



Refugee Research Network

Research Digest

No. 81 – March 5, 2020

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

Cities and Towns (February, 2020), Forced Migration Review, Issue 63, Refugee Studies Centre. In the 20 articles on Cities and towns in this issue of FMR, policymakers, practitioners, researchers, representatives of cities and international city-focused alliances, and displaced people themselves debate the challenges facing both the urban authorities and their partners, and those who have sought refuge. A number of authors explore new ways of working in urban settings – including area-based approaches, multi-stakeholder partnerships, and city- to-city collaboration – while others offer insights and inspiration from local responses and the perspectives of displaced and host communities. Available at: <https://www.fmreview.org/sites/fmr/files/FMRdownloads/en/cities/cities.pdf>

Batarseh, R. C. (2019). “Perfect Vision”: An examination of the role of census and profiling practices in visualizing and crafting refugee ‘groups’ under Contemporary Group Resettlement Programs. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, Oxford University Press.

This article demonstrates how the characteristically visual practices of boundary-making around prospective refugee groups comprise an important and instrumentalized version of what Rogers Brubaker (2004) calls ‘groupism’. Current practices in relation to this concept are the preconditions for the writing of specific narratives of risk, persecution and flight in UNHCR group profiles. An examination of group resettlement reveals how officials do not just choose between pre-existing refugee groups based on racial, national and ethnic categories, but rather attempt to construct an idealized conception of groups reflected in Brubaker’s notion of groupism. Available at:

<https://academic.oup.com/jrs/advance-article-abstract/doi/10.1093/jrs/fez075/5572266>

Atuguba, R. A., Tuokuu, F. X. D., & Gbang, V. (2020). Statelessness in West Africa: An Assessment of Stateless Populations and Legal, Policy, and Administrative Frameworks in Ghana. *Journal on Migration and Human Security*. Drawing on qualitative interviews that are complemented by the analysis of government policy documents, this study examines statelessness in Ghana. It addresses a

range of policy, legal, institutional, administrative, and other politico-socioeconomic matters attendant to the concept. This study defines statelessness, identifies its consequences, and offers several recommendations to prevent and reduce it in Ghana. Available at (Open access):

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/2331502419900771>

Brankamp, H. (2020), Refugees in uniform: community policing as a technology of government in kakuma refugee camp, Kenya, *Journal of Eastern African Studies*. This article demonstrates that the deployment of community policing in Kakuma camp in north-western Kenya has been far more contested. Aid organisations and Kenyan authorities have competed in determining the orientation and implementation of community policing at a time when the government was intensifying both securitisation of refugees and counter-terrorism measures. Based on ethnographic fieldwork, the article illustrates that governing refugees through community policing blurs the lines between humanitarian protection, domesticating local systems of governance, and expanding the security state. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/17531055.2020.1725318>

Report, Policy Briefs and Working Papers

Report: Unprepared for (re)integration: Lessons learned from Afghanistan, Somalia and Syria on Refugee Returns to Urban Areas (January 31, 2020), ReDSS. This study addresses programming and policies in relation to refugee returns and, specifically, with regards to their (re)integration within urban areas, with a focus on Afghanistan, Somalia and Syria. While millions of refugees return to poverty, conflict and insecurity in all three settings, a tunnel focus on returns rather than on (re)integration has limited value for long-term planning. Stakeholders, including communities and returnees themselves, have been unprepared for what happens post-return. Available at: <https://regionaldss.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Reintegration-Report-SPREAD.pdf>

Report: A voice in their futures: The Need to Empower Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh by Daniel Sullivan, (February, 2020), Refugees International. The situation for the Rohingya remains bleak despite some positive news in recent weeks. Conditions in Myanmar for those Rohingya who remain are grim. In Bangladesh, the government has put in place a series of security measures that limit the access of the Rohingya to the outside world leading to desperation inside the camps. This report is based on a recently conducted fact-finding mission in Bangladesh, which includes data from interview representatives of UN agencies, the government of Bangladesh, local and international NGOs, and Rohingya refugees themselves. Based on the findings the author reports that Rohingya are not meaningfully engaged and informed about decisions that affect them and proposes a path forward. Available at:

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/506c8ea1e4b01d9450dd53f5/t/5e3b490b28c8c8206c947423/1580943632978/Bangladesh+Report+-+February+2020+-+FINAL.pdf>

Report: Lebanon at a Crossroads: Growing Uncertainty for Syrian Refugees by Sahar Atrache (January 30, 2020), Refugees International. With a population estimated at around 6 million, Lebanon is host to

the largest number of refugees per capita in the world. This massive influx has posed immense challenges to this small country, which lacks the adequate resources, infrastructure, and political will to respond to refugees' needs. Lebanon is at a crossroads. Violence is rising, as is the use of excessive force against protestors and activists. The increasing drift toward repression threatens to further destabilize the country and undermine the situation of all people in Lebanon, including refugees. The current issue of Syrian refugees and pressures for their return will almost certainly be a priority for the new government. The author urges for the crisis to serve as an opportunity to radically change Lebanon's approach toward refugees and its most impoverished citizens. Available at:

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/506c8ea1e4b01d9450dd53f5/t/5e30aa6574b74c11d78182f7/1580247658317/Lebanon+Report+-+January+2020+-+FINAL.pdf>

News reports and blog posts

Brazil's humane refugee policies: Good ideas can travel north by Audrey Macklin (February 11, 2020), The Conversation. This article examines Brazil's recently set bold precedent that should make northern states adjust the lens. Its policy toward Venezuelan refugees, in contrast to its wealthier peers, is pragmatic, humane and sensible. The author concludes that there is something to learn from Brazil, and if they can find an efficient, pragmatic way to welcome, protect and integrate hundreds of thousands of forced migrants arriving at its border, so can more affluent states. "Good ideas — like good people — can migrate north, and we should welcome them". Available at: <https://theconversation.com/brazils-humane-refugee-policies-good-ideas-can-travel-north-130749>

The future of refugee resettlement: Made in Europe? By Susan Fratzke and Hanne Beirens (February, 2020), Migration Policy Institute. Europe's new role as a resettlement innovator and the largest collective provider of resettlement spaces globally offer both an opportunity and responsibility. The question European and EU leaders face is what to do with their newfound resettlement muscle. The seating of the new European Commission and ongoing deliberations around how to implement UNHCR's resettlement strategy offer an opportunity for European leaders to define an answer. The authors provide a number of recommendations for European leaders to consider. Available at: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/news/future-refugee-resettlement-made-in-europe>

Digital and social media

News Audio: Displacement, Youth voices, Women's Equality by Daniel Johnson, United Nation News, (February 25, 2020). News in Brief from the United Nations covering top stories including the displacement crisis by UN chief Guterres, perspective of a refugee woman on her hopes for the future, and challenges to women's equality. Available at: <https://soundcloud.com/unradio/news-in-brief-25-february-2020>