for the acknowledgement of ethical responsibility and solidarity between subject and viewer. Through a mediation based on connectivity anchoring the work in context and slowing the viewer down), the book and exhibitions circumvented the limitations imposed by the traditional means of disseminating photographic human rights stories. As Azoulay writes, “The act of a prolonged observation by the observer as spectator has the power to turn a still photograph into a theatre stage on which what has been frozen in the photograph comes to life. The spectator is called to take part, to move from the addressee’s position to the addresser’s position to take responsibility for the sense of such photographs by addressing them even further...transforming them into emergency claims” (Azoulay, 2008, p. 169). More importantly, through these public works, the project served as a visual tool for advocacy, which enhanced the visibility of the Rohingya to audiences invested in cultivating change.

5.3. Nowhere People

“We are only proclaiming our rights...our right for a name and a nationality.”

Rosa, Dominican Republic, 2011⁹

The longer I became embedded in the issue, the more I saw just where I wanted to travel and what stateless communities fit best into my growing project. As I have already discussed in the past two Public Works, Asia was the starting point. Asia led to Africa, then to the Middle East, the Dominican Republic and Europe. Calculations were made based on the needs of the project. For example, the Roma continually came up in my research. A number of photographers had already created in-depth bodies of work on the Roma, and I originally felt I would not contribute anything new. But when seen through the lens of statelessness, I found the Roma to be an ideal subject to explore the ramifications of the collapse of the Soviet Union and former Yugoslavia and the denial of nationality. Within each country, statelessness could be explored through a unique characteristic, yet the stateless shared many similar traits. When placed together, I believed *Nowhere People* would take on a shape and identity born out of similarity rather than differences and out of alliance instead of antagonism.

In this final section, I will discuss the public work, *Nowhere People*, which from 2006 to early 2016 incorporated work from twelve countries and was developed into a series of exhibitions, a book and a website. The construction of these public works was in many ways both a precursor to and an extension of lessons learned and tactics employed from my study of the Rohingya, where collaborations were essential to success and where connectivity took priority over an attempt to reach a large, unengaged audience through more traditional dissemination channels. As I will show, the collection of public works from *Nowhere People* was anchored in context so as to mediate a greater understanding for the viewer, which could then elicit a more meaningful response of solidarity between viewer and the subject in the photograph. I believed this approach could create

⁹ Constantine, 2015, p. 359.

an alternative space where a ‘collective agency’ (Grossberg, 1996, p. 103) was extended to the subject and where, through the event of photography, viewers could then facilitate in the intervention of the subjects’ invisibility. Moreover, I felt the project could serve as a vehicle establishing a ‘becoming’ (Grossberg, 2000, p. 156) for this global community.

John Collier describes a ‘whole view’ as, “...the product of a breadth of samples that allows us to comprehend the whole through systematic analysis of those carefully selected parts. A good selection process provides a sufficient reflection of cultural circumstances from which to establish a reliable perspective” (Collier/Collier, 1986, p. 62.) This was the tactic I followed for much of my research. The individual situations brought about by statelessness made their own critical statement about the discriminatory policies of each state. Through this ‘systematic analysis’ of each of these selected situations of statelessness, the project forged a more well-defined perspective of a darker element in the human condition. The global community had not seemed to recognise the human condition that it had created: statelessness. I viewed the achievement of *Nowhere People* as similar to Donna Ferrato’s work on domestic violence, *Living with the Enemy* (Ferrato, 1991). As Ariella Azoulay describes, “[*Living with the Enemy*] is an investigation into a phenomenon that was then still without recognizable visual templates,” (Azoulay, 2012, p. 59).

As detailed in the previous Public Work on the Rohingya, I chose Asia because of funding and because Asia presented the most developed point of entry into the issue of statelessness. I had read extensively about the Urdu-speaking community in Bangladesh (otherwise known as the Bihari). The community was one of the most organized, active and vocal stateless communities in Asia (if not globally), yet their story had received almost no attention from a visual storytelling point of view. Following the partition of India in 1947, Urdu-speaking Muslims from Bihar fled into what became East Pakistan. During the Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971, the Bihari were viewed as Pakistani collaborators. They were fired from their jobs, stripped of their land and assets and

targeted in waves of violence. Hundreds of thousands were placed into camps throughout Bangladesh. The Bihari were abandoned as citizens of Pakistan and excluded from citizenship in the newly created Bangladesh. For the next thirty-seven years, nearly 300,000 stateless Bihari have lived as ‘camp dwellers’ in over one hundred designated urban ghettos. In 2006 and 2008, I made three trips to Bangladesh, travelling to cities like Dhaka, Chittagong, Rangpur, Saidpur and Mymensingh to create a photo essay about the situation of the Bihari community. The work surveyed how discrimination, lack of citizenship and documentation prohibited Bihari from attending schools, obtaining legal employment, accessing healthcare and/or exercising any number of other civil rights. It also looked at the generational shift in identity between the older generation (many of whom were still very sympathetic to Pakistan) and the younger generation who, while proud of their family heritage, demanded to be recognized as Bangladeshi. In May 2008, a petition was filed by a group of Bihari youth and the High Court granted Bangladesh nationality and National ID cards to all Bihari born in Bangladesh after 1971. Yet, even with the landmark judgment, there has been little improvement in the lives of most Bihari.

Over three million people reside in the state of Sabah in Malaysian Borneo. Nearly one third are people who legally or illegally migrated to Malaysia over the past forty years, mainly from Indonesia and the Philippines. Although the industries driving Sabah’s economy depend on migrant labour to survive, strict immigration and citizenship policies have been implemented to preserve the interests of Malaysians and curtail any influence this immigrant community might enjoy were they extended equal rights. It is estimated that up to 50,000 children in Sabah are without nationality and are stateless. For the thousands of undocumented people living and working in the country, the fear of exposing their presence to authorities influences their decision of whether or not to give birth in a hospital. As a result, large numbers of children born in Sabah do not receive birth certificates and documentation and are, consequently, shut out from accessing public schools and affordable healthcare. Moreover, they are destined to wear the stigma of “foreigner” for the rest of their lives. I

travelled to Sabah twice in 2006 and felt these visits would provide a valuable representation on the impact statelessness had on children. What I experienced showed how the immigrant community has been blamed for any number of larger issues. My work explored the strategies stateless children took to survive on their own and the desperate situations many found themselves in. While tens of thousands of children and young adults have been born in Sabah, grown up in Sabah and possess no connection to the birthplace of their parents or grandparents, my time in Sabah showed how discriminatory and nationalistic-driven policies continue to force these youth into the shadows of the only home they know.

Ethnicity and language form the basis for defining Nepalese national identity, which is significantly skewed in favour of the Nepali-speaking castes. These distinctions have also been used to cast doubt on the origin and nationality of millions of people in the Terai area of southern Nepal, which is situated along the border with India. By 2007, an estimated four million people in Nepal were without Nepalese citizenship, including large numbers of people from the Dalit community. Deep-rooted discrimination and social stigma have left Dalit or “untouchables” in the Terai disadvantaged as they have historically been excluded from microfinance and economic development programs. I made two research trips to Nepal in 2007 and 2008 and spent all of my time in remote Dalit villages in the Terai. While in the Terai, I documented how, though the natural resources of the Terai fuel Nepal’s economy, most Dalit in the Terai were landless and had been denied equal access to basic social benefits. Unrecognized as citizens, they cannot have marriages legalized or obtain birth certificates. Over two million Nepali work outside the country as foreign labourers, yet stateless Dalit cannot acquire passports, travel abroad or remit money back to their families and communities. This common vehicle for economic livelihood in an impoverished country such as Nepal is one that is beyond the reach of Dalit because of their statelessness, and it forces them to live a hand-to-mouth existence. Today, interpretation of Nepalese citizenship law is commonly left to the discretion of local and district-level bureaucrats and civil servants. In addition, Nepal’s

citizenship laws deny women the right to pass their citizenship on to their children. Estimates claim hundreds of thousands of Dalit remain stateless in the Terai.

In 2008, I expanded the project *Nowhere People* beyond Asia. The ensuing work and photographs produced in Africa explored the connection between colonialism and tribalism and the use of the deprivation of citizenship as a tool to exclude unwanted ‘others’. I have already discussed the work I conducted in Kenya, but in early 2010, I travelled to Ivory Coast. The historical ramification of colonialism and tribalism in Ivory Coast was not only of great significance to the wider understanding of statelessness but was also one of the most dramatic situations where the denial of citizenship was directly linked to conflict. In the 1920s and ‘30s, French colonialists resettled thousands from French West Africa, particularly from Burkina Faso, into Ivory Coast to work on vast coffee, timber and cocoa plantations. After independence in 1960, Ivory Coast was opened up to large-scale immigration. Communities from the Muslim north of the country, as well as foreigners from surrounding countries, were encouraged to settle in southern Ivory Coast to develop the country’s agricultural sector. The mass immigration started by the French and perpetuated after independence permanently changed the country’s ethnic balance. This led to a rise in anti-foreigner sentiment. In 1972, nationality laws were changed and hundreds of thousands became stateless. In the 1980s, the country’s political elite and intellectual class manufactured the xenophobic concept of “Ivoirité” or “Ivorian-ness,” which defined those from the south as pure Ivorian and those from the north (or those originating from other countries) as foreigners. The denial of citizenship and subsequent denial of documentation, land and voting rights would directly contribute to the eruption of a bloody civil war in 2002. During my time in Ivory Coast, I travelled throughout the southeast of the country documenting large communities of Burkinabe and photographing stateless people that were providing labour in support of Ivory Coast’s cocoa production. I spent time with communities that dated back to colonial migration but had their Ivorian identity challenged by those from the more dominant tribes around them. Today, where historical injustices remain unaddressed,

where ethnic divisions continue to run deep and where corruption and discrimination push people to live invisible lives on the edge of society, Ivory Coast remains home to seven hundred thousand stateless people.

In 2012, I started working in the Middle East in Kuwait (2012), Lebanon (2012) and Iraq (2014). The book, *Nowhere People*, would reflect my research only in Kuwait and Iraq even though the Middle East itself presented new perspectives that I felt were missing from my previous research: the connection between regime change and statelessness (Iraq), the impact of gender discrimination in nationality laws (Lebanon) and statelessness and structural violence in the fifth wealthiest country in the world (Kuwait). When Kuwait became independent in 1961, one third of its population was granted nationality. Another third became naturalized as citizens. The rest were considered *Bidoon jinsiya*—without nationality. Immediately after independence, the Bidoon enjoyed many of the same rights and were largely seen and treated as equals to other Kuwaitis. But in the mid-1980s, the Kuwaiti government gradually began stripping the Bidoon of their rights and fired Bidoon en masse from jobs. In less than five years (1986-1991), the Bidoon had become jobless, 'rightless' and reduced to the status of “illegal foreigners.” I travelled first to Kuwait.

