

Scholar Report

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Title of Scholarship Project:	Contemporary Social History of the Regulation of Internationally Trained Nurses in Britain

The research conducted.

During a six-week period in the summer of 2024, I completed a research project entitled 'Contemporary Social History of the Regulation of Internationally Trained Nurses in Britain'. My project contributed to a wider project 'Making it to the Registers', conducted by principal investigator Professor Marie Andrée Jacob. Throughout my research I was privileged to work with Professor Marie Andrée- Jacob as well as co-investigator Dr Priyasha Saksena and research fellow Dr Amrita Limbu. 'Making it to the Registers' focuses on the concept of 'registration' for migrant and refugee healthcare workers and aims to conduct an in-depth historical and ethnographic study of modern registration.

At the beginning of my research project, I started to familiarise myself with the wider project by reading the blogs, updates and further information provided on the Making it to the Registers website as well as reading several sources provided to me by my supervisor. Notably *Doug Haynes' Fit to Practise: Empire, Race, Gender and the Making of British Medicine*; *'Can lessons be learned from history? The origins of the British Imperial Nurse Labour Market'* by Solano Diana Rafferty and *'Angels or Aliens? Refugee Nurses in Britain 1938 to 1942'* by John Stewart. My first experience of the research project was attending the Migration Matters Festival 2024 in Sheffield where my supervisors presented alongside co-investigators to the project, representatives from the partner organisation BAPIO (British Association of Physicians of Indian Origin) as well as some refugee and migrant nurses and doctors who reflected on their experiences of the registration process. This opportunity to be introduced to the wider importance and context of the project was extremely formative to my outlook on my research. I was tasked with taking some short recordings and notes throughout the presentation. Which I would then use to reflect and feedback. On the first week of research, I met with all three of the supervisors that I would be working with to reflect on the conference and discuss the preliminary readings. We covered the relevant issues regarding the regulation of the nursing and medical profession, as well as discussing primary research methods which I had not used before such as Hansard and the newspaper archives. I was able to use these primary sources to aid my research in the coming weeks. We decided that my first task would be to continue with some further reading around the topic, and then start to compile a timeline on the history of the

registration of internationally trained nurses. We mentioned finding out about the controversy between SENs (State Enrolled Nurses) and SRNs (State Registered Nurses). I also created a post for the Laidlaw Scholars Network reflecting on my experience at the Migration Matters Festival. From this, I was asked to share some extracts to the 'Making it to the Registers' twitter. Once I had made some progress in this area and presented a draft timeline/poster to my supervisors, I moved on to another task whilst simultaneously continuing the timeline. I was tasked with reading the transcripts of several interviews with migrant or refugee doctors or nurses, with the end goal of creating a memo which would be given to stage@leeds and petroglyph. These organisations would use this memo to put together creative outputs: a show and a graphic novel. In order to access the transcripts, I had to complete some data sensitivity training as the interview I would be reading would contain sensitive information that I was not able to share and had to keep protected on my laptop. As part of the memo, I had to write a summary explaining the concept of registration, contrasting the experiences of internationally trained doctors and nurses with those of UK trained doctors and nurses. Furthermore, I was lucky in that my supervisor allowed to do some independent research relating to my experiences during my study abroad year in Morocco. When I initially met with my supervisor, I mentioned some research I had done relating to the migration of Moroccan trained doctors to developed countries. I was able to produce a blog post for the 'Making it to the Registers' website exploring this phenomenon.

How is the research you conducted impactful or important?

Throughout history, particularly since the establishment of the NHS in 1948, international healthcare workers have formed an integral part of British healthcare. This project explores who gets to become and remain a professional healthcare worker in the UK. This question has become especially important given the shortage of healthcare workers in the UK and other developed countries. During the pandemic we witnessed how imperative healthcare workers are and saw how retired doctors and nurses were called upon to return to the acting medical register. This begs the question, who does the UK rely on in times of crises? Many international workers were recruited to the UK due to the high rate of immigration of European workers from the UK after the Brexit referendum. This recruitment and reliance on international healthcare workers is not a new phenomenon. We see it during World War II when the General Medical Council extended 'emergency registration' to Jewish refugee doctors and overseas-qualified doctors primarily from the British colonies. Furthermore, when the UK recruited nurses primarily from the Caribbean in the 1950s to staff the National Health Service (established in 1948). The project explores the contemporary importance as well as the historical background of the registration of international healthcare workers in the UK.

