

The Limits and Opportunities of Regional Solidarity: Exploring Refugee Resettlement in Brazil and Chile

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Abstract

This paper explores the implementation and experience of refugee resettlement in Brazil and Chile by focusing on the main limits and opportunities of regional 'solidarity', the principle on which the programme is based. By analysing how the notion of solidarity is understood in the context of resettlement in Latin America, I review the programme at two levels. First, at the regional level, I focus on the programmes in both Brazil and Chile, to assess resettlement as an instrument of international cooperation and responsibility sharing. At the local level, I look at refugees' residency status and access to rights. I focus here on the resettlement of Colombian and Palestinian refugees in both countries. Exploring resettlement through the lens of solidarity, allows us to understand the nuances and multiple dimensions of resettlement. This is timely, as countries of the Southern Cone of Latin America are identified as 'emerging resettlement countries' and expected to increase their resettlement intake. The findings discussed in this paper show that resettlement should aim for a complementary understanding of solidarity in order to improve the quality of the programme, as well as expanding its scope and capacity.

Policy implications

- Expanding solidarity: a complementary understanding of regional solidarity that emphasises solidarity *vis-à-vis* states as well as solidarity *vis-à-vis* refugees will allow improvement both in the quality and capacity of resettlement.
- Integration: the region should promote refugee integration as a key aim of resettlement to increase its role and impact as a durable solution.
- Funding: both the region and the international community need to keep expanding sources of funding for resettlement in order to increase its capacity (intake number) and scope (countries reached).

1. Emergent resettlement countries in Latin America

In October 2017, 66 Syrian refugees arrived in Chile from Lebanon under the Emerging Resettlement Countries Joint Support Mechanism (ERCM), a recent platform coordinated by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR). The arrival of these Syrian refugees in Chile, and the expressed commitment of countries such as a Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay to receive new groups of extra-regional refugees, did not take the region by surprise, considering that Latin American countries have a long tradition of providing asylum and refugee protection (Grandi, 2017; Lavanchy, 2006).

Chile, Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay are four of the 37 countries currently offering refugee resettlement (UNHCR, 2017). While these countries have some experience of implementing this durable solution, they are considered emergent resettlement countries as their programmes are still in formation (Jubilut and Carneiro 2011). There is a renewed interest in emergent host countries, since there is an estimated 1.2 million refugees in need of resettlement by 2018 (UNHCR,

2017), and the promotion of third country resettlement is one of the key objectives of the Global Compact on Refugees (UNHCR, n.d). This renewed interest demands an assessment of how resettlement has been achieved, implemented and experienced. This paper does so for Brazil and Chile.

These two countries are stimulating cases studies because, notwithstanding their differences, they share important characteristics. First, both Chile and Brazil are pioneers in Latin America in assuming the resettlement commitment and hosting the largest programmes in the Southern Cone (Ruiz, 2015). Second, Brazil and Chile share a history of exile, since thousands of people have fled each country because of dictatorships. Third, both countries are signatories of the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, as well as part of the regional framework including the 2004 Mexico Declaration and Plan of Action (MPA) that established the solidarity resettlement programme, and the 2014 Brazil Declaration and Plan of Action (BPA) (Regional Refugee Instruments & Related, 2004; 2014).

A fourth commonality is that both countries have resettled Colombian and Palestinian refugees. Small groups of Colombian refugees were annually resettled between 2004

and 2012 in each country. Both states also resettled more than 100 Palestinian refugees each between 2007 and 2008. The Colombian refugees experienced persecution and lack of local integration in the first country of asylum, while the Palestinian refugees had lived in protracted situations in refugee camps in the Middle East (Marcogliese, 2017; Vera Espinoza, 2017). Palestinian and Colombian refugees remain the largest resettled groups in both countries and their experiences are instrumental in reflecting on the programme in relation to current protection needs.

Since the beginning of the conflict in Syria, the region has reinforced its commitment to extra-regional refugee protection opening spaces of resettlement and asylum for Syrian refugees (Rodrigues et al., 2017; Rodríguez Camejo, 2017). At the same time, Latin America faces new dynamics of internal displacement as the number of people fleeing criminal violence increases (Cantor, 2014). As Cantor (2017) argues, while refugee challenges within the region may seem small, there are 'hot spots of violent criminality' that may have regional implications. Such displacements may increase demands to expand resettlement programmes, as well as other durable solutions. Assessing past resettlement experiences from inside and outside Latin America, is crucial to moving forward.

