



Refugee Research Network

Research Digest

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The RRN Research Digest provides a synopsis of recent research on refugee and forced migration issues from entities associated with the RRN and others.

Recent Publications and New Research

Lancaster, J. (2019). Boats and borders: Australia’s response to refugees and asylum seekers. Court of Conscience, Issue 13. This issue considers Australia’s treatment of refugees and asylum seekers. The author highlights that it is a well-timed and sobering reminder that Australia is failing many of those whom it is bound to protect. The authors selected this topic because Australia’s cruel and inhumane treatment of irregular asylum seekers focuses more on discouraging people smugglers and less on upholding the obligations under international law, and because human rights are universal and absolute, and should not be enjoyed only by some. Lancaster argues that we must overcome our apathy to those we turn away from our borders and detain offshore in conditions that offend human rights, human dignity, and human conscience. This Issue features 14 articles written by academics, legal professionals, and students. A close reading of each text reveals nuanced perspectives covering five areas: ‘Rethinking the Popular Narrative’, ‘Increasing Support to Refugees and Asylum Seekers’, ‘Scrutinising Government Practices’, ‘Tension Between the Government and the Courts’, and ‘The Need for Statutory Reform’.

Available at:

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/52db5a03e4b0ce27634860c1/t/5dbaa3629d2cb749b2e464ca/1572512651841/CoC_2019_Digital_SinglePages_Compressed.pdf

Lenette, C., Bordbar, A., Hazara, A., Lang, E., & Yahya, S. (2019). “We Were Not Merely Participating; We Were Leading the Discussions”: Participation and Self-Representation of Refugee Young People in International Advocacy, Journal of Immigrant & Refuge Studies. There is increased commitment to the participation and self-representation of people with lived experiences as refugees and asylum seekers in advocacy, especially at international, high-level events. However, we know very little about what opportunities and challenges such processes present. This paper reports on findings from a research project on youth participation and self-representation at the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in collaboration with two young women and two young men from refugee backgrounds who live in Australia. It contributes new perspectives to contemporary debates on the potential for participation and self-representation in high-level consultations to effect policy change.

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/15562948.2019.1679404>

Lokot, M. (2019) The space between us: feminist values and humanitarian power dynamics in research with refugees, Gender & Development, 27:3, 467-484. International humanitarian and development

agencies striving to promote gender equality and women's empowerment sometimes neglect to recognise the power hierarchies present in their own engagement with communities. Drawing from research on Syrian refugees and humanitarian workers in Jordan, this article explores research as well as monitoring and evaluation practices of international humanitarian agencies. It suggests that the emphasis on generating evidence has resulted in more transactional and less relational engagement with refugees. This paper asks how feminist values can inform research with refugees, and explores how these values may provide less extractive ways of engaging with displaced populations. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13552074.2019.1664046>

Abdelaaty, L. (2019). Refugees and Guesthood in Turkey, Journal of Refugee Studies. Even as Turkey took in over 3 million Syrians at great expense, Turkish officials were referring to these individuals as guests rather than refugees. Despite significant legal developments in the country, and formalization of a temporary-protection regime, this choice of labels reveals the influence of underlying political trends on Turkish refugee policies. This article compares Turkey's reactions to the Syrian inflow with its responses to previous refugee groups, including Iraqis in 1988, Bosnians in 1992, Kosovars in 1998 and Chechens starting 1999. It demonstrates that the refusal to designate certain populations as asylum seekers or refugees, enables Turkey to opt in or out of what might otherwise appear to be generally applicable, national-level policies. Through these strategic semantics, policymakers retain a freedom to manoeuvre in response to international and domestic political incentives. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fez097>

Report, Policy Briefs and Working Papers

"A Refugee and Then..." Participatory Assessment of the Reception and Early Integration of Unaccompanied Refugee Children in the UK (June, 2019). UNHCR. This report summarises the findings of a participatory assessment (PA) of the reception arrangements and early integration support of unaccompanied and separated asylum-seeking and refugee children in the UK. The study, carried out from June 2018 to April 2019, was commissioned by UNHCR, and funded by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers (DG JUST). The report brings to light the increase of unaccompanied and separated refugee children living in the UK. While there is expansive literature examining the immigration law and policy framework for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in the UK, less research has explored their reception arrangements and early integration support from the perspectives of local authorities, service providers and, mostly importantly, the children themselves. This research attempts to fill the gap and brings together first-hand accounts of young refugees and asylum-seekers and those who support them across the UK, as they describe the path from their arrival to early integration in British society. Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/publications/legal/5d271c6a4/a-refugee-and-then.html>

