

PEACE SCIENCE DIGEST

A PROJECT OF THE WAR PREVENTION INITIATIVE

SPECIAL ISSUE Refugees & Migrants

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A close-up view of the Za'atri camp in Jordan for Syrian refugees as seen on July 18, 2013, from a helicopter carrying U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and Jordanian Foreign Minister Nasser Judeh.

Need for the Digest photo credit: Christin Hume on Unsplash

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NEED FOR THE DIGEST

Peace and Conflict Studies (henceforth: Peace Science) has emerged as an academic discipline with its own graduate programs, handbooks, research tools, theories, associations, journals, and conferences. As with most scientific communities, the slow migration of academic knowledge into practical application becomes a limiting factor of a field's growth, its impact, and the overall effectiveness of its practitioners.

The expanding academic field of Peace Science continues to produce high volumes of significant research that often goes unnoticed by practitioners, the media, activists, public policy-makers, and other possible beneficiaries. This is unfortunate, because Peace Science ultimately should inform the practice on how to bring about peace.

The research and theory needed to guide peace workers to produce more enduring and positive peace, not only more peace studies, have come to stay. Bridging the gap between the peace movement moralism and foreign policy pragmatism is a major challenge facing everyone who seeks to achieve peace on Earth. (Johan Galtung and Charles Webel)

To address this issue, the War Prevention Initiative has created the *Peace Science Digest* as a way to disseminate top selections of research and findings from the field's academic community to its many beneficiaries.

The *Peace Science Digest* is formulated to enhance awareness of scholarship addressing the key issues of our time by making available an organized, condensed, and comprehensible summary of this important research as a resource for the practical application of the field's current academic knowledge.

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Dear Readers,

Borders. Wars have been fought over them. Walls have been built along them—and then sometimes torn down. People have crossed them hoping to build new lives. From space, they must seem utterly insignificant; as Astronaut Russell Schweickart reminds us, there are “No frames, no boundaries” on earth from that perspective.¹ Nonetheless, many of us simply take borders for granted, just as we may take for granted having citizenship status in a country that protects us and grants us certain rights. But when it comes right down to it, where we are born is a matter of chance, though hugely consequential benefits—or costs—can follow. In a world where the free movement of goods is privileged over the free movement of people, ease of travel across international borders depends on a variety of factors related to how each one of us is positioned in global power structures: the passports we carry, how much money we have, our social networks, and even our ethnic, racial, or religious identities determine whether we gain or are denied access to other countries. Indeed, many countries right now are actively trying to prevent the arrival of those trying to cross borders to escape war, violence, poverty, or resource scarcity.

Considering the plight of migrants (258 million globally) and especially refugees (26 million globally) is impossible to do without also considering war and human security. On the most obvious level, one of the many enormous costs of war is the massive human displacement it causes as people try to protect themselves by leaving the war zone. But human displacement itself can also come with its own security implications. Refugees and migrants are often subject to violence at the hands of host governments (see Analysis 1) and communities, while also sometimes being targets of recruitment into armed groups (see Analysis 4). Less commonly recognized, however, is the role they play in peacebuilding, both in their home countries from a distance (Analysis 6) and in their host countries when—along with their local counterparts—they engage in meaningful forms of contact (Analysis 2) or economic activity (Analysis 5).

Nonetheless, these days refugees and immigrants are regularly dehumanized and used as scapegoats to mobilize people in support of right-wing nationalist agendas, especially across Europe and in the United States, with narratives about “them” destroying “our” way of life or even threatening “our” security. Anti-immigrant/refugee policies and rhetoric have of course been a cornerstone of the Trump agenda, from the so-called “Muslim ban” early in his tenure to the horrific practices recently unfolding at the U.S./Mexico border and the ICE raids taking place in communities across the U.S. At the same time, there are also plenty of community-led initiatives to welcome and support refugees and immigrants, as well as to build meaningful contact between newcomers and host communities—all of which highlight the importance of building empathy between the two (see Analysis 3). In fact, an outpouring of community support—especially efforts to educate individuals about their rights—may have been what effectively protected thousands of undocumented immigrants from recently announced ICE deportation raids.

For those of us in the U.S., now is the time for introspection, both about our country’s role in creating the conditions that have forced people to flee—from the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq to nonexistent climate leadership—and about who we are as a nation. If the United States stands for anything, however imperfectly, it is for the ability of people to transcend the conditions of their oppression and build a life where they are free to pursue their dreams: “Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free...” Let us all remember that any of us could be in the position of having to flee our homes. How would we want the world to respond?

