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Bridging the Gap Between Imagined and Plausible Futures for Refugees: What Students Wish Their Teachers Knew

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There is a gap between the futures that refugee young people imagine will be possible through their education and the plausible futures in exile, where opportunities are truncated by social, economic, and political exclusions. Our study examines how education can narrow this gap. Through interviews with Syrian students in Lebanon, we document fixed and malleable elements of education that refugee students identify as bridging their current education and their futures. Students experience the structures and content of schooling in Lebanon as both exclusionary and immutable, yet their teachers use what we call relational pedagogies rooted in predictability, explaining, fairness, and care to support students' learning and navigation toward future opportunities. While our research focuses on refugees, it has conceptual implications for educators and school systems in other settings where teachers support their marginalized students to make sense of disconnects between what they imagine is possible through school and their future opportunities.

Keywords: *comparative education, immigration/immigrants, in-depth interviewing, pedagogy, qualitative research, refugee education, teacher education/development*

Introduction

Globally, 68 percent of refugees have access to primary school and 37 percent to secondary school, rates that are deeply insufficient but, importantly, growing (Dupuy et al., 2022; UNHCR, 2022). Refugee young people experience this education in contexts of extreme uncertainty. They face "unknowable futures" (Dryden-Peterson, 2017), particularly circumscribed by geographic limits on where these futures might be. Indeed, 75 percent of refugees seek exile in low- and middle-income countries (UNHCR, 2023), kept out of many high-income countries through policies and walls. Additionally, with conflicts lasting on average between 10 and 20 years (Devictor & Do, 2017), they know that returning to their countries of origin is nearly impossible in the short term and improbable in their educational and early working lifespans. Reflecting the protracted nature of displacement, refugee young people now generally enroll in schools within national education systems; refugees' enrollment in national schools may seem commonplace from within the United States, yet until recently the vast majority of refugees globally were segregated in separate schools for refugees (Dryden-Peterson, 2016). Currently, in the national schools they attend, refugee young people are typically taught as if the opportunities that are presumed to follow from a national education can accrue to them, and refugee young people imagine these opportunities will follow (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2019).

The opportunities refugee young people imagine mirror the opportunities other young people globally seek. They seek opportunities that are short term *and* long term, small and large. They wish to pass their end-of-year exams and proceed to the next level of school. They wish to go to university and become vets and engineers and teachers. They wish to build relationships with peers and feel happy and

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secure. They wish to contribute to their communities, both to their conflict-affected homes and to the places they find themselves at that moment. Yet these opportunities that refugee young people imagine will follow from their education are often more limited than for others, truncated by social, economic, and political structures. They are frequently unwelcome in their places of exile, almost always noncitizens without the possibility of becoming citizens, experience constant fears that their refugee status will be taken away, and face severe limitations on access to higher education and the rights to work, own property, and be contributing members of society (Ginn et al., 2022; Zetter & Ruaudel, 2016). In other words, there is a gap between the futures refugee young people imagine will be possible through their education and the plausible futures in their settings of exile. How can education for refugees narrow the gap between the opportunities refugee young people imagine and those that are plausible in these settings of extreme marginalization?

Our study takes up this question and focuses on ways in which education for refugees *can* narrow this gap between refugee young people's imagined and plausible futures. We focus on learning from Syrian students about the elements of education they identify to be most essential in navigating their current situations in Lebanon and planning for and creating the very futures they imagine and aspire toward. For the larger project of which this analysis forms part, we collected data in three schools in Beirut, Lebanon, and its suburbs (two public schools and one private school). Our methods included in-depth interviews, classroom observations, 9 months of school-based participant observations, and an in-class writing prompt. In this analysis, we focus on in-depth interviews with Syrian grade 9 refugee students at the two public schools, conducted in the 2018–2019 school year at three moments in time ($n = 12$ students, $n = 36$ interviews). We document four elements that refugee students identify as acting on the connections between their current education and their futures: structures of schooling, content of curricula, pedagogies, and relationships. We learn from students *how* their teachers' actions on these elements supported them in navigating current education and preparing for their futures. Overall, we find that students experience the structures and content of schooling in Lebanon as quite immutable; yet their teachers use what we call relational pedagogies, rooted in predictability, explaining, fairness, and care to support their refugee students' learning and navigation of the fixed structures and content of schooling that they experience as exclusionary and limiting.

In our analysis, we make three interrelated contributions to the literature on refugee education, with implications for the education of other children who also experience mismatches between their inclusion in education and their ongoing structural marginalization. Conceptually, we establish the value of orientations to refugee education that are defined less by the *future geographies* that hosting states and multilateral institutions anticipate for students (where students will be in the future) and more by the desired *future opportunities* young people want (what students seek to do in the future—economically, socially, and civically). Methodologically, we focus on educational approaches that students describe *do* support them in building capacities to imagine and create these desired futures through education. Much of what we found in our research joins a growing body of critical work that documents how schools and teachers fail refugees (e.g., Crul et al., 2019; Mendenhall et al., 2018). Yet, in our commitment to research that is oriented toward action and justice, we focus on the types of pedagogies and relationships that students described as productive in supporting them in bridging the gaps between their imagined and plausible futures. Empirically, and related, our findings point to instructional practices related to pedagogy and relationship-building that are immediately relevant to education actors, particularly teachers, as they make decisions in the present about education that can best prepare their refugee students for opportunities in the future.

The article is organized as follows. We begin by outlining a conceptual framework that argues for a shift in the framing of refugees' futures from one centered on geography to one centered on opportunity. We then conceptually explore the role of education in that shift by examining ways in which students are looking to shrink the distance between their imagined and plausible futures and ways teacher practices might support them. We then outline our methods, including contextual background on refugee education in Lebanon and description of our processes of data collection and analysis. We analyze and present data on educational elements that students identified as connected to their futures—structures, content, pedagogies, and relationships—with a focus on how relational pedagogies, in particular, support them in creating futures. Finally, we analyze these elements in light of the gaps between refugees' imagined and plausible futures. We argue that teachers can use certain pedagogical practices and approaches to relationship-building that support their refugee students in navigating structures and content of schooling that they experience as fixed, exclusionary, and limiting toward the creation of future opportunities.

Conceptual Framework

From Geography to Opportunity

Refugee young people build their futures in contexts of extreme uncertainty. Some of this uncertainty is geographic, in terms of where that future will be. For example, a Syrian student in Grade 9 in Lebanon wonders whether to anticipate their near-term and/or long-term future in Syria, in Lebanon, or somewhere else entirely, like Germany or Canada. Both global and national refugee policies are generally based on these quite static geographic conceptions of refugees' futures: return to the country of origin, local integration in

the country of asylum, or resettlement to a distant country (Betts & Collier, 2017; UNHCR, 2021).