I investigated the enormous disparity between communities that reside in a country where citizenship is the gateway to privilege, a secure future and a share of the country's vast wealth. For Kuwaitis, the government provides sizable housing subsidies, free healthcare and education, assured employment and large financial allowances for marrying and having children. I documented how the Bidoon cannot own land and property and live in slum-like settlements on the outskirts of urban areas. I collected stories and photographs depicting the high levels of unemployment and ways in which Bidoon—who are prohibited from owning businesses and from being hired legally from any company in Kuwait—adapt to earn a living. More importantly, the work presented a community determined to secure rights and actively opposing the deprivations imposed upon them

by the state. With the Arab Spring, Bidoon youth became more vocal in their desire for equal rights and citizenship. In 2011 and 2012, they staged peaceful demonstrations only to be met with violent crackdowns by Kuwaiti security forces. I was present at one of these demonstrations and photographed the Bidoon's solidarity as they acted as a community claiming their rights. I also photographed the response from the government. The resulting images show how Bidoon from the younger generation continue to demand their rights and to be identified as full citizens of Kuwait, yet they also show how the older generation battles with the harsh reality of having had this fundamental element of their identity—being Kuwaiti—torn away from them.

In May 2014, I spent two weeks in Iraq. Though Iraq currently has one of the most progressive nationality laws in the Middle East, statelessness continues to paralyze the lives of several minority groups. Iraq's Dom (gypsy) is one of the most persecuted groups in the country. In the late 1970s, Saddam Hussein offered them Iraqi nationality, allowing the Dom a well-defined role within Iraqi society. They worked as dancers, singers or musicians, sold alcohol, created handicrafts and were fortune-tellers. And behind closed doors they worked as prostitutes for the Iraqi and Ba'ath party elite. Retaining Iraqi nationality was dependent on fulfilling these needs. I visited several Dom settlements in Basra, Diwaniyah, Erbil and Sulaymaniyah, and I came to realize how the citizenship issued to them was an empty promise, leaving the Dom (after 2003) discarded and defenceless. Dom expressed how their nationality certificates were clearly stamped with the words, "Exception from the Iraqi Nationality Laws." The stamp singles them out for harassment and discrimination, and Iraqi authorities often use the exception to reject the issuance or renewal of documents altogether, claiming their nationality is not legitimate. The fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003 gave rise to increasingly religious political parties and Islamic fundamentalists who condemned the Dom's lifestyle. Militias have targeted and attacked Dom communities throughout Iraq. Most of the Dom I met had lost their livelihoods and were susceptible to exploitation. My work focused on how the

lack of freedom of movement, employment, harassment, segregation and grinding poverty (as well as the denial of access to even the most basic government services) impacted their communities.

While people can become stateless for any number of reasons, the collapse of a state and subsequent discrimination within the systems of these newly created countries has resulted in millions of people becoming stateless. This important stimulant had yet to be explored in my project, which was the primary reason for expanding the project to Europe, particularly Italy, Serbia and Ukraine. The dissolution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia created seven new countries in the Balkans. Bloody wars over ethnic, religious and national territory sent millions of people across new borders. Systems for civil and birth registration throughout the former Yugoslavia were devastated, and thousands of people lost or had their documents destroyed during the conflicts. The wars also separated people from their homes. In Yugoslavia, proof of permanent residence had been a precondition for receiving citizenship and virtually all government identification. The same policy was adopted throughout the Balkans after Yugoslavia fell apart. After years of displacement, many stayed in Serbia and settled in areas like Belgrade, Novi Sad and Kruševac. To add, thousands fled the wars and settled in other European countries like Italy. After the wars, a new generation emerged. While families might have originated in Bosnia, Kosovo or Montenegro, thousands of children had been born in Serbia and Italy, and it was these countries they considered home. I spent several months in both countries in 2014 and 2015, and I focused heavily on documenting the repercussions statelessness had in the lives and futures of Roma who were born in these countries but denied recognition. I articulated how prejudice and discrimination pushed Roma from Ex-Yugoslavia to live in segregated and unregistered squatter settlements located on the fringe of urban centres, none of which fulfilled the requirements for gaining permanent legal residence. My stories attempted to explore how the historically complicated, bureaucratic and often discriminatory administrative systems had trapped thousands of Roma youth in a vicious cycle where they were deemed, ‘legally invisible’—an invisibility that was then

inherited from one generation to the next. In Serbia, I met Roma youth desperately seeking documentation so they could enter school and obtain work. I found most lived constantly under the threat of eviction and detention. In Italy, I investigated how the denial of vital documents left the Roma stranded in a place where the conditions of their daily life and the bureaucratic demands of the system intertwined to make them illegal residents in the only country they had ever known.

Joseph Stalin's deportations removed millions of people from their homelands. The purges also fortified popular suspicion and institutional discrimination toward ethnic minorities. It was a legacy that would live on much longer than the Soviet Union itself. In 1944, the entire population of Crimean Tatars in Ukraine was loaded onto cattle trains and deported from Crimea to the human dumping grounds of Uzbekistan. Dozens of ethnic communities suffered a similar fate. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 resulted in the creation of fifteen new countries. In the aftermath, hundreds of thousands of people from Latvia to Kazakhstan, and Estonia to Kyrgyzstan would find themselves unexpectedly stranded, without citizenship, in any of the new states that had replaced their former country. During the 1980s and 1990s, large numbers of Crimean Tatars were permitted to return to Crimea, but those arriving in Ukraine after 1991 faced significant difficulties.

Inconsistencies in legal and administrative procedures, debates over residency issues, discrimination and financial requirements prevented thousands from acquiring citizenship in either Ukraine or Uzbekistan. I travelled to Ukraine in 2009 and spent time with families and individuals from the Crimean Tatar community who were struggling to overcome years of statelessness or were still trying to secure citizenship.

The final country featured in the book *Nowhere People* is the Dominican Republic. I travelled there in 2011 after several human rights activists had told me that the Dominican Republic housed one of the most radical examples of statelessness in the world. My motivation was shaped by two factors: First, here was a situation where thousands were being subjected to denationalization and, second,

because it reflected the hollowness of the international community to enforce obligations of human rights. Discriminatory laws were being crafted and used as weapons of exclusion by the state with impunity. From the 1920s to the 1960s, Haitians had been brought to the Dominican Republic to work as cane cutters on State-owned sugarcane plantations. They lived in remote, slum-like *bateyes*. Over time, workers permanently settled in the country, started families and lost all ties to Haiti. For years, many children of Haitian descent, born on Dominican soil, often received Dominican citizenship, including birth certificates, *cedulas* (national ID cards) and passports. They had access to schools, jobs and other social services. In 2004, discriminatory policies from the highest levels of the Dominican government were drafted to redefine Dominican nationality and exclude the Haitian community. Two years later, registration officials throughout the country were ordered to withhold copies of birth certificates and identity documents from children of “foreign parents”—Haitians. A change to the Dominican constitution in 2010 was then followed by a landmark decision by the Dominican Constitutional Court in 2013, retroactively stripping citizenship from any person born after 1929 to migrant parents. These policies essentially denationalized hundreds of thousands and were used as legal tactics to systematically discriminate against Dominicans of Haitian descent and deprive them of rights, citizenship and their place in Dominican society. While in the Dominican Republic, I spent time with and photographed youth from this community who had been denied legal identities and the documents required to move forward with their education and their lives. My work there strove to articulate how these youth were born on Dominican soil and grew up believing they were Dominican, only to have discrimination and politics strip them of their identity, rights and dreams. To add, I also created a parallel body of work that explored the neglect faced by the older generation of individuals from this community who are stateless and have no safety net to support them in their old age.

The true magnitude of statelessness became clear to me several years into the project. What had started out as a need to explore the lives of stateless people in one region developed into an

investigation of global proportion. Each year I was determined to examine a new element of the issue that had not been visually represented. I felt statelessness could not be narrowed down to one clear legal definition. These experiences in the field told me it was more. Statelessness was comprised of a complex makeup of conditions that changed from one country to the next and impacted the lived experiences of individuals differently depending on the political, economic and cultural constitution where they resided.

In Asian countries like Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal and Sri Lanka, I found the arbitrary denial of citizenship was commonly used to exclude and marginalize entire ethnic groups (probably the reason why Asia is home to the largest number of stateless people in the world). While in Europe, statelessness was much more prevalent among individuals who, because of discrimination, are thrown out of the system. In many ways, these individuals experience a deeper sense of isolation and helplessness than stateless individuals who are part of a larger stateless community, like those found in Asia. I found that in countries possessing more historically developed state administrative systems, like Italy, Holland and Poland, documentation is paramount to securing one's citizenship status and access to rights, whereas in African countries, the value of documentation (and in extension, rights associated with citizenship), even if it is a National ID card, is commonly dependant upon the package of subjective experiences, biases and prejudices embodied in the authority looking at that documentation (whether it be a government official, police or hospital administrator).

Arendt said, "Nobody had been aware that mankind, for so long a time considered under the image of a family of nations, had reached the stage where whoever was thrown out of one of these tightly organized closed communities found himself thrown out of the family of nations altogether" (Arendt, 1973, p. 294). I recognized how the lives of the stateless might be bound to the deprivations of these tightly organized communities of the nation. Yet, I also recognized how

having been expelled from the family of nations, the lives of all the stateless people I had met resided within a space bound by a shared condition that had no borders, regardless of their geographic placement in the world. With *Nowhere People*, I would construct a portrait of this global community of people who had been thrown out of the family of nations. I believed the collective body of work could challenge contemporary understandings of citizenship and the deficiencies of the legal mechanisms put in place to protect human rights of the stateless. In addition, it became clear to me that photography and the project were uniquely placed to add the voice of the stateless into a growing interest (some call, movement) in the issue.

In 2010, in collaboration with the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), a series of high-profile international exhibitions were launched. Initially, the exhibition consisted of photographs highlighting the stories of stateless people in eight countries. As my research progressed, new situations of statelessness were added to the exhibition. Captions, quotes from stateless people and historical texts were included for each country to create context for the photographs. The exhibitions were held in strategic locations and corresponded to strategic moments to maximize advocacy. Examples of these exhibitions would be: the UN Palais des Nations in Geneva during high level meetings on statelessness (Figure 3.17-3.18), at the UN Headquarters in New York during the annual General Assembly meetings (Figure 3.15-3.16), in the Department of Justice in Dublin, Ireland during ministerial meetings related to human rights (Figure 3.9-3.10) and in Belgrade, Serbia during a meeting to discuss regional solutions to statelessness (Figure 3.11-3.12). This partnership with the UNHCR and the collaboration on these exhibitions created a platform for the work and stories to be seen by and exposed to high-level officials with invested stakes in the issue of statelessness--an audience I was unable to reach on my own. The work from the project was slowly being woven into a growing discussion. As interest in the issue expanded, the work from *Nowhere People* was increasingly considered to be a critical visual reference to understanding the multiple conditions of statelessness. This culminated in an exhibition of *Nowhere People* being

shown at the Peace Palace in The Hague in Netherlands during the 1st Global Forum on Statelessness meeting in late 2014 (Figure 3.7-3.8).

The exhibitions were a huge milestone for my project, but in many ways, I felt the capacity to engage was limited (like most conversations about statelessness) to discussions related to the legal paradigms of universal rights vs. the rigidity of the nation-state. The photographs and stories of the stateless I had collected over the previous ten years reinforced the deficiencies in the enforcement of international human rights laws. Looking beyond the dialog over human rights, however, I was confident the world's stateless and the project *Nowhere People* also represented a significant claim for the rethinking of citizenship and belonging in today's world. In her book *Dignity in Adversity*, Seyla Benhabib says, "Today we are caught not only in the reconfiguration of sovereignty but also in the reconstitution of citizenship" (Benhabib, 2011, p. 98). Additionally, I believed those individuals and communities included in *Nowhere People* became a challenge for the re-imagining of identity.

