

*Outi Autti and Saara Intonen*

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## **The Recognition of War Refugees: Lapland, Love, and Care**

In 1944, more than 50,000 residents of Finnish Lapland were evacuated to Sweden. This article studies how these refugees of the Lapland War (1944–1945) experienced their relations with local people in their host communities. It explores the evacuees' reception on individual and social levels, particularly the processes of recognition in the new communities based on the application of Honneth's recognition theory to oral-history data. According to Honneth, mutual recognition, which is the precondition for individual autonomy and a just society, divides into three forms—love in primary relationships, rights in legal relationships, and solidarity in the community of value. They have three corresponding forms of disrespect—abuse, exclusion, and denigration, all of which can raise struggles for recognition. An analysis of empirical data within this framework reveals detailed information about the actual social processes connected to recognition. How did the evacuees describe their wartime experiences, and which experiences in their narratives were significant enough to be remembered decades after the evacuation event?<sup>1</sup>

The theoretical aim of studying an exceptional situation of war and evacuation is to test the explanatory power of Honneth's theory. How can recognition and justice be realized in a situation

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1 Axel Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts* (New York, 1995).

that is exceptional for both the refugees and their temporary hosts? Our expected finding is that the war-related evacuation and chaos during the event increased the threat of disrespect and that the exceptional nature of the event evinced the most fragile parts of recognition. This article examines refugees who fled only to Sweden, because crossing the national border involved practices that those who fled elsewhere within Finland did not encounter. The bureaucracy of border formalities together with a foreign culture and language can reveal interesting situations connected to recognition theory.

Though our research subject is historical, it connects to a wider phenomenon that is topical and continuous, even timeless. People are always leaving home to escape war and seek security somewhere in the world. In the receiving communities, refugees often raise mixed feelings, from empathy to concern but also frequently fear. The focus of international refugee studies has been on contemporary refugees and current salient issues, policies, and practices, not so much on past displacements and the lives of historical refugees. The agency of refugees and oral-history methods, however, provide opportunities to examine refugees as subjects of history. Given the criticism of international refugee studies for their lack of adequate theoretical grounding in a field dominated by empirical case studies, the demand for theoretically innovative refugee research is at a premium.<sup>2</sup>

Honneth's theory is primarily the province of philosophy. It has found empirical application especially in social scientific research topics focusing on work, youth and education, health care, and social work. It has also appeared in studies that examine the economic conditions, resilience, and identity formation of forced migrants. Our study complies with the most recent applications of the recognition theory that discuss the theme of mutual recognition between parties in unequal positions, interpersonal recognition in institutional contexts, and care outside primary relations. What differentiates our study from previous ones, however, is its historical context. Compared to contemporary, ongoing

2 Philip Marfleet, "Refugees and History: Why We Must Address the Past," *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, XXVI (2007), 136–148; Eveliina Lyytinen, *Turvapaikanhaku ja Pakolaisuus Suomessa* (Turku, 2019), 24, 26; Dawn Chatty and Marfleet, "Conceptual Problems in Forced Migration," *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, XXXII (2013), 1–13.

processes, the historical context of World War II provides a more comprehensive view of the process of recognition.<sup>3</sup>

The refugee history of Finland has remained relatively invisible in national history and memory. Despite a rich local literature about the evacuation period, the Lapland War and its consequences has garnered little scientific and public interest. Research about the Lapland War tends to present evacuation as a secondary issue, covered mainly in memoirs and fictional work. According to the new military history, however, war history should encompass all of its participants, thus accommodating ordinary people, the agency of individuals and groups, linguistic aspects, and modes of remembering. Examples of the more inclusive and experiential approach of the new military history are the studies of civilians and soldiers in their shared everyday life during the Lapland War, the material and mental reconstruction of Lapland, and the evacuation journey of the Saami.<sup>4</sup>

3 Salim Chena, "L'asile au maghreb: quelle reconnaissance pour les exilés subsahariens?" *Les cahiers du cread*, XCVII (2011), 111–145; Cathrine Brun, "Dwelling in the Temporary: The Involuntary Mobility of Displaced Georgians in Rented Accommodation," *Cultural Studies*, XXX (2016), 421–440; Flora Gosh and Søren Juul, "Lower Benefits to the Refugees in Denmark: Missing Recognition?" *Social Work & Society*, VI (2008); Fiona C. Thomas et al., "Resilience of Refugees Displaced in the Developing World: A Qualitative Analysis of Strengths and Struggles of Urban Refugees in Nepal," *Conflict and Health*, V (2011), available at <https://doi.org/10.1186/1752-1505-5-20>; Albena Tcholakova, "Identity Transformation between Recognition and Maintenance of Biographical Coherence: The Example of Refugees in France," *Sociologie*, VII (2016), 59–76; Sally Robinson et al., "Recognition in Relationships between Young People with Cognitive Disabilities and Support Worker," *Children and Youth Services Review*, CXVI (2020), available at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2020.105177>; Jarkko Salminen, "Contradictions between Individually Needed and Institutionally Offered Forms of Recognition," *Constellations*, XXVII (2020), available at <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8675.12476>; Toril Borch Terkelsen, Siren Nodeland, and Solveig Thorbjørnsen Tomstad, "Robert Nozick and Honneth: An Attempt to Shed Light on Mental Health Service in Norway through Two Diametrical Philosophers," *Nursing Philosophy*, XXI (2020), available at <https://doi.org/10.1111/nup.12244>; Iida Kauhanen and Mervi Kaukko, "Recognition in the Lives of Unaccompanied Children and Youth: A Review of the Key European Literature," *Child & Family Social Work*, XXV (2020), 875–883.

4 See, for example, Ulla Savolainen, "The Return: Intertextuality of the Reminiscing of Karelian Evacuees in Finland," *Journal of American Folklore*, CXXX (2017), 166–192; Pirkko Kanervo, Terhi Kivistö, and Olli Kleemola (eds.), *Karjalani, Karjalani, Maani Ja Maaillmani: Kirjoituksia Karjalan Menetyksestä Ja Muistamisesta, Evakoiden Asettamisesta Ja Selviytymisestä* (Turku, 2018); Marja Tuominen, "Where the World Ends? The Places and Challenges of Northern Cultural History," in Bruce Johnson and Harri Kiiskinen (eds.), *They Do Things Differently There: Essays on Cultural History* (Turku, 2011), 43–80; Veli-Pekka Lehtola, "Second World War as a Trigger for Transcultural Changes among Sámi People in Finland," *Acta Borealia*, XXXII (2015), 125–147; Sampo Ahto, *Aseveljet vastakkain: Lapin sota 1944–1945* (Helsinki, 1980);