Persistent challenges arise for refugee young people related to these geographic uncertainties and conceptions of futures as they navigate their educations. Rhetoric abounds on the ways in which education can prepare young people for transnational and borderless futures. For all but the most affluent, however, the content of what children learn and the relationships they build in schools are integrally connected to the country in which they learn. In an analysis of 576 recent textbooks from 78 countries, for example, Lerch et al. found that textbooks continue to center on nationalist narratives and are oriented toward creating national citizens (2017). Language of instruction policies that emphasize languages that in theory enable national and global participation—colonial languages such as English—dominate in refugee-hosting countries. Yet the possible benefits of that learning in terms of expanding the geography of future opportunities are out of reach, especially for poor children including refugees. They are also submerged in languages they do not understand at school, making any learning challenging (e.g., Reddick & Dryden-Peterson, 2021).

Refugee young people encounter a tension between the state-centric emphasis of learning in schools globally and the geographic uncertainty of their futures. They struggle to determine what kind of education might best meet the needs of their imagined futures. Refugee young people often reconcile this tension by investing in a future that is less bounded. This type of future might be "a future of transnationalism" (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2019) but it also might be quite geographically static even if in an as-yet-unknown place. We propose that refugee young people seek to "unbound" the limitations imposed on them by their positions as refugees in certain geographies from the opportunities they seek to create through education. In the context of the United States, a similar tension between the education young people think they are getting and the kinds of opportunities that follow has been described as "cruel optimism" (Bartlett et al., 2018) and "false hope" (Duncan-Andrade, 2009). How might refugee education support young people in reconciling this tension?

Students Navigating Imagined and Plausible Futures Through Education

A key process that refugee young people engage in through their education is to try to shrink the distance between their imagined and plausible futures. Poole and Riggan (2020) argue that Eritrean refugee youth in Ethiopia combat "teleological time" that exerts violence on their educational aspirations with "prophetic time" as a way to create other futures. Bonet (2022) and Aden (2023b) show that refugees often view resettlement—a pathway to permanent residence and citizenship in a typically faraway country—as the only way to bridge the gap between their aspirations and the structural barriers they experience in their education in Egypt and Kenya respectively. Chopra and Dryden-Peterson show that while Syrian young people in Lebanon think education will enable them to forge economic, civic, and social belonging in Lebanon, restrictions on their rights to work, to legally remain in the country, and to participate make these aspirations largely unrealizable (Chopra & Dryden-Peterson, 2020). Brun and Shuayb (2020) describe the education that has been created for Syrians in Lebanon as "futureless education."

Learning from Syrian young people in Lebanon, we explore how education might instead support the bridging of gaps between their imagined and plausible futures. We use the term "imagined futures" to describe young people's hopes and goals for the long-term (see also Chopra, 2018; Dryden-Peterson, 2022; Shuayb, 2014; Vigh, 2009). We draw on Benedict Anderson's idea of "imagined communities" (Anderson, 1983) to invoke the aspired-for yet intangible status of "imagined futures." These may be educational and professional goals, as well as personal goals for the kinds of parents and civic actors they seek to become. Imagined futures are not yet within reach but instead strived for, and they contain some uncertainty around the definite and tangible steps in the present that could indeed lead to the realization of that imagined future (for more on the role of education in navigating uncertainty, see Vavrus, 2021).

"Plausible futures" are a set of future possibilities for the shorter term, those that are realistic and manageable while often constrained by social, economic, and political structures. In Lebanon, for example, Kelcey and Chatila (2020) argue that the ways refugees have been included in the public education system, through a second shift, has reinforced existing inequities of these structures. Plausible futures are shaped by these contexts. They are futures for which young people take concrete actions, even if they are small steps, in their daily lives and school learning and that influence the decisions they make in the present. In the naming of this kind of future as "plausible," we draw on new language in climate change research that seeks to trace likely future outcomes of remaining on a status quo trajectory (e.g., Moyer & Hedden, 2020).

The classifications of "imagined" and "plausible" do not seek to hierarchically organize or evaluate these types of futures. Instead, as we learn from students, both imagined and plausible futures exist simultaneously. Importantly, they are often misaligned for refugees. We argue that a central role of refugee education is to support students in bringing their imagined and plausible futures into better alignment, not by working for the lowest common denominator of the plausible future but instead by expanding opportunities for the realization of the more expansive imagined futures.

The concept of "navigational capacities" (Swartz, 2021) is useful in understanding how refugee young people might bridge this distance. In a study of the experiences of child

soldiers in Guinea-Bissau, Vigh documents the importance of these navigational capacities for young people aspiring toward certain goals while constrained by their environments. Young people need to learn not only that they must navigate but *how* to navigate, which includes engaging in "complex political praxis of moving toward a goal while at the same time being moved by a sociopolitical environment" (Vigh, 2006, p. 236).

Support for Students Navigating Imagined and Plausible Futures Through Education

Refugee young people identify elements of education that they must navigate as they seek to build their futures, unknowable as they are, within the constraints of their sociopolitical environments in exile. We focus on elements they describe supporting their efforts to shift from futures oriented around geography to futures oriented around opportunity. In our analysis, we explore four elements students identify, including structures, content, pedagogies, and relationships.

Structures include the ways in which education is organized. In Lebanon, the structures of refugee education are defined by inclusion in the national system, including access to Lebanese schools and certification, a possible mechanism for creating future opportunities. At the same time, the model of refugee education in Lebanon is one of "temporal segregation" (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2019). Lebanese students attend school in the morning and Syrian students in the afternoon, during what is called the "second shift." The teachers are Lebanese and work on a contractual basis; in a few cases, the teachers in the morning and afternoon shifts at a school may be the same (for more on how this model developed, see Akar & van Ommering, 2018; Brun & Shuayb, 2020). In the 2017–2018 school year, the year before our study, this model meant paying for an additional 12,251 teacher salaries within a national education that was already struggling (Lebanon Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2018), with unpredictable, despite promised, funding from international donors (Geha & Talhouk, 2018) and with corruption in the ways education aid was spent (Shuayb, 2020). Public education has not been available for all Syrians, and some attend nonformal education programs (Abu-Amsha & Armstrong, 2018; Greaves et al., 2021; Karam et al., 2016).

Content includes whatever topics the formal curriculum covers (and does not cover) and the mandated language(s) of learning. The languages of instruction, and examination, in Lebanon are predominantly English or French, with Arabic used in Arabic language classes (Bahous et al., 2011; for more on language dilemmas among Syrian refugees in Lebanon, see Chopra et al., 2023). The formal curriculum is tightly scripted in Lebanon, particularly in the grade 9 year that culminates in the Brevet high-stakes exam, which determines entry to secondary school. Flexibility to adapt what refugee students learn to their experiences in Lebanon or to what they think they might need for their futures is limited. It is shaped by internal divisions around what should be taught in schools, particularly as related to civics and connected to social cohesion (Shuayb, 2016). School history covers only up to Lebanese Independence from French control in 1943, and teachers face risks to their jobs if they expand the boundaries of what they teach (Akar, 2016). What Syrian students learn in school in Lebanon takes place in the context of a long history of education of Palestinian refugees (Shuayb, 2014); it is also interrelated with conflict in multiple ways (see van Ommering, 2015), including the legacies of Lebanon's civil war (1975–1990), conflict between Lebanon and Syria, and the presence of Syrian troops in Lebanon until 2005 (for more on historical and contemporary interrelationships among education and conflict in Lebanon, see Abu El-Haj et al., 2018).