As I have expressed, the wide use of new digital technologies and platforms have created a number of new opportunities for photographers to disseminate their work, but as John Roberts describes, "...one of the paradoxes of the current period is that a huge number of the images circulate, but few images take on a discursive and political life beyond their passing moment of consumption" (Roberts, 2014, p. 99). Simultaneous to the rise in digital platforms, photographers today possess significant opportunities to retain authorship over their work. Like the previous two public works, I decided the book form provided a blank canvass for me to place the work of *Nowhere People* and an ideal vehicle for reinforcing my thoughts on how stateless people continue to ask for the reassessment of some of these larger themes.

In November 2015, *Nowhere People* was published along with an updated version of the website, www.nowherepeople.org. The publication of the book was supported through grants I had received (similar to my previous two books) and was self-published. The book was organized into twelve chapters, each exploring stateless people within a specific country. The purpose for this was conceptualized not for simple organizational reasons but can be summed up by the comments in a 2014 article, *Statelessness: An Invisible Theme in the History of International Law*, written by Will Hanley. "Just as the international depends on the nation, statelessness is intimately bound up with the state, both semantically and legally. It is in effect of the state, and inconceivable without it, yet the state offers no resources of remedy. The reality of statelessness is in its effects. Law has not described it--it is a state of exception and a site of law's failure" (Hanley, 2014, p. 325). Since the advent of the nation-state, rights (and also identity) have been defined by the borders and the territorialized power of the sovereign state. This decision over the structure of the book was meant to represent this dynamic. More importantly, it was meant to force readers to acknowledge that the people in the book had been rendered stateless; that this, "state [of being stateless] is not a trait of the people it afflicts but is, rather, a status imposed upon them by those who expelled them" (Azoulay, 2012, p. 226).

Establishing a 'voice', both through individual stories and as a collective, was crucial. This was accomplished through the endpapers of the book. Small slices of testimony from stateless people all over the world were sutured together and displayed as one vocalization of their shared condition. Within each section of the book, photographs are woven around historical information and short personal stories. Quotes are placed throughout the book to enhance the readers' connection to the subjects. Short poems and song lyrics collected from members of these stateless communities during my research are included in several sections, acting 'as linguistic bridges' (Collier/Collier, 1986, p. 119) to elicit deeper meaning through art. In addition, 2003 Nobel Peace Prize Winner, Shirin Ebadi contributed a voice by writing the Foreword to the book.

The book also exposes those moments where the actions of the stateless intersect and challenge the power and antagonism of the state. One sees the stateless actively stake their claim to belonging, such as in a protest by youth from the Bihari community (Constantine, 2015, p. 50-51), a demonstration by Bidoon youth in Kuwait (Constantine, 2015, p. 152-155), a gathering of Crimean Tatars demanding land rights in Ukraine (Constantine, 2015, p. 260-261), or even in the carrying of the Dominican national flag in a cultural festival (Constantine, 2015, p. 359). By combining these images of confrontation with other photographs depicting the resourcefulness of the stateless working to survive, the book attempts to disrupt prevailing stereotypes and prejudices that could feed into easily accepted narratives of the stateless as being powerless victims.

Definitions of identity in the modern, place identity in an unbreakable, antagonistic relationship rooted in *difference*. As Stuart Hall explains, “[identities] emerge within the play of specific modalities of power, and thus are more the product of the marking of difference and exclusion, than they are the sign of an identical, naturally-constituted unity” (Hall, 1996, p. 4). Grossberg quotes Hall by saying, “Identity is a structured representation which only achieves its positive through the narrow eye of the negative” (Grossberg, 1996, p. 103). This identity constructed through difference is central to the problematic nature of contemporary citizenship. But similarly to the thoughts of Grossberg and Azoulay, I believe that through the assembly of photographs in the book *Nowhere People*, the lives of these invisible stateless people represent the construction of a common identity defined by the positive attributes of similarity, affiliation and solidarity, rather than by difference and segregation. Additionally, through the ethical and civil contract created between the subject and viewer through the citizenry of photography, I believe *Nowhere People* created an alternative space where the stateless could be recognized and their identity could be restored. As Butler claims, "To ask for recognition, or to offer it, is precisely not to ask for recognition for what one already is. It is to solicit a becoming, to instigate a transformation, to petition the future always in relation to the

‘other’. It is also to stake one's own being, and one's own persistence in one's own being, in the struggle for recognition” (Butler, 2004, p. 44).

With the stories and photographs hinged on context, and the combination of voices and photography asking the viewer to suspend his or her gaze long enough to foster connectivity, and with the elements of my research tying “together a multitude of tangible details into one systematic relationship” (Collier/Collier, 1986, p. 161), I believe *Nowhere People* is a way of reorganizing what Azoulay’s describes as ‘the plane of the visible’ for the stateless people I encountered over all those years. (Azoulay, 2008, p. 421).

6. Conclusion

Not long after I began work on the project *Nowhere People*, I found myself constantly asking the same two questions: How is this [statelessness] possible? Why doesn't the public know about it? These questions forged the two tracks I travelled along for the next decade. They formed the foundation and set the trajectory for how I progressed from one year to the next, crossing one continent after another.

Will Hanley wrote, "Statelessness can be cast as a question of law, and indeed of international law, but only if one reads between the lines--and that is perhaps the job of non-lawyers. Three features of statelessness obscure its visibility in thematic accounts of international law: it concerns ordinary people, not states; it concerns practice, not concepts; it concerns the weak, not the strong" (Hanley, 2014, p. 322).

In the introduction to the book *People Out of Place*, Alison Brysk and Gershon Shafir write, "Since human rights have been internationalized, their enforcement, by and large, has remained national..." (Brysk/Shafir, 2004, p. 22). Unfortunately for the stateless, this has also placed nations in the position of absolving themselves of responsibility for the human suffering of those deemed 'others', or more commonly, to arbitrarily perpetrate rights abuse with impunity while shielding themselves behind the protective veil of national sovereignty.

After years of photographing the stateless, I have come to realize that my work cannot alleviate the suffering or sense of betrayal felt by the subjects photographed. Photography cannot draft laws, issue documents or confirm one's legal connection to the world. Photography cannot, in the world in which we live, provide someone with their entitled rights. It cannot retract the degrading acts of injustice inflicted on the men, women and children whom I have encountered nor can it directly

claim to be responsible for changing the future of any of those children. But like Suzy Linfield states, “photographs have robbed us of the alibi of ignorance” (Linfield, 2010, p. 46).

I believe *Nowhere People* exposes how the deficiencies in the legal mechanisms, established through years of discourse over human rights, impact the day-to-day lives of the stateless. I believe that *Nowhere People* has not only provided new sites in which a number of people can rethink citizenship and identity but has also created alternative spaces of agency for those who, through powers beyond their control, lack both. The public works presented in this statement should prompt its audience to encounter, understand and recognize them.

There is no doubt that for years, statelessness was an invisible issue on the global stage. Stateless people and the complex condition in which they exist were invisible as well. While I expected I would not discover definitive answers to the questions surrounding statelessness, I did feel that by the end of the project, the photographs and the stories of those affected could bring the public much closer to understanding their lives. Photography could speak for the people I had the privilege to meet. The work disputes, challenges and intervenes in the invisibility of those individuals and their communities and provides tangible evidence that these stateless people all over the world do exist.

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- Zucherman, Ethan. (2014) Curating Participation. *Aperture*, 214, pp. 36-41.

Word Count: 29,032

APPENDIX 1:

Evidence of Public Works:

Kenya's Nubians: Then & Now

EXHIBITIONS:

1. **Mish Mash Gallerie**, Kampala, Uganda. June 2-9, 2012.
2. **Moving Walls 19, Open Society**, New York City, USA. November 20, 2011 - June 15, 2012.
3. **Host Gallery**, London, UK. November 17-26, 2010.
4. **Kibera Primary School**, Nairobi, Kenya. August 12-14, 2010.
5. **Go Down Arts Centre**, Nairobi, Kenya. July 17 - August 24, 2010.

FIGURE: 1.1

London, UK
HOST Gallery
November 17-26, 2010
In collaboration with: UN Refugee Agency & Open Society Foundations



FIGURE: 1.2



FIGURE: 1.3

Nairobi, Kenya
Kibera Primary School
August 12-14, 2010
In collaboration with: UN Refugee Agency & Open Society Foundations



FIGURE: 1.4



FIGURE: 1.5

Nairobi, Kenya
Go Down Arts Centre
July 17 - August 14, 2010
In collaboration with: UN Refugee Agency & Open Society Foundations



FIGURE: 1.6



PUBLICATIONS:

1. “The Wrong Side of History”, *Perspective Magazine*, October 2010. p. 26-31.
2. “Slum Warriors: The Nubians”, *DATUM Magazine (Austria)*, December 2009. p. 58-63.
3. “Slum Warriors: The Nubians”, *Power Magazine (Hong Kong)*, June 2009. p. 63-69.

PRESENTATIONS:

1. Brunei Gallery, SOAS. London, UK, November 25, 2010
2. Refugee Studies Centre. Oxford, UK, November 23, 2010.

SELECTED PHOTOGRAPHS:

FIGURE: 1.7



A woman holds a photo of her grandfather who served in the King's African Rifles. Nubians from Sudan were conscripted into the British Army in the 1880s and brought to Kenya in the early 1900s. They fought for the British in East Africa during in WWI and WWII in a military unit called the King's African Rifles. (2008)

FIGURE: 1.8



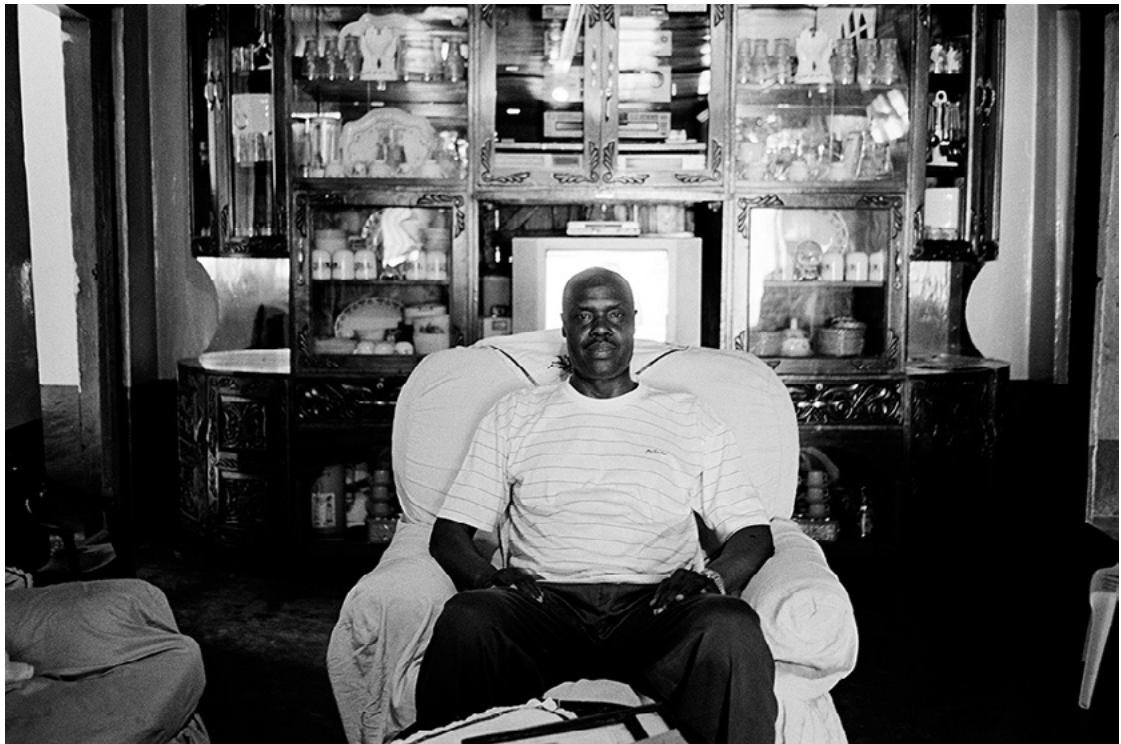
Having lived in Kenya for over 100 years, the Nubian community has historically been denied recognition. Elders from the Nubian community sit in a soda shop in the Makina section of Kibera. (2008)

