



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.

Dear RRN Colleagues and Friends,

We want to welcome everyone back to another academic year! We are thrilled to announce that our RRN Research Digest will continue to be published bi-weekly this year.

We sincerely appreciate your contributions to open-access research and encourage you to keep sharing all of your relevant work with us. It greatly enhances the content of the RRN Research Digest. Please reach out to us at rrndigest@yorku.ca with your submissions and ideas.

*Sincerely,
The RRN Team*

NEW RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

Clark-Kazak, C. (2024). [Forced migration in/to Canada: From colonization to refugee resettlement](#). McGill-Queen's University Press. Forced migration shaped the creation of Canada as a settler state and is a defining feature of our contemporary national and global contexts. Many people in Canada have direct or indirect experiences of refugee resettlement and protection, trafficking, and environmental displacement. Offering a comprehensive resource in the growing field of migration studies, Forced Migration in/to Canada is a critical primer from multiple disciplinary perspectives. Researchers, practitioners, and knowledge keepers draw on documentary evidence and analysis to foreground lived experiences of displacement and migration policies at the municipal, provincial, territorial, and federal levels. From the earliest instances of Indigenous displacement and settler colonialism, through Black enslavement, to statelessness, trafficking, and climate migration in today's world, contributors show how migration, as a human phenomenon, is differentially shaped by intersecting identities and structures. Particularly novel are the specific insights into disability, race, class, social age, and gender identity. Situating Canada within broader international trends, norms, and structures – both today and historically – Forced Migration

in/to Canada provides the tools we need to evaluate information we encounter in the news and from government officials, colleagues, and non-governmental organizations. It also proposes new areas for enquiry, discussion, research, advocacy, and action. This book is open-access to all readers.

Betts, A., Flinder Stierna, M., Omata, N., & Sterck, O. (2024). [The economic lives of refugees.](#) *World Development*. The economic lives of refugees are often viewed as relatively homogeneous, and sources of within-group variation remain largely unexplored. The authors describe the socio-economic diversity of refugees in one particular region: East Africa. Drawing upon first-hand quantitative and qualitative data collected in Kenya, Uganda, and Ethiopia (n = 8,996), the article systematically compares 12 refugee subpopulations living in seven refugee camps and the three capital cities. In order to identify sources of variation, they examine three main questions: (1) What variation is there in socio-economic outcomes? (2) What strategies and resources do refugees rely upon, and how do these vary? (3) How are opportunities and constraints shaped by differences in institutions and identity? Overall, it is shown that, although the economic lives of refugees have some distinguishing and common features, they are also heterogeneous by host country, urban/camp context, nationality, and household. The authors explain why describing and understanding sources of within-group variation matters for research and policy.

Scott-Smith, T. (2024). [Fragments of home: Refugee housing and the politics of shelter.](#) *Stanford University Press*. This book focuses on seven examples of emergency shelter, from Germany to Jordan, which emerged after the great "summer of migration" in 2015. Drawing on detailed ethnographic research into these shelters, the book reflects on their political implications and opens up much bigger questions about humanitarian action. By exploring how aid agencies and architects approached this basic human need, Tom Scott-Smith demonstrates how shelter has many elements that are hard to reconcile or combine; shelter is always partial and incomplete, producing mere fragments of home. Ultimately, he argues that current approaches to emergency shelter have led to destructive forms of paternalism and concludes that the principle of autonomy can offer a more fruitful approach to sensitive and inclusive housing.

Boucher, A. K. (2024). [Migrant sexual precarity through the lens of workplace litigation.](#) *Gender, Work & Organization*. Theories of precarity have emphasized workplace isolation, worker vulnerability and a lack of control over key features of work. Migration status has been viewed as an attribute that can exacerbate worker precarity, and sexual violence and bodily injury are viewed by feminist scholars as sources of such precarity as well. Nevertheless, how the interaction of workplace conditions, migration status, gender and sexual violence impact migrants needs more attention. The data collected for this project demonstrates that female migrants experience higher rates of sexual harassment, sexual assault, sexual servitude, and sex trafficking when compared with men. They are characterized qualitatively by key features that present a heightened form of sexual precarity when compared with citizens: misuse by employers of visa conditions, debt bondage, live-in arrangements, entrapment and slavery, and the combination of sexual violence with economic

infringements such as wage theft and physical assault. Sexual precarity, this paper argues, should be viewed as an overlapping and reinforcing form of workplace precarity that has distinctly sexual and bodily dimensions.

