



Research Digest

No. 147 | April 4, 2024

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

NEW RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

Abou-Ismaïl, R., Gronfeldt, B., & Marinthe, G. (2024b). [Defensive National Identity relates to support for collective violence, in contrast to secure national identity, in a sample of displaced Syrian diaspora members.](#) *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 99, 101954. This paper examines whether national identities in Syrian diaspora members shape attitudes towards the regime at home. The authors contrast national narcissism (i.e., defensive national identity), an exaggerated belief in one's national ingroup's greatness, and national identification (i.e., secure national identity), a feeling of belonging to the nation and evaluating it positively, as differential predictors of collective violence beliefs. The findings suggest that a defensive national identity was related to support for upward (i.e., violence targeted at regime leaders) and diffuse (i.e., violence targeted at regime supporters) collective violence.

Hoffmeyer-Zlotnik, P. (2023). [Perspectives of flow and place: Rethinking notions of migration and mobility in policy-making.](#) *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 50(6), 1299–1316. Why do some migration policies cause controversial debates while others are barely noticed? And why do migration policies consistently fail to meet their stated objectives? This paper argues that identifying the underlying perspective that informs migration policy-making can be a productive tool to answer these questions. The author starts by reviewing notions of 'migration' and 'mobility' used in political and scholarly discourse and argues that the ways of differentiating between the two entail not only biases related to norms of sedentariness or social hierarchies, but also blind spots for how states and individuals perceive cross-border movements. As an alternative, the author proposes to conceptualize 'migration' and 'mobility' as categories reflecting perspectives that either normalize sedentariness and fixed borders or movement and fluidity.

Tagliacozzo, S., Pisacane, L., & Kilkey, M. (2023). [A system-thinking approach for Migration Studies: An introduction.](#) *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 50(5), 1099–1117. Migration studies first took up a systems perspective in the 1970s to explain

migration flows and their dynamics over time. Over the last decades, the dominant discourse and analysis in migration studies have remained constrained within the limits of the ‘migration system.’ While the influence of the ‘wider environment’ on the migration system has been recognized, what the elements of the wider environment are, and their mechanisms of influence remain poorly articulated. Through eight innovative contributions, this Special Issue seeks to contribute, first, to unpacking the elements (i.e. the other systems) that constitute the ‘wider environment’ with which the components of the migration system (e.g. migrants, sending and receiving communities, institutions, policies, etc.) interact, and secondly, to disentangling the mutual influences between the migration system and this wider environment.

Vankova, Z. (2023). [Refugee labour mobility to the EU: A tool contributing to fairer sharing of responsibilities in the context of forced displacement?](#) *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 43(1), 53–73. A significant shortcoming of work-based pathways is that, in most cases, they do not lead directly to a durable solution but rather offer “a journey to a durable solution” on the basis of temporary residence permits. By comparing the different approaches applied to Ukrainian and Syrian refugees in the European Union, this article concludes that refugee labour mobility in its current state has the potential to contribute to fairer responsibility sharing only cumulatively with other durable solutions and complementary pathways, and when it provides admission facilitation coupled with a fast and clear path to permanent residence or legal mechanisms, ensuring possibilities for extension of residence rights and legality of stay.

Zangiabadi, S., Alghalyini, B., Zoubi, F., & Tamim, H. (2024). [Effect of food insecurity on depression, anxiety, and stress among resettled Syrian refugees in Ontario.](#) *PLOS Global Public Health*, 4(3). Food insecurity has been linked to adverse health outcomes, particularly among vulnerable populations such as refugees. This study aimed to assess the prevalence of food insecurity and its association with depression, anxiety, and stress among resettled Syrian refugee parents in Ontario. Results of the multiple linear regression analysis showed that food insecurity was significantly associated with higher levels of depression, anxiety, and stress. The authors conclude that implementing effective government interventions and frameworks is essential to reduce food insecurity among resettled Syrian refugees to ultimately improve their mental health outcomes and overall well-being.

REPORTS AND POLICY BRIEFS

[Converging Crises: The Impacts of COVID-19 on Migration in South America.](#) (2024). **Migration Policy Institute.** During the onset of COVID-19, many countries were already grappling with increased demands on their regularization, integration, and broader social welfare systems. This report is part of a series of studies by MPI’s Task Force on Mobility and Borders during and after COVID-19 that explores opportunities to improve international coordination regarding border management during public health crises. Other regional case studies in this series look at Asia, the Pacific, Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa. Thematic studies consider the role of digital health credentials in facilitating movement, using risk analysis to shape border policies, and the rise of remote work and “digital

nomads.” A final capstone policy brief reflects on lessons for future public health emergencies.