FIGURE: 1.9



Nubian children look over the sprawling Kibera slum. Nubians have lived on the land of Kibera for over a century and consider it to be their ancestral homeland in Kenya, yet their claims to title deeds have never been recognized. (2010)

FIGURE: 1.10



A Nubian Elder sits in the front room of his family's home in Kibera. His family has lived in Kibera for over 100 years. (2008)

FIGURE: 1.11



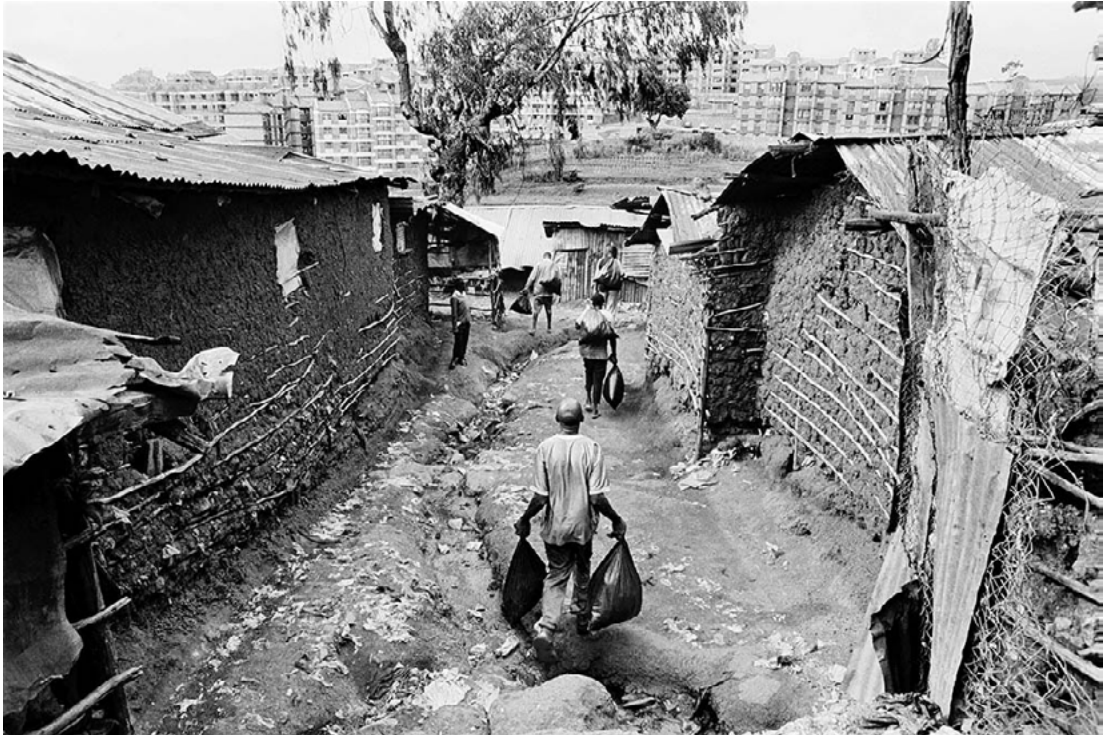
Without land to cultivate and unable to compete for decent employment, many Nubians depend on rental income to survive. The majority of people in Kibera live in dilapidated rooms and huts. All the structures in Kibera, including Nubian homes, are considered temporary structures. (2008)

FIGURE: 1.12



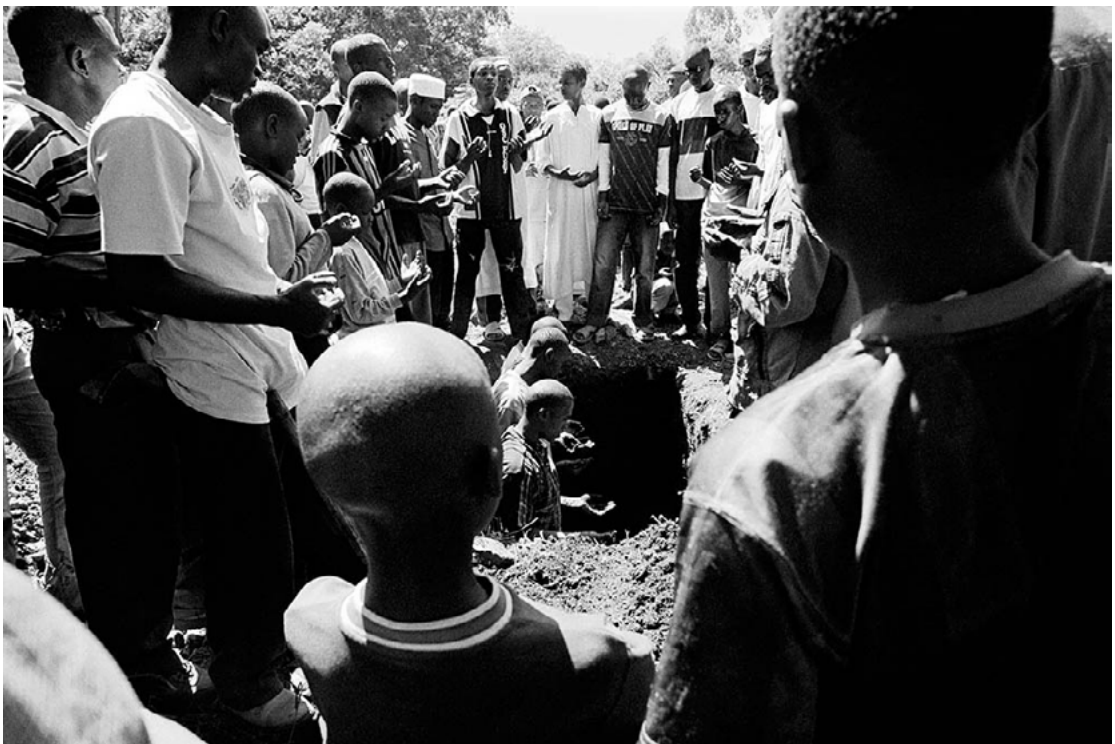
Nubian youth have to go through a process called ‘vetting’ and often have to wait years before they are issued a National ID card. Two unemployed Nubian youth sit in their youth group’s office in Kibera. (2008)

FIGURE: 1.13



A group of Nubian youth collect garbage to earn money and to help keep the Nubian sections of Kibera clean. Denied IDs, without job opportunities and higher education, many youth in the Nubian community feel they have been unable to fully participate as citizens in Kenyan society. (2008)

FIGURE: 1.14



Nubians have been buried in the Muslim cemetery in Kibera since 1912. Nubians feel it is the most significant confirmation of their connection to the land of Kibera. Nubian men make a final prayer before the deceased is laid to rest. (2008)

FIGURE: 1.15



While Nubians are now a minority in Kibera, they are determined to preserve their traditions and cultural identity. Over one hundred Nubians walk through the Makina section of Kibera during a traditional Nubian wedding ceremony. (2008)

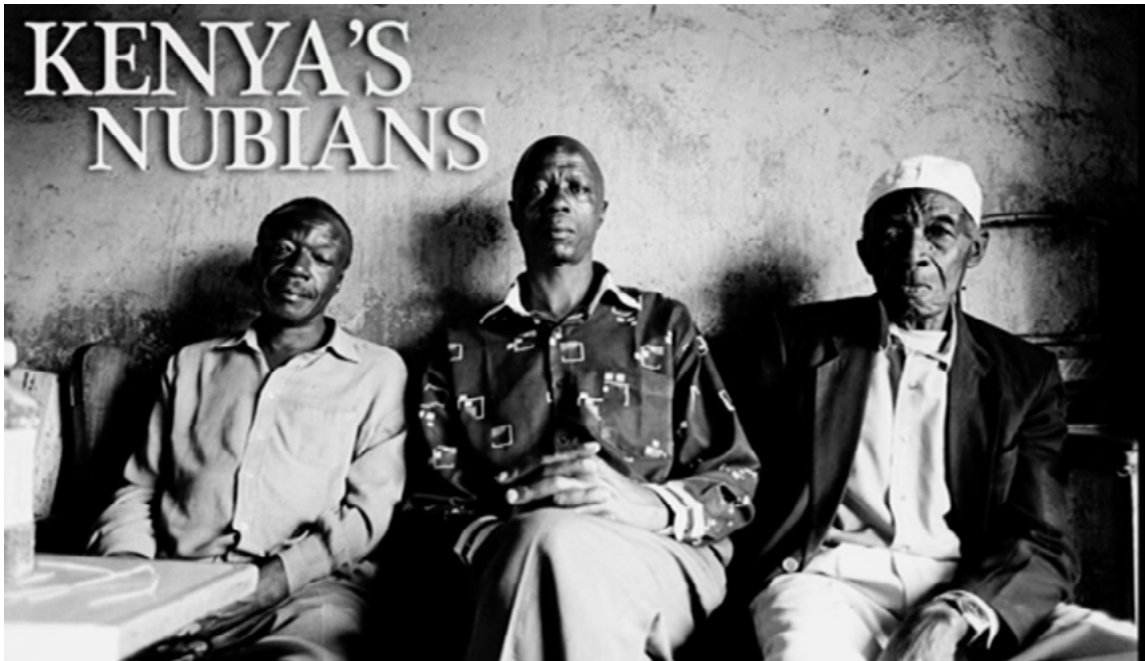
FIGURE: 1.16



A Nubian family pose for a photo in a studio in downtown Nairobi (circa 1940s). These old photographs of the Nubian community are part of a collection of over 300 photos, some dating back as far as 1910. The collection exposes the Nubian community's historical connection in Kenya.

