



Refugee Research Network

Research Digest

No. 100 – January 21, 2021

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

RRN JOURNEY

Our brief history...



A note from RRN Founder, Professor Susan McGrath

Launched in 2008, the Refugee Research Network (RRN) has been a global network of scholars, practitioners, and policymakers that strives to have a wide-ranging and progressive impact on refugee research and policy in Canada and globally. We have continued to try to support the mobilization of new and existing refugee research knowledge to make it more accessible. In May 2017, we created the Refugee Research Digest to circulate up-to-date refugee research and related activities albeit in English only. This is our 100th edition!

As most academic endeavours, we have relied heavily on the expertise of staff and students. I want to recognize the valuable contributions of Michele Millard, the Coordinator of York's Centre for Refugee Studies, and students William Payne, Dina Taha and Irina Osminin.

Please continue to send us your research so that we can continue to share it. If you haven't yet, please complete the [3-min survey](#) as your feedback is instrumental in improving the digest.

Much thanks,

Susan McGrath C.M. Centre for Refugee Studies, York University

Recent Publications and New Research

Special Issue: Shuayb, M., & Crul, M. (2020). Refugee Children, Status, and Educational Attainment: A Comparative Lens: Special Issue Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees. While covering different geographic areas and educational systems, the findings from the articles in this special issue highlight common challenges to refugees in crisis. In both the Global North and South, policies remain hostile to refugees, pushing them further into the margins. At best, they are seen as providers of skilled labour for the aging European communities or a burden surviving on the host community's generosity and thus should be grateful for whatever they receive. Yet, the marginalization, exploitation, and discrimination that refugees experience is part of a structural system plagued by racism, discrimination, and injustice in both the Global North and South. These structural inequalities led the authors to adopt a wider lens in the study of refugees beyond the emergency and humanitarian scope to a justice-oriented approach. [Access the special issue here.](#)

Martin, S., & Bergmann, J. (2020). (Im)mobility in the age of COVID-19. International Migration Review. The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted global human mobility dynamics. This IMR Dispatch examines the historical, bidirectional links between pandemics and mobility and provides an early analysis of how they unfolded during the first nine months of the COVID-19 emergency. Results show, first, that international travel restrictions to combat the spread of the coronavirus are not a panacea in and of themselves. Second, the analysis demonstrates that the pandemic, government responses, and resulting economic impacts can lead to at-risk populations' involuntary immobility. Similarly, stay-at-home measures have posed dire challenges for those who lack options to work from home, and migrants living in precarious, crowded circumstances. Moreover, the global economic contraction has increased involuntary immobility by reducing labour demand and people's resources to move. Third, the authors show that people's attempts to protect themselves from the virus can shift patterns of mobility, such as increases in cross-border return migration and urban-to-rural movements. [Read here.](#)

Easton-Calabria, E. & Skran, C. (Eds) (2020) Special Issue: Rethinking Refugee Self-Reliance. Journal of Refugee Studies, 33(1). This special issue on Rethinking Refugee Self-Reliance brings together a collection of 13 articles (11 academic and 2 field reports) critically examining the potential for, past precedents, and current state of refugee self-reliance, including novel tools to measure it and research presenting self-reliance as defined by refugees themselves. [Read more.](#)

Glorius et al. (2020): Is Social Contact With the Resident Population a Prerequisite of Well-Being and Place Attachment? The Case of Refugees in Rural Regions of Germany. Frontiers in Sociology (Section Migration and Society), 1-13. This paper addresses the quality and quantity of social contact between refugees and resident populations as a prerequisite for integration and long-term migration-development effects from a social, geographical perspective. Drawing from survey data and qualitative interviews with residents and refugees, it examines expectations, perceptions and experiences of everyday encounters and social relationships in neighborhoods in small rural towns and villages. The results support arguments

from research literature for faster social inclusion in rural areas due to greater nearness, and obstacles toward the integration of foreigners due to higher homogeneity of rural neighborhoods and only a few experiences of positive everyday contact with foreigners among rural residents. Nevertheless, more in-depth research is needed to consider the interrelations of both structural contexts and complex and changing needs for personal development in the future, also from an intergenerational perspective. [Read more.](#)

Weidinger, T. & Kordel, S. (2020): Access to and Exclusion from Housing over Time: Refugees' Experiences in Rural Areas. *International Migration*, 1-18. Taking the example of recognized refugees in rural Germany and following the housing pathways approach, the paper addresses the complex interplay of individual and family-related residential preferences over time and structural factors regarding access to housing and associated settlement and integration. Results are from a long-term empirical study that encompassed both refugees' and local actors' views. Mechanisms and practices of exclusion that prevent refugees from accessing appropriate private housing are related to the negotiation of residential preferences about where and how to live, as well as to structural aspects such as the pattern of local housing markets, accessibility of infrastructures, or the unwillingness of landlords to let to refugees. The paper concludes to highlight the role of place in housing trajectories and the significance of social resources within refugees' practices and local intermediaries' strategies to overcome exclusion and access to rural housing. [Read more.](#)