This study of marginalized Lapland War evacuees from the perspective of recognition theory expands the prevailing narratives and highlights different interpretations of the past. Unlike studies of contemporary refugees, our historical perspective takes the long view to examine transgenerational aspects of the refugee experience, enhancing previous applications of Honneth's theory and refugee studies.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS** Research materials for this article were collected as part of the project "Recognition and Belonging: Forced Migrations, Troubled Histories and Memory Cultures." The first part of the data consists of qualitative interviews conducted from 2013 to 2018 with fourteen people (nine men and five women) who experienced the Lapland War and evacuation. The data also include two written memoirs. The interviews, which were completed by Autti, were with elderly persons born in the 1920s and 1930s. At the time of the war, they were children or youths. The interviews lasted an hour on average, recorded on audiotape and transcribed verbatim. The interviews are anonymous, cited as pseudonyms and codes; the notation of memoir citations refers to their writers' names since the memoirs are published online.<sup>5</sup>

Given that seventy years passed between the Lapland War and the interviews, a search through the archives for additional research material dated closer to the evacuation was imperative. The second part of our data consists of the written narratives of Lapland War evacuation that Intonen collected from the National

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Veikko Erkkilä and Pekka Iivari, *Jätetyt Kodit, Tuhotut Sillat: Lapin Sodan Monta Historiaa* (Helsinki, 2015); Erkki Rautio, *Pohjoiset Pakolaiset* (Pello, 2004); Susanna Runtti, *Naapuriin Evakkoon* (Keuruu, 1994); Onerva Hintikka, *Pako Lapin Sodasta* (Helsinki, 2016); Mirjam Kälkäjä, *Joen Takana Petsamo* (Helsinki, 1991); Joanna Bourke, "Uusi sotahistoria," in Tiina Kinnunen and Ville Kivimäki (eds.), *Ihminen sodassa: Suomalaisten kokemuksia talvi- ja jatkosodasta* (Helsinki, 2006), 21–42; Kivimäki, "Sodan kokemushistoria: Uusi saksalainen sotahistoria ja kokemushistorian sovel-lusmahdollisuudet Suomessa," *ibid.*, 69–86; Maria Lähteenmäki, *Jänkäjääkäreitä Ja Parakkipiikkoja: Lappilaisten Sotakokemuksia 1939–1945* (Helsinki, 1999); Marianne Junila, *Kotirintaman Aseveljeyttä: Suomalaisen Siivittäjän ja Saksalaisen Sotaväen Rinnakkainelo Pohjois-Suomessa 1941–1944* (Helsinki, 2000); Tuominen, T. G. Ashplant, and Tiina Harjumaa (eds.), *Reconstructing Minds and Landscapes: Silent Post-war Memory in the Margins of History* (New York, 2020); Veli-Pekka Lehtola, *Saamelainen Evakko* (Helsinki, 1994); *idem*, "Second World War."

5 Autti and Intonen each have a personal connection to evacuation experiences through their family histories.

Archives of Finland and two anthologies. These data comprise 726 pages of narratives from 143 writers (97 women, 43 men, and 3 undefined), originally submitted to writing competitions, in 1959, 1968, and 1974, and arranged by local authorities in northern Finland to commemorate the anniversaries of evacuation and the war. At the time of the evacuation, the majority of the writers were children, adolescents, or young adults. The length of the writings varies from one to sixty pages, the average being approximately ten pages. The data include short poems and stories, fragmentary recollections and chronological narratives, factual reporting, and highly emotional literary expressions. Archival materials are anonymous, cited only as codes, but the published texts carry authors' name and page numbers.<sup>6</sup>

The methodology employed draws from sociological interview research, the anthropology of experience, and oral-history research. The specific methodological tool is qualitative content analysis of several readings of the data, using Honneth's theory and the research questions as frames of reference. As Bruner stated, the interpretive process operates on two distinct levels—the study's subjects interpreting their own evacuee experiences in expressive forms and the interviewers interpreting their expressions, both oral and written narratives, through fieldwork and analysis. Narratives are the most universal means to organize and articulate experiences. Expressions of personal experience always refer to the past; hence, these narratives are also oral history. Yet, narrating transforms experience, reshaping it through

6 The written memoirs are Mem1: Veikko Kerätär, "Evakkoreissu' Yläkemijoen historiaa," available at <https://ylakemijoenhistoria.wordpress.com/keratar-veikko-evakkoreissu/>; Mem2: Toivo Saunavaara, "Muisteluksia evakkomatka Ruotsiin 1944–45," available at <https://ylakemijoenhistoria.wordpress.com/evakkomatka-ruotsiin-ts/> (both accessed January 7, 2021). The writing competition texts are I: *Me Olimme Evakossa* (Rovaniemi, 1959); II: KA, Hb:1 Kirjoituskilpailu "Evakkotaival" (1967–1968) Lapin Nuorisoseurain Liitto ry:n arkisto (fonds)"; III: Jorma Etto (ed.), *Pohjoisen Taikapiiri: Lapin Evakkojen Maailma 1944–1945* (Rovaniemi, 1977). The writing competition text code refers to the writer's gender and to the competition to which the text was submitted in chronological order: I=competition in 1959; II=1967–1968; III=1974. The interview code presents information about the age and gender of interviewees—F1930A: F=female, 1930=birth year, A=first of the interviewees born in 1930. The interviewees were Finnish by ethnicity; the texts do not indicate whether the writers were ethnically Finnish or Saami. Finland has no register for ethnicity, and the writers were not asked to state theirs. Based on the evacuation routes described in the writings and the reluctance of the Saami to participate in writing competitions organized by Finns, we assume that almost all of the writers were ethnically Finnish.

imagination and language. Moreover, experiences and memories are never simply individual; they are also social, obtaining their expression and meaning from the surrounding world. The ability to forget and reject is also important; contents, gaps, and silences can reveal the significance that narrators ascribe to their experiences and memories. Experiences that deviate from everyday life and bring new circumstances are particularly in need of explication and communication. Narration involves negotiating events and understanding changes; the organization of experience into expression is also a process of integration. Narration is how individuals and communities witness and remember; it is also how they are remembered.<sup>7</sup>

The inevitable gaps between reality, experience, and expression constitute a methodological challenge that we acknowledge. “What the reality of an experience is,” “how consciousness perceives it,” and “how individuals frame and articulate it” never fully match. The differences between life lived, experienced, and narrated is crucial in the interpretation of a person’s life story. Since we aim at a deep understanding of evacuation experiences, we focus on the construction and interpretation of the meanings of social reality and the different interpretations of the past.<sup>8</sup>

Love, the first form of recognition and a precondition for all the other forms, refers to primary relations, like that between a child and parent and later between peers, as in romantic love and friendship. Strong emotional attachments formed between a small number of people support the development of self-confidence, and the confidence to experience and express needs, emotions, and desires. The corresponding form of disrespect shows its effects on the level of physical integrity. Violations of the body,

7 See, for example, Norman K. Denzin, *Sociological Methods: A Sourcebook* (New York, 2006); Victor W. Turner and Edward M. Bruner (eds.), *The Anthropology of Experience* (Urbana, 1986); Outi Fingerroos et al. (eds.), *Muistitietotutkimus: Metodologisia Kysymyksiä* (Helsinki, 2006); Kimberly A. Neuendorf, *The Content Analysis Guidebook* (Los Angeles, 2017; orig. pub. 2002); Bruner, “Experience and Its Expressions,” in Turner and Bruner (eds.) *Anthropology of Experience*, 3–31; Fingerroos and Ulla Majja Peltonen, “Muistitieto ja Tutkimus,” in Fingerroos et al. (eds.), *Muistitietotutkimus*, 7–24; Turner, “Dewey, Dilthey, and Drama: An Essay in the Anthropology of Experience,” in Turner and Bruner (eds.), *Anthropology of Experience*, 35, 37; Bourke, “Uusi sotahistoria,” 39; Marita Eastmond, “Stories as Lived Experience: Narratives in Forced Migration Research,” *Journal of Refugee Studies*, XX (2007), 251.