MULTIMEDIA FEATURE

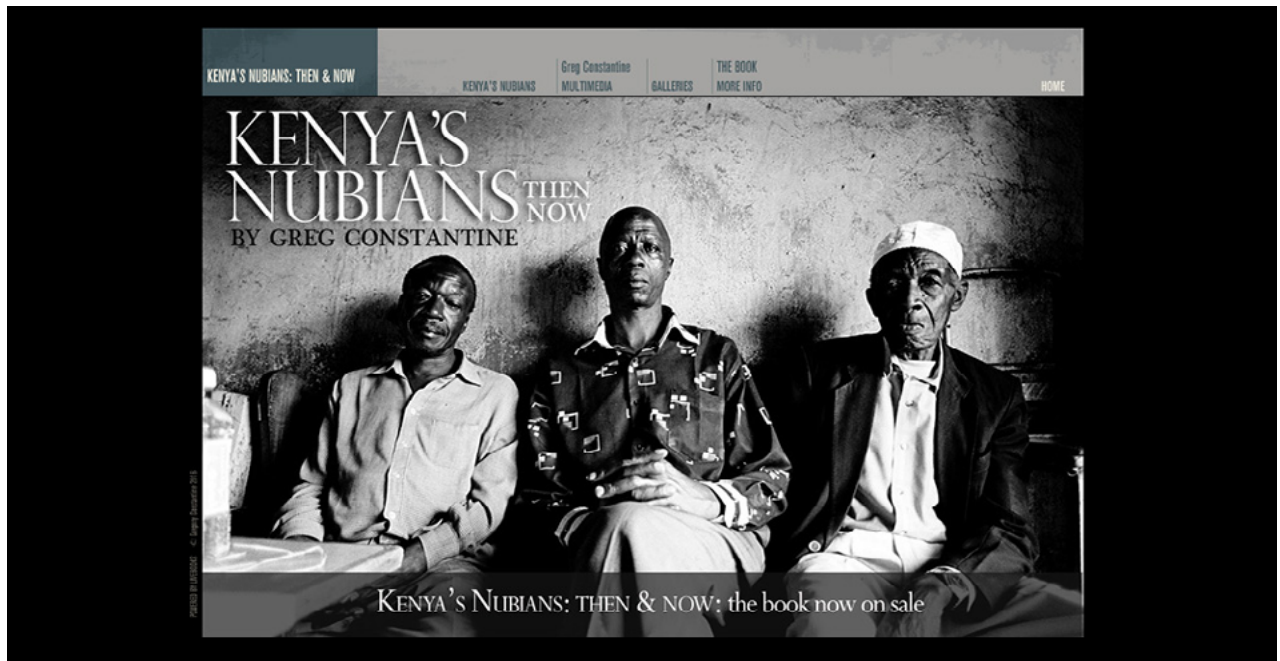
FIGURE: 1.17



A short multimedia film incorporating the voices of the Nubian community talking about their history and statelessness. (2010)

WEBSITE

FIGURE: 1.18



www.nubiansinkenya.com

APPENDIX 2:

Evidence of Public Works:

Exiled To Nowhere Burma's Rohingya

EXHIBITIONS:

1. **Customs House**, Sydney, Australia. June 23, 2016 - February 5, 2017.
2. **Hoxton Arches Gallery**, London, UK. October 27-31, 2015.
3. **Galata Fotografhanesi**, Istanbul, Turkey. July 4-30, 2015.
4. **powerHouse Arena Gallery**, New York City, USA. May 12-28, 2015.
5. **Prototype Gallery L4**, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. April 18 - May 1, 2015.
6. **Plaine de Plainpalais**, Geneva, Switzerland. March 4-29, 2015.
7. **Jogja Gallery**, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. August 23-30, 2014.
8. **Reminders Photography Stronghold**, Tokyo, Japan. May 17-30, 2014.
9. **71 Surawong Rd**, Bangkok, Thailand. March 13-23, 2014.
10. **Cemara 6 Galeri**, Jakarta, Indonesia. February 6-16, 2014.
11. **European Parliament**, Brussels, Belgium. November 25-29, 2013.
12. **US Holocaust Memorial Museum**, Washington, DC, USA. November 4-8, 2013.
13. **Meta House Gallery**, Phnom Penh, Cambodia. June 6-20, 2013.
14. **Australian National University**, Canberra, Australia. March 15-22, 2013.
15. **Atrium Gallery**, London School of Economics, London, UK. July 16-August 24, 2012.
16. **Documentary Arts Asia**, Chiang Mai, Thailand. February 2012.
17. **Foreign Correspondents Club**, Hong Kong. August 1-31, 2011.
18. **Central Library**, Hong Kong. June 20-23, 2011.
19. **Angkor Photo Festival**, Siem Reap, Cambodia. November 2006 (group show).

FIGURE: 2.1

Sydney, Australia
Customs House
June 23, 2016 - February 5, 2017
In collaboration with: City of Sydney & Refugee Council of Australia
Note: Launched during Refugee Week 2016.



FIGURE: 2.2



FIGURE: 2.3



FIGURE: 2.4

London, UK
Hoxton Arches Gallery
October 27-31, 2015
In collaboration with: The International State Crime Initiative (ISCI)
Notes: Timed with the release of ISCI report on the Rohingya.



FIGURE: 2.5



FIGURE: 2.8

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Unused Shopping Mall, Prototype Gallery
April 18 - May 1, 2015
In collaboration with: Tenaganita Malaysia
Notes: Launched during the ASEAN Summit and Asia Peoples' Forum meetings in Kuala Lumpur.



FIGURE: 2.9



FIGURE: 2.10

Geneva, Switzerland
Plaine de Plainpalais Public Park
March 4-29, 2015
In collaboration with: International Federation for Human Rights & Human Rights Watch
Notes: Held during the UN Human Rights Council meetings in Geneva.



FIGURE: 2.11



FIGURE: 2.12

Tokyo, Japan
Reminders Photography Stronghold Gallery
May 17-30, 2014
In collaboration with: Human Rights Watch Japan & The Stateless Network
Japan



FIGURE: 2.13



FIGURE: 2.14

Bangkok, Thailand
Abandoned/unused bank, Surawong Rd.
March 13-23, 2014
In collaboration with: Embassy of Canada in Thailand



FIGURE: 2.15



FIGURE: 2.16

Jakarta, Indonesia
Cemara 6 Galerie
February 6-16, 2014
In collaboration with: Jesuit Refugee Service & Indonesian Civil Society
Network for Refugee Rights Protection (SUAKA)



FIGURE: 2.17



FIGURE: 2.18

Brussels, Belgium
European Parliament
November 25-29, 2013
In collaboration with: Human Rights Watch & Open Society European Policy
Institute



FIGURE: 2.19



FIGURE: 2.20

Washington, DC, USA
US Memorial Holocaust Museum
November 4-8, 2013
In collaboration with: US Holocaust Memorial Museum, FotoDC, Open Society Foundations & Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting



FIGURE: 2.21



FIGURE: 2.22

London, UK
Atrium Gallery, London School of Economics
July 16 - August 24, 2012
In collaboration with: Refugees International, LSE Arts, LSE Center for Study
of Human Rights



FIGURE: 2.23



PUBLICATIONS:

1. [“Exiled To Nowhere”](#), *FeatureShoot*, August 4, 2014.
2. [“Capturing Asia’s Nowhere People”](#), *Wall Street Journal*, May 15, 2014.
3. [“Nowhere To Go”](#), *Bangkok Post*, March 18, 2014.
4. [“Images of Exile”](#), *Wall Street Journal*, February, 16, 2014.
5. [“A Countryside of Concentration Camps”](#), *The New Republic*, January 21, 2014.
6. [“Exiled, the people Burma banished”](#), *Phnom Penh Post Magazine*, April 26-May 2, 2013.
7. [“Plight of Myanmar’s Rohingya”](#), *Al Jazeera English*, April 21, 2013.
8. [“No Place Like Home”](#), *South China Morning Post Magazine*, December 16, 2012.
9. [“The Flight of the Rohingya”](#), *Virginia Quarterly Review Online*, September 2012.
10. [“Inescapable Oppression for the Rohingya”](#), *Southeast Asian Globe Magazine*, July 2012.
11. [“Exiled To Nowhere: Burma’s Rohingya”](#), *CNN.com*, June 2012.
12. [“Exiled To Nowhere”](#), *DATUM Magazine*, November 2010. p. 40-45.
13. [“Exiled To Nowhere”](#), *Photo Documentary Folio X12*, August 2010.
14. [“Rescue for the Rohingya”](#), *The World Today*, May 2010. p. 30-31.
15. [“Burmese Refugees Persecuted in Bangladesh”](#), *The New York Times*, February 20, 2010. p. 6.
16. [“Crisis After Escaping Myanmar”](#), *International Herald Tribune*, February 17, 2010. p. 1,3.
17. [“Living in a No man’s Land”](#), *Irrawaddy Magazine*, January 2010. p. Cover, 20-25.
18. [“Sinking in a sea of indifference”](#), *Southeast Asian Globe Magazine*, April 2009, p. 50-54.
19. [“Desperate flight from unspeakable squalor”](#), *International Herald Tribune*, February 16, 2009, p.1-2.
20. [“A Forgotten People”](#), *CNN: World’s Untold Stories*, February 2009.
21. [“The Rohingya: A Minority in Limbo”](#), *The Irrawaddy Magazine*, February 2007.
22. [“The Rohingya from Myanmar”](#), *Stern Magazine*, November 2006.
23. [“The Rohingya Riddle”](#), *The Irrawaddy Magazine*, June 2006.

PRESENTATIONS:

1. Queen Mary University of London. London, UK, November 3, 2015.
2. The New School. New York City, USA, April 30, 2015.
3. Monash University. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, April 22, 2015.
4. University of Nottingham of Malaysia. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, April 20, 2015.
5. Universitas Gadjah Mada. Yogyakarta, Indonesia, August 27, 2014.
6. Atma Jaya University. Yogyakarta, Indonesia, August 26, 2014.
7. Indonesia Islamic University. Yogyakarta, Indonesia, August 25, 2014
7. Waseda University, Tokyo. Japan, May 20, 2014.
8. International Christian University. Tokyo, Japan, May 23, 2014.
9. Trisakti University. Jakarta, Indonesia, February 11, 2014.
10. European Parliament. Brussels, Belgium, November 25, 2013.
11. US Memorial Holocaust Museum. Washington, DC, USA, November 4, 2013.
12. Meta-House, German Cultural Center. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, June 6, 2013.
13. London School of Economics, London. UK, July 16, 2012.
14. UK House of Commons. December 2011.

