



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

Bose, P. (2020). *Refugees in New Destinations and Small Cities: Resettlement in Vermont*. Palgrave Macmillan. This book offers a perspective on contemporary global migration policies and practices and how they play out at the local level. It draws on extensive qualitative research with refugees, advocacy organizations, local and state officials, and various other stakeholder groups in order to understand not only the politics and history of resettlement, but also the lived realities of daily existence. [More here.](#)

Abdelaaty, L., & Steele, L. G. (2020). *Explaining Attitudes Toward Refugees and Immigrants in Europe*. *Political Studies*. While there is a large literature on attitudes toward immigrants, scholars have not systematically examined the determinants of attitudes toward refugees. Often, refugees are simply treated as a subset of immigrants, under the assumption that attitudes toward both sets of foreigners are similar. This article examines whether there are distinctions between attitudes toward refugees and immigrants, as well as variation in their determinants. [More here.](#)

Topak, Ö.E. (2020), *Biopolitical Violence and Waiting: Hotspot as a Biopolitical Borderzone*. *Antipode*. This paper conceptualises Lesbos hotspot as a biopolitical borderzone where migrants experience concentrated violent practices of borders, including legal exclusion, presence of exclusionary surveillance and absence of surveillance for safety, degrading living conditions, and waiting. The paper also discusses the biopolitical consequences of these practices for migrants such as physical illnesses and injuries, and psychological disorders. The paper demonstrates how waiting is entangled in a complex way with other biopolitical practices and how it both creates and amplifies biopolitical effects for migrants. [More here.](#)

Gorman, C. S., & Culcasi, K. (2020). Invasion and colonization: Islamophobia and anti-refugee sentiment in West Virginia. *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space*. Amidst a rise in hate crimes, hate group organizing, and anti-Muslim and anti-refugee policy making in the United States, this paper examines efforts by a national hate group to organize opposition to the resettlement of Syrian Muslim refugees in West Virginia, a non-traditional refugee destination. Through analysis of materials disseminated at a public seminar titled the “Invasion and Colonization of West Virginia,” the authors identify four unique social-spatial themes this group is using to make alarmist and conspiratorial claims about Muslim refugees invading and colonizing the state and nation. [More here.](#)

Report, Policy Briefs and Working Papers

Macklin, A., Goldring, L., Hyndman, J., Korteweg, A., Barber, K., & Zyfi, J. (2020). The Kinship between Refugee and Family Sponsorship. *Ryerson Centre for Immigration and Settlement and the CERC in Migration and Integration Working Paper*. This piece draws from an ongoing research project that examines refugee sponsorship from the perspective of sponsors, particularly sponsors of Syrian refugees from 2015 onwards. This paper identifies multiple points of contact between private sponsorship and the family as a social unit. The authors argue that certain features associated with kinship relations are embedded in the institutional structure and norms of private refugee sponsorship, and that these echo in sponsors’ accounts of their relationship with sponsored refugees. The analysis sheds light on the way sponsors conceived of their role, how their understanding may have evolved, and how engaging in sponsorship transforms sponsors in social terms. [Read here.](#)

Dejean, F., & Jean-Baptiste, E. (2020). The role of Christian religious groups: with Syrian refugees and Haitian asylum seekers. *A BMRC Research Digest*. This research concerns the interventions by Christian organizations (churches and agencies) with the Syrian refugees who arrived mainly in 2015 and 2016 and the Haitian asylum seekers whose arrival on Canadian soil received heavy media coverage in the summer of 2017. It seeks to understand how these organizations mobilized to meet the specific needs of these groups, to examine the various types of action undertaken and finally to identify the specific nature of the religious institutional actors and how their actions are related to the actions of the other actors present. [Read summary here](#), or a [full report](#) available in French.

News reports and blog posts

Australia’s migration and refugee programs go under Budget microscope by Samantha Dick (September 25, 2020). *The New Daily*. Australia’s refugee and migrant programs are under the budget microscope as the federal government seeks to rebuild after the coronavirus pandemic. Millions of Australian workers have been left jobless, and political leaders may adopt a populist ‘Australia-first’ approach to immigration to ensure jobs go to Australians first. However experts urge that migration is

an essential element of helping to address or minimise any adverse consequences of a structurally ageing population. [Read here.](#)

EU's migration proposals draw anger on left and leave questions unanswered by Jennifer Rankin (September 23, 2020). The Guardian. Since 2015, more than 1 million refugees arrived in Europe. Consequently, migration has been at the forefront of debates. Leaders have flung accusations at each other, exposing painful divisions. Governments on both sides of the asylum debate are holding fire as they digest the plans spread over five draft regulations and other official texts. [Read here.](#)

A murderous pact: The European Union to deport refugees by Peter Schwarz (September 26, 2020). World Socialist Web Site. The author argues that the "Asylum and Migration Pact," presented by the EU is cynical and inhumane as it will lead to deportation, misery and certain death for hundreds of thousands. He highlights that the current management plan is focused on throwing out refugees who have managed to cross the borders of Fortress Europe at the risk of their lives. Elementary principles of the right of asylum and human rights fall by the wayside. [Read here.](#)

Detainee to UN secretary-general: 'The refugee convention has lost all meaning' by Amir Mirzaei (September 22, 2020). Green Left. Refugee Amir Mirzaei was brought to Australia from Manus Island under the now-defunct Medevac law. He is still being detained in Melbourne. He has written to the United Nations secretary-general António Guterres asking for action, and spelling out his mental anguish from being detained. This is an abridged version of his letter that he asked *Green Left* to share with the world. [Read here.](#)

Digital and social media

Webinar: Conceptualising policy - do 'climate refugees' or 'environmental migrants' really exist? (October 7, 2020, 1.30 - 3.00PM GMT). Convened by the Refugee Law Initiative and its Internal Displacement Research Programme, in partnership with the Platform on Disaster Displacement. This webinar will focus on how law and policy can interact with the impact of natural hazards on human mobility. [Register here.](#)