This paper explores refugee resettlement in Brazil and Chile through the lens of solidarity, as it was formulated in two key regional instruments of refugee soft law: the 2004 MPA and the 2014 BPA. I show that solidarity in refugee resettlement in Latin America is mainly understood and formulated *vis-à-vis* other states in the region as well as between the region and the international community. By contrast, the relationship between the states and the refugees is less explicit in the MPA and BPA. In my analysis, I interrogate both dimensions – solidarity *vis-à-vis* states and solidarity *vis-à-vis* refugees – by assessing resettlement against two aims of the programme: (1) Responsibility sharing and (2) Resettlement as durable solution. This dual reading allows exploration of resettlement at both regional and local levels, drawing on original interview material with resettled refugees and key organisations in Brazil and Chile. At the regional level, resettlement has resulted in a limited expansion of resettlement intake, but it has had positive effects in promoting certain norms and protection spaces for forced migrants (Guglielmelli-White, 2012; Harley, 2014). At local levels, resettled refugees faced different challenges securing access to rights and citizenship status, which affected their integration (Vera Espinoza, 2015). Finally, the paper reflects on the disconnection between regional and local progress and advocates for a complementary understanding of regional solidarity that allows improvement both in the quality and capacity of resettlement.

2. Understanding solidarity in the context of resettlement in Latin America

Resettlement involves 'the selection and transfer of refugees from a State in which they have sought protection to

a third State that agreed to admit them – as refugees – with permanent residence status' (UNHCR, 2011, p. 9), and is one of the three main durable solutions available to refugees. The other two are integration in the first country of asylum and voluntary repatriation to the country of origin. While voluntary repatriation remains the preferred option among states, resettlement took the spotlight in the last five years as a possibility of 'orderly and long-term' relocation of refugees (Garnier et al., 2018). This is in line with the motto of 'safe, orderly and regular' migration promoted in the international arena, first as part of target 10.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals (UN, 2015) and then as part of the Global Compact on Migration and Refugees (IOM, n.d). While this seems to mark a shift from refugee and migrant protection as a humanitarian issue to a development one (Türk, 2016), it also reinforces 'responsibility sharing', one of the core norms of the refugee regime (Betts, 2009).

However, resettlement is only available for less than one per cent of the refugee population (van Selm, 2014), because resettlement is neither a right of refugees nor an obligation of states. Contrary to asylum, which guarantees the right to *non-refoulement* – meaning that asylum seekers cannot be forced to return to a country where they may be persecuted – resettlement is a discretionary response from the states. One of the main reasons is that responsibility sharing has a weak legal and normative framework (Betts, 2009) and resettlement does not have a binding legal basis in international refugee law (Madureira and Jubilit, 2016).

In this context, the initiative of 'solidarity resettlement' in Latin America emerged as an innovative approach that would put into action the idea of regional solidarity (Bari-chello, 2015). The 'solidarity resettlement programme' was adopted as part of the MPA in 2004 and it was built around three pillars: the regional tradition of refugee protection in Latin America, the re-birth of resettlement – related to its strategic use – and the principle of solidarity. The latter provided an identity for the programme (Jubilit and Carneiro 2011).

'Solidarity' is mentioned 16 times in the MPA, not only in relation to resettlement but also as part of other concrete actions, such as the 'solidarity cities' and the 'borders of solidarity' programmes. In the document, solidarity is first referred to as a 'fundamental principle' that together with humanism 'guides States policies on refugees in Latin America' (MPA, 2004, p. 1). It is also mentioned as a value, which together with 'respect, tolerance and multiculturalism', emphasises the plight of refugees. Furthermore, it is mostly referred to as part of a framework of international and regional solidarity, echoing the move from burden-sharing to responsibility sharing (Jubilit and Carneiro 2011). Solidarity resettlement is thus represented as a regional approach to responsibility sharing by which countries of the region can receive refugees who are in another Latin American country, thereby contributing 'to mitigate the effects of the humanitarian situations these countries face' (MPA, 2004, p. 11). It is also stated that this duty is connected to 'international solidarity', which requires

technical and financial cooperation from the international community (MPA, 2004). Therefore, in the context of resettlement, 'solidarity' refers to a common exercise of interest and cooperation between states in the region, but also between the region and the international community. This approach makes it a relevant example of South-South cooperation (Harley, 2014). Importantly, while resettlement - as a discretionary state measure - can be considered as an act of generosity, it is not totally unselfish (see de Menezes, 2016).

A simple definition of solidarity emphasises unity or agreement, among individuals and groups with a common interest (Oxford Dictionary Online, n.d). In other words, solidarity does not equal altruism. Self-interest, shared by others, is part of any solidarity action. As Hilpold (2015, p. 262) argues, solidarity has 'many egoistic traits', which does not mean that it cannot coexist with other altruistic approaches. However, what makes solidarity a distinctive principle of cooperation is the emphasis on a shared goal or interest, which requires a certain common identity or affinity to motivate joint action (Moreno-Lax, 2017). In the context of refugee resettlement in Latin America, solidarity emerged as a principle that sustains regional cooperation among states that are bounded by regional and sub-regional identities and reciprocity.