Your *Peace Science Digest* Editorial Team,

1. Listen to Russel Schweickarts view of a world without borders at: https://youtu.be/7y70_9WB3ZU



Patrick Hiller



Kelsey Coolidge



Molly Wallace

LETTER FROM THE FIELD

Dear Readers,

In my former position as executive director of Portland Meet Portland,² I led public dialogues on the topic of immigrants and refugees in Oregon communities for the last three years. During that time, I have had the privilege to travel to both rural and urban places and developed a sense of how vastly different communities in Oregon think about people who flee violence, war, persecution, economic hardship, or lack of opportunity.

I have learned that immigrants and refugees can be framed as an existential threat to an American identity. Or, they can be framed paternalistically as eternal victims (or heroes) and objects of pity who are powerless and in need of a savior. To be clear, these framings are not equal in the negative impacts they have. Yet, in both instances we are asked to talk a lot about immigrants and refugees in ways that serve our own interests.

Some of the more extreme examples of this might be, “Send her back,” “shithole countries,” “They’re bringing drugs. They’re bringing crime. They’re rapists,” and so on. These talking points are dehumanizing and create an environment that is permissive of violence. Many people do not use or agree with the extreme talking points above. More common, however, is the sentiment that immigrants and refugees do not want to “be American” and thus are rejected from “our” communities.

Immigrants and refugees do want and value what it means to “be American.” Yet, they are asked not to integrate but to assimilate without the space and resources to understand the new culture they live in, recover from their trauma, or be afforded a sense of safety and belonging. Upon arrival, they are immediately thrust into a new struggle for survival, new demands and obligations, and new systems in a new language—all while being told they must give up their identity, the very thing that provides them a sense of grounding, orientation, and purpose. In such a contradictory setting, newcomers (and not so newcomers) are often paralyzed. They are asked to become something that is a source of their own isolation and fear.

The responsibility lies with those of us who are lucky enough to live in our home countries and communities. Immigrants and refugees must have options for existing across a spectrum, and they must be allowed to determine their own paths as they grapple with the inevitable generational shifts unfolding before their eyes. Whereas the 70-year-old Syrian refugee will most likely never learn English, their granddaughter may never fully speak Arabic. Since language and identity are so closely bonded, loss of language equals loss of identity. Many of us can empathize with that feeling. It is the same feeling that ranchers have in rural parts of Oregon when they see their livelihood becoming harder and scarcer and their children choose not to carry on small family businesses and move away for better opportunities.

Cultural preservation and integration are not mutually exclusive; in fact, they are intimately linked and supportive of each other. Immigrants and refugees are complex human beings just like any of us and need the freedom to determine their own futures together with those around them. This is what it means to be refuge: To listen, to discuss, to provide, to be curious, to welcome, to ask, to give and receive, to support, to be present and engage, to guide, and to love.

Manuel Padilla

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2. Portland Meet Portland is a Portland, OR, non-profit organization with the mission to “welcome and befriend immigrants and refugees, engaging diverse cultures. We enrich the broader community through mutually beneficial mentoring opportunities and dialogue that promotes cross-cultural learning, enhances professional development, and builds trust.” See their website: <http://www.portlandmeetportland.org>

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Photo Credit: Don Ross III on Unsplash

Refugees, Asylum-Seekers, IDPs, and Migrants: Facts & Figures

Refugee: “[S]omeone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. Most likely, they cannot return home or are afraid to do so.” (USA for UNHCR: <https://www.unrefugees.org/refugee-facts/what-is-a-refugee/>)

Asylum-seeker: Someone seeking refugee status whose case has not yet been decided.

IDP: Internally displaced person, or someone who has been forced to flee home due to violence, natural disaster, and so on but who has not crossed an international border.

Migrant: “An umbrella term, not defined under international law, reflecting the common lay understanding of a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons.” (International Organization for Migration: <https://www.iom.int/who-is-a-migrant>) However, the term “migrant” is typically used to refer to those living outside the country of their birth who are not refugees. (In other words, “migrant” and “refugee” are often used as mutually exclusive categories, with “migrants” choosing to move to another country, often for economic reasons, and “refugees” being forced to move for reasons described above.)