I felt that during the Migration Matters Festival that I attended in Sheffield the importance of the 'Making it to the Registers' project was highlighted to me. I got to hear from the doctors and nurses who have been through the process of registration in the UK and understand

why this system creates barriers for them. Around 1/5 of healthcare workers in the NHS are non-British which equates to about 265,000 people. The prominence of overseas trained workers in the NHS signifies the importance of understanding the process of how these people come to work in the UK's National Health Service, and whether they are supported throughout this process. I felt very lucky to hear these experiences; I was particularly impacted by the story of Nelson, a highly qualified nurse from Cameroon who, at the time of the conference, was about to undergo his (notoriously difficult) English Language exam as the next step of his requalification as a nurse. Hearing firsthand about the obstacles internationally trained healthcare workers, particularly refugees, must face made me understand the impact that this project could have on actual people. We heard from Sheffield – based charity ReSTORE who aim to support refugee nurses while they pass the necessary exams to become a nurse in the NHS, as well as help them to find jobs. They provide emotional, holistic and practical support to refugees, and the programme is already being replicated in Switzerland and America. It was highlighted that while this charity provides excellent support to those within the catchment, there is still a significant proportion of people from other areas who are lacking these key services. They even mentioned one case where a nurse commutes from Manchester to receive the support of ReSTORE. They also talked about administrative barriers that occur for some refugees, which I had not considered when I was introducing myself to the topic. For example, some refugees are hindered from registration because their diploma has been burnt or lost in their home country meaning they have no way to prove their qualification in the UK.

Overall, it is clear to see how the 'Making it to the Registers' project is impactful both in a contemporary and historical context. When I started the project, I was keen to see how I could contribute to its progress. As my project title was 'Contemporary Social History of the Regulation of Internationally Trained Nurses in Britain' I was going to be focused more on the history of the registration of nurses. The overall project, while covering all healthcare workers, had focussed more on doctors. This meant that I would be bringing a new aspect of expertise to the project as I would be able to devote my time to reading and researching this new section to the project that I could discuss with the team. As I was new to the topic and to law and historical research, I was able to bring a new perspective. I was able to utilise various resources such as journal articles, documentaries and newspaper archives to contribute to my knowledge on the subject and then create a timeline. This timeline will be shared on the 'Making it to the Registers' website and the Laidlaw Scholars network and therefore will become a resource for others to use.

Activities I have been involved in to disseminate the research.

As aforementioned, I attended the 'Making it to the Registers' presentation at the Migration Matters festival. It was interesting to see how the researchers on this project collaborate, particularly as they mentioned that most correspondence before this conference had happened online, so it was the first time most of them had met. I saw multiple organisations such as BAPIO, ReSTORE, 'Making it to the Registers' as well as existing and aspiring NHS doctors come together in order to present and discuss the key issues and themes that the project explores. I also curated a reflective blog discussing my thoughts

and learnings during conference which I shared to the Laidlaw Scholars Network. I also shared some posts to the 'Making it to the Registers' 'X' (Twitter) to reach a wider audience. I tried to take quotes from the conference that I thought would be impactful. The timeline that I worked on during my research period will hopefully become a useful resource for other researchers or those interested in the topic. I also hope that by creating an attractive research poster summarising my research I will be able to share the importance of this project with as many people as possible. I think that because I am an undergrad and someone new to this area of research, this actually impacted my presentation of my research in a positive way. Healthcare and policy tend to use a lot of abbreviations and jargon that can be difficult to understand. As it was all new to me, I was able to present my findings in a more accessible way. Moreover, I had a blog posted on the 'Making it to the Registers' website concerning the migration of doctors from developing countries. I also took part in an interview from the School of Law about the new cohort of Laidlaw Scholars. I also wrote the memo which has been sent to stage@leeds and petroglyph who are then going to produce their own educational content which will raise awareness on this project. I was particularly interested in the idea of a graphic novel being used to promote a cause such as this. My supervisor showed me an example of a graphic novel about medical promise 'Lissa' which was produced by academics based on academic research. I have an interest in art and graphic design since I studied it at A level and I was excited to see these interests cross over. All these activities contributed to the dissemination of the research to students and researchers within and outside of the university.