Pedagogies describe the ways that teachers teach and the theories and values behind these approaches (e.g., Alexander, 2001; Schweisfurth et al., 2020). As Abu El-Haj (2023) argues related to Lebanon, pedagogies are shaped by teachers' roles as mediators between the state and their students while teachers are also being shaped by the state, echoing findings from other contexts (Lopes Cardozo & Shah, 2016; Riggan, 2016). Pedagogies are also shaped by relationships, interactions among teachers and students, and the meaning they each make of these interactions. While the structures and content of education for Syrian refugees in Lebanon are limiting as young people seek to connect their imagined and plausible futures, we document how some relational pedagogies used by teachers do support young people in navigating the gaps between these futures. Students describe essential components of these relational pedagogies as predictability, explaining, fairness, and care; and in our analysis of these components and how they are interconnected, we draw on several bodies of research.

Students' experiences of care in education are inextricably linked to feelings of belonging and to practices of learning that enable them to engage in thinking and action to counter oppression (e.g., Bajaj et al., 2023; Love & Muhammad, 2020), which are essential in bridging gaps between imagined and plausible futures. There are many ways students experience this care in classrooms, including by feeling connected to their teachers (Oliveira, 2021; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2008) and experiencing empowerment *and* academic success (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Predictability, often mistaken for the status quo or a lack of uncertainty, is often a reflection of students seeking to know who and what they can count on in the face of constraints, including as they encounter education that does not meet their expectations or aspirations (Vavrus, 2021). Culturally sustaining pedagogies and sociopolitically relevant pedagogy (Bajaj et al., 2017; Paris & Alim, 2014) emphasize the

importance of approaches that explicitly address for what purposes and for what outcomes?, as connected to what teaching and learning includes and how it takes place. We argue that practices of explaining and fairness, as they are described by our participants, are ways both teachers and students constantly return to these questions. In this way, explaining and fairness are not only core components of teaching and learning processes but critical commitments to the transformative potential of refugee education.

These relational pedagogies have been markedly absent from the increasingly common situations in which refugees are included in national education systems (for example, see Brun & Shuayb, 2023; Dryden-Peterson, 2022; Morrice & Salem, 2023; Reddick, 2023). They are more readily observed in nonformal and refugee-led schools globally (Aden, 2023a; Dryden-Peterson, 2006; Malkki, 1995), especially when teachers and students share identities as, for example, Syrian students taught by Syrian teachers in nonformal schools in Lebanon (Adelman, 2019; Greaves et al., 2021). We hope our work can contribute to needed research that seeks to explore what these pedagogies are, how teachers might learn them, and the institutional conditions and enabling policies that are needed to support them (Bajaj et al., 2023; Salem & Dryden-Peterson, 2022).

Research Design and Methods

This study took place during the 2018–2019 school year. At that time, there were almost one million Syrian refugees in Lebanon; one in six people in Lebanon was a refugee, such that Lebanon hosted the largest number of refugees globally relative to its national population (UNHCR, 2019). Our study predated the 2019 financial crisis and economic collapse, the rampant inflation that has followed, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the deadly 2020 Beirut port explosion, all of which have massively increased poverty and suffering and resulted in many schools in Lebanon being closed most of the years since our data collection.

We are a team of researchers who bring multiple disciplinary and identity backgrounds to this research. We have trained and worked in the fields of education, political science, sociology, and anthropology. Two researchers have lifetime experiences growing up, being educated, and working in Lebanon; two have these experiences outside Lebanon, one in the Global North and one in the Global South. We shared some experiences with our participants, some of us as teachers and all of us as students who experienced uneven power structures at school and often curriculum—both formal and informal—that did not represent us and served to marginalize. At the same time, none of us have experiences of forced migration.

We created this research team purposefully, bringing together multiple perspectives and experiences and working together in ways that enable us to question each other's assumptions and interpretations through all stages of work, from research design to data collection to writing for academic publications and sharing with participants and other public audiences. During the research, we were within physical proximity to the schools and experiences of the students who participated in our research. We lived side-by-side with them but enjoyed privileges, rights, and mobility that were not possible for them and their families; some of us had our own experiences of discrimination and structural biases that the Lebanese political system places. We designed the methods for this research bearing in mind the need for experiences of young people to shape the goals and processes of research itself and, ultimately, of education practice and policy.

We focused on grade 9 because it represents the last stage at which most refugees have access to free, basic public schooling in Lebanon. The end of grade 9 includes the high-stakes Brevet examination, which determines access to secondary school or onward pathways should students decide to leave school and pursue vocational education, workforce participation, or other life decisions (e.g., marriage, particularly for females).

We conducted a series of three interviews with six grade 9 students at each of the two schools ($n = 12$ students, 36 interviews). In the first interview, we focused on participants' educational history and key moments of decision-making, including their experiences of displacement, migration, and onward mobility, and their most and least favorite teachers and friends in the different schools they had attended in Syria and Lebanon. In the second interview, we focused on relationships of support/constraint that enabled participants to continue their learning or not, how these relationships came to be, where these individuals are located currently, and their role, if any, in shaping education and migration decision-making. In the third interview, we focused on identity, sense of belonging, and future aspirations, including through an identity mapping exercise (adapted from the work of Sirin & Fine [2007], with Muslim American youth, and the work of Chopra [2018], with Syrian youth in Lebanon). Classroom observations ($n = 101$) and 9 months of participant observations in the two schools were important to the interviews as they supported our building relationships with students, routinizing our presence in classrooms, and enabled us to reference and probe about particular classroom instances in our interviews. We do not analyze the observation data here; for the purposes of this analysis, our focus is what students wish their teachers knew and thus on students' description and meaning making of their classroom experiences and their teachers' practices from the interviews.