International Agreements

1951 UN Convention on the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol:

Establishes refugees’ right to protection, including the obligation of countries not to return refugees to countries where they face persecution (the principle of “non-refoulement”). Countries also have the obligation not to punish refugees for illegal entry or to expel refugees.

1990 UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Their Families:

Explicitly extends already-existing human rights to migrant communities.

2018 Global Compacts on Refugees and for Migration:

Reiterate countries’ obligations to respect the human rights of migrants and refugees but also recognize the need to more equitably share the burden of taking in refugees and to support the countries most affected by the arrival of refugees and migrants.

International Organizations

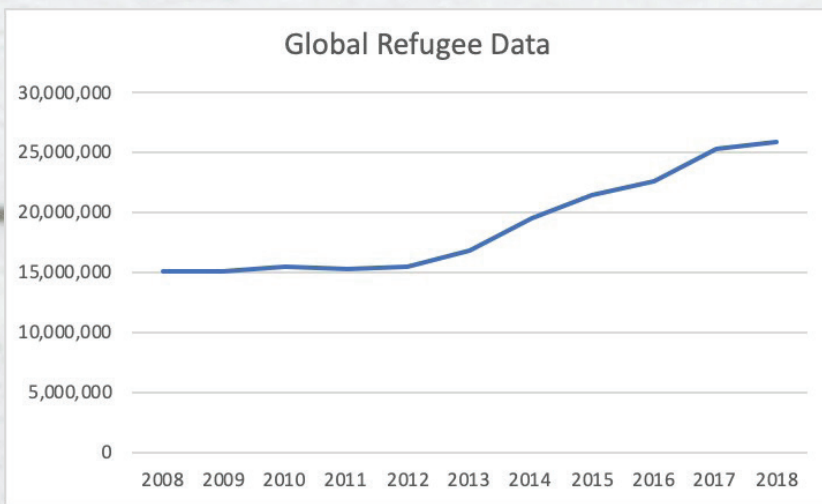
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR):

A United Nations agency with the mandate to protect refugees, forcibly displaced persons, and stateless persons. Also known as the UN Refugee Agency.

International Organization of Migration (IOM):

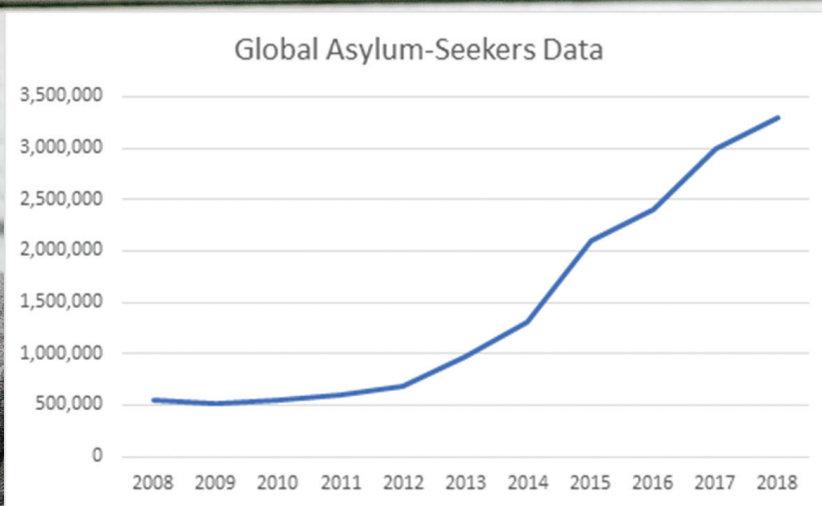
An intergovernmental organization that provides migration services and advice to governments in order to promote “humane and orderly migration.”

The most recent data on refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and migrants demonstrate the truly global nature of the crisis.



