

GROWING CAPACITY FOR REFUGEE WELCOME: CULTURE, STORIES, AND DISCOURSE

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Digital Storytelling as a Method for Critical Dialogue on Refugees in Canada

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INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND



RESULTS

RESEARCH PROCESS

CONCLUSION



- Worn Words: multimedia materials for community education
- unpacking the ‘my’ in my research

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

Challenging dynamics:

- Devaluation of human rights framework
- Ineffectiveness of appeals to shame
- Polarization and distrust of digital media

REFUGEES MAKE NEW PLEA

New York Times (1923-Current file); Jun 12, 1939;

ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Times (1851 - 2007)

pg. 6

REFUGEES MAKE NEW PLEA

**907 on Liner Ask Chamberlain
for Asylum in Britain**

**"In the name of humanity, open
the gates of Cuba to these innocent
victims."**

907 German Jewish refugees barred
from landing in Cuba.

The message was said to have
described the refugees' position as
"desperate," explaining it was im-
possible for them to return to Ham-
burg.

- 1939 – MS St. Louis

The 1951 Refugee Convention



© UN Archives

The 1951 Refugee Convention is the key legal document that forms the basis of our work. Ratified by 145 State parties, it defines the term 'refugee' and outlines the rights of the displaced, as well as the legal obligations of States to protect them.

The core principle is non-refoulement, which asserts that a refugee should not be returned to a country where they face serious threats to their life or freedom. This is now considered a rule of customary international law.

UNHCR serves as the 'guardian' of the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol. According to the legislation, States are expected to cooperate with us in ensuring that the rights of refugees are respected and protected.

[Read the Refugee Convention](#)

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COMPLEX GLOBAL CONTEXT

In popular media, refugee rights intertwined with:

- discourses of terrorism, securitization, illegality
- issues of smuggling, climate change, detention, racism

10 February 2011

- 2010 MV Sun Sea

Rights advocates decry detention of refugee claimants from MV Sun Sea

CBSA directive on Tamil migrants: Detain, detain, detain

CHAD SKELTON Updated: August 4, 2011

Queue-jumpers, terrorists, breeders: representations of Tamil migrants in Canadian popular media

Article in *South Asian Diaspora* 5(1):139-157 · March 2013 with 43 Reads

DOI: [10.1080/19438192.2013.722386](https://doi.org/10.1080/19438192.2013.722386)

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

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How do we adjust our communication to be persuasive amidst this complexity?

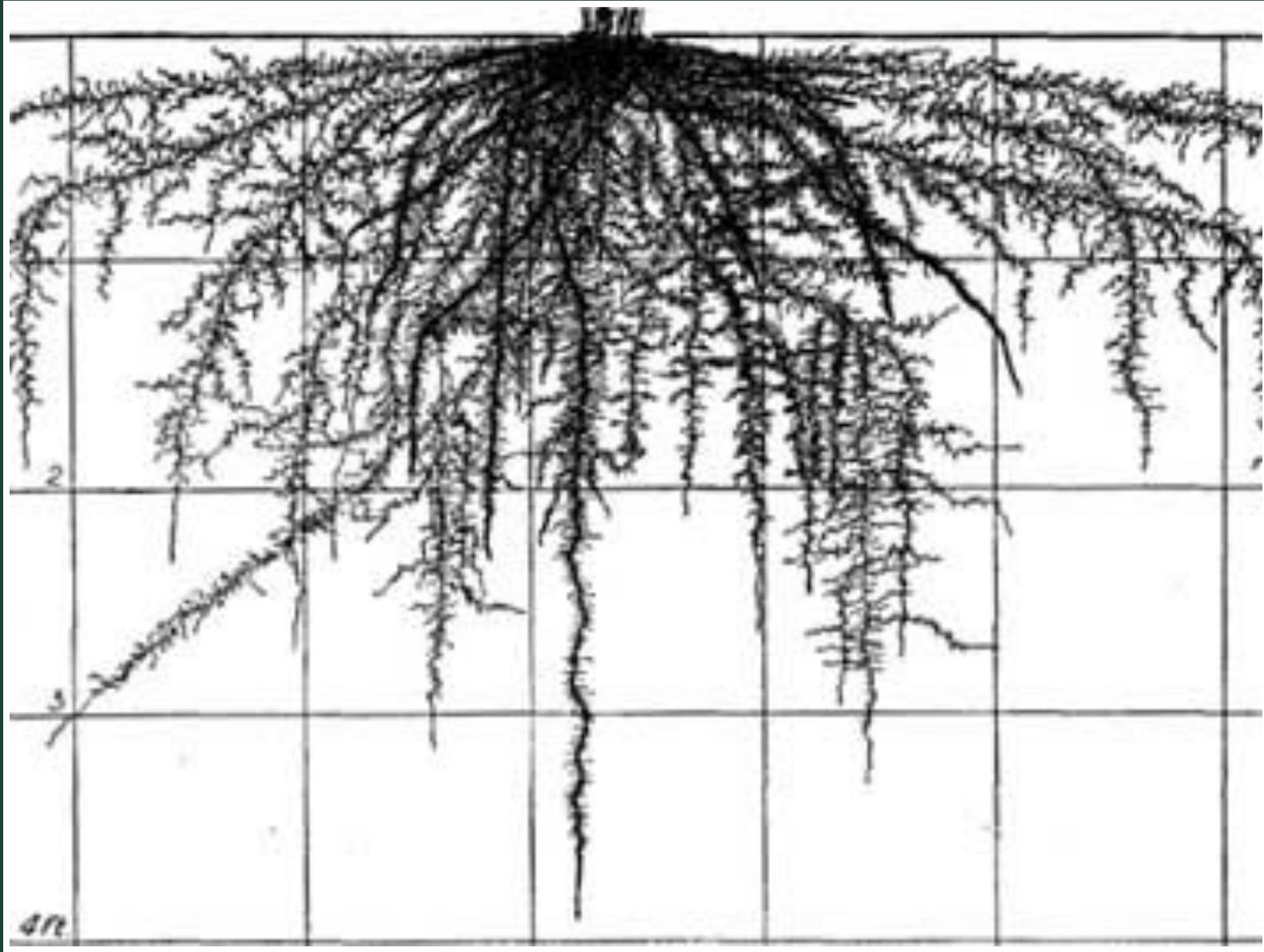
[Anat Shenker Osorio “Changing the Conversation about Refugees”]

STORYTELLING

Stories as cultural formation

Self-reflective storytelling

Storytelling from our roots



Storied roots of refugee welcome

worn words

refugee, welcome, border
security, trauma,
humanitarian, etc...

W *Borders*



Drawing on storied root system

- Break out of narrative patterns
- Cultivate a culture of listening
- Acknowledge complexity
- Embed digital media in already existing communities



- inviting people into a transformative process
- nurturing a sustaining community of refugee welcome
- cultivating a culture of curiosity and listening

THANK YOU

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