We transcribed all of the interviews, with a process of simultaneous Arabic to English translation. We engaged in collaborative analysis as a team, through weekly data discussion meetings and through writing of profiles

and coding. For each student participant, we engaged in a process of analyzing the transcripts to write an analytic profile. This process allowed us to engage in within-case analysis, with each participant as a case. We wrote profiles that addressed themes of educational experiences in Syria and Lebanon; salient differences participants experienced and observed in the curricula of the two countries; relationships with teachers and peers in Syria and Lebanon; experiences of life in Lebanon; relationships that have enabled success/persistence in school; other academic and social supports; visions of the future; and imagined migration trajectories/aspirations. We also focused on specific ideas that students wanted their teachers to know about preparing them for the future. For cross-case analysis, across all student participants, we identified themes from across the profiles that students described as important in connecting their education to their futures, with a focus on the role of their teachers in activating the futures that our participants desire. We wrote analytic memos on these four elements—structure, content, pedagogy, and relationships—with data from all student participants.

Findings

Connecting Imagined and Plausible Futures: Future Geographies and Future Opportunities

All of the students describe geography when speaking about their futures. In general, the geographies that students imagine for themselves fall into the three categories long defined by UNHCR: return to Syria, onward migration/resettlement, and remaining in Lebanon. Many of the students talk about these futures all mingled together, almost as options. Yet without exception, they also describe each of them with uncertainty, each of them contingent upon a set of factors that they have no control over and don't know how to predict, each of them embodying a gap between plausible and imagined geographies.

Amal's family is considering returning to Syria the summer after her Brevet exam. On the one hand, Amal believes, "It is better to continue my education in Syria and go back to my country." But simultaneously, she is reluctant to sever her relationships in Lebanon: "There are a lot of people whom I befriended here. It's hard to leave them, but at the same time I don't want to stay here, because in the end I have my country. My country is still good. I can go back. So, I'm torn between these two things." Amal, though, is equally exhausted with the continual change, of not knowing what future is plausible or imagined, which she sees as necessitating "demolishing and building memories." Echoing the sense of uprootedness and disruption in her life and that might accompany the move back to Syria, she elaborates: "After I demolished my memories in Syria and came here, and am building them, now I'm going to demolish them, leave them and rebuild in Syria. This is a drastic change in my life. It's hard for me to do . . . I would prefer to stay here. I've had enough of building memories. It's better to stay." Mira similarly wishes to return to Syria, but she recognized the fleeting nature—lack of plausibility—of that hope and thus imagines an even less certain future geography. When drawing herself 10 years from now in the identity mapping activity that was part of our third interview with her, Mira drew a flag to represent being in some place, but not any particular flag because she did not know where it would be. She said, "I drew it in black because I didn't know which flag it would be." There are few, if any, concrete actions students take, or wish their teachers would take, to transform their imagined future geographies into plausible future geographies.

Connecting their futures to opportunities, on the other hand, students are more detailed about the ways—the incremental steps—in which they work to transform the future opportunities they imagine into plausible future opportunities. For example, Nayla's immediate, plausible future goal is to pass the Brevet exam, a goal that motivates her for it is one in a series of stepping stones to get to her imagined future of being an actor, of "getting closer to my dream": "I'm mostly excited that when I finish this stage [grade 9 Brevet], I'll only have two years until I go to the acting center. . . . I started feeling like I'm going to have a new experience that I'll live for the first time." Mujahed also holds an imagined future that involves a specific career, in his case to be an engineer or an architect. To make this future seem more plausible, he has actively sought advice from his current math teacher about ways to achieve this goal. In addition, he has also stayed in touch over WhatsApp with his grade 6 teacher in Syria, who herself also studied to be an architect. He asked her the requirements to become an architect in the future, regardless of geography: "She tells me that I should draw and that I should have a keen eye for drawing."

Importantly, students describe *processes* by which they work in the present to try to eventually create and realize these future opportunities. In our analysis of the structures, content, pedagogies, and relationships of refugee education, we found that students divided them into two categories as connected to their futures. Structures and content, as defined in the conceptual framework, were *fixed elements*, which for students seemed unchangeable and standing in the way of links between their imagined and plausible futures. Pedagogies and relationships, also as defined in the conceptual framework, were *malleable elements*, which teachers and students could shift, even if in small ways, to narrow the gaps between imagined and plausible futures. We identify four components of these relational pedagogies that students describe teachers using in ways that support this process, related to predictability, explaining, fairness, and care.

We show the interrelationships among these elements in Figure 1, including the fixed elements in dark gray and the

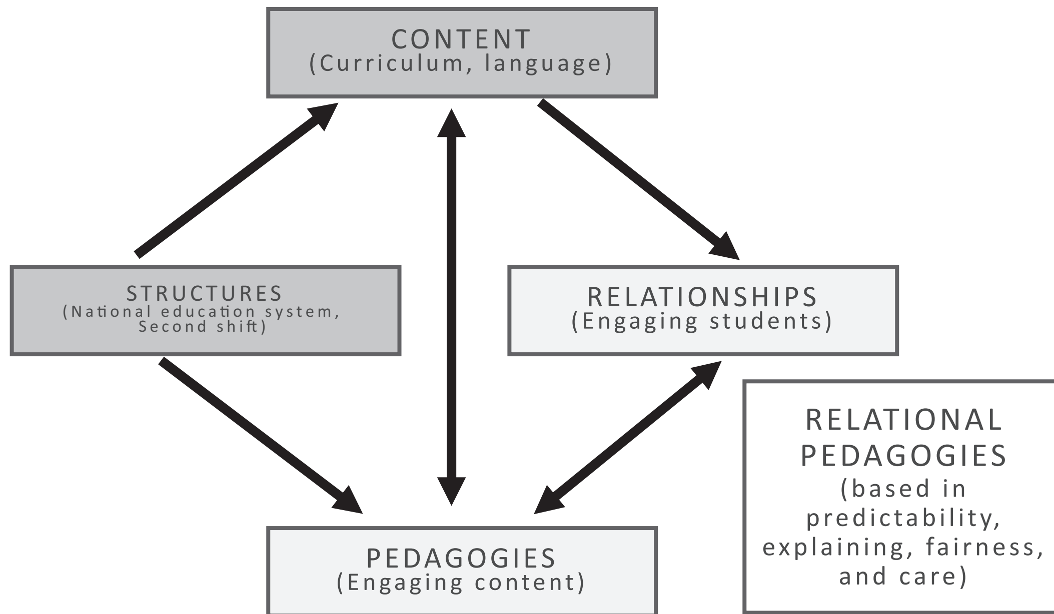

FIGURE 1. *Narrowing the gap between imagined and plausible futures: teachers support students to navigate fixed elements of education (structures and content) through malleable elements (pedagogies and relationships).*
Note. Dark gray indicates educational elements that students view as fixed; light gray indicates educational elements that students experience as malleable; and clear indicates relational pedagogies that support students in narrowing the gap between imagined and plausible futures.

malleable elements in light gray. We learn from students that the structures of refugee education in Lebanon, in particular the second-shift approach, shape the content to which they have access in the form of what curriculum and what language. These structures also shape the kinds of pedagogies teachers use or avoid, informed by their positions as Lebanese nationals and by the need to support their students in catching up in a new and unfamiliar education system in order to be successful. Both content and pedagogy work together to, at times, create conditions for the development of relational pedagogies through which teachers support students to make sense of their current situations and how to connect their presents to the futures they seek to create through education.