BOOK REVIEWS: *Exiled To Nowhere: Burma's Rohingya*

1. ["Shining Light on the Rohingya"](#), *Himal Southasian Magazine*, February 25, 2013.
"Exiled To Nowhere is a timely book to help us awaken to the reality of our stupor and apathy. Unfortunately, the impetus for humanitarian action often comes more from the dictates of realpolitik than it does from well-meaning projects such as this one, but that fact only serves as an indictment of our callousness. Constantine's book is a reminder of the Rohingyas' humanity, and a call to ours."
2. "Notable Photo Books of 2012", *Photo District News Magazine*, November 16, 2012.
"Constantine's black-and-white photographs of Rohingya living in refugee camps and unofficial settlements in Bangladesh are straightforward, well edited and haunting. They are free of sensationalism or trite symbolism. His landscapes show us the tenuousness of a makeshift existence. His photographs of Rohingya in their shelters or doing work they can, urge us to appreciate their strength and perseverance while also assuring us we can't imagine it."
3. ["Exiled To Nowhere"](#), *Christian Science Monitor*, October 31, 2012.
"Exiled to Nowhere shows the human face of the Rohingya, an ethnic minority who find themselves stranded, with no state to recognize them or protect their rights."
4. ["Photo-book gives powerful testimony..."](#), *South China Morning Post*, September 30, 2012.
"In documenting the plight of Myanmar's stateless Rohingya minority, roving photographer Greg Constantine has produced an important work at a crucial time..."
5. ["Photo project documents Rohingya's strife"](#), *Wall Street Journal*, July 30, 2012.
"Exiled to Nowhere: Burma's Rohingya allows outsiders a snapshot into the lives of what human rights groups consider one of the most grave and under-reported case of human rights abuse in the world."
6. ["Between Burma and a Hard Place"](#), *Mother Jones Magazine*, July 18, 2012.
"Though ostensibly a photo book, Exiled To Nowhere serves as a vivid collection of reportage that few magazines could (or, these days, would) deliver...The bar is set high when it comes to grabbing the attention of readers (and photo editors) with projects focused on human rights in desolate places. It's refreshing to get yanked out of that jaded place by a successful project like Constantine's."
7. ["The Nowhere People"](#), *The Nation*, July 23, 2012.
"[Exiled To Nowhere] vividly portrays the plight of the Rohingya, a poisonous crisis that has spread across the region."
8. ["Exiled To Nowhere"](#), *The Irrawaddy Magazine*, June 25, 2012.
"Constantine remains faithful to the classic time-tested photo-documentary form of black and white images to provide a sensitive and comprehensive portrait of the plight of this largely overlooked minority group."

SELECTED PHOTOGRAPHS:

FIGURE: 2.24



Blind in one eye after being beaten in the head during forced labor, this stateless Rohingya man fled from Burma in the mid 1990's and is one of an estimated 300,000 stateless Rohingya living in the southern part of neighboring Bangladesh. (2006)

FIGURE: 2.25



The Burmese authorities take photos of Rohingya families so they know exactly how many people live in each house, like this photograph. Discrepancies to these records are punishable by fines and arrest. (2009)

FIGURE: 2.26



Rohingya in North Rakhine must obtain permission to get married. Couples often have to wait years and are forced to pay large amounts of money. This 26-year-old could not afford to pay local authorities to receive permission to get married. She fled to Bangladesh in 2005. (2009)

FIGURE: 2.27



Rohingya men push their fishing boat onto shore. Rohingya men in the Shamlapur area of Bangladesh work as bonded laborers and are trapped into debt to local Bangladeshi boat owners. (2008)

FIGURE: 2.28



Communal violence erupted between the Buddhist Rakhine community and the Muslim Rohingya community in Burma in 2012. All Rohingya homes in the Zaldan Khama quarter of the city of Sittwe were destroyed during the violence. Only the shell of the 200-year-old Zaldan Khama Mosque was left standing. (2012)

FIGURE: 2.29



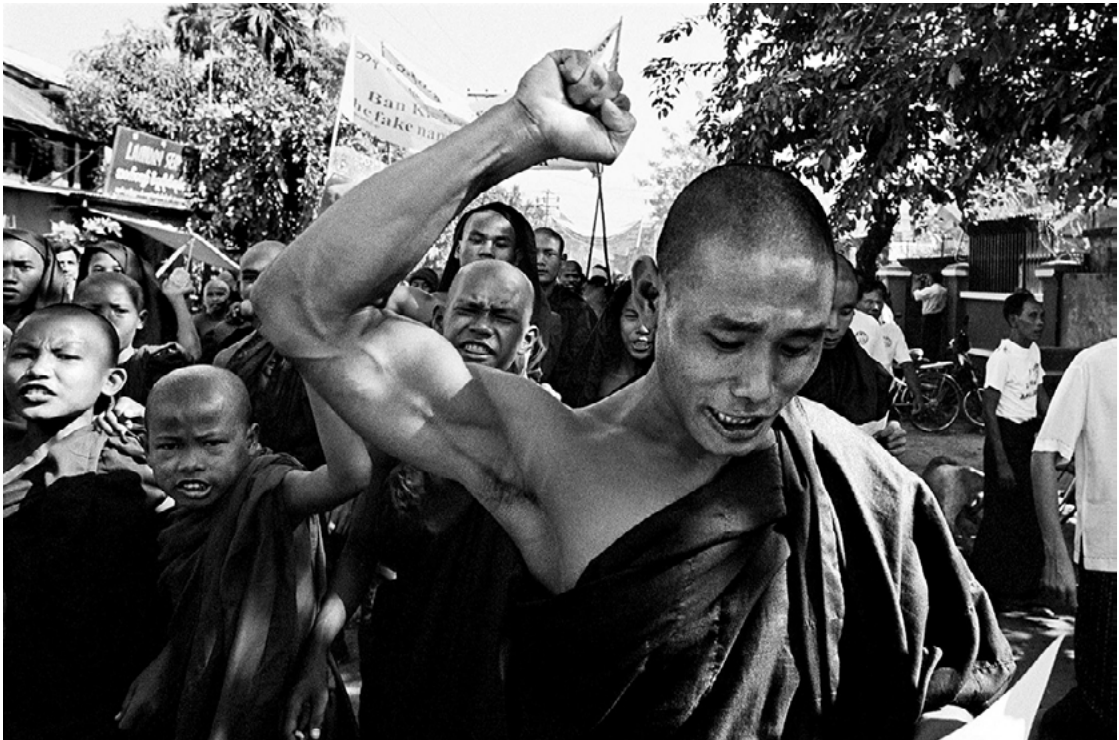
Almost 3,000 Rohingya temporarily lived in the Thet Kay Pyin Zay middle school after the violence in mid-2012. In December 2012 they were expelled. Most moved into small, primitive huts made primarily of bamboo, straw and hay. (2012)

FIGURE: 2.30



A Rohingya girl walks over a stream of dirty water in Say Tha Mar Gyi IDP camp. Most camps once consisting of huts and tents were replaced by hundreds of more permanent barrack-like line-row buildings. (2013)

FIGURE: 2.31



Thousands of protesters from the Buddhist Rakhine community demonstrate through the streets of Sittwe. The anti-Rohingya demonstration was State-approved. The demonstrators reject the existence of an ethnic group called the ‘Rohingya’ in Burma. (2014)

FIGURE: 2.32



7-year-old Nur hauls mud at a work site with other Rohingya men near one of the IDP camps. Rohingya feel an entire generation of children will not have access to schools and an education. Most children in the camps cannot go to school. (2013)

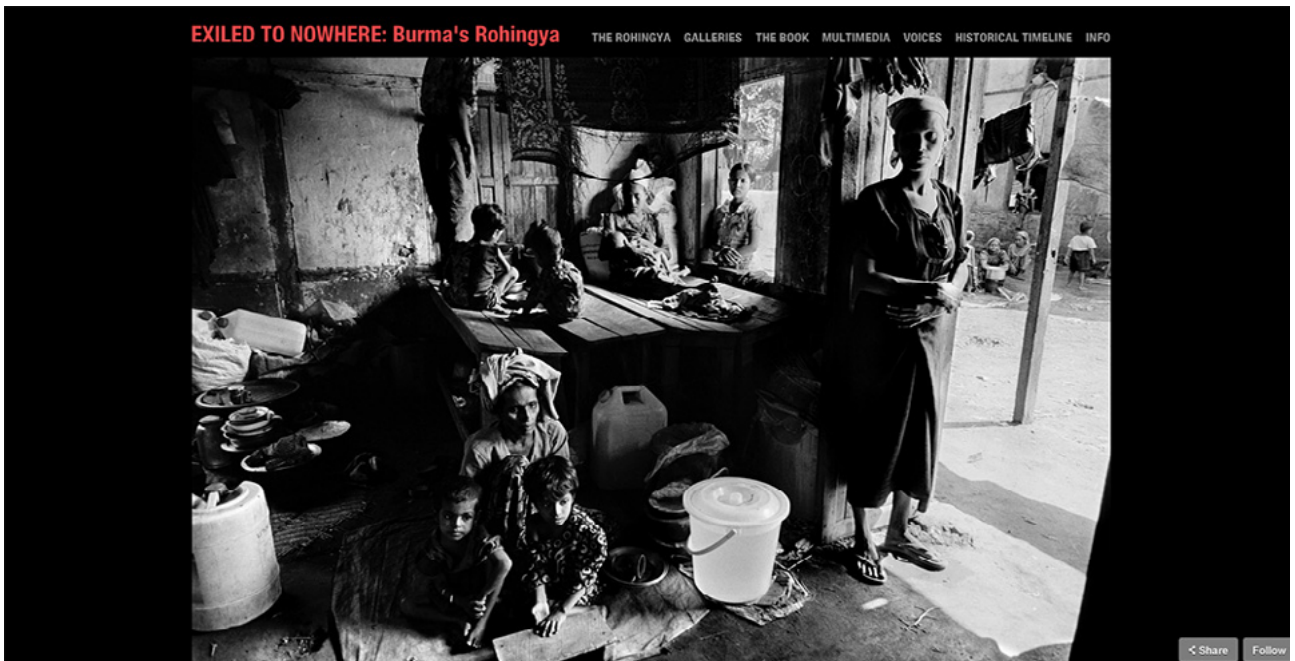
FIGURE: 2.33



A group of young Rohingya stand on the side of the road at the Dar Paing IDP camp while a patrol of Burmese Police take a break. The presence of Burmese Police and Army encampments inside the Rohingya IDP camps has increased significantly in the past year. Police patrols are now present throughout the camps. (2013)

WEBSITE

FIGURE: 2.34



www.exiledtonowhere.com

APPENDIX 3:

Evidence of Public Works:
Nowhere People

EXHIBITIONS:

1. **Waseda University**, Tokyo, Japan. May 1-30 2016.
2. **La Maison de Savoir de l'Université du Luxembourg**, Luxembourg. October 7-31, 2015.
3. **Sophia University**, Tokyo, Japan. June 2-30, 2015.
4. **Maison de la Catalanite**, Perpignan, France. May 7 - June 1, 2015.
5. **Royal Alberta Museum**, Edmonton, Canada. December 7, 2014 - March 31, 2015.
6. **Japan Parliament**, Tokyo, Japan. November 13-19, 2014.
7. **Haneda Airport**, Tokyo, Japan. November 21-23, 2014.
8. **Peace Palace**, The Hague, Netherlands. September 7-13, 2014.
9. **World Council of Churches**, Busan, South Korea. October 15-23, 2013.
10. **Webster University**, St. Louis, USA. April 15-20, 2013.
11. **Duke University**, Raleigh, USA. November 10-25, 2012.
12. **Department of Justice**, Dublin, Ireland. July 5-19, 2012.
13. **Palace of Fine Arts**, Budapest, Hungary. May 17-31, 2012.
14. **Belgrade Shopping Promenade**, Belgrade, Serbia. April 2-30, 2012.
15. **Royal Albert Hall**, London, UK. November 14 - December 5, 2011.
16. **Cultural Centre of the Philippines**, Manila, Philippines. November 18-30, 2011.
17. **Taller Public Silvano Lora Galerie**, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. November, 2011.
18. **BBVA Bank Gallery**, Madrid, Spain. October 19 - November 7, 2011.
19. **United Nations Headquarters**, New York City, USA. July 25 - September 20, 2011.
20. **The Kennedy Center**, Washington, DC, USA. June, 2011.
21. **United Nations Palais des Nations**, Geneva, Switzerland. December 8-13, 2010.
22. **Penchuck Arts Center**, Kiev, Ukraine. June 2010.
23. **Angkor Photo Festival**, Siem Reap, Cambodia. November 2006 (group show).
24. **Chobi Mela Festival**, Dhaka, Bangladesh. November 2006 (group show).