8 Bruner, “Experience and Its Expressions,” 6–7; Honneth, *Struggle for Recognition*; *idem*, *The I in We: Studies in the Theory of Recognition* (Malden, Mass., 2012).

such as abuse and rape, cause suffering and inflict a sense of being helpless, at the mercy of others, and a lack of control over one's own body. They deprive people of self-confidence and confidence in their connection to the social world.<sup>9</sup>

The second form, rights, refers to respect of others as morally accountable, free, equal, and autonomous. Legal recognition enables self-respect and assurance of one's social values, judgments, and decisions. Legally responsible people are cognizant of a community's social norms and of its members as holders of equal rights and duties. The forms of legal disrespect are the denial or deprivation of rights, subjugation, and exclusion. The disrespected fail to receive equal moral responsibility. Disrespect constrains personal autonomy and interaction with others.<sup>10</sup>

The third form of recognition, solidarity, refers to respect given to others for their individuality. Solidarity is possible only within the framework of a community's collective goals and shared values. Each person makes a unique contribution—through particular traits, abilities, and achievements—that others acknowledge as adding to the common good and that redounds to the individual as self-esteem. When self-esteem is possible for everyone, so is societal solidarity, though esteem does not need to be granted by society as a whole; a smaller community is a sufficient sphere of recognition. Disrespect at this level takes the form of degrading, disgracing, and denigrating individual or collective ways of life, beliefs, abilities, and achievements. Along with social esteem, self-esteem is also lost when others refuse to view a person's actions as meaningful.<sup>11</sup>

For Honneth, the realization of society's moral development occurs across the two dimensions of individuation and inclusion through struggles for recognition. Honneth does not assume that societal development follows his model, since existing as well as pursued patterns of interaction are always defined in processes of social negotiation. The results of such negotiations cannot be predicted theoretically, only explored empirically. Forced

9 Honneth, *Struggle for Recognition*.

10 Joel Anderson and Honneth, "Autonomy, Vulnerability, Recognition, and Justice," in Anderson and John Christman (eds.), *Autonomy and the Challenges to Liberalism: New Essays* (New York, 2005), 127–149; Honneth, *Struggle for Recognition*.

11 Honneth, *Struggle for Recognition*; *idem*, "Recognition or Redistribution? Changing Perspectives on the Moral Order of Society," *Theory, Culture & Society*, XVIII (2001), 43–55.

displacement often entails radical breaks with familiar conditions of everyday life, requiring re-negotiations of self in relation to new contexts.<sup>12</sup>

Leaning on Honneth's view, this article explores the negotiations and processes whereby evacuees seek to build a new foundation for their lives through recognition in their temporary host communities. Our analysis of recognition in evacuees' narratives about their encounters with local people in the host communities focuses mainly on immediate, individual experiences but also on shared memories and long-term effects. After introducing the historical background of the Lapland War and evacuation, we outline the main features of the evacuees' reception, describe the asymmetry of their encounters with their hosts, and highlight the various processes of negotiation embedded in the data.

THE LAPLAND WAR AND EVACUATION From the summer of 1941 until the autumn of 1944, a large number of German troops were deployed in northern Finland, fighting with the Finnish Army against the Soviet Union. The so-called Continuation War between Finland and the Soviet Union was an integral part of German war efforts on the eastern front. Finland was allied with Germany and dependent on German military assistance. When the Continuation War ended on September 5, 1944, the terms of the armistice required Finland to deport German troops, about 215,000 men, from Finnish territory within two weeks. Peaceful retreat under a tight timeline, however, was impossible. To protect the civilian population from the anticipated conflict, the entire Province of Lapland had to be evacuated. Hostilities between the Finnish and German armies erupted into the Lapland War on September 15.<sup>13</sup>

In 1944, Lapland's population was around 143,500. Approximately 56,500 persons were evacuated to Sweden and 47,500 to other parts of Finland, primarily Ostrobothnia. Some evacuees

12 Honneth, "Recognition and Justice: Outline of a Plural Theory of Justice," *Acta Sociologica*, XLVII (2004), 351–364; *idem*, *Struggle for Recognition*; *idem*, "Rejoinder," in Daniëlle Petherbridge (ed.), *Axel Honneth: Critical Essays: With a Reply by Axel Honneth* (Boston, 2011), 391–421; Eastmond, "Stories as Lived Experience," 254.

13 Lehtola, "Second World War"; Tuominen, "Lapin Ajanlasku: Menneisyys, Tulevaisuus Ja Jälleenrakennus Historian Reunalla," in Kivimäki and Kirsi-Marja Hytönen (eds.), *Rauhaton Rauha: Suomalaiset Ja Sodan Päättyminen 1944–1950* (Tampere, 2015), 39–70.



used personal contacts to find their way to relatives or friends; others defied the evacuation order and hid in the forests and the wilds. At the time, southeastern Finland was also under evacuation orders, creating a total of c. 590,000 displaced people within Finland.<sup>14</sup>

The existing evacuation plans proved to be deficient, largely because they anticipated the enemy to be the Soviet Union instead of Germany. The departure was quick and sudden. The evacuation order and packing instructions arrived mainly through radio, newspapers, and announcements distributed to homes and attached to walls. People could bring only what they could carry, forced to abandon all other property. Transportation was arranged by train, truck, and boat, but the traveling conditions were poor. The evacuation from Lapland took approximately two weeks.<sup>15</sup>

Following a scorched-earth policy, the withdrawing German troops systematically annihilated their military installations, as well as all civilian infrastructure and property within their reach, destroying almost the entire built environment in their wake and slaughtering 24,000 domestic animals and 24,000 reindeer in the process. After the last Germans crossed the border between Finland and Norway on April 27, 1945, evacuees immediately began to return home—the majority of them in the spring and summer 1945. With mixed feelings of sorrow and joy, they found familiar landscapes but a homeland in ruin. The returnees had to start their lives again from scratch.<sup>16</sup>

#### REFUGEES' STRUGGLE FOR RECOGNITION

*The Crossing of National Borders and the Borders of Privacy* Right after crossing the border between Finland and Sweden, the evacuees underwent a strict administrative regimen—the

14 Autti, "Environmental Trauma in the Narratives of Post-War Reconstruction," in Kivimäki and Peter Leese (eds.), *Trauma, Experience and Narrative in Europe after the Second World War* (London, 2022); Ruutti, *Naapuriin Evakkoon*; Tuominen, "Lapin Ajanlasku"; Martti Ursin, *Pohjois-Suomen Tuhot Ja Jälleenrakennus Saksalaissodan 1944–1945 Jälkeen* (Oulu, 1980), 29–32.