Carlaw, J & Azahah, K. (2024). [Pathways to permanence and immigration levels: A critical policy discourse analysis \(CPDA\) of struggles and limits to societal membership for migrants amidst and emerging from COVID-19 \(2020-2022\) in Canada.](#) *Toronto Metropolitan Centre for Immigration and Settlement (TCIMS) and CERC in Migration & Integration*. In the documents examined in this paper, pathways discourses and proposals appear to have provided a way for actors with very different political and policy agendas to signal their commitments to immigrant and migrant rights without necessarily engaging in more inclusive structural change that would address the insecurity and labour and human rights violations experienced by many living under temporary or precarious statuses. For that reason, and because of the stakes of these debates, the gap between actors' political and policy discourses demands sustained and intense scrutiny. As seen in recent government and opposition migration discourses, the growth of Canada's migrant worker and precarious status population and the important substantive rights that accrue to those who achieve permanent residence mean that pathways discourses and policies granting access to permanent residence will continue to be of tremendous importance. The paper concludes with some reflections on post-2022 developments, including December 2023 statements by Canada's Immigration Minister that a 'broad and comprehensive' regularization program is forthcoming and a significant decline in public support for current immigration levels."

Chatty, D. (2024). [Refuge in the levant and eastern Mediterranean: Spaces of containment or places of choice?](#) *Journal of Refugee Studies*. After the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq in 2003, the European Union became fixated on keeping refugees from the Middle East out of Europe. By 2015, with the mass influx of Syrians, Iraqis, and others, seeking safety across the Balkans, the European response was an extraordinary effort to push back and contain these displaced people within the Eastern Mediterranean region through physical barriers, bilateral agreements, and the establishment of refugee camps. This paper suggests that Europe's efforts to keep displaced Syrians and Iraqis out of Europe were misguided. That is, contrary to what much of the European main media reported at the time, relatively few of those displaced Syrians and Iraqis had a strong desire to seek asylum in Europe. Rather, depending upon socio-economic and kinship networks, and historical ties developed over 500 years of Ottoman suzerainty, they preferred to remain in the region following long-established transnational socio-economic networks and kinship ties.

Sahin-Mencutek, Z., & Triandafyllidou, A. (2024). [Coerced return: Formal policies, informal practices and migrants' navigation.](#) *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 1–18. This article raises two questions: (1) how do formal policies and informal practices intersect in coercing returns of migrants without legal immigration status, refused asylum seekers and those unlikely to get asylum? (2) how do migrants at risk of return navigate the coercion they are exposed to? The paper also investigates how migrants exercise agency by contesting/resisting or complying with the return procedures. The article contributes to the

scholarship on returns by unpacking formal and informal policy and practice dynamics and migrant agency. Empirically, the paper is based on observations and documentation of practices derived from field research and 97 interviews conducted with returnees from EU countries and Turkey to Albania, Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan between 2018 and 2023.

van Reekum, R., & Schinkel, W. (2024). [Instituting the global: The racial analytics of migration.](#) *Migration Studies*, 12(3). In this article, the authors regard concepts of inclusion and exclusion as epistemological obstacles for a political (rather than a critical) analysis of migration. Working with the rich conceptual innovations and scientific and philosophical genealogies developed by Denise Ferreira Da Silva in *Toward a Global Idea of Race*, they seek to show how concepts of inclusion and exclusion, as well as equations between migration and mobility fortify what Da Silva has called ‘globality’ and ‘raciality’. They argue, today, the racial institution of the global operates to a large extent by way of the conceptual, classificatory and ocular practices that make up what is known as ‘migration’, which continues to be understood (falsely but constitutively) as cross-border mobility.

REPORTS AND POLICY BRIEFS

[“Don’t tell me about your fear”: Elimination of longstanding safeguard leads to systematic violations of refugee law.](#) (2024). **Refugee International.** As part of a June 2024 asylum ban rule, the Biden administration eliminated a safeguard that had been in place for nearly 30 years to protect people seeking asylum from being summarily deported without a chance to present their asylum claim. This provision, included in an Interim Final Rule (IFR) titled “Securing the Border” that went into effect immediately on June 5th, eradicates a key requirement for immigration officers to ask people arriving in the United States about their fear of return. In just two months, this change has had disastrous consequences. Based on countless interviews conducted by legal service organizations with asylum seekers impacted by this policy since it was implemented in June, immigration officials are failing to comply with U.S. and international refugee law and summarily deporting people who fear return without a screening on their asylum claim (referred to as a “credible fear interview,” or CFI). The effects of the new policy are detailed.