FIGURE: 3.1

Perpignan, France
Maison de la Catalanite
May 7 - June 1, 2015
In collaboration with: UN Refugee Agency



FIGURE: 3.2



FIGURE: 3.3

Edmonton, Canada
Royal Alberta Museum
December 7, 2014 - March 31, 2015
In collaboration with: UN Refugee Agency



FIGURE: 3.4



FIGURE: 3.5

Tokyo, Japan
Japan Parliament & Haneda Airport
November 13-23, 2014
In collaboration with: UN Refugee Agency



FIGURE: 3.6



FIGURE: 3.7

The Hague, Netherlands
The Peace Palace
September 7-13, 2014
In collaboration with: UN Refugee Agency & European Network on Statelessness
Note: Held at the 1st Global Forum on Statelessness



FIGURE: 3.8



FIGURE: 3.9

Dublin, Ireland
Department of Justice
July 5-19, 2012
In collaboration with: FotoIreland & UN Refugee Agency



FIGURE: 3.10



FIGURE: 3.11

Belgrade, Serbia
Belgrade Shopping Promenade
April 2-30, 2012
In collaboration with: UN Refugee Agency & Praxis Serbia



FIGURE: 3.12



FIGURE: 3.13

London, UK
Royal Albert Hall
November 14 - December 15, 2011
In collaboration with: UN Refugee Agency



FIGURE: 3.14



FIGURE: 3.15

New York City, USA
United Nations Headquarters
July 25 - September 20, 2011
In collaboration with: UN Refugee Agency



FIGURE: 3.16



FIGURE: 3.17

Geneva, Switzerland
United Nations Palais des Nations
December 8-13, 2010
In collaboration with: UN Refugee Agency



FIGURE: 3.18



PUBLICATIONS:

1. [“No place to call home”](#), *New Straits Times*, July 23, 2016.
2. [“Nowhere People](#), *ABC News Online*, June 27, 2016.
3. [“The Human Face of Statelessness”](#), *CNN Connect The World*, June 12, 2016.
4. [“In the Shadow of the Rohingyas of Myanmar”](#), *The Wire (India)*, June 2, 2016.
5. [“Photographer aims lens at stateless people”](#), *Global News (Canada)*, April 7, 2016.
6. [“People whose stories you probably didn’t hear...”](#), *The Independent (UK)*, January 1, 2016.
7. [“Vivere Senza Una Patria”](#), *Internazionale (Italy)*, December 10, 2015.
8. [“Eye on the Invisible”](#), *National Public Radio.org*, November 21, 2015.
9. [“Ha Dez Anos A Fotografar Gente De...”](#), *Diario De Noticias (Portugal)*, November 10, 2015.
10. [“The denial of a place to call home”](#), *BBC Newsday*, October 27, 2015.
11. [“Statelessness”](#), *Journal of Media & International Policy*, July, 24, 2014.
12. [“Stateless In Kuwait”](#), *Newsweek Japan*, July 9, 2013. p. 72-75.
13. [“I Am Kuwaiti”](#), Open Society Institute, January 8, 2013.
14. [“Erased: Why Tens of Thousands of Haitian Youth...”](#), *Atlantic Monthly*, April 11, 2012.
15. [“The Places Where Nowhere is Home”](#), *NY Times Lens Blog*, November 2, 2011.
16. [“Nowhere People”](#), *La Vanguardia Magazine*, October 29, 2011. p. 68.
17. [“Nowhere People”](#), *XL Semanal Magazine*, October 18, 2011. p. 32-36.
18. [“Slum Warriors: The Nubians”](#), *DATUM Magazine*, December 2009. p. 58-63.
19. [“Sri Lanka: Tamil Tea Workers”](#), *International Herald Tribune*, July 22, 2009. p. 1-2.
20. [“Stateless”](#), *Forced Migration Review*, April 2009, p. 40-41.
21. [“Nowhere To Run”](#), *POWER Magazine*, April 2009. p. 108-115.
22. [“Exposures: Nowhere People”](#), *Photo District News (PDN)*, December 2008. p. 126, 127-128.
23. [“Landless in the Terai”](#), *Himal SouthAsian Magazine*, May 2008. p. 59-63.
24. [“Exiled To Nowhere: Stateless in Asia”](#), *Visual Communications Quarterly*, Winter 2007, p.
25. [“Statelessness”](#), *The Economist*, December 2007.
26. [“Lost Boys of Sabah”](#), *Irrawaddy Magazine*, October 5, 2007. p. 20-26.
27. [“Photographing the Nowhere People”](#), *Al Jazeera*, August 7, 2007.
28. [“Stateless with borders all around”](#), *The New York Times*, April 8, 2007. p. 4.
29. [“Citizens of Nowhere”](#), *International Herald Tribune*, April 1, 2007. p. 1, 3.

PRESENTATIONS:

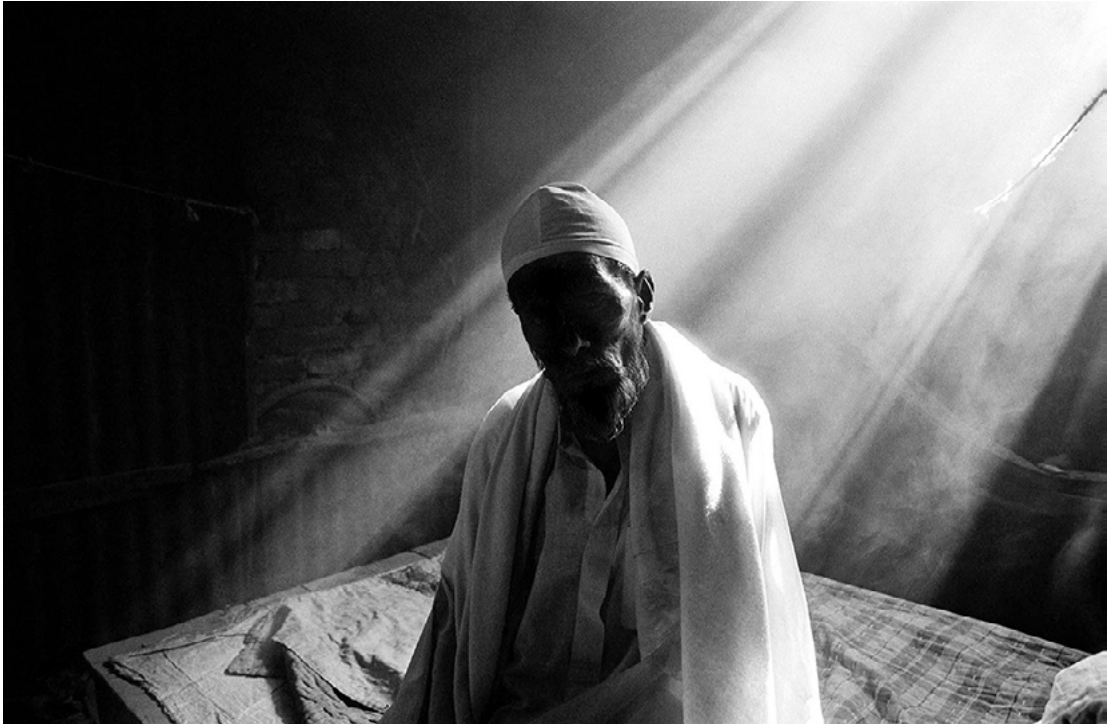
1. Customs House. Sydney, Australia, June 23, 2016.
2. Sydney Jewish Museum. Sydney, Australia, June 22, 2016.
3. Rikkyo University. Tokyo, Japan, May 31, 2016.
4. Tokyo Medical & Dental Hospital. Tokyo, Japan, May 30, 2016.
5. Waseda University. Tokyo, Japan, May 27, 2016.
6. University of Victoria. Victoria, Canada, April 11, 2016
7. Liu Institute For Global Issues. Vancouver, Canada, April 7, 2016.
8. Busboys & Poets, Washington, DC, USA, April 4, 2016.
9. World Affairs Council, Philadelphia, USA, March 31, 2016.
10. Bronx Documentary Center. NY, USA, March 30, 2016.
11. [TEDxEastEnd](#). London, UK, January 16, 2016.
12. Frontline Club. London, UK, November 3, 2015.
13. University of Utrecht. Utrecht, Netherlands, March 23, 2015.
14. University of Rome. Rome, Italy, March 19, 2015.
15. University of Tilburg. Tilburg, Netherlands, November 8, 2014.
16. Humanity House. The Hague, Netherlands, September 11, 2014.
- 17.. Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting. Washington, DC, USA, April 30, 2013.

BOOK REVIEWS: *Nowhere People*

1. [“Greg Constantine: *Nowhere People*”](#), *L’Oeil De La Photographie*, February 26, 2015.
“The book sheds light on the tactics States and people in power take to exclude and legally erase entire ethnic communities from the larger fabric of society, often with impunity.”
2. [“*Nowhere People* profiles stateless people...”](#), *Christian Science Monitor*, February 24, 2016.
“Emerging through these pictures are people who, though repressed and marginalized, are intelligent, resilient, and resourceful. They’re courageous and they persevere.”
3. [“*Nowhere People & the Plight of Stateless*”](#), *Huffington Post*, February 16, 2016.
“...depicting statelessness is essential to evoke the kind of visceral or emotional response that can only be done in some cases through a visual medium. *Nowhere People* is a testament to the capacity to use the photographic language for necessary reasons...”
4. [“18 Breathtaking Photos That Try to Capture...”](#), *Buzzfeed*, January 30, 2016.
“As borders continue to close and war and economic desperation drives millions from their homeland seeking safety or a better way of life *Nowhere People* is a worthy reminder of the effect that abstract government designations can have on individuals. [*Nowhere People*] is far-reaching, exploring what it means to be stateless in Europe, Africa an Southeast Asia.”
5. [“Notable Photo Books of 2015”](#), *Photo District News Magazine*, December 15, 2015.
“*Nowhere People*, with its short, digestible histories of stateless communities and rich visual documentation, is both proof of the human spirit and confirmation of the cruelty of xenophobia, sectarianism and other forms of social elitism.”
6. [“No place to call home”](#), *The Nation*, December 17, 2015.
“The book covers tough ground - the lives of more than 10 million people around the world stuck in a grim and bleak existence...*Nowhere People* is an important work, a timely reminder of the urgent need to resolve these people’s problems.”
7. [“Citizens Of Nowhere”](#), *The Atlantic*, November 8, 2015.
“*Nowhere People* gives us an unparalleled view of what it is like to be stateless...The images in *Nowhere People* negate the idea that these men, woman and children are non-persons. Hope and determination explode through the black and white frames. Personal stories and interviews populate the book as well adding rich layers of language and history, and show Constantine’s commitment to bearing witness. By capturing the lives of these stateless people on camera, Constantine creates a kind of documentation that governments have long denied them.”
8. [“This Is What It’s Like to Live Without A Country”](#), *Mother Jones*, October 24, 2015.
“The book, in its scope and depth, brings to mind a vast Sebastiao Salgado project (think Migrations) or Ed Kashi’s excellent Curse of Black Gold book on the Nigerian oil industry.... It’s a hefty, beautiful beast. From the textured, embossed cover to the excellent black & white reproductions and smart layout, including nice foldout pages allowing for big, gorgeous horizontal images, it’s a book that as an object itself stands out..Its great layout and wonderful body of documentary work puts it among some of the best, most ambitious documentary projects of our time.”