Fixed Elements: Structures and Content That Disconnect Imagined and Plausible Futures

Structures. Amin used the phrase "being behind" to describe how he felt as a refugee student studying in Lebanon. In one way, this idea of "behind" reflects the structure of schooling for Syrians, capturing the idea that Syrians studied later in the day, in the afternoon, so quite literally came to school behind their Lebanese peers.

Our participants also felt behind in substantive academic ways. Many of the participants could not enroll in school immediately after arriving in Lebanon and thus missed out on years of schooling. Participants recalled being refused enrollment either because they had arrived in the middle of the school year, often unaware of the necessary paperwork required for enrollment or that there was a separate schooling shift organized for Syrians. Completing these formalities as refugees entailed multiple trips to numerous institutions. By the time families had obtained the necessary paperwork, schools no longer had space to enroll Syrian students. Mira recalled her school requiring a document from the UN to enroll her officially in the second shift. She explained, "Mama asked about it, and we went to the UN office to get the paper, but it was too late because the schools were full."

Once equipped with the paperwork, students were often assigned to grades lower than the ones they had completed in Syria, a consequence of Syrian students' unfamiliarity with learning in English and the new-to-them curriculum in Lebanon. Mujahed described a school administrator's decision-making around his grade-level placement: "She said that the curriculum in Syria is easier than the one here. Additionally, everything here is in English and everything we had [in Syria] was in Arabic." Maysa attributed 2 of the 3 years of education she missed to language. The gap between her English language skills and the level required in the curriculum was so wide that "no matter how I could have improved my English skills, I couldn't have passed."

Participants' cognizance of the fewer instructional hours in the afternoon, compared to their Lebanese peers in the morning shift, further exacerbated this sense of "being behind," unable to make progress on their immediate, short-term goals of completing the materials necessary for success on the Brevet exam. Masood elaborated how this difference

influenced curriculum coverage: “For example, they [Lebanese] have biology in the morning, they have around 4 sessions per week. We [Syrians] only have 2 sessions, and our sessions last 45 minutes, while their sessions last 60 minutes. . . . We won’t be able to finish all the program.” Not completing the curriculum in time represented a lost opportunity for participants, of never being able to attempt their Brevet examinations fully prepared, inducing a sense of anxiety and concern.

Compounded with the reduced instructional hours were some students’ perceptions regarding differences in the quality of learning opportunities between the two shifts. Munir viewed these differences in structure and, consequently, learning as impeding his ability to build toward a long-term, imagined future. “It’s like they’re giving it [the school] to us so we can learn, not to be established, he said”. Students described how Lebanese students in the morning shift could access extracurricular activities and science laboratories, opportunities that remained out of reach for them in the afternoon shift.

Ironically, while speaking to how the structure of education afforded differences in learning opportunities, participants also perceived the structure as enabling some reconciliation of these very differences. Munir explained what mattered the most to him: “What’s important is that they’re studying the same [curriculum] we are, and we’re all getting the same certificate.” Through their Syrian peers and Lebanese acquaintances who attended morning shifts, some students described how students in the morning shift too confronted challenges, emblematic of a struggling Lebanese public education system attempting to simultaneously cater to Lebanese nationals and Syrian refugees. Mujahed asked his neighbor in the first shift about their learning: “The teaching that they have isn’t better than ours . . . the student I asked said that there is a teacher who did not explain the lessons to them.” Similarly, Maysa knew from her friend attending the morning shift that they were also struggling to complete the curriculum “since their teacher is often absent.”

Content. Within the structures of second shifts in Lebanese public schools, Syrian students followed and were taught the Lebanese curriculum, content they hoped to cover completely to be prepared for their high-stakes Brevet exams. All participants in our study spoke about fully completing this curriculum as an important prerequisite for their success on the Brevet, a plausible future goal they sought to realize. In addition to learning content that would enable them to pass, students also described how the content of the curriculum they followed in Lebanon was connected to their longer-term imagined futures, particularly in the ways they did—and, more often, did not—see themselves and their experiences represented.

Most students expressed a preference for the Lebanese curriculum over the Syrian curriculum, citing its rigor and applied focus. In this way, they perceived the content of what they were learning as valuable. Yet they universally questioned the immediate instrumental value of it if, as second-shift students, they would never manage to “finish” the curriculum to be well-prepared for the exam. The structural elements of being behind from the outset and having less instructional time in the second shift were compounded by language challenges and additional time lost to non-content-related activities.

The transition to the Lebanese curriculum was challenging for most students, particularly those who previously studied the Syrian curriculum in primary school, either because they came to Lebanon more recently or were in nonformal schools in Lebanon that used the Syrian curriculum and Arabic language. Mira described how she “hated” school in Lebanon at first: “I would sit there and look at what they are doing. I didn’t understand anything.” Eight years later, Mira continued to worry about English as connected to the Brevet. “We’re all worried about the official exam . . . we’re really worried that English would wipe out all the effort we put in.” Amin explained that scientific subjects came with particular challenges of technical terms as well. In his view, the variability in content mastery in his class was consequence of differing familiarity and comfort with academic English.

With less time in school, Syrian students’ anxieties around curriculum completion were accentuated when teachers’ pedagogies and approaches to learning posed another hurdle to completing the curriculum. Several students expressed frustration at their teachers’ focus on behavior and class management in lieu of teaching content. We also observed students missing class to free up their classroom for visiting dignitaries, coming to observe how donor funds were being used for refugees, and students described these visits as further truncating their instructional time.

Some teachers supported students in making up for this lost time. Mujahed agreed that “We are losing time but they are making up for it during other days. For example, we were behind in the Biology subject this year . . . , so she [the teacher] started giving us extra sessions before school.” At one school, students pointed to how their math teacher used to teach them the grade 9 curriculum when they were in grade 8. Munir said, “He was always teaching us rules from grade 9 [curriculum, while in grade 8] and now we find grade 9 very easy.” Afternoon-shift students also tried to build their own access to content by connecting with peers in the morning shift. Wadad arranged with a friend in the morning shift to copy her notebook and share it with her peers, so the afternoon shift could have access to the same materials as the morning shift. These strategies for content coverage partially helped students overcome the feeling of being behind.

In addition to the instrumental view of content connected to the Brevet, students also explained what they wished was

included in the curriculum connected to navigating their present lives outside of school. When a civics lesson was taught on respecting public servants for serving the "public," a student referenced the insults his father faced from government employees when trying to renew the family's residency permits and questioned if such behavior warranted respect. The civics teacher smiled sheepishly, and the bell rang, marking not just the end of the period but also implicitly communicating that there was little time to bring in personal experiences and dilemmas into a formal curriculum that was deeply disconnected from students' everyday realities.

