



## RRN Research Digest

No. 97– November 12, 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.

A promotional graphic for an RRN webinar. It features a central image of two hands holding a piece of paper with the word "Ethics" written on it. The graphic is framed by green and black geometric shapes. On the left, the RRN logo and the text "Refugee Research Network" are visible. Below the logo, the title "WHAT DOES AN ETHICS OF CARE MEAN FOR KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION IN MIGRATION CONTEXTS?" is displayed. Underneath the title, the speaker's name "CHRISTINA CLARK-KAZAK, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA" is listed. At the bottom left, the date and time "NOVEMBER 25, 2020 WEDNESDAY, 2:30-3:30PM EST" are provided. At the bottom right, there is a "RRN Webinar" button with a play icon and a muted speaker icon.

[Register here](#)

## Recent Publications and New Research

**Bradley, M. (2020). *The International Organization for Migration: Challenges, Commitments, Complexities*. Routledge.** This book provides an accessible, incisive introduction to IOM, focusing on its humanitarian activities and responses to forced migration—work that now makes up the majority of the organization’s budget, staff, and field presence. IOM’s humanitarian work is often overlooked or dismissed as a veil for its involvement in other activities that serve states’ interests in restricting migration. In contrast, this book argues that

understanding IOM's involvement in humanitarian action and its work with displaced persons is pivotal to understanding the organization's evolution and contemporary significance. Examining the tensions and controversies surrounding the agency's activities, including in the complex cases of Haiti and Libya, the book considers how IOM's structure, culture, and internal and external power struggles have shaped its behaviour. It demonstrates how IOM has grown by acting as an entrepreneur, cultivating autonomy and influence well beyond its limited formal mandate. [Learn more](#) (20% Discount Available - enter the code FLR40 at checkout).

**Dennler, K. (2020). Challenging Un-Belonging and Undesirability. *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies*, 19(2), 501-518.** This article uses qualitative research to examine how people with precarious immigration status exercise agency in the context of deportability, restrictions to their rights, and discourses that construct them as un-belonging and undesirable members of Canadian society. It also examines the extent to which agency transforms people's everyday realities. The research identifies two ways that research participants exert autonomy over their lives: persistent presence and critiquing their construction as un-belonging and undesirable. While acts of autonomy made it easier for participants to sustain themselves, the research shows that participants internalized discourses hostile to people with precarious immigration status. This suggests that agency is necessary, but also limited in its capacity to mitigate the harm caused by enactments of immigration control. ([Open access](#)) [Read here.](#)

**Khadka, R. K. (2020). The labour market negotiation of Bhutanese in the Canadian labour market, [Doctoral dissertation]. University of British Columbia.** The Bhutanese refugees came to British Columbia from Nepal, between 2009 and 2015, and they experienced challenges in finding jobs. This study examined their employment experience in Canada. The findings show that they lacked language, job-search skills and work skills relevant to the labour market in Canada. They also experienced discrimination based on race, class and gender. A majority of Bhutanese refugees found jobs in meat packaging companies as cleaning staff, but they were temporary low paying jobs that were physically demanding. This study recommends policies and programs that could help Bhutanese refugee succeed in Canada. ([Open access](#)) [Read more.](#)

**Forced Migration Review issue 65: Recognising refugee, November 2020.** This issue includes two features. The main feature on *Recognising refugees* explores some of the shortcomings in refugee status determination systems worldwide, as well as the challenges faced by different actors and the consequences for asylum seekers and refugees. Authors also explore new developments and approaches. The second feature offers reflections on lessons and good practice emerging from the 2018–20 GP20 Plan of Action for IDPs. ([Open Access](#)) [Read here.](#)

## Report, Policy Briefs and Working Papers

**Improving the US Immigration System in the first year of the Biden Administration by T. Alexander Aleinikoff and Donald Kerwin, November 2020.** This report co-published by the Zolberg Institute on Migration and Mobility and the Center for Migration Studies New York highlights nearly 40 immigration reforms that should be prioritized by the Biden

administration. The authors argue that Successful immigration policy reform will depend upon the quality and coordination of the top personnel in a number of federal agencies as well as effective leadership by the White House. [Read here.](#)