15 Lehtola, *Saamelainen Evakko*, 78; *idem*, "Second World War"; Autti, "Environmental Trauma."

16 Oula Seitsonen and Eerika Koskinen-Koivisto, "'Where the F... Is Vuotso?' Heritage of Second World War Forced Movement and Destruction in a Sámi Reindeer Herding Community in Finnish Lapland," *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, XXIV (2018), 421–441; Ursin, *Pohjois-Suomen Tuhot*.

registration of their personal details, delousing in lice saunas, health checks, vaccinations, and several weeks of quarantine to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. The quarantine camps were located near the Finnish border and around the sites where the evacuees were stationed. The evacuees were placed in five Swedish counties; the number of refugees could not total greater than 10 percent of the population in a single municipality. After the quarantine, most of the evacuees moved to communal accommodations in public buildings, such as schools, clubhouses, or barracks, and even henhouses. Some stayed in private households.<sup>17</sup>

The evacuees reported their reception as having been surprisingly friendly and helpful; it increased their self-esteem: “Were we after all welcome, although we were only war refugees?” Physical suffering, however, was common, especially at the beginning of the evacuation journey. The traveling conditions were inhumane: Overcrowding, cold, hunger, and filth were common companions in the cattle cars of trains, on the backs of trucks, and on ships. Children and old people often fell ill with dire results. The death of children was frequently reported in the material; in the Vilhelmina barracks camp, for example, sixteen children were buried on one wintry Sunday. The deaths of the elderly were attributed to the language barrier, nurses’ incompetence, or sheer indifference. From the viewpoint of the recognition theory, loved ones or fellow evacuees being left to die is an extreme form of physical violation, as well as a sign of disrespect in a breakdown of human and individual dignity: “You can guess what kind of care the sick old people received, when the nurse who spoke only Swedish didn’t understand them, they themselves tried to help each other. It was depressing to watch when some old people, when they fell ill, were not taken to a hospital to receive treatment, they were left to die in peace instead.”<sup>18</sup>

According to Honneth, violation becomes a moral wrong only when the victims understand it to be intentional, but people are vulnerable to indirect forms of disrespect, too. The unexpected health checks, lice saunas, and quarantines after the border crossing are examples of such indirect abuse. They heightened the feeling of being left helplessly at the mercy of others. Swedish soldiers

17 Hintikka, *Pako Lapin Sodasta*, 71.

18 Hilma Leinonen FI, 79; FII; MII.

whisked children and parents away without explanation to be washed and vaccinated regardless of resistance. Instead of a sense of security, the hygiene and health procedures caused anxiety and panic. The lice sauna felt particularly abusive. Undressing, standing naked in a queue, running between different rooms, and washing in the presence of Swedish soldiers was humiliating. The bathing disrespectfully deprived them of control and exposed their bodies to unwanted scrutiny. Some of the evacuees described it as the most terrifying experience of their entire journey, coloring their memory of the evacuation and the host country: “Anguish and outcry prevailed in these tent saunas that night. Tired children cried when they were vaccinated—women looked for clothes or their children in dark tents. Many of the old people suffered strokes, and an old man had sat down on a blazing stove and he was taken to a hospital in an ambulance.”<sup>19</sup>

The evacuees usually endured the quarantine period, isolated and under guard, for two weeks or so, but it could drag out for months. Information about other evacuees or events in the homeland did not reach the camps, and evacuees could not leave the camps without a police escort. The loss of freedom, tantamount to being in prison, was humiliating: “Law enforcement stood guard at the gate to stop Finns from getting out to the village and spreading any viruses or other germs. We were like prisoners. The threat of diphtheria haunted. If one of the villagers caught a contagious disease, Finns were to blame.”<sup>20</sup>

Since falling ill meant returning to quarantine, evacuees feared and avoided the constant health checks. Guarded patients could not have visitors without permission, and even then only through a window, glass door, or fence. The precautions felt excessive and had a negative impact on the self-respect of the evacuees despite occasional displays of compassion: “The custodian lady, who we called *mamma*, came to see us in the morning, she brought a big bag of sweets as if to children, and we truly were children, for we were helpless like little children, entirely controlled by others.”<sup>21</sup>

19 Honneth, “Recognition or Redistribution?” 48; Anderson and Honneth, “Autonomy, Vulnerability,” 135; Erkki Vuollo, *MIII*, 216.

20 *FII*.

21 Anna-Liisa Töyräs, *FI*, 30–31.

Nor did the Swedish authorities always respect the needs of the evacuees. Sometimes food, heating, and/or washing facilities could be conspicuously absent. At worst, the camp practices were actually harmful—a case in point being the provision of rotten food, accompanied by the insult that “it was good enough for Finns.” A worker in the camp kitchen reported seeing “that famous Swedish thrift. The same bowl was used for doing the dishes, mopping the floors, making sweet dough and washing kitchen towels.”<sup>22</sup>

Swedish hosts and hostesses could also abuse their authority by playing favorites with evacuees and conniving to gain personal benefit, for example by rationing already paid goods or charging for items that did not require payment. Evacuees’ ignorance of their rights left them open to violation and exploitation. Veikko Kerätär recollected that their hosts were friendly, “but sometimes it was apparent that they considered us Finns a little bit inferior. Once when the hostess of our accommodation was peeling apples for her own children, only the skins were given to us.” Furthermore, the authorities routinely prohibited the locals from arranging coffee services and clothing charities, confiscated Christmas presents, and withheld snacks from evacuee children on school occasions. Such aggravation could have profound consequences: “These kinds of things that now seem so insignificant are big issues to a small sapling, and they stay with you the whole life through.”<sup>23</sup>

*The Asymmetry of Encounters* Encounters between evacuees and locals were hardly on equal terms. The asymmetry, which reflected differences in wealth, culture, language, and social capital, hindered interaction. Moreover, the differing living standards between countries and regions were materially evident. Having endured the misery of war for many years, the hastily departed, dishevelled Finnish refugees, from broken families and communities, looked downtrodden and poverty-stricken, whereas the hosts, who had a vastly different experience, were largely unscathed. The lack of a common experiential background was an obstacle to creating relations. Unfamiliarity made some people withdraw from their environment.<sup>24</sup>

22 FII; Sonja Puikko, FIII, 232.

23 Veikko Kerätär, Mem1; Marketta Mäkihalvari, FIII, 198.

24 See also Lehtola, *Saamelainen Evakko*; *idem*, “Second World War.”

Many refugee families splintered on departure. The intention was to move people, cattle, and property from the same area to the same destination, but in practice this outcome was more the exception than the rule. Children sometimes left home earlier with friends or relatives, and young men and women often left early to drive the cattle. Even if families had departed together, they easily became separated in the crowds and chaos. Not all cases of missing older adults and children had a happy ending: “We heard that someone had lost a little boy, and soldiers were walking in a chain and calling for him. We did not know yet that he was our cousin—3–4 years old boy Teuvo. The boy was not found then, but later in the autumn he had been found dead and buried in Tornio.”<sup>25</sup>