Despite this disconnect, Maysa described how learning about Lebanon was directly related to where she was physically anchored at present and for the near future: "As long as I am studying here and continuing my education here, and as long as I am in this country, this state, I would learn [its curriculum]. It's no problem." Nayla agreed: "It's good because I still live in Lebanon . . . so it's nice for me to get to know its values and its policies." Many students, however, reflected on the mismatch between content they were taught in class and their daily experiences. When we asked Wadad about whether there were times when what was in the civics textbook was different from what she experienced, she said, "Of course there is. Nobody really follows the law. Every person does what they [want] . . . But this is the curriculum. His [civics teacher's] job is to teach it to us, and because we're supposed to be the future generation, we need to learn. But no one takes this seriously of course."

With this limited faith in teachers taking the civics curriculum seriously, Munir discussed how being unable to see himself and his role in the world in the content he learned stood in the way of his imagined future. He wanted to learn how to contribute to society but found no guidance in the curriculum on how to do this. Across our sample, students described the content of what they learned as fulfilling an instrumental and near-term goal, passing the Brevet, rather than what they thought would be meaningful and useful for navigating their lives in Lebanon and beyond.

Malleable Elements: Relational Pedagogies That Connect Imagined and Plausible Futures

Students often found that the structures and content of schooling stood in the way of their imagined futures. While those challenges seemed immutable to them, they found that effective teachers supported them to overcome the barriers of structures and content through pedagogy and approaches to building relationships, which together form relational pedagogies. Our participants identified four key components of these relational pedagogies that supported them in their education toward the futures for which they imagined and planned—related to predictability, explaining, fairness, and care. These relational pedagogies enabled Syrians to feel that they could both learn daily and be prepared for their exams, create opportunities for further education, and make their longer-term imagined futures more plausible.

Predictability. Every participant explained how critical predictability was for both learning and covering all the necessary material. Most students had experienced schools and classrooms where order was lacking, what they often described as "chaos." These experiences of chaos stood in contrast to the strict order and discipline, or *nizam*, they had experienced in schools in Syria. One component of predictability was a fixed and reliable schedule for the day, including defined start and end times and a timetable of classes to which teachers and schools adhered. Students described previous schools they had attended in Lebanon as lacking this order, so they appreciated this stability at the schools they now attended.

A second component of predictability was a noise and discipline level that enabled teaching and learning. Wadad described the absence of discipline in English class: "Nobody listens to her [the teacher]. Her word is not respected." Similarly, she said, "The physics teacher shouts a lot. . . . All the students had a headache because of his high voice . . . his class is also chaotic." Layal wished this chaos did not impede her learning in history class. In this class, she said, "no one cares" and students could do as they liked. "Whoever wants to sleep can sleep, whoever wants to talk can talk, whoever wants to eat can eat. You feel that the teacher yells, quickly explains what she has memorized and then she's done." The disinterest Layal felt from her teacher, and the lack of time spent teaching, made her feel she was unprepared for her history exam, confronting a plausible future of likely needing to repeat the Brevet.

Explaining. Layal called for teachers to create predictability in their classrooms through a focus on explaining—elaborating materials students had questions about or needed help with. Wadad made an important distinction between content and pedagogy using the example of her physics teacher. She said, "He may have the knowledge and information, but he doesn't know how to convey them to students." Every student emphasized the value of "explaining." Masood described how hard it is to learn when his teacher "didn't listen to our questions, and if we happened to ask her [a question], she would say 'the question you're asking is a silly question, and we explained it many times.'" As a student valuing stability and incremental progress, Amal elaborated on how similar remarks from teachers hindered her progress toward future goals: "Sometimes this destroys my motivation toward the lesson and I regress, especially if I were going through something and I couldn't study and I didn't get the grade I wanted. Of course, this is something that crushes me inside."

Students did find teachers who valued and used explaining as a key part of their pedagogies in some of their classes.

Mujahed described some teachers' skills in explaining "in simple terms." Nayla's biology teacher encouraged questions and participation. She said, "She even focuses on the people who she sees aren't participating" as a way to engage different students in class. "After each time they [my teachers] explain an idea," Nayla said, "if I feel like it's a little difficult for me, I go and ask them. They don't mind explaining it again. And if they feel like I still don't understand it well, they have no problem giving me questions about it or examples so that I can understand it more." Mira's biology teacher modeled how to explain material well, using gestures to explain the lesson, approaches that helped Mira remember the material. Mira said, "For example, she would be talking about enzymes and saliva in the mouth. She says this is where the food comes in and is crushed there, it goes to the stomach, these gestures . . . the blood absorbs." Mira pointed to the mouth, the throat, and the stomach to demonstrate how the teacher explained this lesson. Maysa found explanation embedded in the "activities and exercises" her geography teacher chose. "When we take a lesson, he would explain it, and ask about those who didn't understand and then he would repeat it to them," she said, going around the room to check on each student and identify their struggles and areas for improvement. Maysa explained how he often divided students into small groups to work together, "so we could participate and if anyone has something wrong, he would focus more. He doesn't allow anyone to stay in their place." Students also connected this kind of explaining to opportunities for making visible the relevance of learning. Amal appreciated her math teacher, who demonstrated how math "is built around your daily life."

Fairness. Students identified fairness in their teachers' pedagogies as supporting them to navigate the inequities they experienced in the structures and content of education, particularly the elements they saw as roadblocks to future opportunities. Students often found a lack of fairness, discussing how they often felt they had little power at school or were made to feel unwelcome and discriminated against. Wadad said, "I don't know if that has something to do with us being foreigners or because they're not used to listening to students. But in the end no matter how hard I try, nothing will happen. Not only that, but the student is also always made out to be wrong; it's impossible for the teacher to be wrong." This feeling of powerlessness made it hard for students to ask questions or to seek the support they needed. Masood also recalled the time when his science teacher reminded the students of their precarious, temporary status in Lebanon. When the class was being disorderly, she angrily yelled out: "You Syrians, we are hosting you in our country and this is how you behave!" Masood described the incident as "words that hurt."

Some teachers used pedagogies that attempted to redistribute this power and open spaces where their refugee students felt welcome and able to contribute. Mujahed's math teacher called on him to explain the lesson and said, "tomorrow, you will explain the lesson and I will be the student." This situation where Mujahed could become the teacher for a day made Mujahed feel "courage and self-confidence." Teachers also attempted to counter the messages of powerlessness that Syrian students received through the fixed curriculum that did not include them. Nayla shared how her civics teacher motivated her students "to become part of society, to have greater importance and not just be on the margins, just eating and drinking and that's it." The teacher reminded them that with civics they "might be able to change other people's perspectives." Acknowledging the dissonance between this optimism for students as agents of change and their limited power as refugees and as students, Amal recalled how this teacher admitted that, "In the end, nothing of what's in this lesson exists. We wish it does." The civics teacher tried to motivate her students to eventually alter this reality, to help them navigate the gaps between the plausible and imagined futures: "It's true you're learning things that don't exist but you might be the reason they exist in the future. You might do things related to politics and things like that and you can change and do the things you studied about, things related to law." Part of what Amal and Nayla found motivating about this teacher's pedagogy was how she talked about the future in these ways and also took actions in the present, such as explicitly recognizing how the students are "very good and have improved a lot in the subject."