The resettlement programme for Latin American refugees was proposed by Brazil in 2004, when it hosted a preparatory meeting for the 20th anniversary of the Cartagena Declaration (Regional Refugee Instruments & Related, 1984), the main regional instrument and base of refugee protection in the region. The proposal, by which countries of the Southern Cone contributed to the burden of refugees received by Colombia's neighbours as a result of the decades-long internal conflict, was the birth of the 'solidarity resettlement' programme. In the notes of that meeting, it is possible to find articulations of a shared regional interest. For example, the participants acknowledged 'the need to strike a balance between the legitimate interests of the State, particularly as regards to security, and the humanitarian needs of those in need of protection' (UNCHR 2006, p. 271). They also highlighted the need for the international community's support to achieve durable solutions in the region.

Indeed, solidarity resettlement responded to strategic interests such as the concern for regional security and the goal of increased presence within the international community, as well as access to a larger structure of resettlement that could enhance protection to a larger refugee population (Betts, 2017). In this sense, de Menezes (2016) argues that the actions of Latin American states are based on strategic interests just like states in any other region, with one main difference: their actions in relation to refugee protection are framed on the rhetoric of solidarity. However, this solidarity, he argues, has provided a 'utopian ambition' that has not translated into effective implementation of resettlement as a durable solution. By contrast, other authors state that the principle of 'solidarity' has contributed to 'norm development', which facilitated regional

cooperation in refugee protection (Barichello, 2015; Harley, 2014). Furthermore, the language of solidarity creates a branding of 'generosity' that helps states to increase acceptance of refugee protection and responsibility sharing (Kneebone, 2016).

This rhetoric of solidarity is extended to the Brazil Declaration and Plan of Action of 2014, emphasising responsibility sharing as well as regional and international cooperation (BPA, 2014). In relation to resettlement, the BPA expands the scope of resettlement with countries hosting large numbers of refugees inside and outside the region. It also identifies concrete situations that may require the support of resettlement, such as the influx of forced migrants in Ecuador, the displacement from organised crime in the countries of the Northern Triangle in Central America, and large humanitarian crises outside the region (BPA, 2014). The BPA also suggests evaluating national resettlement programmes in order to identify common obstacles and share good practices, while encouraging other countries in the region to join the programme.

The review of the MPA and BPA documents, suggests two main dimensions to the configuration of solidarity in relation to resettlement in Latin America, both related to 'responsibility sharing': (1) solidarity between states (Hilpold, 2015) or what Moreno-Lax (2017) calls the 'horizontal dimension', and (2) solidarity between the region and the international community. The latter is similar to what Moreno-Lax calls the state-regime or 'systemic' dimension. However, in this case it does not necessarily include refugees themselves as direct actors of solidarity. Indeed, the MPA and BPA lack an explicit conceptualisation of what solidarity *vis-à-vis* refugees means. This solidarity may exist to certain extent in practice, but it is mainly assumed to be part of resettlement as humanitarian action and not necessarily as a guidance principle. That is to say, refugees are assumed to be recipients of refugee protection as encouraged through responsibility sharing.

In the next subsection, I briefly explore the aims of resettlement as a durable solution and I argue that solidarity, as a states-refugees dimension, should be considered as a key principle in refugee integration. This would not only contribute to the assessment of resettlement but also to its implementation.

Resettlement as a durable solution

Resettlement programmes in both Brazil and Chile were developed as expressions of responsibility sharing and designed to provide durable solutions for refugees. The UNHCR describes 'durable solution' as 'one that ends cycles of displacement by resolving their plight so that they can lead normal lives' (UNHCR 2011, p. 28). Two dimensions are identified: the first relates to refugee protection, and the second refers to conditions allowing refugees to re-establish their lives. While the regional approach to resettlement created the conditions for developing spaces of protection, it has been less successful in achieving refugee integration. The assessment of resettlement commissioned by the

UNHCR in five regional host countries, identified the need to enhance the economic and social integration of refugees (Ruiz, 2015; see also Guglielmelli-White, 2012). Therefore, when we are discussing resettlement as durable solution we need to explore refugee integration.

Integration is a contested concept that refers to a variety of multidimensional processes, usually framed as a 'two-way process', including experiences, politics and negotiations taking place when a refugees arrives in a new host country (see Ager and Strang, 2008). In the case of resettlement this process starts from the moment refugees receive the information about the third host country and accept the option of resettlement (Vera Espinoza, 2018). As part of the process of integration, it is expected that refugees will become full participants in the economic and social activities of the new country (Hyndman, 2011).