[Engaging employers in growing refugee labor pathways.](#) (2024). **Migration Policy Institute.** Refugee labour pathways, which focus on helping displaced people with in-demand skills access existing economic immigration channels, have attracted considerable attention in recent years. The appeal is two-fold: From a humanitarian perspective, they open additional opportunities for refugees and other displaced people to move to safety. From a labour market perspective, they offer access to an additional talent pool at a time when many employers are struggling to recruit qualified workers. Such programs now exist in several countries, with the largest in Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom. Designed and implemented as a partnership between these countries’ governments and the nongovernmental organization Talent Beyond Boundaries (TBB), these pathways aim to help jobseekers overcome obstacles that can be exacerbated by displacement, such as difficulty connecting with potential employers or providing identity or credential documentation. As

these programs progress from the pilot stage, the central role employers play and their impact on efforts to achieve scale have gone largely unexplored. This first-of-its-kind report aims to fill this gap by examining employers' experiences with recruiting displaced talent and ideas for program improvements. The analysis, conducted by MPI and drawing on unpublished TBB survey data on employer engagement, draws in part on consultations with employers, policymakers, and civil-society stakeholders.

[Public opinion of climate migrants: Understanding what factors trigger anxiety or support.](#) (2024). Migration Policy Institute.

Climate change and extreme weather events are predicted to dramatically alter patterns of human mobility around the world. This poses an urgent policy question: How will receiving communities react to the arrival of people displaced by disasters and climate impacts? The degree of public support for newcomers can shape how policy responses are designed, implemented, and received by the public. But public opinion is not always easy to predict, nor is it static or fixed. A review of polling and experimental data from around the world suggests that climate migration may trigger anxiety if accompanied by a sense of disorder, unfairness, or loss of control, but also that communities can rally to support large displaced populations, given the right conditions. Efforts to increase support for climate migrants often draw on common narratives—of urgency, of climate migrants' victimhood, or of their ability to make positive contributions to climate action—but these all come with their own risks and trade-offs. This policy brief looks at what is known about public opinion of climate migrants, and what lessons can be gleaned from broader efforts to mitigate public anxiety and build welcoming communities in the context of rapid societal change. It reflects on how common narratives can create environments more or less welcoming of climate migrants, and how they shape the space policymakers have to think creatively about how to manage climate migration.

[The Nuba mountains: A window into the Sudan crisis.](#) (2024). Refugee International.

Sudan is in the midst of a human rights and hunger crisis. Khartoum has been destroyed. Darfur is once again experiencing mass atrocities including possible genocide. Famine has already been declared in part of the country and is likely to spread. Nearly every part of the country and many neighbouring countries have been affected by the war, whether through direct violence, economic collapse accelerating food insecurity, or the arrival of refugees seeking safety and aid across borders. Amid this turmoil, the area of the Nuba mountains bordering South Sudan and long controlled by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement North (SPLM-N) has become a haven of relative security, but far from untouched. An estimated 700,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) have arrived in the Nuba mountains since the start of the war in April 2023. A poor rainy season last year and a plague of locusts had already increased food insecurity in the area. Now, a sharp increase in arrivals of displaced people from other parts of Sudan and the closure of trade routes to the north due to the conflict have exacerbated the challenges.

NEWS AND BLOG POSTS

[Canada accepts 1,500 Nigerians seeking asylum in 15 months](#) by Stephen Angbulu, **August 25, 2024. Punch.** Canada’s Immigration and Refugee Board granted asylum to at least 1,467 Nigerians, who applied for refugee protection from January 2023 to March 2024. This brings the total number of accepted asylum claims filed by Nigerians to 11,370 from 2012 to Q1 2024, as shown by data from the Refugee Protection Division of the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada. The Board grants refugee protection in Canada if the Division satisfactorily confirms that an applicant or claimant meets the United Nations definition of a Convention refugee, “which has been incorporated into Canadian law, or that the applicant is a person in need of protection.”

[Fewer migrants, greater danger: The impact of 2024’s crackdowns](#) by Adam Isacson, **August 29, 2024. WOLA.** Migration to the U.S.-Mexico border has plummeted in 2024: this summer has seen some of the fewest migrant arrivals in four years. While this might suggest that migration is now “under control,” a closer look at the data reveals a stark humanitarian cost as enforcement policies grow more aggressive in the United States, Mexico, and further south. The numbers show that more migrants and asylum seekers are being denied protection, often bottlenecked along the route and preyed upon by criminal groups, while deaths on U.S. soil increase. The numbers contradict the narratives of hard-liners, like the state government of Texas, who insist that harsh crackdowns on protection-seeking migrants are effective. And they offer no evidence that the present migration decline will be long-lasting.