Tuulikki Soini, who left from Pechenga at the age of fourteen, wrote in her diary that her family of eight was scattered in as many as seven different places. Two little brothers had been sent to southern Finland to their grandmother; a sister was somewhere in Sweden; her mother was in quarantine; and her father’s was nowhere to be found. The men and women, children, and elderly of the same family were frequently placed in different barracks despite their wishes. After many decades, evacuees still considered the separation of family members a terrible injustice. The further disintegration of village communities only added to the anguish and insecurity of the evacuees.<sup>26</sup>

According to Honneth, the love and care emanating from primary relations builds self-confidence and alleviates anxiety and homesickness, constituting an important precondition for adjusting to the demands of a new environment. This fundamental form of recognition is a precondition for all other forms of recognition. The disruption of the evacuees’ families and communities intensified the inherent asymmetry between the evacuees and their hosts. The absence of such safety nets weakened self-confidence and eroded agency; it often made the encounter with unfamiliarity debilitating, thereby weakening negotiations for recognition.<sup>27</sup>

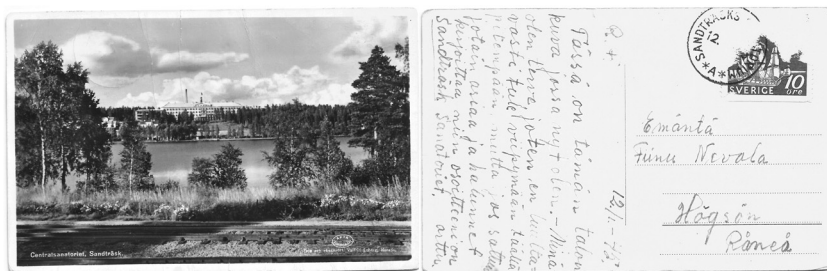
Notwithstanding the reassurance that knowledge of a relative’s whereabouts could bring, many people had to endure

25 Toivo Saunavaara, Mem2.

26 Tuulikki Soini, FIII, 16.

27 Honneth, *Struggle for Recognition*.

Fig. 1 Arttu Nevala's Postcard to His Wife



SOURCE Home archive of Risto Merkkiniemi.

lengthy periods when they had no idea where their relatives and friends were or whether they were alive. Even when the location was finally known, re-uniting was not always easy. The movements of evacuees were subject to control after quarantine, and traveling required a special pass. Contact by letter or through the mediation of authorities and other evacuees was often the only way to maintain primary relations. For instance, when Arttu Nevala learned that his wife Hiinu was in Rånåsa, he sent a postcard to inform her that he was in quarantine (see Figure 1). Olavi, a teenager at the time, had driven cattle in September 1944 across the Swedish border before being lodged in an old henhouse in Sikeå with strangers from elsewhere in Lapland. Not until November did he learn where his parents, brothers, and other relatives were. He finally was able to reach his mother and younger brother after Christmas, but his father and other brother were somewhere else.<sup>28</sup>

The evacuees' position as subjects of a rescue operation, not as independent actors, meant that they immediately forfeited their independence. This loss of agency undermined legal recognition of their abilities and general circumstances. Their complete loss of control was reflected in the passive, often brutal, expressions with which they described their situation: "We were loaded," "crammed," or "thrown from the car to the ground like barrels of herring." The Swedish army's reception of them was hierarchical, systematic, and impersonal. The evacuees were treated "like sheep" or "rounded up like reindeer" in isolated rope corrals.

28 Olavi, M1928.

They likened the manner of their feeding to that of the cows that the soldiers took to pasture for hay, or to that of little babies. The narrative of the evacuees as passive, commodity-like objects reveals a loss of agency, authority, equality, and legal standing. The comparison to animals shows a loss of human and individual dignity. Although the evacuees understood the reception practices as necessary in some official capacity, they felt that it was personally humiliating. The practices violated the norms of respect and esteem.<sup>29</sup>

The suffering caused by the health-care measures, though not intentional, was disrespectful at all levels of recognition. The evacuees washed and locked in quarantine forfeited all freedom and self-determination; they saw their treatment as an abuse of rights and human dignity. The infliction of bodily suffering and humiliation made their own needs seem worthless in the eyes of others. The authorities also removed the possibility of care in the face of these indignities by separating family members from each other, damaging both individual and collective self-esteem. The health precautions tended to disparage the people from “war-infected Finland” with their “Finnish bacilli” threatening the locals. The upshot was a detrimental cultural distinction and an interlacing of different levels of disrespect: “The sauna thing, so rudely and coarsely organized, raised a high barrier between us and the Swedes. The Swedes were hygienic and exemplary people in every way. We, by contrast, were filthy and dirty evacuees, whom Sweden could treat however they wanted.”<sup>30</sup>

The treatment of evacuees as a depersonalized, manipulable throng was inevitably reflected in encounters with locals. The experience wounded the self-esteem and self-respect of the evacuees and hampered their ability to negotiate for recognition and establish a position in the new community. Care produced shame: “Somehow it felt so bad.... We had to leave home and seek custody from strange people, eat their charity bread.” Needing the help of others was difficult for formerly active, self-sufficient people; it made them feel like children: “This is the easy life then, no need to even cook for ourselves. Just sit down at a prepared table.

29 Matti Nieminen, MI, 98.

30 Honneth, “Recognition and Moral Obligation,” *Social Research*, LXIV (1997), 26; MII; FII.

I'm not used to having it so easy." The absence of any particular bond with the place exacerbated the inequality. Hosts encountered evacuees under familiar conditions, but evacuees had to deal with new people, places, and customs that sometimes changed more than once, as well as a debilitating language barrier. Unfamiliarity had a negative effect on agency.<sup>31</sup>

The relationship of the Lapland evacuees to Sweden was at least ambivalent. The new place meant peace and material security, not just dependence on a foreign system. But a lack of property enhances the feeling of estrangement and causes shame, because aid received as a gift feels undeserved. Especially at the beginning of the evacuation journey, the aid was tantamount to charity because the evacuees had no way to reciprocate. A gift can also be a means of exercising power and a threat to equality. The shame of the evacuees reflected their inability to pay back their rescuers for their help.<sup>32</sup>

The evacuees could take only a small number of possessions on their journey, many of which were often lost along the way. When possible, property was used as leverage in negotiations for recognition, because it was a visible sign of the evacuees' worth. By the same token, a lack of property was a ready excuse for denigration. Evacuees often had no other clothes with them than the ones that they were wearing. In the destitution of war, they wore the same outfit many times, patched and soiled during the evacuation journey, causing embarrassment in front of their more prosperous hosts: "A public health nurse came here and gave the order to undress. I have never been so ashamed when she stood next to me and looked at my clothes like they were vomit. They were clean now, but so ugly. Shirt and trousers made of father's old flannel shirt and mother's old petticoat and trimmed, self-knitted garters." Welcome as the clothing from the authorities might be, it tended to produce hard feelings rather than reduce them. The resort to the old clothes of others was yet another indication of a loss of agency and unworthiness. In Armstrong's research, Karelian evacuees associated borrowed clothes with laziness, a trait