In the context of refugee integration, citizenship is considered an important staging post. Ager and Strang (2008, p.176) argue that the notions of nationhood, citizenship and rights are fundamental to understanding the 'principles and practice of integration', even if they vary across settings. Scholars not only recognise citizenship as a status through the Marshallian perspective of the acquisition of rights and responsibilities (Marshall, 1949), but they also validate citizenship as a form of sense of belonging, a political project of belonging that determines membership of a certain territory or a political community (Castles and Davidson, 2000).

While my understanding of citizenship embraces residency status as a form of formal membership, as well as a set of practices and negotiations developed across different scales and levels (Stokke, 2013), in this paper I mainly focus on status and access. Both dimensions relate to the implementation and experience of resettlement in Brazil and Chile. That is to say, I focus on the guarantee of legal status offered by resettlement in each country and how they confer (or not) certain rights. This understanding of citizenship as access to rights is at the core of resettlement that is supposed to come with the promise of permanent residency (UNHCR, 2011).

There is scope here to strengthen the solidarity state-refugee dimension, as integration should be a key expression of regional solidarity. Indeed, countries of the region have shown great generosity in receiving resettled refugees. However, there are also shared interests between the state and refugees that could encourage further solidarity beyond the *gift* of 'humanitarian protection' (Moulin, 2012). Refugee integration is a constant negotiation and multidimensional process that also includes shared interests between the state and refugees. The first ones aim to end the cycle of displacement and settle people to whom refugee protection was granted, the second ones aim to integrate and to live normal lives. Solidarity understood in relation to resettled refugees' integration could promote better reception structures, norms and policies in the host countries.

The dimensions of solidarity discussed in the paper shed light in two functions of refugee resettlement in Latin America: responsibility sharing and durable solution. The rest of the paper grounds the assessment of the resettlement

programme in Brazil and Chile in relation to its regional and local implementation.

3. Refugee resettlement and regional solidarity in praxis

Method

The analysis discussed in this paper draws on 80 semi-structured interviews with resettled refugees and other actors involved in the resettlement programme in Brazil and Chile.¹ Interviews were carried out during two fieldwork visits in each country between 2012 and 2014 (see Table 1). These interviews are part of a larger study that implemented a qualitative driven mixed-methods methodology; it also included a survey with 86 resettled refugees across both countries, and participant observation in two of the implementing agencies.

Interviews with resettled refugees covered different themes, going through their experience of displacement from the first country of origin to their experiences in the country of resettlement. With the rest of the participants, the interviews explored their role and involvement in resettlement as well as questions related to the design and implementation of the programme. Interviews were conducted in 14 cities (2 in Chile; 12 in Brazil) and varied between 40 and 120 minutes. All interviews were audio-recorded after approval was given and two copies of the consent form were signed. After transcription, all interviews were imported to the qualitative data analysis software NVivo (QSR International, Brisbane) and organised by country (Chile and Brazil) and by group of reference (Palestinian refugees, Colombian refugees, and informants). The analysis was done through successive stages of reading and coding. In this paper, I focus on the discussion of categories and themes related to the implementation of resettlement, regional cooperation, and access to rights.

Table 1. Summary of Semi-structured Interviews

| Country Interviews | Chile December 2012 – April 2013 | Brazil October 2013 – March 2014 |
|----------------------|--|--|
| Colombian refugees | 11 | 12 |
| Palestinian refugees | 12 | 9 |
| UNHCR staff | 1 | 2 |
| Government officers | 2 | 4 |
| NGOs' members | 5 | 6 |
| Other actors* | 7 | 9 |
| Total interviews | N= 38 | N=42 |

Notes: *Other actors included former staff, university clinics, translators, politicians, academics, religious representatives and migrant organisations.

Regional 'shared responsibility' in resettlement

It has been argued in this paper that solidarity in the context of resettlement in Latin America is mainly understood as responsibility sharing and intra-state cooperation. An assessment of the programme at the regional level, through the cases of Brazil and Chile, shows to what extent these functions were accomplished. Since November 2004, when the 'solidarity resettlement programme' was adopted as part of the MPA, five countries in the region – Brazil, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay – have implemented programmes (Ruiz, 2015). If compared with other regions in the global south this is a relevant achievement² and it has been praised as a model of south-south cooperation and dialogue among states (Castillo, 2015; Harley, 2014). However, only four of these countries still continue to take resettlement refugees and all of them, except Brazil, have been, at some point, suspended or delayed due to financial or political reasons (Menezes and Kostas, 2017). For instance in Chile, the resettlement programme went under review after a political dispute between the government of the President of the country at that time, Sebastian Piñera, and the UNHCR. The conflict started with the asylum granted in Argentina to a Chilean guerilla fighter, who according to the government faced charges in Chile (Vera Espinoza, 2015). The programme only resumed in 2017, this time under the government of Michelle Bachelet, with the arrival of the Syrian refugees. This shows that while resettlement has been relatively successful in engaging other countries of the region, the continuity of resettlement depends on political willingness.

