

Refugee Lives inside a Camp:

Ethnographic Work with Liberian Refugees in Ghana



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Forced displacement represents one of the most significant global challenges today, garnering international attention due to both the daunting number of refugees and the widespread dissemination of tragic images in the media. However, we rarely have insight into the day-to-day lives of refugees living in camps. This presentation is based on 13 months of ethnographic fieldwork living inside Buduburam Refugee Camp in Ghana, which was home to more than 20,000 Liberian refugees for nearly twenty years. The aim of my research was to investigate the economic lives of people living in the camp. However, this fieldwork also exposed me to the political,

social, religious and familial aspects of refugees' day-to-day lives. While refugees are typically represented as 'faceless' victims in the global media, this presentation focuses on personal accounts of everyday life as a refugee, shedding fresh light on the 'normality' inside the camp.

Trained as an economic anthropologist, **Dr Naohiko Omata** is a Senior Research Officer at the Refugee Studies Centre in the Department of International Development, University of Oxford. Currently, he leads two major research initiatives. First, he has been spearheading the large-scale multi-country research programme entitled *Refugee Economies* which focuses on economic outcomes for refugees and host populations in East Africa. Concurrently, he is the principal investigator of a research project entitled *Understanding Integration of Syrian Refugee Families in Oxfordshire*. Drawing upon extensive empirical research, he has published widely, including his award-winning book, *The Myth of Self-Reliance* (Berghahn Books 2017). Naohiko received his PhD in Development Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London. He also worked as a practitioner and consultant for UNDP, UNHCR, and NGOs in Sub-Saharan African countries.

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