31 Einari Hihnala, MIII, 117; Anna-Liisa Töyräs, FI, 33.

32 See also Laura Huttunen, *Kotona, Maanpaossa, Matkalla: Kodin Merkitykset Maahanmuuttajien Omaelämäkertoissa* (Helsinki, 2002); Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies* (London, 1970).



much reviled in the Finnish community, and an obstacle to recognized membership in a community.<sup>33</sup>

Asymmetrical encounters were also manifest in the compassionate but condescending reception given to the evacuees. The helper/helped setting fostered prejudice toward individual evacuees and their predicament. Some hosts were surprised to discover that their guests had money or property, or wary of those with a healthy and prosperous appearance, suspicious that their plight was a ruse and their arrival in Sweden unjustified. Evacuees noticed other prejudices besides ones related to the refugee status that had a negative effect on their position. The locals questioned the cleanliness, health, and manners of the incomers. At first, some hosts did not give them forks and knives at meals, only spoons. According to Olavi, “They explained that they understood that you cannot use them. They thought that evacuees have, ha ha, come from the east.” They structured the social order by segregating Finnish refugees, thus strengthening the social cohesion of their own group to the detriment of the evacuees’ need for reciprocal recognition and admittance to the community.<sup>34</sup>

Liisa’s brother had gone to work at a nearby farm everyday. The people on the farm had grown fond of him, but they checked the brother’s hair for lice every morning nonetheless. Tuulikki Soini told of a farmer who couched his approval of evacuees working in Sweden with an insult: “Now we can have good housemaids from Finland in every house in Sweden when they are first washed and scrubbed clean.” The farmer’s words reveal his prejudices about the evacuees by confining them to servant’s work, by stating that they require washing, and by implying that they could not do this washing themselves.<sup>35</sup>

Experiences of shame indicate that recognition as care given without respect and esteem falls short. Failing to see evacuees as equals had negative effects on the self-understanding of the evacuees and their perception of belonging in the new community. Our material points out that rights are an irreplaceable basis for

33 Tuulikki Soini, FIII, 14; Karen Armstrong, *Remembering Karelia: A Family’s Story of Displacement during and after the Finnish Wars* (New York, 2004).

34 Olavi, M1928. See, for example, Natalia Moen-Larsen, “Brothers and Barbarians: Discursive Constructions of ‘Refugees’ in Russian Media,” *Acta Sociologica*, LXIII (2020), 226–241.

35 Liisa, F1929A; Tuulikki Soini, FIII, 14.

the recognition of refugees. Compassion does not compensate for a loss of autonomy; charity is not a proxy for reciprocal solidarity; and care without respect cannot redeem lost agency.

*The Means and Objectives of Negotiation* We identified the different modes of negotiation that the refugees employed to enable recognition and to build a relationship with the locals. They tried to balance the asymmetry of the encounters and to disprove the prejudices of their hosts. Negotiations could vary depending on situation and the form of recognition sought. If the refugees were with their families, for example, they did not need to build a recognition relationship based on care or love. Refugees who had become separated from their families tried to recover primary relations by searching for their relatives independently if authorities were not helpful. Anna lost track of her family after driving their cattle to Sweden. She went daily to the Öjeby station to check trains from the north, but only by chance did she learn where her mother was. Sometimes notices in newspapers about missing family members could help with searches: “We sent addresses to newspapers *Kotimaanviesti*, *Haaparanta*, etc. Little by little we did get the addresses of our relatives. And finally, after a two-month pause, I received a letter from my husband. Now afterward I cannot quite realize how it relieved my mind. He was alive after all.”<sup>36</sup>

Relying on the authorities to re-unite families was slow, if not impossible. Family reasons alone were often not enough to secure a pass to travel. The fact that some evacuees had relatively better luck obtaining a pass because of their occupation indicates that evacuees and hosts had different priorities of recognition—primary relations paramount for the evacuees and skilled labor for the hosts. Labor was successful as leverage for recovering primary relations only rarely, however. Breaking the rules was a better bet—say, fabricating a letter about a sick relative. If that ploy failed, evacuees commonly attempted to escape or to receive relatives without permission. Men who had remained in Finland to perform war duties sometimes broke protocol to visit Sweden to see evacuees. Toivo Saunavaara told of men who came to see their families without permission: “Father came suddenly with (two

36 Anna, F1930A; Rauha Niiranen FI, 10.

other men). The visit was short, however, because they had traveled without permission, and already the next day a police car drove to the yard, where (one of the men) was already sitting somberly. The policemen fetched the escapees from the inside and pushed them into the car."<sup>37</sup>

Evacuees who were separated from their primary relations often sought solace and recognition from fellow evacuees instead because of their shared experience. They also tried to establish new relations with the accommodation hosts, hostesses, and other locals. The refugee situation from war turned the primacy of primary relations described by Honneth upside down when care and friendship had to come from the community rather than family, friends, etc. In the new relations created during evacuation, the different dimensions of the recognition theory—that is, love and solidarity as well as primary and community relations—are difficult to distinguish from each other. The interviews feature numerous stories about care and aid offered by strangers, which was often a good basis for further negotiations toward recognition. In time, such care and aid could develop into a primary relation: “Our stay in Sweden was good. We received a great deal of compassion, and our relationship with them strengthened into friendship.”<sup>38</sup>

The language barrier slowed communication but did not prevent it completely. Some of the hosts were Finnish speakers, and gradually many evacuees learned Swedish, the most accomplished ones becoming interpreters. Learning the language was a means to demonstrate capability and stand out from the mass of refugees within the community and to bridge the asymmetry of encounters, thus paving the way to recognition. Work, too, was a multi-dimensional promoter of welfare and autonomy, offering both a source of income and a meaningful way to pass the time, as well as an opportunity to negotiate for legal recognition and respect and to alleviate social asymmetry. Evacuees’ labor was welcome in farming, housekeeping, and child care. The division of labor often followed the traditional peasant gender system. Women’s tasks varied from child care to housework; men were likely to work the farms and forests. Many evacuees were self-employed artisans, cobblers, or love-letter clerks (people who could write,

37 Toivo Saunavaara, Mem2.

38 MII.

often with beautiful script). Volunteer work included cooking in camp kitchens and teaching evacuee children.

Work, when available, was the principal means to retrieve and maintain lost agency and individuality. Through work and other talents, like playing music or singing, evacuees proved that they were not a mere faceless burden on the community but individually skilled contributors to it. The diligence and competence of the evacuees often evoked admiration and wonder in the locals, especially when contrasted with the negative preconceptions about them. Wages and spending money promoted economic independence, equality, and self-worth; the ability to make one's own consumer choices is a different matter from being the recipient of charity. Even without financial compensation, work was a way to reciprocate. Work and related activities familiarized the refugees with their adopted environment and helped them to develop new primary relations.