When looking at the cases of Brazil and Chile it is possible to identify specific interests and political goals that drove their decision to implement resettlement. In the case of Brazil, resettlement was a further step aimed to reach a sub-regional leadership in refugee protection (Jubilut and Carneiro 2011). In the case of Chile, resettlement was labeled as a 'gesture' to the international community in return for the protection given to Chileans in exile during Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship (Vera Espinoza, 2018). Both countries considered that implementing resettlement would position them as good humanitarian players in relation to international cooperation. These interests were mirrored by the political stance of specific governments. Until recently, many politicians and government officials in South America shared experiences of exile during the dictatorial regimes, which has influenced the way they make sense of migration and their responses to refugee protection (Geddes and Vera Espinoza, 2018).

While resettlement remains at the core of the regional commitment towards refugee protection, it is not integral to the migration policies and strategies of Chile and Brazil and, therefore, it depends on budget and political will. Some participants explained it as follows:

Yes, we managed to establish a programme. Now, how sustainable is it, in a country with our characteristics, to make such effort? I don't know. I mean, that is the question really. It requires political

willingness, sensitivity to the topic to make it a priority. [...] Also, I wouldn't say that there is a regional programme. I would say that there are different attempts in different countries to respond to an issue, but not articulated in a regional approach.

(Resettlement Analyst Chilean government. Chile, March 2013).

There has not been a harmonisation of quota intake in the region. And that is because resettlement is as strong as the personal affinity to the topic of the people governing at specific times in each country.

(Former Officer UNHCR. Brazil, January 2014).

So while the principle of solidarity has encouraged countries of the region to implement resettlement in relation to shared goals and self-interests, the decision can vary from government to government, limiting the scope and continuity of the programme. Actors involved in resettlement in each country are aware of this limitation and both countries have developed some binding legal obligations and internal voluntary processes towards regulate resettlement. Brazil, for instance, enacted a specific normative resolution in 2011 (NR N° 14), that stipulated the specifications of the programme, clarified the responsibilities of institutions, established a selection process, and broadly indicated rights and duties of the resettled refugees. Chile, on the other hand, managed to set up an inter-ministerial commission to support vulnerable cases but it has not remained as a permanent body. Both countries established tripartite structures that included the participation of the Government, the UNHCR and the implementing agencies.

Responsibility sharing can also be reviewed in relation to the intake number of resettled refugees. In total, since 2004, the region has received more than 1,500 refugees from within the region and abroad (Ruiz, 2015). The number of resettled refugees is small in comparison with the global resettlement needs and the intake of traditional resettlement countries such as the United States, Canada, Australia or Sweden.³

It is worth noting that the solidarity resettlement programme was initially aimed to protect refugees coming from Colombia's neighboring countries such as Ecuador and Costa Rica. Since 2005, more than 5,500 Colombian refugees with specific protection needs have been resettled to a third country. About 20 per cent of these Colombian refugees were resettled in countries of the Southern Cone such as Brazil, Chile and Argentina (ACNUR 2010, p.20). According to the National Commission for Refugees in Brazil (CONARE, 2017), to July 2017, Brazil has received in total 715 resettled refugees. Most of the resettled refugees are originally from Colombia, Palestine, Ecuador, Afghanistan and Sri Lanka. Chile, on the other hand, has received a total of 546 resettled refugees that also include Colombian, Palestinian, and now Syrian refugees as well as people from Iraq and Azerbaijan, among others (Ruiz, 2015).

Two reflections here are relevant in relation to these numbers. First, the impact of resettlement can be assessed in relation to the number of the rest of the refugee population in each country. According to CONARE, up to June 2017, Brazil had in its territory 9,552 recognised refugees (including resettled refugees) from 82 different nationalities. In the case of Chile, by June 2015, Chile had recognised 1,833 refugees, including resettled refugees (DEM, 2015). While in Chile, resettlement represents a relevant proportion of the refugees; in Brazil resettled refugees are less than 10 per cent of the total refugee population. This sheds light onto other measures that may complement this durable solution and that may benefit a larger proportion of forced migrants. For instance, Brazil and Argentina have both implemented humanitarian visas for Syrians affected by displacement. The Brazilian model allows Syrians to travel and to request asylum at their arrival or to seek other legal pathways to stay. Since the start of the conflict, Brazil has issued more than 8,000 visas for Syrians (UNHCR, 2017). Further research is needed to evaluate the benefits and shortcomings of these humanitarian visas in relation to resettlement and other durable solutions (see Jubilut et al., 2016). Humanitarian visas remain a specific solution for certain cases only and it has not been widely replicated in the region.