The impact that conducting research has had on me.

As this was the first real independent research that I had conducted, there was a lot of things that I found challenging that impacted me positively. Firstly, I had to take charge of my own organisation and time management skills. Because of the nature of my research, it was mostly independent reading, and I had to learn to set myself my own smaller, realistic deadlines in order to meet the larger deadlines I had set with my supervisor. Initially when I was considering what I wanted to get done during the six-week period, I was quite optimistic about how quickly I could get things done. I hadn't completed historical research to this extent at university level before; in fact, I hadn't studied history formally since before GCSE so it was an adjustment. Therefore, I learnt how to work independently but I was also fortunate to be able to collaborate with others, including other Laidlaw scholars throughout this period. I spent most of the research period on the University of Leeds in the Edward Boyle library where I was able to spend my time with other Laidlaw Scholars also completing their research period. This was helpful for me in terms of motivation and highlighted the importance of collaboration. I had also observed the benefits of this collaboration during the conference I attended as well on an international level throughout the Laidlaw Scholars network. I enjoyed conducting my own research and I realised during this period that I would like to be involved in research in the future, which is not an avenue I had explored before. I learnt several new research skills as well as how to use new resources, such as Hansard and the newspaper archives. I also had my first experience of

accessing sensitive and personal data and anecdotes, which made me consider my own impact on society.

What leadership skills have I gained from the research period.

This research project has been invaluable in enhancing leadership skills. By delving into recent historical events, I have developed critical thinking abilities, strategic analysis, and decision-making skills. Through exploring the complexities of the modern history of the nursing and midwifery register, I have encountered diverse perspectives and conflicting narratives, fostering skills in empathy, understanding different viewpoints, and effective communication. Moreover, the process of conducting in-depth research helped me to develop patience, perseverance, and the ability to manage complex information, all of which are essential qualities for effective leadership in today's rapidly changing world. I was able to use my networking skills that I learnt at previous Laidlaw events to network and make connections with other professionals at the migration conference. Ultimately, engaging in this research project not only deepened my knowledge but also honed essential leadership skills crucial for navigating the complexities of the present and shaping a better future.

My future career, educational and research plans

I would enjoy engaging in another research project in the future. I found that I connected with this research project well and I would like to remain connected with it., My supervisor has agreed to help me find some options for my international placement and connect me with the right people to help me find the right placement for me. She also mentioned my being involved in the organisation of an international conference to be held in 2025 so staying updated on 'Making it to the Registers' is important for my near future. I also was really impacted by the work of the charity ReSTORE and I was fortunate to connect with clinical nurse educator Emma Matthews. I was really inspired by their work, and I hope to engage with them or similar organisations in the future. Overall, my research project has impacted me hugely and I hope to continue to engage with this area of research in the future. Since learning about the difficulties immigrants and refugees face, I have decided to join STAR (Student Action for Refugees) society, and I will be engaging in weekly conversation classes with refugees in Leeds as well as other events with STAR. On an educational level, after my undergraduate degree I am hoping to complete a master's degree, and I am looking now to explore avenues outside of my current degree programme. I am passionate about my current degree, Arabic and Linguistics, but this research period has made me think about my other options – particularly law and history as I have observed the impact that these subjects have on contemporary society. I feel that a career in law is something that I had not considered before so while I am still focusing on languages and linguistics, this is something I would like to explore. Since I enjoyed the research aspect so much, I am also very interested in pursuing a PhD. I know that many of the academics I interacted with throughout my research periods had completed a PhD and I believe it would be a beneficial experience for me and I would be able to explore my own research interests.