Although work was not always available—and when not properly valued or compensated, it could be degrading—it often allowed evacuees to live much as they did at home; the rustic way of life in Sweden did not differ significantly from that in Finland. The practices and values learned at home enabled continuity in otherwise exceptional conditions. When possible, the evacuees cooked recipes from home and built temporary saunas like the ones that they had left behind, which even the Swedes learned to appreciate. Maintaining the remnants of home life supported the identity of the evacuees; it helped to relieve their homesickness. Continuity and regularity encouraged feelings of belonging and strengthened reciprocal recognition. These factors decreased the feeling of estrangement and changed the impression of the refugees from passive and needy to active and capable.<sup>39</sup>

The desire for continuity was apparent also in evacuees' tendency to name camps, places, and routes after regions in Finland. Martta mentioned the Lindå camp in the Västerbotten province, which the Finns called Little-Rovaniemi, named after the capital of Lapland. Evacuees called the canteens in the camp by the names of restaurants in Rovaniemi: "We lived in barracks there, and there were canteens like Lapinmaa and Pohjanhovi, and there were streets like Koskikatu and all such things." In camp

39 Anna-Liisa Töyräs, FI 33. See also Huttunen, *Kotona, Maanpaossa, Matkalla*.

accommodations, evacuees also kept connections with home alive by emphasizing the old social hierarchy. For example, the more prosperous evacuees from the townships might let it be known that they had a higher position than others. Lice saunas, quarantines, and camp conditions broke down these social hierarchies at first, but the prejudices gradually re-emerged in social situations.<sup>40</sup>

Complaining about the situation and dissociating from the Swedes was another strategy to preserve self-esteem. Complaints did not involve direct communication with the locals so much as personal communications in-house between evacuees, primarily concerned with overcoming awkward situations. Evacuees, for example, were liable to criticize the customs, cleanliness, and peculiar food culture of the hosts. The motive was to elevate their own status at the expense of the uncouth Swedes, who had no saunas or washing rooms, whose foods were too sweet for Finnish tastes, etc.

*Crossing the Asymmetries* The lack of symmetry was most easily overcome slowly in private encounters, leisure activities, or workplaces, permitting individual evacuees to stand out from the crowd and show their strengths. At best, negotiations proceeded through recognition to new primary relations. The deepening of new relations into primary relations was evident in the use of kinship terms. For instance, the Swedes would sometimes refer to, and treat, Lapland evacuees as their own daughters or sons, and the Finns, for their part, might call their accommodation places their new village or new home. When the time came for the evacuees to return to Finland, many of their new families asked the children or youths to stay in Sweden, and some did. Veikko Kerätär, who had become friends with the people on a nearby farm, is a case in point: “The folks on the farm where I was working began to ask me not to go away, to stay here; we take you in as our own son. I would have stayed, but mother started to cry desperately that she would not leave me.”<sup>41</sup>

The friendships that developed between evacuees and locals permitted everyday social practices, visits, and other leisure activities to continue and people to integrate with the local community.

40 Martha, F1937C.

41 Veikko Kerätär, Mem1.

Leisure activities signified the resumption of a normal social life after the long years of war. Many recollections mentioned the relief that accompanied the change from war conditions to better material and social circumstances. People recalled going to movies, dances, concerts, and other events. Apparently, the St. Lucia's Day feast in December was unforgettable: "It was a pleasant time for me, wartime at home was not quite so, looking and listening to those airplanes and covering windows; evacuees from Posio were still in our small (cottage) through the winter. You really came alive when you got to Sweden."<sup>42</sup>

Friendship and communication continued after homecoming, even to the time of writing or interviewing. Maija and Erkki, reflecting on the meaning of friendship, regarded their evacuee background as one reason for the compassionate reception in their new community:

Maija: "You made friends during the evacuation time, nice and long-lasting. I was terribly grateful that I was taken into that community not as a stranger or someone to hate; I was treated like anyone else. Maybe because I was an evacuee, being away from home, was something like positive that you have to be nice to her."  
 Erkki: "And it had importance, in relation to local people."  
 Maija: "But that kind of friendship, or an atmosphere that I'm accepted to the group, which is important, of course."<sup>43</sup>

Romance—originating at gatherings of young people, at work, or at family get-togethers—also crossed social and national boundaries: "First we cried over German soldiers when we left home and now we cry over Swedes. There was also romance—there was life although there was no home." Many romances resulted in marriages and settlement in the evacuation place. Courtship, infatuation, and admiration brought joy and fun, encouraging a sense of inclusion and a glimmer of normalcy under exceptional circumstances. Cross-boundary romances left amusing anecdotes, smiles, and fond memories in their wake, though they could also arouse disapproval and jealousy. In general, however, they helped to compensate for the humiliation of lice saunas and health checks,

42 Anja, F1929B.

43 Maija (F1930B); Erkki (M1927).

and, together with love and care, influenced the refugees' feeling of recognition and promoted basic self-confidence.<sup>44</sup>

The conditions of evacuees and attitudes of hosts did not always allow asymmetry to be overcome. Evacuees did not get to remain in their first accommodation place; they constantly had to move from one place to another. Continuous movement interrupted negotiations and made it difficult to build social relations; every forced relocation meant new asymmetrical encounters and negotiations. Even in the more permanent accommodations, reaching a position of negotiation at the level of personal encounter could be difficult. Interaction with locals was scarce in large evacuation camps, remote places, and quarantine. With few opportunities to stand out individually or resist, the evacuees were subjected to local prejudice and arbitrary mistreatment from the camp management. At worst, the direct and indirect forms of disrespect experienced by the evacuees continued throughout their sojourn, preventing the start, progress, or success of negotiations. Hence, the asymmetry defined by refugee status persisted.

RECOGNITION AND THE DIFFERING EXPERIENCES OF DISPLACEMENT  
 Forced displacement is distressing, to say the least. Leaving homes, families, and communities for a foreign environment can be mentally and socially traumatic. Uncertainty, insecurity, and alienation all add to refugees' burden. These difficult experiences further complicate and challenge the refugees' encounters with their hosts. The relations between refugees and hosts in this study varied depending on the context of the encounters and personal situations. If all the preconditions were in order, the refugee journey could be favorable. Apart from security, the refugees benefited from a regular social life of their own and from all three forms of recognition. The presence of relatives—or at least information about their situation—the ability to work, and inclusion in the local community afforded them a more equal status. Active agency and support from the family and community helped evacuees to attach themselves to a place and to live comfortably in exceptional circumstances. Recognition relations maintained or created in the evacuation place alleviated the experience of refuge and unfamiliarity.