The second point to consider, when discussing the reach of resettlement, is the number of people leaving third host countries. In his assessment of resettlement in the region, Ruiz (2015) identifies that 22 per cent of the resettled refugee population left those countries and decided to return to their country of origin, or went back to their first country of asylum, or traveled elsewhere. Even though resettlement comes with the idea of permanent residency, some refugees were frustrated by their experiences and decided to return (see Vera Espinoza 2018).

Solidarity has also been identified as cooperation between the region and the international community. Indeed, resettlement managed to gather the support of the international community, particularly at the beginning. As Jubilut and Carneiro (2011, p. 64) emphasise, the programme 'has been debated and supported' by states such as the United States, Canada and Norway, countries that collaborated as donors and also through twinning agreements as a form of capacity building. However, after the arrival of the Palestinian refugees, coinciding with the 2008 financial crisis, many donor countries considered that countries such as Brazil and Chile, as middle and high-income countries, should be able to sustain resettlement by themselves. Interviewees in both countries explained as follows:

Resettlement in the region has managed to reach donors and it is a programme that the international community has an interest in. We know there are countries that are keen on keeping Latin American refugees within the region. Therefore, from their total quota of resettlement, they give some of those to the solidarity programme and more people can be benefited. I am not sure of the exact

number, but for 3 refugees resettled in Norway, for example, you can finance 15 here.

(UNHCR Officer, Chile, December 2012).

My perception is that the strategy of resettlement in the Southern Cone is that, in the long term, it can become self-funded. Many countries said that they would fund the project at the beginning, until the countries of the region managed to be self-funded. However, that has not happened here.

(Former UNHCR Officer, Brazil, January 2014).

Indeed, one of the main reasons why Brazil and Chile have not been able to increase their intake of resettled refugees is because of the lack of resources (Menezes and Kostas, 2017). The programme is highly dependent on UNHCR resources, which international donations are given to (Guglielmelli-White 2012; Ruiz 2015). The countries of the region have recognised the funding issues and signatory countries of the BPA have suggested the creation of a 'Voluntary Cooperation Fund' with contributions both from the region and from the international community (BPA 2014, p. 13). In this line, some scholars and practitioners argue that the governments of Latin America should increase the funding they already provide for their own national resettlement programmes (Menezes and Kostas, 2017). And while ensuring this funding internally could help safeguard the continuity of the programme, the financial support received from the international community is also one of the reasons why resettlement is an attractive durable solution to implement in the first place. The ERCM, jointly promoted by the IOM and the UNHCR, may provide the support that is currently needed. We will have to see how countries of the region and the international community trade off this support in relation to how many refugees can be resettled, and from which countries of origin, depending on how the money is earmarked.

Resettlement in South America is still considered a work in progress, partly because the countries of the region have managed to set up some procedures in a context of weak structures for refugee protection. Also, the resettlement programmes in both countries diversified refugee support networks and developed partnerships with different local organisations, including city councils, religious groups, schools, NGOs, private sector and even individual volunteers (ACNUR 2010). Overall, the resettlement programmes, as discussed in the cases of Brazil and Chile, have managed to gather support, but it has been unable to considerably increase the intake number of refugees and it is constantly fighting for continuity.

The principle of solidarity has been a useful brand that managed to gather relevant support both in the region and within the international community; nonetheless, the shared interests that sustain that resettlement as responsibility sharing needs to be reviewed, as new refugee crises emerge, and a new political elite in the region will negotiate future humanitarian actions. Latin America may be departing from the liberal tide that characterised it for the last decade in

relation to migration (Cantor et al. 2015), and the principle of regional solidarity needs to be strengthened or it may not be enough to overcome the 'structural discontinuities' of the programme: the institutional and procedural ambiguities at the core of refugee resettlement (Shrestha 2011).

These structural discontinuities in refugee resettlement in Brazil and Chile also reveal a gap between the regional commitment and the local implementation of resettlement.

Solidarity *vis-à-vis* refugees, citizenship and integration

As discussed earlier, resettlement comes with the idea of permanent residency, a secured status that is considered a key stage in the process of refugee integration (Ager and Strang 2008). In this section, I briefly explore some resettled refugees' experiences of integration in relation to their residency status and access to rights in Brazil and Chile. The discussion of the experiences is relevant, as they show the gap between the commitments adopted at the regional level and the local implementation of resettlement. That is to say, effective outcomes of responsibility sharing do not necessarily mean successful implementation of resettlement as a durable solution.

According to most of the resettled refugees interviewed in both countries, the regularisation of their status allowed them and their children to access health services and education (primary and secondary) like any other citizen in the host countries. However, narratives of Colombian and Palestinian refugees in Chile and Brazil described a set of rights and services restricted to them, regardless of their legal status, making it difficult to reach 'substantial citizenship' (Castles and Davidson 2000). While there were some issues that affected refugees across both countries, such as accessing certain social programmes or housing, there were other barriers that marked each group differently in each country. Interviewees reported diverse experiences related to citizenship and belonging, which go beyond the ones discussed in this section. However, I focus here on specific cases of precarious and temporary status in Brazil and Chile.