[Fortress Europe: Migration flashpoints in an election year](#) by Joanna Gill & Lin Taylor, **August 29, 2024. Context.** Rights campaigners warn that new policies from European governments to deter migration from Asian, African and Middle Eastern countries may shut out or even criminalise refugees, already facing growing hostility across the bloc. Amid significant gains by far-right parties in the European Parliament in a June election, more countries across the continent are imposing measures designed to respond to rising anti-immigration sentiment among voters, including Germany, Britain, and France.

[Mani once sang of freedom in Afghanistan. Now, silenced, she’s desperate to escape. Will Australia help?](#) by Shadi Khan Saif, **September 2, 2024. The Guardian.** In the final days of the Afghan republic – in defiance of a looming takeover by the Taliban – the Hazara journalist Mani sang revolutionary poems in public in Kabul about women, freedom and justice. Now she is on the run, waiting for the Australian government to grant her a humanitarian visa. It’s three years since Australia pulled its final troops out of Afghanistan. Their presence over two decades saw the country emerge from the ashes of civil war, embrace a relative peace and a fragile democracy before falling back into the darkness of fundamentalism under the Taliban. Now young women like Mani are bearing the brunt of this failed democratisation project. Like other Afghan women and their families, she is desperately seeking asylum in Australia – somewhere safe to live.

[Mpox outbreak in Africa poses risks for refugees, displaced communities](#) by Lisa Schlein, **August 27, 2024. VOA.** U.N. agencies warn that refugees and displaced communities in the Democratic Republic of Congo and other African countries infected with

mpox are at particular risk of illness and death because of conditions under which they are forced to live. The World Health Organization says at least 42 suspected cases of mpox have been identified among the refugee population in DR Congo's South Kivu Province, one of the regions hardest hit by the disease. Confirmed and suspected cases of the new clade 1b strain also have been recorded among refugee populations in the Republic of the Congo and Rwanda.

[7 years after genocide, plight of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh is exacerbated by camp violence](#) by Nasir Uddin, September 3, 2024. **The Conversation.** Hundreds of thousands of Rohingya in Bangladesh marked the seven-year anniversary of displacement from their homes in neighbouring Myanmar on Aug. 25, 2024. It was a sombre occasion for the long-persecuted Myanmar Muslim minority, who have faced dire living conditions while clustered into the world's most crowded refugee camps. Since 2017, their status has been continually challenged by both intermittent hostility from within Bangladesh and an ongoing civil war in Myanmar, during which the military government has continued to crack down on the Rohingya's homeland in Rakhine state.

EVENTS, RESOURCES, DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA

[Asymmetrical sympathies: The global north's response to protection seekers](#) by **The Migration Oxford Podcast**. Why are some countries across the Global North more open and accepting towards refugees than others? How can asymmetrical sympathies and differential treatments be better understood? The welcoming response of European countries towards Ukrainian refugees from 2022 onwards has been marked by its strength and rapidity. This recent example recalls other moments of openness from past decades: the Western response to Kosovar refugees in 1999, or the response of some countries – including Germany and Canada – to Syrian refugees in 2015. Such responses are striking as they occurred simultaneously with restrictive policies enforced against other groups of protection seekers. How can we understand moments of openness towards refugees in countries of the Global North? Why do these responses favour some groups and not others? How can we understand asymmetrical sympathies and differential treatment in the response to various groups of protection seekers? This episode of The Migration Oxford Podcast explores these questions and more, in an effort to challenge the global responses to refugee crises and ask how we can make those responses more inclusive.

[Fall 2024 belonging talks series on the theme, food, migration, and belonging: Sustainable practices for integrated communities](#) by **Clark University**. This series presents the role of food and cooking in mobile homemaking and for creating sustainable societies. The different events are as follows: *October 9, 12-1PM EST*: "Culinary Sustainability as a Belonging and Resilience Practice for Refugees" (Dr. Susan Rottmann, Zeynep Yilmaz Hava and Nour Zanjari, Food and Migration Research Team, Ozyegin University, Istanbul, Turkey). *November 13, 12-1PM EST*: "From Memories to the Table: My

Pontic Greek Family Journey" (Chef Panos Karafoulidis, Gastro Routes, Thessaloniki, Greece). *November 20, 12-1PM EST*: Presenting Oakland Bloom's food business training and incubator program empowering refugee and immigrant chefs (Claudia Luz Suarez and Chef Nicole Garcia, Oakland Bloom, CA, USA).

Immigrant and refugee mental health project: Leadership course by **The Immigrant and Refugee Mental Health Project**. The Immigrant and Refugee Mental Health Project, funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, is offering a free, online course for leaders who are committed to understanding immigrant and refugee mental health and who lead staff working with immigrants and refugees in Canada. This includes organizations in the health, settlement and social service sectors. The course runs from September 16 – October 28, 2024, with an estimated time of 3 hours per lesson.