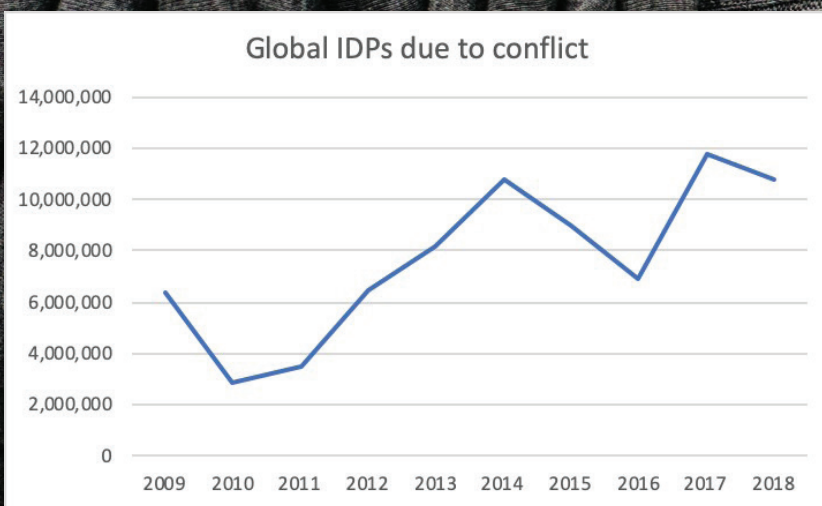
Refugees

Over the past decade, the number of refugees has increased from approximately 15 million (2008) to 26 million (2018). An uptick in the number of refugees is notable after 2013, likely related to the Syrian Civil War. 80% of refugees live in countries neighboring their countries of origin. Over half of refugees are under the age of 18.



Asylum-Seekers

It's a similar story for asylum-seekers. Over the past decade, the number of asylum-seekers has increased from 553,700 (2008) to 3.3 million (2018). In 2018, the highest number of asylum applications were from Venezuelans. After Venezuela, Afghanistan, Syria, and Iraq have the highest numbers of asylum-seekers.



IDPs

The number of IDPs due to conflict has also increased over the past decade. Currently, the countries with the largest IDP populations include Colombia, Syria, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Note: Data for IDPs distinguishes between those displaced by violent conflict and those displaced by natural disasters. The chart here shows only IDPs displaced by violent conflict.

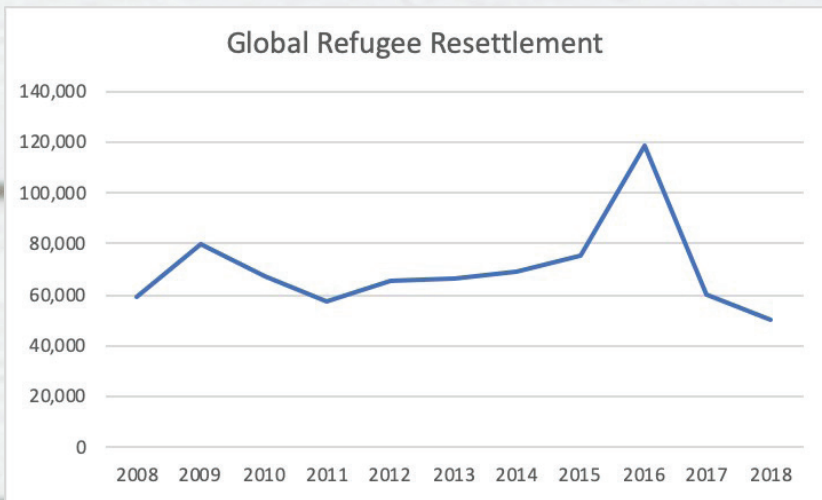
Citations

Data for charts on Global Refugees, Global Asylum-Seekers, Global IDPs Due to Conflict, and Global Refugee Resettlement on Top Countries of Origin for Refugees, Asylum-Seekers, and IDPs and Top Countries of Destination for Refugees and Asylum-Seekers sourced from:

Migration Data Portal. (N.d.). The bigger picture. Retrieved August 5, 2019, from https://migrationdataportal.org/?i=stock_abs_#t=2017

UNHCR. (2019, June). Figures at a glance: Statistical yearbooks. Retrieved August 5, 2019, from <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/figures-at-a-glance.html>