Colombian and Palestinian refugees had different experiences obtaining permanent residence in Brazil. However, they faced similar experiences of exclusion independently of their permanent status. In the case of Colombian refugees, one of the main issues emerged from their 'transitory citizenship status'. They receive a temporary two-year residency permit once they are accepted into the country as refugees, this can be renewed in the second year for another two (Guglielmelli-White, 2012). After four years of the temporary visa, they can apply for the permanent one and naturalisation is possible after 4 years of permanent residency. Although temporary residency regularises their stay and allows them to work, in practice the temporary documentation excludes them from many economic, social and cultural rights. Some interviewees told me of the difficulties they had setting up a business, finding jobs and accessing social programmes:

Our documentation here is transitory in nature. Because, in theory, we have a valid document, but

it is only valid for a short period. So when you need an official document to do something, it happens that your document is not valid anymore. And that is why I couldn't open my business.

(Fernando, Colombian refugee. Brazil, November 2013).

In contrast to the Colombian refugees who struggled with temporary documentation, the resettlement programme made sure that Palestinian refugees obtained permanent residency permits as soon as they completed the four years of temporary residency. Despite this improvement, Palestinians still experienced restricted access to social programmes. As identified in this and other studies (Guglielmelli-White, 2012; Sampaio, 2010), refugees in Brazil faced difficulties accessing certain public services because of the limitations of their legal status, but also because some public services and institutions lacked knowledge about the refugee population, a situation also reported in Chile. Lack of access to the state retirement pension (BPC) was one of the main issues that affected Palestinian refugees particularly:

We arrived here and appeared on the TV news and in the newspapers, but they (the government) didn't pass the information to the public agencies or to the municipality so they don't treat us as they treat Brazilians. Until now, you have benefits like the one my mother-in-law is seeking, the retirement pension, that they said she cannot get because it is only for Brazilians.

(Nacira, Palestinian refugee. Brazil, December 2013).

The problems accessing pensions, housing or higher education subsidies emerged because of eligibility requirements (Sampaio 2010). While some Federal states recognise access to these programmes with permanent or temporary residency permits, other municipalities do not recognise the 'foreigner' category as a welfare beneficiary, requesting them to have naturalization.⁴ Nacira's quote is revealing in how resettlement was implemented and how solidarity was understood, but also portrayed. Palestinian refugees arrived in Brazil and Chile amid great media attention that emphasised the generosity showed by these countries. However, while the countries were effectively showing their role in responsibility sharing, they did little to anticipate the shortcomings of the temporary residence.

One of the main differences between Chile and Brazil is that, since the promulgation of the Chilean Refugee Law (Law No. 20.430) in 2010, refugee status granted to resettled individuals and their families guaranteed them permanent residency in the country. Even so, legal status emerged as one of the refugees' main concerns in relation to the practice of citizenship in Chile. In the case of Colombian refugees, their citizenship practices were influenced by the marginalisation of their economic, social and cultural rights, which also translated into exclusionary routines in their jobs and in accessing housing and services:

The local institutions didn't know at all of the existence of refugees and in many health centers they

didn't want to take us. In the case of our municipality, we kind of opened that precedent, because we met and talked to the health service director to explain to him about us. [. . .] We are not given a better treatment as the refugee law says. And we are not asking the government to give us everything; no . . . we are just asking for equal access!

(Andres, Colombian refugee. Chile. March 2013)

These exclusionary practices derived from both lack of knowledge about resettled refugees' situation and from the barriers imposed by a residency status that did not guarantee them access to certain rights, services or spaces. However, Andres' quote also shows refugee's agency and the strategies they used to deal with these challenges. It is worth noticing many Colombian refugees reported experiencing exclusion, precarious housing and job situations as well as daily discrimination.

For Palestinian refugees in Chile the experience of resettlement was different. The programme made sure that they had permanent residency even before the new law was enacted. They also had a key role in supporting Palestinian refugees' access to naturalisation after 5 years in the country. For Palestinian refugees the main issue, at the moment of the interviews in 2013, was the restriction imposed by the legislation for their children to obtain naturalisation, as the law requested people to be 21 years of age, or 18 if you were the child of a Chilean father or mother by naturalisation. Aziza explained this claim in the following way:

I have all my papers up to date. I have no problem with the government, no problem with the police, nothing. Everything is good here. My kids go to school. I speak Spanish now! My only problem is that I want my kids to be Chilean. That is the problem. I want them to get the nationality at the same time as me and then we will be fine

(Aziza, Palestinian refugee. Chile, February 2013)

Sharing this concern, and supported by the visibility of their resettlement, Palestinian refugees in Chile acted as a group demanding the government's support in obtaining the naturalisation and to modify the legislation that imposed age restrictions to their children. After two years of negotiation, their demands were successful. By June 2015, 65 Palestinians had obtained Chilean Passports. By June 2016, 45 children and adolescents, between 7 and 20 years old, had received naturalisation (Vera Espinoza, 2017).