[Coordination Breakdown: The Impacts of COVID-19 on Migration in Europe. \(2024\).](#)

Migration Policy Institute. Despite many advantages (e.g., robust coordinating institutions and existing freedom of movement agreement, etc.), the onset of COVID-19 largely halted movement both within and from outside the European Union, with heavy consequences for societies and economies across the bloc. This report is part of a series of studies by MPI’s Task Force on Mobility and Borders during and after COVID-19 that explores opportunities to improve international coordination regarding border management during public health crises.

[Diverging Paths: The Impacts of COVID-19 on Migration in the Middle East and North Africa. \(2024\).](#)

Migration Policy Institute. The shutdown of mobility at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic had drastic effects on movement throughout the Middle East and North Africa. Migrant workers comprise much of the workforce in Arab Gulf states, Jordan, and Lebanon, and many lost their jobs and returned to their countries of origin. Tourism and travel, which represent a sizeable share of GDP for many countries, largely halted. And border closures stranded irregular migrants along many major routes. This report is part of a series of studies by MPI’s Task Force on Mobility and Borders during and after COVID-19 that explores opportunities to improve international coordination regarding border management during public-health crises.

[Mobility Shutdown: The Impacts of COVID-19 on Migration in Asia and the Pacific. \(2024\).](#)

Migration Policy Institute. Governments in Asia and the Pacific imposed some of the strictest and longest-lasting limits on human mobility during the COVID-19 pandemic, triggering a collapse in migration, stranding migrants abroad for months, and prompting mass returns that strained health and reintegration systems. But the region also kept COVID-19 cases and deaths relatively low for the first two years. This report is part of a series of studies by MPI’s Task Force on Mobility and Borders during and after COVID-19 that explores opportunities to improve international coordination regarding border management during public-health crises. Other regional case studies in this series look at Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, and South America. Thematic studies consider the role of digital health credentials in facilitating movement, the use of risk analysis to shape border policies, and the rise of remote work and “digital nomads.” A final capstone issue brief reflects on lessons for future public-health emergencies. This series includes three other regional case studies that follow.

[Shehada, R., Al-Ali, A., Jeroudia, M., Taleb, H., Ghanem, H. and Dajani, D. \(2024\).](#)

[Refugees in Jordan: a data-driven approach for change.](#) IIED, London. Jordan hosts a large number of refugees. Many have lived in Jordan for decades but still struggle to create fulfilling lives. This briefing reports on a project that supported refugee communities to generate data about their challenges and agree on their priorities for creating better futures. Refugees identified a complex web of restrictions relating to their legal status and requirements for personal identification as a significant obstacle to leading full lives. They

called for humanitarian organizations and Jordan’s government to offer more opportunities for refugees, so that they can use their skills to contribute to the country’s economy. They also called for agencies and government to engage more fully with refugee communities in planning for refugees, and to provide paths towards long-term residency security that allows them to build new lives.

[The Mobility Key: Realizing the Potential of Refugee Travel Documents.](#) (2024).

Migration Policy Institute. Governments are increasingly experimenting with new mobility pathways for refugees, beyond traditional resettlement operations. These include complementary pathways that connect refugees with work or study opportunities in a country other than the one in which they first sought safety—expanding their future prospects while easing pressure on top refugee-hosting countries. This policy brief—part of the Beyond Territorial Asylum: Making Protection Work in a Bordered World initiative led by MPI and the Robert Bosch Stiftung—outlines the different types of travel documents that can facilitate refugees’ movement and key barriers to acquiring and using them. It also identifies steps that countries of asylum, transit, and destination, along with donors and international organizations, can take to overcome these challenges.

[UNHCR issues new guidance on international refugee protection for Haitians.](#) (2024).

UNHCR. Amidst Haiti’s rapidly deteriorating security, human rights and humanitarian situation, UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, has issued new legal guidance to ensure that international refugee protection is provided for Haitians who need it. Indiscriminate gang violence in Haiti has led to an alarming escalation of human rights violations and large-scale internal displacement. Nearly half of the country’s 11.4 million people require humanitarian assistance. UNHCR’s new guidance aims to assist States with their assessment of asylum claims in light of the stark realities facing Haitians today.