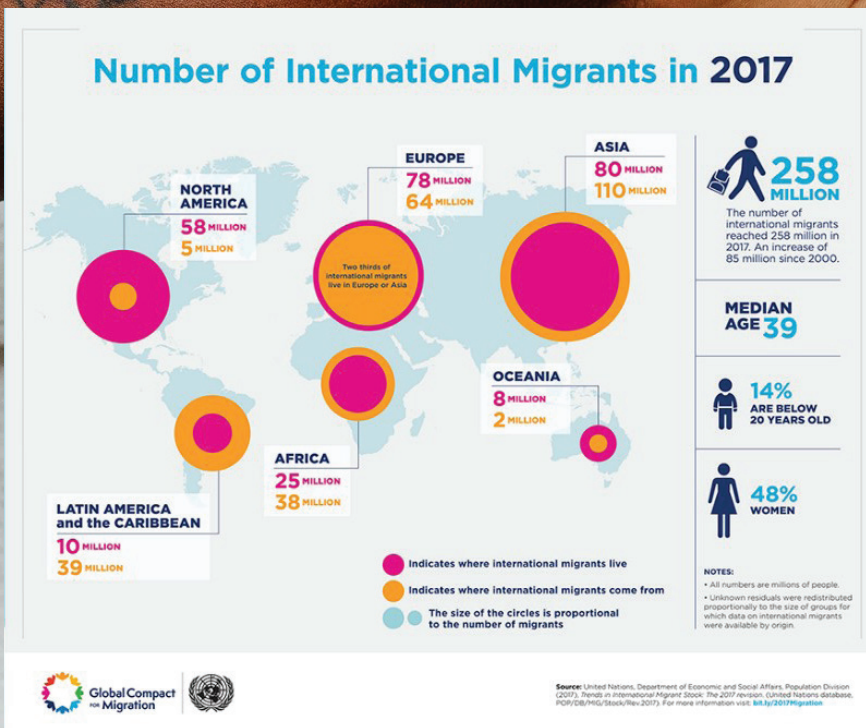
UNHCR. (2019). Global trends: Forced displacement in 2018. Retrieved August 8, 2019, from <https://www.unhcr.org/globaltrends2018/>



Citation:
 Pew Research Center. (2018, July 5). For the first time, U.S. resettles fewer refugees than the rest of the world. Retrieved August 8, 2019, from <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/07/05/for-the-first-time-u-s-resettles-fewer-refugees-than-the-rest-of-the-world/>

Global Refugee Resettlement

The rate of refugee resettlement has declined significantly from its height in 2016, despite the growing numbers of refugees. The Pew Research Center suggests that this decline is driven, in part, by the United States. Prior to 2016, the United States led the world in refugee resettlement, taking 3 million of the 4 million refugees resettled worldwide. While many other host countries to refugees (like Canada and Australia) have also decreased the number of resettled refugees, the U.S. saw the sharpest decline in refugee resettlement from roughly 97,000 in 2016 to 33,000 in 2017.



Citation:
 United Nations. (2019). Global compact for migration. Retrieved August 8, 2019, from <https://refugeemigrants.un.org/migration-compact>

Migrants

There are 258 million migrants worldwide, defined as those who live outside their country of birth. This number is likely to increase in the future due to “population growth, increasing connectivity, trade, rising inequality, demographic imbalances and climate change.”

Blaming and Targeting Refugees in the Wake of Terrorist Attacks

Source | Savun, B. & Gineste, C. (2019). From protection to persecution: Threat environment and refugee scapegoating. *Journal of Peace Research*, 56(1), 88-102.

Keywords

refugees, counterterrorism, repression, state violence, scapegoating

Unable to count on the protection of their countries of origin, refugees must depend on the goodwill of the citizens and governments of other countries who take them in, bound by the terms of the UN Refugee Convention to not turn them away and to protect them. Instead, refugees are often subjected to violence in these host countries. Nevertheless, most scholarly and public attention has centered on the negative security implications of refugee flows, the assumption being that *refugees* contribute to the prevalence of violence in their host countries. This study focuses instead on the question of when *host countries* are likely to engage in violence against the refugees within their borders. The central argument is that such violence is more likely in the wake of a terrorist attack, most probably as a form of scapegoating against refugee communities rather than as a direct means to greater security.

Governments typically respond to serious threats, especially terrorist attacks, with repression, as they are under pressure to show that they are minimizing harm and preventing future attacks. Accordingly, citizens tend to tolerate some repression—but too much repression can come at a cost for governments. Indiscriminate repression might alienate citizens or, in some cases, even lead to support for terrorism among targeted communities. Governments face a dilemma, then, in determining their response to terrorism. The authors argue that strategically targeting refugee communities can “ease this dilemma” for two reasons. First, refugees do not usually have the right to vote, so they lack electoral power that could make their repression politically risky for leaders. And, second, citizens are unlikely to “punish leaders for targeting refugees after terrorist attacks” due to xenophobic attitudes that tend to emerge in response to insecurity. Leaders can even capitalize on these attitudes, reinforcing strong in-group/out-group distinctions where citizens blame foreigners for terrorism—making the targeting of refugees that much less risky for governments.