Relationships that supported this fairness were important in students' views to narrow the gaps between their plausible and imagined futures. With students already feeling "behind," relationships that fostered a sense of equality felt salient. Wadad spoke fondly of her science teacher, who taught the class the "same thing she taught in the morning," often giving both sets of students the "same exam." This act was an important marker of not "discriminating between Syrian and Lebanese," making students feel that "it wasn't like she was teaching with disgust and disinterest. She used to teach from the heart and cover each and every lesson." Mira described her Arabic teacher's ability to focus on every student in the class: "You feel like someone's listening to you. It's not like other subjects, you feel like you're saying something but no one's listening." When teachers were able to teach with fairness, Mujahed described experiencing a sense of unity in class, "We have something in common – the goal is for everyone to succeed. We don't like anyone to fail."

Simultaneously, students also sought equitable treatment targeting students' individual needs. Nayla described the difference between "students who have the courage to talk to teachers and engage with them" and those "who might have less self-confidence." She believed it was the teacher's "duty" to "find a way to speak to that student." Wadad also

described how some teachers knew the students well enough to personalize and differentiate their instruction when needed within the afternoon shift. She also noticed differences among shifts. Her science teacher "didn't explain in Arabic to the morning shift, but she did for us. She did that so we can learn because our [English] language was a little weak." While this pedagogy was different in the morning and afternoon shifts, Wadad found it productive to recognize different learning needs in each shift and to counter the otherwise fixed elements of the structure and content of schooling available to Syrian young people in Lebanon.

Care. Relationships with teachers, in particular those that embodied care, enabled learning. Mira talked about a former teacher, with smiles and excitement, describing the support he had extended when teaching her Arabic from grades 6 to 8. "In the last 5 minutes of class if we finish early, we used to talk and chat. Some friends used to walk with him during break time." When Mira and her friends had doubts about class materials, he would call them to school earlier than their scheduled second shift to help clarify. This teacher also shared his WhatsApp number with students to be available beyond class time. The day of one of our interviews with her was also Mira's birthday, and this teacher had sent Mira birthday wishes that morning, despite no longer being her teacher.

Students connected these pedagogies rooted in care with the predictability they also valued, describing conditions for learning when teachers balanced order with kindness and humor. Wadad described the value of a teacher who "was serious inside the class, but joked when it was the time for humor." Layal explained how these characteristics of a teacher were essential to students' learning; in imagining her own future self as a teacher, she said: "I would want them to love me and trust me, I wouldn't just be a teacher. I wouldn't want my function only to be about giving them a lesson and then leaving the class." While students appreciated teachers who could help overcome authority-laden student-teacher hierarchies, they equally wanted their teachers to be "serious" about learning. Assil contrasted her Arabic teacher with other teachers who "joke around" too much: "She's serious in class and when it's class time, it's class time."

Students described how this care was most supportive to them when it involved teachers integrating care into learning, blurring the lines between relationship-building and pedagogic practices. Nearly all students at one school spoke with admiration about their geography teacher. Nayla explained how he successfully facilitated the whole class's learning while simultaneously identifying gaps in individual students' understanding: "If he finds that someone isn't participating much, he might sit and talk with them and see there may have not understood the lesson and are shy to say so, maybe they know the answer but aren't courageous enough to talk to the teacher."

Students described effective teachers as leveraging relationships in their pedagogies to encourage and motivate their students through processes of bridging the distance between their plausible and imagined futures. Amal's grade 7 Arabic teacher would often share strategies to "diversify" their writing styles. At the same time as teaching new skills, he focused on what students already did well. Amal said, "My essays were very good, so he used to write comments like, 'I'm glad I got to teach you.'" In so doing, Amal explained that "he didn't make us feel like failures or that we couldn't do those things, or that it was impossible or wrong. He gave us space and hope that we could improve, that there's hope to write better." Similarly, Maysa recalled how she was the first student in class whose name her grade 8 English teacher remembered, implicitly communicating to Maysa that "she kept me in her mind." Maysa described the lasting consequences of this action on her motivation: "If someone would pay attention to me and tells me to 'focus, focus, focus!' then I would focus on this subject." This teacher often followed up with Maysa about her homework, ensuring she "didn't leave any homework undone." Mira explained how one of her teachers encouraged students through anticipating future opportunities. He would say, "If you didn't understand one lesson, there are 10 more. . . . A human will always make mistakes, if you made mistakes on the test, keep in mind that you'll make it up in something else." Pedagogies rooted in care clearly communicated to students that they could always improve, which is essential to their sense of growth and development in school in the present and their linking of these experiences to future opportunities.

Discussion

Our analysis takes up the question of how education for refugees can narrow the gap between the future opportunities refugee young people imagine for themselves and those that are plausible within the social, economic, and political exclusions of their displacement and the unknown geographies of these futures. Empirically, we learn from students that teachers play an essential role in supporting them to both understand and navigate this gap, even in the presence of discriminatory state policies and weak educational infrastructures. Especially important are teachers who enabled them to make sense of the disconnects in their experiences being *included* in Lebanese national education but *excluded* from the curriculum they learn and future opportunities that they anticipate success in education leads to. Students describe actions their teachers take to help them navigate fixed and exclusionary structures and content of schooling, like their structural and social isolation from nationals in second shift and their alienation from curriculum that does not recognize their experiences. Teachers bridge these gaps through ways of teaching and ways of building relationships—relational pedagogies rooted in predictability,

explaining, fairness, and care. Students describe each of these components as important on their own and also interconnected. While these relational pedagogies may be desired by most students globally, our study points to a particular value of them for students who experience gaps between the kinds of opportunities they hope will be possible through education and what is plausible in the sociopolitical environments in which they live.

First, refugee young people find great value in predictability, including a calm environment and clear expectations. They describe how they are better able to learn when the classroom environment feels predictable in having a set schedule, being calm and not too noisy, and having clearly communicated and collectively established expectations for student behaviors. While these conditions may be assumed for schools and classrooms in some places, Syrian students in our study find this predictability to be uncommon.