**The Effect of Covid-19 On the Economic Inclusion of Venezuelans in Colombia by Jimmy Graham and Martha Guerrero Ble, Refugees International, October 2020.** Colombia is the largest destination country for displaced Venezuelans, hosting almost 1.8 million as of May 2020. The Government of Colombia has maintained an open and constructive response, issuing residency and work permits and providing humanitarian relief. Yet Venezuelans in Colombia still face many obstacles to economic inclusion. COVID-19 has exacerbated these challenges, increasing Venezuelan unemployment and worsening their situation. This policy paper, part of the “Let Them Work” initiative, outlines the impact of COVID-19 on Colombians and Venezuelans alike, exploring the barriers both face to accessing the labor market. It then identifies practical ways in which the Government of Colombia, donors, international organizations, and NGOs, can overcome these barriers. [Read more.](#)

**Human Mobility, Shared Opportunities: A Review of the 2009 Human Development Report and the Way Ahead, UNDP report, October 21, 2020.** This UNDP publication recommends actions for policymakers to enhance the benefits and reduce the costs of human mobility to help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The report finds that the reforms advanced by UNDP are as relevant as ever. Making migration work for sustainable development requires us to expand legal pathways, guarantee migrants’ rights and access to services, reduce transaction costs, foster integration and social cohesion, and mobilize diasporas, among others. Increased policy coherence and cooperation, in the context of the two Global Compacts – on Refugees and for Migration – and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, are key to realize the potential development gains of human mobility. [Read more.](#)

**Supporting Immigrant and Refugee Families through Home Visiting: Innovative State and Local Approaches by Caitlin Katsiaficas, Migration Policy Institute, October 2020.** For immigrant and refugee families, home visiting can offer integration-related supports by helping parents navigate unfamiliar early childhood, health, and social service systems. But even though they make up an important segment of the at-risk populations these programs aim to serve, immigrant and refugee families are less frequently enrolled in home visiting programs than families in which the parents are U.S. born. This brief highlights strategies adopted by some states and counties to address this gap. To do so, it explores four case studies. [Read more.](#)

## News Reports and Blog Posts

**Voices in limbo: The plight of asylum seekers and refugees in Hong Kong in times of Covid-19 by Ka Wang Kelvin Lam, RLI blog, November 10, 2020.** In the context of the current global pandemic, many residents of Hong Kong still recall the outbreak of [Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome \(SARS\)](#) in 2003, which caused more than a thousand infections and hundreds of deaths in the small city with a population of 7.5 million. With the lesson of SARS, Hong Kong people knew that they could not afford to drop their guard: the border soon closed,

the city was placed on lockdown, people masked up and maintained social distancing. The author interviewed a number of asylum seekers and refugees stranded in the city to understand from their perspective how their lives were affected by the pandemic. [Read more.](#)

**The humanitarian fallout of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict by Andrew Connelly, The New Humanitarian, November 5, 2020.** Battle for control of Nagorno-Karabakh has frequently plunged the South Caucasus into turmoil, but the latest hostilities are threatening to cause a regional humanitarian crisis, with tens of thousands of civilians displaced amid growing COVID-19 outbreaks and at the onset of winter. [Read more.](#)

**New MP Ibrahim Omer's election highlights the challenges refugees from Africa face in New Zealand by Samuel Judah Seomeng and Caroline Bennett, The Conversation, October 27, 2020.** The election of Labour candidate Ibrahim Omer on October 17 makes him New Zealand's first African MP and one of only two former refugees to sit in the New Zealand parliament. [Read more.](#)

## Digital and Social Media

**RRN webinar recording: Social Media Tools for Mobilizing Refugee Research.** The Refugee Research Network hosted its inaugural webinar in October. A lot of the work of the RRN focuses on the value of using social media as a tool to disseminate knowledge about refugee and forced migration issues. The guest speakers, Michele Millard and William Payne argued that it is imperative that academics incorporate social media as part of their dissemination program and activities to have impact beyond specialized audiences. [Watch recording](#), [download the presentation](#) or [access webinar transcript](#).