

Review

Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, Gil Loescher, Katy Long, and Nando Sigona (eds): *The Oxford Handbook of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies*

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*The Oxford Handbook of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies*¹ aims at providing a comprehensive overview of the major scholarly works in the ever-expanding field of refugee and forced migration studies. This 53-chapter volume (including the introduction) sheds light on the most recent debates and challenges that have involved both academics and practitioners (lawyers, activists, etc.) in this field and promotes an interdisciplinary approach to the study of displacement, migration, and migrants' rights. It engages with a diverse range of topics from legal studies, political science, international relations and even presents some regional case studies. The book is a useful and inspirational source for both students and scholars who wish to explore new research directions in this field.

This edited volume has an excellent and coherent structure. It is structured into seven parts: Approaches: Old and New (Part I), Shifting Spaces and Scenarios of Displacement (Part II), Legal and Institutional Responses to Forced Migration (Part III), Root Causes of Displacement (Part IV), Lived Experiences and Representations of Forced Migration (Part V), Rethinking Durable Solutions (Part VI), and finally Regional Studies (Part VII). It begins by addressing the history of the field of migration studies. Chapter 2 outlines the development of refugee and forced migrants studies from a Europe-centric approach in the 1920s and 1930s to a more global approach in the 1980s. It then provides an up-to-date interdisciplinary approach to the field of forced migration as it covers topics from the perspectives of political science (chapter 4), sociology (chapter 7), international relations (chapter 5), anthropology (chapter 6), geography (chapter 9), and security studies (chapter 21).

For legal studies researchers, this handbook has a lot to offer concerning the legal approach to refugees and forced migrants. Chapter 3 is a very good introduction to the most important legal tools in the international law of refugee protection. It outlines a short history of the first initiatives to give refugees legal protection (International Refugee Organization, replaced later by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees - UNHCR). Major international conventions on refugee protection (the 1951 Convention to the Status of Refugees, the 1967 Protocol) and regional treaties (the Cartagena Treaty, the Convention on Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa) are also included in this section (chapter 3). Regional and international legal instruments are examined through several chapters: human rights and migrants (chapter 16), borders and citizenship (chapter 19), statelessness and refugees (chapter 21), resettlement and displacement (chapter 23 - 24), trafficking (chapter 25), non-refoulement principle (chapter 16), and encampment and self-resettlement (chapter 10). Finally, while parts of the book cover the legal and institutional responses to forced migration at a general, encompassing level,

¹ Edited by Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, Gil Loescher, Katy Long, and Nando Sigona, Oxford, 2014.

other parts focus on specific issues that are of high importance in today's migration studies. Gil Loescher, for instance, explores the effectiveness of the UNHCR and the challenges it is likely to face in the future in general without dwelling much on concrete, local issues (chapter 17). By contrast, Susan Akram writes about the role of specific UN agencies such as the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) and the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine (UNCCP) in distinguishing the legal status of Palestinian refugees from other refugees (chapter 18).

One of the key features of the book is that different chapters are dedicated to different categories of refugees. This can be seen mainly in part II and part V of the book: urban refugees (chapter 11), refugees and diasporas (chapter 14), IDPs (chapter 11 and 13), protracted refugees (chapter 12), children refugees (chapter 31), women refugees (chapter 32), older refugees (chapter 33), and refugees with disability issues (chapter 34). This categorization strategy is a very effective way to draw the reader's attention to the importance of distinguishing different labels and concepts in migration studies.

The Handbook goes beyond the legal, social, and political science approaches to provide a specific section for regional case studies. These selections range from the African continent (chapters 42-45), Asia (chapter 46-48), Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific (chapter 49), the Americas (Chapter 50-52), and finally Europe (chapter 53).

Despite the diversity of topics, this volume does not address sufficiently a few issues. First, it lacks a systematic, up-to-date review of the relationship between media and refugees. Only one chapter (chapter 36) discusses this question, and this chapter covers only the media's representation of refugees and the negative campaigning towards immigrants going on in some countries such as the UK. Given our current age of information, one chapter is not enough to cover the omnipresent and highly debated issue of technological development and its impact on immigrants. A whole section should be included in future editions addressing social media's influence. The work of Stefen Castles² for instance is an attempt to understand the impact of globalization on the flow of people and the new mobility trends with the emergence of a transnational community and multi-layered citizenship.

The Handbook's edition also fails to engage with the omnipresent use of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) by transnational migrants. Works done by Anastasia N. Panagakos and Heather A. Horst,³ for example, demonstrate how different ICT tools have been incorporated into migrants' lifestyle. Furthermore, this volume neglects the role of social media tools in fostering and/or hindering the social integration process of migrants into their new host societies. A recent study by Khorshed Alam and Sophia Imran⁴ in Australia, for instance, focused on the linkages between migrants and technology. Other scholars have examined the role of the new communication channels in facilitating migration⁵. While individual chapters tackle the problem of anti-immigrant representation (chapter 36) and governments' policies in criminalizing forced migration (chapter 15), very little is said about anti-immigrants campaigning by politicians and governments. This phenomenon is a very

² C. Stephen, Migration and Community Formation under Conditions of Globalization, *International migration review*, Vol. 36, No. 4, 2002, p. 1143-1168.

³ P. N. Anastasia & H. A. Horst, Return to Cyberia: Technology and the Social Worlds of Transnational Migrants, *Global Networks*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 2006, p. 109-124.

⁴ K. Alam & S. Imran, The Digital Divide and Social Inclusion Among Refugee Migrants: A case in regional Australia, *Information Technology & People*, Vol. 28, No. 2, 2015, p. 344-365.

⁵ R. Dekker & G. Engbersen, How Social Media Transform Migrant Networks and Facilitate Migration, *Global Networks*, Vol. 14, No. 4, 2014, p. 401-418.

common practice today in some countries (such as the UK, USA, Hungary, and Poland) and deserves a deeper attention from researchers.

Despite the lack of more up-to date work on mass media, technological development, and migration studies, the Oxford Handbook is overall an excellent, interdisciplinary, and extremely diverse source for anyone interested in the field. It provides not only theoretical background about the various presented topics, but it also examines challenges and problems with the current legal tools used in addressing forced migration. It not only presents some of the most debated theoretical issues in migration studies but also offers practical solutions to the increasingly complex threats facing refugees and forced migrants. As Katy Long, one of the book's authors puts it: "[...] we need to not only rethink solutions, but also rethink protection. Such strategies can make displacement itself better, by allowing the displaced – when they are able – to move beyond humanitarian space and engage in development, exercising choice, and autonomy, even if this does not amount to an ideal durable solution" (2014, p. 376).