



Refugee Research Network

Research Digest

No. 93 – September 3, 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

Agrawal, S., & Sangapala, P. (2020). Does Community Size Matter in the Settlement Process? The Experience of Syrian Refugees in Lethbridge in Alberta, Canada. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*. The article documents refugee experience in the first year of their settlement in a small city in Canada and then explores whether the size of the community matters in the settlement processes. The findings argue that contrary to existing scholarly literature, small municipalities are more creative, nimble, and efficient in settling Syrian newcomers. The authors also discuss the limitations of small cities and the immediate and long-term consequences they pose to the settlement process. The authors urge for municipal governments to play a more substantial role in the refugee resettlement process to offset the disproportionate burden settlement sector carries. ([Open access](#)) [Read here.](#)

McGuirk, S., & Pine, A. (2020). Asylum for Sale: Profit and Protest in the Migration Industry. PM Press/Kairos. This new volume brings together academics, activists, journalists, artists, and people directly impacted by asylum regimes to explain how current practices of asylum align with the neoliberal moment, and to present their transformative visions for alternative systems and processes. *Asylum for Sale* offers a fresh and wholly original perspective by challenging readers to move beyond questions of legal, moral, and humanitarian obligations that dominate popular debates regarding asylum seekers. Digging deeper, the authors focus on processes and actors often overlooked in mainstream analyses and on the trends increasingly rendering asylum available only to people with financial and cultural capital. [More here.](#)

Tønnessen, M., & Wilson, B. (2020). Visualising Immigrant Fertility Profiles of Childbearing and their Implications for Migration Research. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*. Different measures of fertility have strengths and limitations when used to describe the fertility of immigrants, and no single measure captures every aspect of this complex phenomenon. This paper introduces a novel visual framework that shows life course profiles of immigrant childbearing in a multifaceted way. The authors illustrate the importance of these fertility profiles and how they can be used to expand our

knowledge of immigrant childbearing and to investigate various hypotheses of migrant fertility, giving a novel overview of the relationships between fertility measures such as period and quantum, before and after arrival. ([Open access](#)) [Read here.](#)

Stel, N. (2020). Hybrid Political Order and the Politics of Uncertainty: Refugee Governance in Lebanon. Routledge. This book is the first to critically and comprehensively explore the parallels between Lebanon's engagement with the recent Syrian refugee influx and the more protracted Palestinian presence. Drawing on fieldwork, qualitative case-studies, and critical policy analysis, it questions the dominant idea that the inconsistency, and fragmentation of refugee governance are only the result of forced displacement or host state fragility and the related capacity problems. [More here.](#)

Report, Policy Briefs and Working Papers

Bejan, R. (2020). Following the refugee relocation scheme: Ideological interpretations of interstate shared responsibility in Romania. In *Unpacking the Challenges & Possibilities for Migration Governance. RESPOND Working Paper. Upsala University, Sweden.* The number of irregular migrant entries within the European Union (EU) increased by 546% in 2015. No policy has adequately addressed this humanitarian crisis, partially because of the deep ideological divisions within the European Union regarding the implementation of the 2015 refugee relocation scheme. This paper uses interview data (n = 14) to explore how Romanian policymakers and elected representatives interpret the idea of interstate shared responsibility in relation to the EU's relocation system for internally redistributing refugees and to examine what version of interstate solidarity is considered politically desirable. ([Open access](#)) [Read here.](#)

Exacerbating The Other Epidemic: How COVID-19 is Increasing Violence Against Displaced Women and Girls by Devon Cone (August 4, 2020), Refugee International. Displaced women and girls face a greater risk of experiencing physical and sexual abuse, and the current realities of COVID-19 pandemic—lockdowns, border closures, and economic desperation— further exacerbate this risk. This report details the ways in which displaced women and girls are facing an increased threat of gender based violence amid the pandemic, and highlights creative solutions and steps governments, donors, and communities must take to combat such threat. [Read here.](#)

Reform Past Due: COVID-19 Magnifies Need to Improve Spain's Asylum System by Daphne Panayotatos (July 27, 2020), Refugees International. Spain manages multiple borders on its mainland, islands, and overseas enclaves. Its geography and history draw individuals from distinct parts of the globe seeking safety and opportunity. However, not all have an equal chance of finding refuge. Reports of authorities using aggressive border tactics to keep away people arriving from northern Africa stand in stark contrast to special temporary legal protections the government has extended to forced migrants from Venezuela. Overall, practical and policy measures are closing the space for asylum, mirroring a concerning, broader trend in Europe. Meanwhile, Spain's capacity to process claims and attend to asylum seekers is growing increasingly strained. [Read here.](#)

A Primer on the Trump Administration’s Most Ambitious Effort to End Asylum by Yael Schacher (July 29, 2020), Refugees International. On June 15, 2020, the Departments of Homeland Security and Justice issued a major proposed asylum regulation: “Procedures for Asylum and Withholding of Removal; Credible Fear and Reasonable Fear Review” (rule). The proposed rule would dramatically curtail eligibility for asylum in the United States by barring or discrediting broad categories of claims and making it extremely difficult for asylum seekers to get a fair or full hearing. This issue brief addresses some of the most regressive and harmful elements of this proposed rule—and ones that are in striking contrast to the intent of Congress in implementing U.S. obligations under the Refugee Convention and Protocol. [Read here.](#)

News reports and blog posts

What does Europe’s East-West divide tell us about its external borders? By Raluca Bejan (August 24, 2020), Crisis Magazine. European Union expansion produces legal routes for Eastern European migrants to move westwards. But the discriminatory conditions they often face reflect unfair intra-EU agreements. Responses to migration from outside Europe must address the forms of structural uncertainty and inequality already produced within its borders. [Read here.](#)

Genocide: The Term That Fits The Crime in Myanmar by Yasmin Ullah and Eric Schwartz (August 27, 2020). Refugees International. Myanmar began its worst violence yet against Rohingya Muslims three years ago today, ruthlessly driving out hundreds of thousands of women, men and children through murder and other grievous abuses, in a campaign intended to destroy, in whole or in part, the Rohingya people. But Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo still has not called those crimes genocide. The authors explain the importance in classifying the current violence as genocide. [Read here.](#)

Digital and social media

Video: Borderstory is a 20-minute multimedia film part of Worn Words listening research project. This film unpacks the word 'border' in asylum discourse. It includes an animation of securitization as a cultural narrative and cross-sector research interviews that interrupt the story in postcolonial filmmaking fashion. [Watch here.](#)