Brazil and Chile have both improved refugee protection practices and policies. However, the experiences of both Palestinian and Colombian refugees in both countries show that many solutions were ad hoc. There are also several differences in how the programme dealt with the issues raised by Palestinian and Colombian refugees. In the case of the Palestinian programme, both countries received great financial support from international donors. The funding not only meant extra resources and personnel, but also great interest from the international community and visibility in the local and the international media. The resettlement programme

for Colombian refugees did not receive the same level of funding or attention.

Overall, resettled refugees in both countries experienced resettlement as a process of uncertainty that did not necessarily mean reaching a durable solution or putting an end to the consequences of the displacement, showing the disconnection between the solidarity expressed at the regional level and the one experienced in each country. In addition, it shows that solidarity between states-individuals is assumed as part of resettlement *vis-à-vis* a humanitarian action that leads to settlement, and not as a guidance principle that could facilitate implementation at the local level.

4. Conclusions

Latin America has shown its commitment to refugee protection implementing resettlement as a tangible expression of solidarity. However, resettlement faces several discontinuities at the regional and local level. This article explored the implementation and experience of resettlement in Brazil and Chile, through the principle of solidarity. It argues that solidarity in the context of resettlement in Latin America is mainly understood in relation to shared interests, which enable regional and international cooperation in refugee protection. Therefore, it assessed resettlement in relation to its function of 'responsibility sharing', showing the achievements in terms of engagement and the challenges of capacity building and programme continuity due to fluctuating political interest and financial constraints. The relative achievements of regional resettlement seem disconnected from the implementation on the ground because the principle of solidarity as agreed in the MPA and BPA does not have a strong impact in the development of resettlement locally. In this context, I briefly discussed how solidarity in the states-refugees relationship is taken for granted, when indeed it should be a key part of resettlement as a durable solution. Reviewing experiences of Palestinian and Colombian resettled refugees in each country, I showed the difficulties faced due to their residence status and their pivotal role negotiating their own resettlement experiences. An explicit commitment of solidarity between states and refugees on integration, would allow the recognition of shared interests that may improve the design and implementation of resettlement at the local level. Resettlement is a durable solution, but it will only accomplish its aim if it guarantees not only immediate protection but also access to rights, allowing refugees to develop membership and belonging in the host countries. In this sense, there is a need to reach a complementary understanding of regional solidarity – both as responsibility sharing and as a durable solution based on integration – which would improve both in the quality and the capacity of resettlement programmes.

While a focus in solidarity is insufficient to explore the development and outputs of refugee policy in relation to resettlement or to explore in depth the multiple experiences of integration, it is key to understanding the context that

frames resettlement in Latin America. In addition, the relative progress at different levels shows the disconnection between the negotiation of resettlement as policy option and its implementation in practice.

This review of resettlement in Latin America through the lenses of solidarity contributes to the regional and global discussions on refugee resettlement, its impact (Betts, 2017) and the power imbalances in resettlement as humanitarian governance (Garnier et al., 2018). By assessing resettlement in Brazil and Chile, this paper also adds to the understanding of emergent resettlement countries. Finally, the focus on solidarity expands debates on regional responsibility sharing, durable solutions and how to face new displacements in Latin America. Further comparative research is needed on the impact of resettlement in relation to other durable solutions in the region, as well as research into how the ERCM will shape, or not, resettlement in the region.

Despite its shortcomings, resettlement as part of the regional approach to refugee protection and governance in Latin America is a concrete advance and it signals possible new spaces of protection in high middle-income countries distant from conflict zones (Jubilut and Carneiro, 2011). The challenge now is how to increase capacity and improve quality, moving beyond the rhetoric of solidarity to the praxis of it.

Notes

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1. Refugee's names have been replaced with pseudonyms. The names of officers and staff members of institutions related to resettlement in each country also have been anonymised. However, their role and affiliation has been kept as part of the study. The research received ethical approval in July 2012.
2. In Asia, Japan and the Republic of Korea have also implemented resettlement programmes.
3. The United States alone, whose resettlement programme has been running since 1975, had a resettlement admission target of 70,000 for 2014–2015. In 2017 this quota was dropped to 45,000.
4. In April 2017, the Federal Supreme Court stated that foreigners are eligible to receive the state pension without naturalization, but questions remain of how the benefit will be recognized at the local level.

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