NEWS AND BLOG POSTS

[Armed groups continue terror campaign across Burkina Faso.](#) March 21, 2024. **United Nations. Large parts of Burkina Faso are being terrorized by armed groups, and the rampant insecurity is “beyond alarming,” said the UN human rights chief on Thursday following a brief visit to the country. High Commissioner Volker Türk said, from the capital Ouagadougou, that his local office had been “engaging intensely with the authorities, civil society actors, human rights defenders, UN partners and others on many of the multifaceted human rights challenges” the country faces following a coup in January 2022 that saw Captain Ibrahim Traoré assume power.**

[Canada needs a national strategy for homeless refugee claimants](#) by **Christina Clark-Kazak, March 31, 2024. The Conversation. One year after the federal government closed Roxham Road, refugee claims in Canada continue to increase: there were 143,785 in 2023 compared to 91,730 in 2022. The surprise announcement in March 2023 to modify Canada’s Safe Third Country Agreement with the United States was touted as a way to “better manage access to the refugee system.” Instead, the past year has seen deaths at irregular crossings,**

increased asylum claims at airports (not covered by the modified agreement) and soaring refugee claimant homelessness across Canada.

[Thailand: The forgotten tragedy of 50 Uighur refugee](#) by Valentin Cebron, March 18, 2024. **La Croix International.** In Thailand, some 50 Uighurs who escaped the oppressive Chinese government have been languishing in detention centers for over a decade, in flagrant disregard of international law, reports by several NGOs. If deported to China, "it is clear they would face torture," says Robertson. Their prolonged imprisonment, as refugees in transit, violates international human rights standards. According to HRW, Thailand is caught between the United States and China, opting not to take a stand and thereby keeping the 50 Uighurs in appalling conditions.

[Weeping, weak and soaked, dozens of Rohingya refugees rescued after night on hull of capsized boat](#) by Reza Saifullah and Edna Tarigan, March 21, 2024. **The Associated Press.** An Indonesian search and rescue ship on Thursday located a capsized wooden boat that had been carrying dozens of Rohingya Muslim refugees, and began pulling survivors who had been standing on its hull to safety. An AP photographer reported that 10 people were taken aboard local fishing boats and the Indonesian craft saved another 59. Men, women and children, weak and soaked from the night's rain, wept as the rescue operation got underway and people were taken aboard a rubber dinghy to the rescue boat. There were contradictory reports about whether anyone had died in the accident, with survivors saying many who had been aboard when the boat departed from Bangladesh were still unaccounted for, but authorities insisted everyone had been rescued.

[Why refugee ration cuts in Uganda risk long-term social damage](#) by Maja Simonsen Nilsen, Emmanuel Viga, Eria Serwajja, and Hilde Refstie, March 18, 2024. **The New Humanitarian.** Refugees in Uganda are turning to increasingly desperate measures to support themselves and their families following drastic reductions in humanitarian aid. However, the current research suggests the worst effects of these cuts are yet to be seen, as refugee social networks buckle under pressure to fill the gaps left by aid agencies. Uganda's open-border policies and refugee self-reliance model have earned international acclaim. However, a surge in refugee numbers and major cuts in humanitarian funding are pushing the country's response efforts to the brink. Increasingly threadbare aid budgets mean many of the 1.5 million refugees in the country – one of the world's largest refugee-hosting nations – are receiving less than 40% of their basic survival rations, while others are getting less or nothing at all.

EVENTS, RESOURCES, DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA

[Change Agents: Overcoming the employment stumbling block facing many migrants](#) by **SBS News**. While it is common to hear about society's high achievers, there are others acting as role models of change. Resumes and cover letters are required for most job applications in Australia. However, overseas, in some countries, this is a less common practice. In this episode of Change Agents, the hosts meet a woman helping refugees and immigrants navigate the Australian job market for the first time.

[Continuing Conversations 6: REUK Showcase](#) by **Refugee Education UK**. Are you working on a refugee education project in Europe? Perhaps as a teacher, developing an educational programme for refugees in your school or through your NGO – or as a researcher looking at refugees' access to university or non-formal educational settings? Would you like to meet others working in this field in a friendly and collaborative environment? This is an online networking event hosted by the Hub for Education for Refugees in Europe (HERE) at the University of Nottingham, UK. Building on HERE's inaugural conference in 2022 and our previous five 'Continuing Conversations' events in 2023, this session seeks to foster further connections among the growing HERE Network and continue our critical conversations around support for refugee learners across Europe. This online event takes place on April 22nd, 2024, 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM EDT.

[The Refocus: An Online Summer Forced Migration in Africa Workshop Series](#) by the **Refugee Law Initiative, University of London; the Centre for Migration Studies, University of Ghana; the African Centre for Migration & Society, University of the Witwatersrand; and the African Academy of Migration Research (AAMR)**. This workshop series facilitates the development of knowledge and critical thinking on forced migration and protection issues in Africa, as well as the training of early career and emerging scholars. The Series takes a hybrid approach to participation. If participants are interested in attending the Refocus Series as a summer school, it will be necessary to join all 4 sessions and then produce a written submission on a topic related to this year's theme. Alternatively, participants are welcome to simply attend all four sessions or attend specific ones. Both forms of participation are free and open to all. The event will take place every Wednesday in April 2024.