44 MII; FII.

Yet a generally good evacuation experience was possible only for a few refugees. Under ordinary conditions, war tends to flatten experience: Society concentrates and simplifies during war. Class and social background, which otherwise create differing experiences, lose some of their importance. Class and wealth differences, however, differentiated the experiences of the Finnish refugees severely. Wealthy families managed to evade cattle-car transportation, collective health-care measures, and evacuee camps because they had the wherewithal to rent an apartment in the south of Finland, drive there by car (only the most wealthy), and spend a comfortable winter where few other evacuees could go. They suffered no asymmetry in their encounters with locals.<sup>45</sup>

The forms of primary relations and communality varied between and within cultures, time periods, and contexts, as our study demonstrates. In refugee situations, when relatives were scattered, the boundaries of family and community became porous and inexact, and relations became mixed. The fundamental human need for love—recognition transmitted as care—is the most significant factor in kinship. Kinship practices, however, do not belong only to primary relations as defined in Honneth’s model. In the absence of family, refugees sought love and care from other sources. Encounters in the context of a war refuge could bypass love as the fundamental form of recognition; the first negotiations were about equal membership in the community and the kind of social viability that carried rights and respect. These recognitions served as precursors to the recognition of love and care.<sup>46</sup>

The actual process of recognition transpired between evacuees and locals, but evacuees’ personal, internal negotiations to bolster individual and collective self-respect and to cope with estrangement were just as important to their identities. The resulting nature of recognition was complicated. For example, the act by which the hosts showed compassion to the evacuees while subjecting them to charity caused a riptide of gratitude and shame. Autonomy required all forms of recognition, but the process of recognition in all its forms embodied contradictions.

45 Kivimäki, “Sodan kokemushistoria,” 83.

46 John Borneman, “Caring and Being Cared for: Displacing Marriage, Kinship, Gender and Sexuality,” *International Social Science Journal*, XLIX (1997), 573–584.



This study demonstrates the significance of being recognized and being disrespected. Injustice, denied recognition, disintegrated primary relations, or direct or indirect forms of disrespect influenced the basic elements of autonomy, such as physical integrity. They also influenced cultural self-understanding, which had to confront Swedish prejudices. Experiences of disrespect were breaches of normative expectation largely derived from the context of war refuge and refugee status. De Beauvoir states that actions in a time of crisis should be distinguished from actions in a time of stability. The crisis situation, however, does not explain all the disrespect experienced by refugees; Swedes harbored prejudices about Finns before they were refugees. Despite instability, the motives of individuals and communities are attached to earlier experiences and events and their future horizons. De Beauvoir does not point to the deed alone but also to the situation—communal or historical circumstances as well as the historical community as a structural factor per se.<sup>47</sup>

When violence is seen as the main progenitor of wartime subjectivity, agency, and social process and as the sole determinant of thought and action, the analytical eye focuses only on how people survive it. For Lapland evacuees, the flight from war meant violence, loss, and violation to be sure, but the departure was also a great adventure, especially for children and young people. Evacuation enabled new social relations and forms of agency, which portended a permanent effect on subsequent activity. The traces of the evacuation time that the narrators described in this study are redolent of recognition relations that often convey a feeling of gaining another home. Sometimes new family relations persisted through the rest of life and friendships into the next generations. Even if contact and communication had ended, however, the recognition obtained during evacuation time could still sustain and support. The evacuation experience discussed herein, which opened the Finns to the nature of Swedish society, resonates with the greatest migration in Finnish history during the 1960s when hundreds of thousands of Finns migrated to Sweden mostly for industrial work. Even the migrants from Lapland, where structural change had caused mass unemployment, were able to to move

47 Simone de Beauvoir, *Moniselitteisyyden Etiikka* (Helsinki, 2011; orig. pub., in French, Paris, 1947), 23–24.

more easily to a foreign country which had a personal or family history of hospitality and a language that was not totally foreign.<sup>48</sup>

The narratives of wartime are selective, changing, and unfinished. They are also pathways to personal history and other people's experiences. The struggle between remembering and forgetting has social and cultural significance, because community defines the circumstances and events that are worth remembering. In our data, the timespan between the events and expressions varies from fifteen to seventy years. The temporal distance further shapes the memories and narratives. Collective reminiscences, written memoirs, and discussions of the Lapland War and its mass evacuation in media have produced a certain way of remembering, in which all our informants participated in one way or another. They had to decide which recollections were suitable for the collective narrative and which were not. The modes of remembering are constructed socially; they influence what we want or can remember about the evacuation, and what remains obscure. The interviewees felt safe reminiscing about the humiliating lice saunas, for example, because they shared the experience with many others at the time and because the lice saunas belong essentially to the model narrative of the Finns evacuated to Sweden.<sup>49</sup>

Another central component in the model narrative is the Finns' gratitude to Sweden for receiving refugees and offering them security. Gradually gratitude began to work as the currency of reciprocal recognition, a means for the evacuees to give a gift in return to the Swedes. This kind of collective gratitude easily hides unpleasant events. For example, some people refused to be interviewed at all because they did not want to talk about uncomfortable memories, and some people contacted us after their interview to talk about sexual harassment or violence that they had been reluctant to mention earlier. These unpleasant themes did not fit with their initial or the collective evacuation narrative based on gratitude. Individual expressions draw from collective memory but also deviate from it to challenge it.<sup>50</sup>

48 Stephen Lubkemann, *Culture in Chaos: An Anthropology of the Social Condition in War* (Chicago, 2010).

49 For collective memory, see James V. Wertsch and Henry L. Roediger, "Collective Memory: Conceptual Foundations and Theoretical Approaches," *Memory*, XVI (2008), 318–326.

50 Eastmond, "Stories as Lived Experience."

Our informants described dramatic events and changes in their physical, cultural, and social environment. Their narratives can help to illuminate the radical disruptions in the lives of displaced people and their struggles to cope and make sense. Narratives and narrating itself can be a means for individuals and communities to create continuity and coherence in their life histories and identities. Although contemporary refugees are often in the middle of their unfinished story, narratives can help refugees in the past and present comprehend uncertainties, find ways forward, and give meaning to their predicaments. They can support individual and collective self-esteem, especially as framed within a shared survival story. Most of the written evacuation narratives in our study end in optimism, highlighting the persistence of the people in Lapland, and look to the future: “Lapland rising from the ashes” has already developed into an idiomatic expression. Unpleasant memories made cracks in the image of the evacuation journey as a survival story, but narratives of experienced disrespect can be a way to elicit justice. Refugee narratives can create a sense of belonging and promote self-affirmation in the face of the demeaning and stereotypical images of receiving societies. Above all, narratives can depict refugees not merely as helpless victims but also as people with voice and agency. Narratives are attempts to bring recognition to individual and shared memories.<sup>51</sup>

The use of the recognition theory in material about war refugees demonstrates the theory’s explanatory power in a situation when everyday life and recognition relations have collapsed, and people have to create new recognition relations in all three forms from different sources. The perseverance and creativity of the Finns as they worked toward this goal reveals the importance of recognition. How people can become seen and loved, how they can earn rights and respect, and how they can each evolve into contributing members of a community are much in evidence among the evacuees of the Lapland War.

51 *Ibid.*