Report, Policy Briefs and Working Papers

Carlaw, J. (2021). Unity in Diversity? Neoconservative Multiculturalism and the Conservative Party of Canada John Carlaw Working Paper No. 2021/1, Ryerson Centre for Immigration and Settlement. This paper outlines characteristics and realities of neoconservative multiculturalism, including references to the conservative time in office and dynamics since their defeat in the 2015 election. These characteristics include 1) pragmatically adapting themselves to common sense notions of multiculturalism and immigration in Canada while also seeking to shift the politics of multiculturalism in Canada rightward by 2) seeking to empty it of anti-racist content and bind its remnants to a neoconservative worldview and 3) engaging in practices and discourses of exclusion, including a) engaging in clash of civilizations and Islamophobic discourses and policies, b) re-ethnicizing Canadian citizenship, c) targeting asylum seekers and 4) bolstering and collaborating with anti-multicultural civil society voices and actors. [Read the working paper.](#)

Cone, D. (2020). Critical Advice for President-elect Biden: A Comprehensive Approach for Displaced Women and Girls, *Refugees International*. This report outlines a pragmatic agenda for the incoming Biden administration to dramatically improve the lives of displaced women and girls while re-establishing desperately needed U.S. leadership and credibility on these issues. [Read the report.](#)

Panayotatos, D. (2020). Blocked at Every Pass: How Greece's Policy of Exclusion Harms Asylum Seekers and Refugees, *Refugees International*. Greek authorities have denied or undercut access to asylum for those seeking safety. The report lays out a framework for how Greece—with the support of the EU—can reverse course and fulfill its international commitments to asylum seekers and refugees. [Read the report.](#)

Moyo, K., & Zanker, F. (2020). Political Contestations within South African Migration Governance, *Arnold-Bergstraesser-Institut of the German Foundation for Peace Research*.

Based on over 30 interviews and four focus groups in Johannesburg and Musina, this report demonstrates that the definition of migrants and refugees is blurred, also at a political level. Foreign nationals are regularly scapegoated, and refugee rights are continuously dismantled for domestic political gain. Though foreign policy reiterates these domestic imperatives, on paper the internal approach stands in paradox to foreign policy ideals of Pan-Africanism. It also shows the different roles of actors involved in migration governance, including the Department of Home Affairs and civil society, before discussing how social xenophobic rhetoric is based on the premises of identity-construction through othering and being linked to economic deprivation. These discourses are reinforced both through rhetoric by politicians and the media. However, the authors show that it does not have to be different, like in the case of the border town of Musina. [Read the report](#). For more research results and project details, read [here](#).

News reports and blog posts

‘The asylum process broke my dream ... now I have a new one.’ The refugee entrepreneurs by Michelle Richey (December 3, 2020) The Conversation. As the world struggles amid pandemic uncertainty, there may be no other group better suited at finding ways to cope than refugees. Restrictions on movement, working, and property ownership inhibit refugees' freedom globally, pushing many into poverty. Nevertheless, against this oppressive backdrop, refugees show tremendous ingenuity, creating businesses and livelihoods from whatever is available to them. This news report outlines inspirational refugee initiatives in entrepreneurship. The refugee community has shown that entrepreneurship is not exclusively the domain of people with extensive networks – it also can help people build new networks. It is not only for those with abundant self-confidence and opportunities – it can also be for those who wish to build self-confidence to change their lives. Seen in this light, refugee entrepreneurs and communities are trailblazing paths out of uncertainty and can provide tremendous insight and inspiration at this unique and challenging time. [Read here](#).

Journeys of hope: what will migration routes into Europe look like in 2021? By Lorenzo Tondo (January 14, 2021) The Guardian. As a new year begins, so do the journeys of tens of thousands more people seeking a new life overseas. The Guardian has spoken to experts, charity workers, and NGOs about the challenges and risks they face on the main migration routes into Europe. This news report summarizes the previous use of prevalent refugee routes to seek asylum while also outlining predictions for future use. [Read here](#).

Digital and social media

LERRN Virtual Conference: 70 Years Protecting People Forced to Flee – North American Panels. January 21, 2021 at 12:30 PM-4:15 PM. Two panels will consider North American perspectives on the “who, what, and how” of realizing protection and solutions, both within North American and through North American engagement in the global refugee regime. [Register for both panels here](#). This panel is part of the virtual academic conference, “70 years protecting people forced to flee”, taking place on 18, 19, 21, and 27

January to mark the 70th Anniversary of the founding of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. For more information, [click here](#).

Video recording: Stakeholder Meeting on Refugee Resettlement in the United States. This stakeholder meeting brought together migration researchers and representatives of U.S. voluntary resettlement agencies to consider the role of migration research in informing programs serving refugees and migrants during the COVID-19 pandemic, with an emphasis on bringing global learning to those on the ground working with refugees. The discussion at the meeting was framed by the results of a scientific workshop, "[Forced Migration Research: From Theory to Practice in Promoting Migrant Well-Being](#)," organized in May 2019 by the Committee on Population (CPOP) of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine with dedicated support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. [Watch here](#).

Video: A Refugee's Resettlement Journey to Canada. IRCC produced an animated video to provide refugees resettling to Canada with an overview of what to expect, including services and supports provided to help them get settled in Canada. [Watch here](#). It is also available in different languages.