SELECTED PHOTOGRAPHS:

FIGURE: 3.19



An ailing 75-year-old Urdu-speaking man sits alone in his room in Pat Godam Camp in Mymensingh, Bangladesh. He has no family left and does not have the resources to obtain health care. (2006)

FIGURE: 3.20



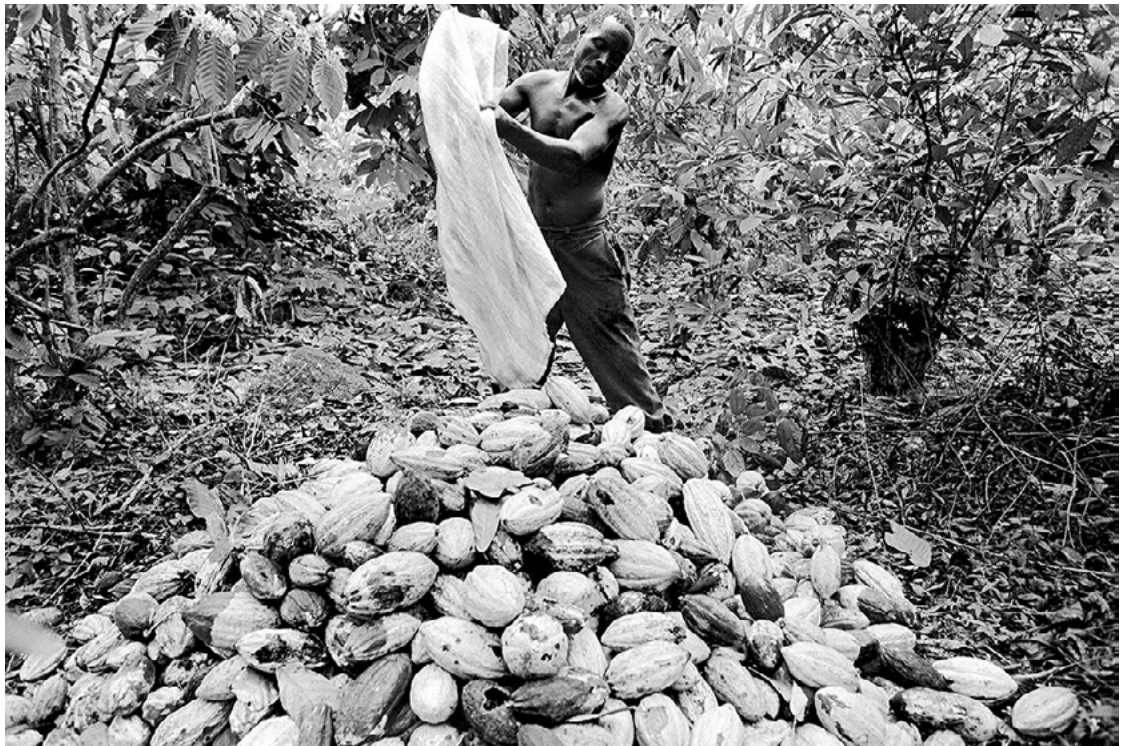
A young stateless boy pushes a cart at a fish market in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia. Up to 50,000 children, mostly of Filipino and Indonesian descent are stateless in Sabah. (2006)

FIGURE: 3.21



Hundreds of thousands of Dalits who live in the Terai area of southern Nepal are without Nepalese nationality. A group of landless Dalits in the town of Lahan sit in a tractor-pulled wagon after spending the day doing odd jobs. (2007)

FIGURE: 3.22



A Burkinabe man collects cocoa on a small plantation in a remote area outside of Bouafle in the Ivory Coast. While Burkinabe have lived in Ivory Coast for generations they are seen as 'foreigners' in the country. (2010)

FIGURE: 3.23



Over 100,000 people from the Bidoon community are stateless in Kuwait. Bidoon youth demonstrate for their right to Kuwaiti citizenship. (2012)

FIGURE: 3.24



Children from the Dom (gypsy) community play in a slum outside of Basra. The Dom are some of the most vulnerable people in Iraq. Most of the children in the community have no documentation. (2014)

FIGURE: 3.25



This 44-year-old woman is a Lebanese national. She gave birth to her daughter in 2005. Lebanese citizenship laws do not permit women to pass on citizenship to their children. Her daughter and son are both stateless even though they were born in Lebanon to a mother who is a Lebanese national. (2012)

FIGURE: 3.26



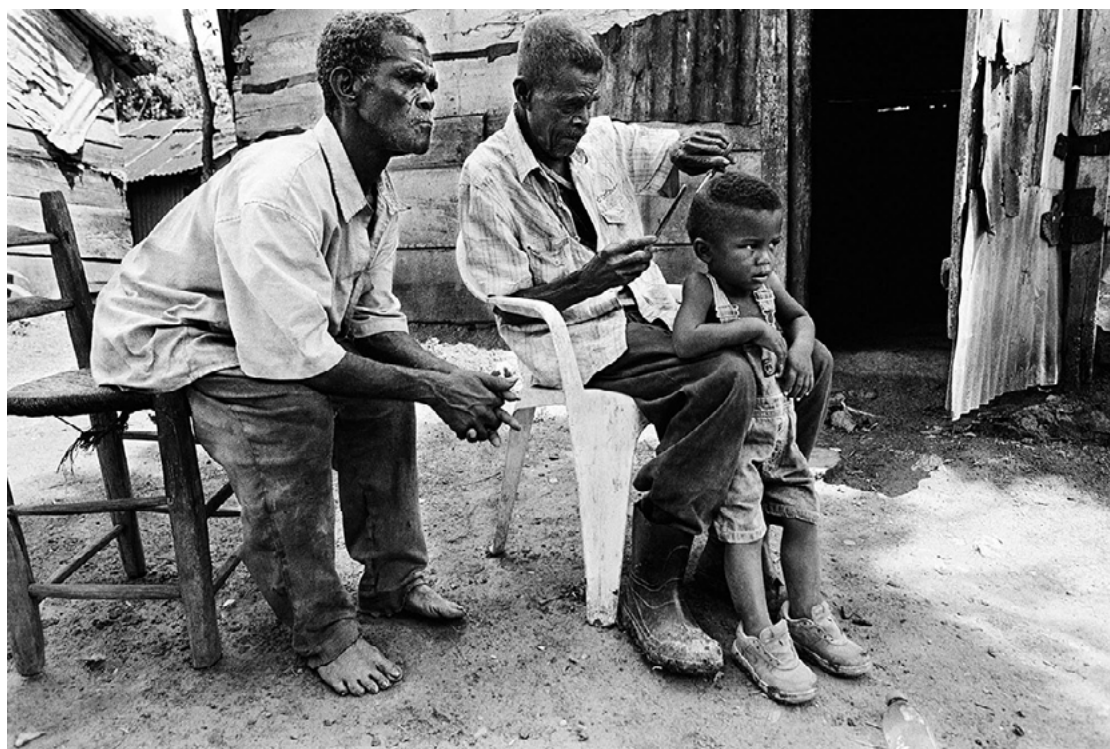
This woman from the Roma community in Serbia was unable to register her four children. She is now pregnant and it is unlikely she will be able to register her newborn. All four children are legally invisible. (2014)

FIGURE: 3.27



Thousands of Crimean Tatars who returned to Ukraine found themselves stateless. While stateless, they lost out on opportunities that continue to have consequences on them today. Zarema and her family were not able to obtain land. Now they live in a two-room shed on another family's property. (2009)

FIGURE: 3.28



Tens of thousands of Dominicans of Haitian descent are stateless in the Dominican Republic. Julien (92) cuts the hair of a 3-year-old boy born in Dominican Republic but denied a birth certificate because his parents are of Haitian descent. (2011)

MULTIMEDIA FEATURES

FIGURE: 3.29



A short multimedia film about the impact detention has on stateless people throughout Europe. The film was made in collaboration with member organizations of the International Detention Coalition and the European Network on Statelessness. (2015)

FIGURE: 3.30



A short multimedia film about the stateless in Europe featuring the stories of stateless people in Holland, Italy, Malta and Poland. The film was made in collaboration with the European Network on Statelessness. (2014)

WEBSITE

FIGURE: 3.31



www.nowherepeople.org

APPENDIX 4:

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

1. Distinguished Visiting Fellowship, Queen Mary University of London, November 2015.
2. Notable Photo Book of the Year, *Photo District News Magazine*, USA, 2015.
3. Ten Best Photo Books of 2015, *Mother Jones Magazine*, USA, 2015.
4. National Endowment for Democracy, August 2014-July 2015.
5. Oak Foundation, June 2014-June 2015.
6. Allard Prize for Photography, Canada, 2014: Winner.
7. NPPA Best of Photojournalism 2013, HM, Best Tablet/Mobile Device eBook.
8. National Endowment for Democracy, Aug 2013-June 2014.
9. Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting, October 2012.
10. Open Society Justice Initiative: Consultancy, September 2012.
11. Notable Photo Book of the Year, *The Independent*, UK, 2012.
12. Notable Photo Book of the Year, *Photo District News Magazine*, USA, 2012.
13. Notable Photo Book of the Year, *Christian Science Monitor*, USA, 2012.
14. Thai Printer Awards, 2012; Gold Medal.
15. Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting, February 2012.
16. Amnesty International Media Awards, UK, 2011: (short listed)
17. Human Rights Press Award Hong Kong, 2011: Award of Merit.
18. Days Japan Photojournalism Awards, 2011: Special Jury Prize.
19. Open Society Institute: Discretionary Grant, January 2011.
20. Osborn Elliott Prize for Journalism in Asia, 2009: Co-winner.
21. Open Society Institute: Audience Engagement Grant, Oct 2009.
22. Harry Chapin Media Award 2009: Winner, Photojournalism.
23. Getty For Good Grant, Finalist, 2009.
24. PX3: Prix de la Photography Paris, 2009: Honorable Mention (x2).
25. NPPA Best of Photojournalism 2009 HM: Best Published Picture Story.
26. Society of Publishers in Asia Award: Feature Photography, 2008: Winner.
27. Harry Chapin Media Award for Photojournalism, 2008: Finalist.
28. Human Rights Press Awards Hong Kong, 2008: Award of Merit.
29. UNICEF Photo of The Year, 2008: Nomination.
30. UNICEF Photo of The Year, 2007: Nomination.
31. POYi, 2006: 2nd Place: Feature Picture Story, Award of Excellence: Portraits.
32. International Photography Awards, 2003: 2nd Place: Photo Essay, HM: Feature.

APPENDIX 5:

List of Enclosures:

- 4.1 Monograph of *Nowhere People (2015)*
- 4.2 Monograph of *Exiled To Nowhere: Burma's Rohingya (2012)*
- 4.3 Monograph of *Kenya's Nubians: Then & Now (2011)*

- 4.4 Thirty 8x10" photographic prints w/captions
- 4.5 USB containing 3