Political leaders may choose to target refugees for repression after terrorist attacks for either greater security or political gain. Security would be the motivation if leaders actually believed that refugee communities

were involved in terrorism and that repression would mitigate further terrorism. By contrast, political gain would be the motivation if leaders were merely using refugees as scapegoats and repression as a way to “do something” to appease voters after a terrorist attack—a sort of “security theater”¹ to make citizens *feel* safer even if they aren’t actually *made* safer.

To explore their research question about when countries are more likely to violently repress refugees within their borders, the authors examine a data set of all countries from 1996 to 2015, which includes whether they experienced an act of transnational terrorism and how widespread government violence against refugees was in a given year. Government violence includes nine forms of violence against refugees: “killing, sexual violence, torture, beating, shooting, violent repatriation, extortion, destruction or confiscation of property, and harassment.” The authors’ analysis provides support for their main hypothesis that host countries are more likely to violently repress refugees after terrorist attacks, as there is a statistically significant relationship between transnational terrorism happening in a country-year and the prevalence of government violence against refugees, even when the authors control for other pertinent factors. In plain terms, “one additional terrorist attack increases the risk of prevalent refugee victimization...by 47%.”

To discern whether governments are motivated more by security or by political gain in their decisions to repress refugees, the authors examine whether violence against refugees is more prevalent in cases where there is reported involvement of refugees in acts of terrorism or recruitment of refugees to terrorist groups, either of which would suggest a security motivation for government repression. Their analysis does not, however, indicate a statistically significant increase in the prevalence of violence against refugees in such cases, leading them to cautiously find support for *political* motivations and the operation of a scapegoating mechanism against refugees.

Finally, the authors also find support for their second hypothesis that the more democratic a country is, the more likely it is to increase its violent repression of refugees after terrorist attacks. The explanation provided is, first, that in general democracies repress refugee populations less than authoritarian regimes do, and, second, that in the wake of terrorist attacks, leaders in democracies “have stronger incentives to respond to voters’ demands and preferences...quickly,” leading them to be more likely to change their behavior towards refugees within the country’s borders. On the other hand, authoritarian leaders’ behavior towards refugees doesn’t change much, as they are more likely to repress them any time, in the presence or absence of terrorist attacks.



Continued reading:

Jacobs, E. (2017, February 4). Trump’s immigrant ban has echoes of France’s counterterror measures. PRI. <https://www.pri.org/stories/2017-02-04/trump-s-immigrant-ban-has-echoes-france-s-counterterror-measures>

United Nations. (2016, October 24). Perception that refugees are more prone to radicalization wrong and dangerous—UN rights expert. UN News. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2016/10/543592-perception-refugees-are-more-prone-radicalization-wrong-and-dangerous-un-rights#WCzyY7lrjjpg>

Woodward, C. (2019, January 7). AP fact check: Trump’s mythical terrorist tide from Mexico. AP News. <https://www.apnews.com/4a7792c523ab4b5984893b38c988d70b>

Fernandez, M. & Lester, K. (2019, July 15). ‘Nobody opened the door’: Neighbors rally during an ICE raid in Houston. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/15/us/ice-raids-trump-houston.html?searchResultPosition=1>

Lee, M. Y. H. (2017, March 6). Trump’s claim that ‘more than 300’ refugees are subjects of counterterrorism investigations. *The Washington Post*. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/wp/2017/03/06/trumps-claim-that-more-than-300-refugees-are-the-subject-of-counterterrorism-investigations/?utm_term=.df3elbef4a78

Taylor, L. (2019, May 2). US counterterrorism under the UN spotlight. Just Security. <https://www.justsecurity.org/63886/u-s-counterterrorism-under-the-u-n-spotlight/>

1. Schneider, B. (2006). *Beyond fear: Thinking sensibly about security in an uncertain world*. New York: Springer Science & Business Media.

TALKING POINTS

- Prevalent governmental violence against refugees is 47% more likely in the wake of a terrorist attack, and it is probable that this violence is a form of scapegoating against refugee communities rather than a direct means to greater security.
- Refugees provide “easy” targets for government repression in the wake of terrorist attacks because they usually lack political power, and citizens of the host country will be unlikely to “punish leaders for targeting refugees” due to xenophobic attitudes that often accompany insecurity.
- Democracies are more likely to see this correspondence between terrorist attacks and a rise in governmental violence against refugees.