Policy Brief: Safe Journeys and Sound Policy: Expanding protected entry for refugees, by Clair Higgins, November 2019, Kaldor center for international refugee law. This Policy Brief draws on past and current state practice to outline what these procedures look like, and how they should operate as tools of refugee protection. It speaks to a core objective of the Global Compact on Refugees, which is to expand access to third-country solutions for refugees and asylum seekers. Available at: https://www.kaldorcentre.unsw.edu.au/sites/default/files/Policy_Brief_8_Protected_Entry.pdf, a discussion of the brief is available in a podcast interview at:

<https://www.kaldorcentre.unsw.edu.au/publication/podcast-refugee-protected-entry-explained-dr-claire-higgins>

Digidiki, V., & Bhabha, J. (2019). Returning Home? The Reintegration Challenges Facing Children and Youth Refugees from Libya to Nigeria. Harvard University and International Organization for Migration.

This report from the FXB Center for Health and Human Rights at Harvard University and International Organization for Migration (IOM) finds that young migrants who return home from Libya to Nigeria often face serious challenges in their efforts to reintegrate into society. Current migration policies doubling down on exclusion are leaving thousands of migrant children and young people trapped in transit, opting to return home as the only solution to a life of destitution and despair. The report highlights the dangers and risks that a particularly vulnerable population, children and young people from Sub-Saharan Africa, faces while migrating. Professor Bhabha emphasizes the need for more robust human rights protections for some of the most vulnerable migrants of our time, and the unmet responsibilities owed by some of the wealthiest nations on earth. Available at:

<https://cdn1.sph.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/2464/2019/11/Harvard-FXB-Center-Returning-Home-FINAL.pdf>

News reports and blog posts

Refugee camps versus urban refugees: what's been said – and done, by Cristiano D'Orsi, The Conversation (November 3, 2019). This news report summarizes the ongoing confusion on the policy front regarding camp vs. urban refugees. Though the UNHRC's current strategic plan acknowledges that more refugees are moving to cities, it offers few recommendations on how cities could serve them better. In practice, urban refugees are forced to fend for themselves. Lack of support, policy and their undocumented status, makes self-reliance difficult, often leaving them homeless and indigent. The author describes a recent improvement marked by a signed declaration on the rights of urban refugees in November 2017 by the International Organization for Migration and the umbrella group United Cities and Local Governments, which included 150 cities around the world. The declaration emphasizes the significant social, economic and cultural contributions that refugees bring to urban development and call on international organizations and national governments to support cities politically and financially to care for refugee populations. The author concludes that although recent initiatives to support urban refugees have been undertaken in Africa, urban refugees are still for the most part, invisible, untraceable and in need of support. Available at: <https://theconversation.com/refugee-camps-versus-urban-refugees-whats-been-said-and-done-126069>

Words matter: The vocabulary of Syrian talks in Geneva by Ben Parker, The New Humanitarian (November 4, 2019). Detailed talks began in Geneva aimed at drafting a new Syrian constitution, with discussions between government, opposition, and civil society representatives being closely watched for signs of progress in the bitterly divided country after eight and a half years of war. The humanitarian wondered if the language used in opening speeches for the government and opposition suggest any commonalities that could help shape the way forward? They explored further creating two word clouds – one based on the government's opening statements and one based on the opposition's. Despite their

differences, both sides used some common vocabulary, showing at least some shared hopes. Find the word cloud side by side at: <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/maps-and-graphics/2019/11/04/Syria-peace-talks-negotiation-text-speeches>

Digital and social media

Recorded lecture: "Migration: the movement of humankind from prehistory to the present" with Prof Robin Cohen, Nov. 12, 2019, Oxford Martin School. If migration is as old as the hills, why is it now so politically sensitive? Why do migrants leave? Where do they go, in what numbers and for what reasons? Do migrants represent a threat to the social and political order? Are they none-the-less necessary to provide labour, develop their home countries, increase consumer demand and generate wealth? Can migration be stopped? One of Britain's leading migration scholars, Robin Cohen, probes these issues in this talk: <https://www.oxfordmartin.ox.ac.uk/events/migration/>

Social media: Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group is a registered charity offering support to people held indefinitely in immigration detention in the UK, near Gatwick Airport. In this short video two visitor volunteers, Margaret, and her husband Laurie, share 3 words that describe indefinite immigration detention for [#Unlocked19](#). This is an example of advocacy efforts to generate support for people who are in detention among the public. Watch at: <https://twitter.com/GatDetainees/status/1196758190085615616>