Second, refugee young people also describe teachers' commitments to explaining as being essential to their learning and sense of being capable of academic success. These pedagogies include answering questions and making curricular materials relevant, even when they explicitly exclude refugees. Refugee young people are better able to catch up and overcome the overarching feelings of "being behind" when their teachers focus on explaining and not just delivering the content they teach, unusual in Lebanon and in most exam-driven education systems globally. These pedagogies include using simple terms or translation, especially when terms are complicated or in a new language; answering questions and not making students feel out of place for asking them; reinforcing ideas and concepts from one lesson to another and one year to another; focusing on processes and mechanisms rather than facts; and engaging with students on the relevance of what they are learning not only to their immediate goals of passing exams but to the longer-term future opportunities they seek.

Third, refugee young people emphasize how pedagogies that explicitly focus on fairness support them to navigate the inequities they experience in their education and opportunities. Students want to be taught the same materials as national students and to feel like they are on the same level playing field in terms of access to curricular content and instructional time that can support them in immediate goals of passing exams. At the same time, they appreciate teachers who recognize their different needs and use pedagogies that enable them to equitably access this curriculum, including translating to Arabic in class even when national students learn only in English. They also value teachers who extend the curriculum to make relevant some content that feels exclusionary or does not include their histories and identities or recognize the ways they are without the same rights and opportunities as national students.

Fourth, refugee young people explain the need for pedagogies rooted in care, including listening, kindness, and welcome. They describe how they are better able to learn and feel motivated to achieve their future goals when their teachers get to know them as individuals, including listening to their ideas and concerns, approaching them with kindness, and making them feel that they are not intruders in the national schools they attend. Students described how these kinds of relationships supported them explicitly in reconciling their broader experiences of exclusion in Lebanon and the future opportunities they planned for through their education, not necessarily focused on the future geography of being in Lebanon but not excluding that possibility.

While dimensions of these pedagogies are well-documented in the literature, we bring them together here for the first time, conceptually linking them as a set of pedagogies through which teachers support young people to narrow the gaps between their imagined futures and the futures that are plausible in the sociopolitical context in which they live. We demonstrate ways in which students view teachers as providing critical supports for their current learning and how they link that learning to their future goals. In particular, our analysis suggests that teachers mitigate the rigid exclusions of the structures and content of schooling through this set of relational pedagogies, even in a context where the rights and opportunities of their students are limited, both inside and outside of school. While our research focuses on refugees, it has conceptual implications for educators and school systems in other settings where teachers must support their marginalized students to make sense of the disconnects between what they learn at school is possible and the future opportunities they seek.

Our conceptual and empirical contributions are rooted in affordances of our methodology. Our focus on what students experienced in schools and the meaning they made of these experiences as connected to their imagined futures opens new space in the field of refugee education. Much of the research in this field has focused on the structures and content of education, the elements students identify as fixed. In turning our attention to what students see as malleable, we document not only relational pedagogies that students value but also ways in which these relational pedagogies support students to navigate the fixed structures and content. In addition, while we do not ignore the many instances of harm, challenge, and the contradictions in perspectives and experiences that both students and teachers hold, we purposefully focus on the opportunities students point to vis-à-vis these pedagogies that support them to meet their goals.

Our findings hold implications for policy, practice, and research. Refugee young people describe "being behind." They literally arrive behind national students as they attend school only in the afternoons and for a shorter amount of time. They also struggle to catch up on years of lost schooling and to learn in a new language. While refugee young people value access to the national system in Lebanon, and to its curriculum and certification, teachers and education leaders can

mitigate feelings of being behind through equalizing access to instructional time and allocating resources to the specific needs of refugee students, including remedial learning during or after regular school hours and language support.

Refugee young people also describe challenges in finding spaces where they can discuss their identities, their histories, and their experiences of exclusion. Even when it is not possible to address these issues in the formal curriculum, education leaders can provide teachers with adequate instructional autonomy to welcome informal conversations and additional discussions that allow students to appropriately explore questions around their identities, their displacements, and their current experiences in exile.

Related, we see teachers creating and using the relational pedagogies, including predictability, explaining, fairness, and care, that we find students value in connecting their plausible and imagined futures; yet teachers often do so in isolation and in tenuous conditions. Teachers play a central role in the experiences of refugee students, in easing the burden of being in an unwelcoming environment, and in creating opportunities for students to navigate the education system and their daily learning. Teachers, then, need the support of education leaders and systems in cultivating and using these pedagogies. Pedagogies that include predictability and explaining are often emphasized in existing teacher training to which teachers of refugees need access. Pedagogies rooted in fairness and care are relational practices that are often overlooked in teacher professional development and should be included. Learning and practicing these pedagogies takes time, which for teachers is already in short supply, and requires professional development that is targeted, comprehensive, and ongoing. Teachers of refugees in Lebanon are both professionally and personally over-burdened, as pay can be unpredictable and the demands on them, when teaching both refugee and national students, are often untenable.

We hope this set of relational pedagogies may be further developed and refined in future research and policy development. Studies on how teachers learn these pedagogies and the institutional conditions that enable teachers to develop, practice, refine, and sustain them will be essential. Research is needed on ways to strengthen existing system-wide teacher preservice and in-service professional development as well as to explore new models of teacher learning. Other institutional conditions may also be critical, including school culture, school leadership, and sociopolitical security for teachers that may enable them to adapt formal curriculum to meet their students' needs. Given the responsiveness of these relational pedagogies to students' experiences in a given sociopolitical environment, research is needed to document and analyze the context-specific practices—including within and across countries with varied legal and social inclusiveness of refugees—that teachers use to support refugee students in navigating and resisting the often exclusionary and unequal conditions in which they live and learn. Important to all of these domains of further research will be the study of refugees' educational experiences and post-schooling trajectories over the long term and the implications of these relational pedagogies on the kinds of future opportunities they are able to access and create.

Note on Authorship

This study is a collaborative effort. Chopra and Dryden-Peterson are equal first authors, listed here alphabetically. Dryden-Peterson initially led the conceptualization of the larger ReBuild Project, together with Cindy Horst, which is a comparative study including Lebanon and Kenya. Dryden-Peterson and Chopra led the conceptualization of the Lebanon site of the project and were joined early in the process by Geha and Talhouk, and together we finalized the research design; Chopra and Talhouk led the data collection; Dryden-Peterson, Chopra, and Talhouk conducted analyses; Dryden-Peterson and Chopra led the conceptualization and writing of the manuscript; all authors reviewed and approved the final manuscript. The views are those of the authors and do not reflect the views of any institutions with which they may be affiliated.

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Ethical Approval

This research was reviewed and approved by the Committee on the Use of Human Subjects at Harvard University and the Institution Review Board at the American University of Beirut. Permission for data collection was granted by the Republic of Lebanon Ministry of Education and Higher Education. All participants were aware of our roles as academic researchers and provided with an information sheet about the research, its potential risks and benefits, and their rights within the research; all gave their consent for participation. All appropriate steps were taken to protect participants' confidentiality.

Open Practices Statement

The data collection file can be found at https://doi.org/10.3886/E195747V1.

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