Photo Credit: Tony Webster. Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.0 Generic (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)
A protest in Downtown Minneapolis against President Trump's immigration executive order, the Muslim ban, and border wall. January 31, 2017.

INFORMING PRACTICE

This study sheds light on the anti-immigrant/anti-refugee sentiment that has been on the rise recently in the United States, Europe, and elsewhere, especially in the wake of ISIS-orchestrated or -inspired attacks. Although these attacks are carried out by a few individuals (who, if of European descent, would have been singled out as disturbed and individually culpable), it has been all too easy for citizens in affected countries to become suspicious of *all* people coming from the Middle East or North Africa, collectively blaming entire nationalities or religious faiths. Politicians like Trump, Salvini, or Farage have capitalized on these attitudes, while also fanning the flames of xenophobia and promoting discriminatory immigration policies that collectively punish innocent families escaping war or persecution. Although discriminatory immigration policies may sometimes stop short of the sort of anti-refugee violence addressed in this article, this research makes evident how such violence stems from the same underlying attitudes and scapegoating practices and therefore is not unlikely in such contexts. In fact, incidents reported during recent ICE raids to apprehend and deport undocumented immigrants in the United States—connected to counterterrorism only through the far-fetched claims of the Trump administration that terrorists are streaming through the southern border—do fit this study's characterization of governmental violence: when one man in Minnesota locked his car doors to keep out ICE agents surrounding his car, the agents broke the windows and pulled him out of the car to detain him. In the wake of terrorist attacks in France, the government instated a state of emergency, enabling it to put “hundreds of predominantly Muslim men...under a form of house arrest, without bringing charges against them.” Though it is not clear how many of these men were French citizens and how many were immigrants or refugees, it is clear that religious and ethnic profiling and scapegoating is at work in such cases.

This research helps us become more critical citizens, better able to question whether these anti-refugee/immigrant (or, more broadly, anti-Muslim) policies are motivated by an actual concern for greater security or by a desire on the part of politicians to gain political points with an electorate eager to blame someone for terrorism or other security threats. We can be more attentive to the fact that political leaders often engage in “security theater,” placating the public with “decisive”—but ultimately ineffectual—counterterrorism policies. Citizens in these countries can call out these politicians and publicly examine the *actual* security implications of their counterterrorism policies, while at the same time reminding governments of their obligations to refugees under the 1951 Refugee Convention. More broadly, we can take this attentiveness and critique a step further and recognize the ways in which not just domestic repression but war itself is an act of “security theater”: a symbolic response that reassures the public that a government is “doing something” in response to a terrorist attack, for instance, but which can have minimal or even counterproductive effects on a populace's security.

The Importance of Contact Between Refugees and Host Communities

Source | Ghosn, F.; Braithwaite, A.; & Chu, T. S. (2019). Violence, displacement, contact, and attitudes toward hosting refugees. *Journal of Peace Research*, 56(1), 118-133.

Keywords

contact theory, refugees, host communities, relationship-building

In this age of widespread hostility towards immigrant and refugee populations, it is important to consider what factors can positively shape host populations' attitudes towards them. In particular, attitudes towards Syrian refugees in Lebanon—the country with the highest per capita number of refugees globally—have largely become more negative over the past several years as more and more Syrians have crossed the border to flee the civil war in their country. Trying to understand what explains differences in attitudes that persist among Lebanese citizens, the authors ask whether and how individuals' own conflict-related personal experiences and/or the extent of their contact with Syrians influence their attitudes towards hosting refugees.

Contact theory: The theory, widely credited to the social psychologist Gordon Allport in his 1954 book *The Nature of Prejudice*, that under appropriate conditions interpersonal interactions with people of another group decrease prejudice and improve attitudes towards them.

Noting the legacy of violence in Lebanon, the authors begin by considering whether personal experiences with violence and/or displacement during the Lebanese civil war (1975-1990) may affect Lebanese attitudes towards refugees. Previous scholarship provides contradictory expectations. On the one hand, war-time experiences could predispose people to exclusionary world views in order to cope with the insecurity and disorientation that accompany violence, hardening their in-group/out-group categories and making them less likely to welcome outsiders. On the other hand, these same experiences could engender greater empathy for others facing similar circumstances of violence and displacement. The first two hypotheses in this study reflect these contending possibilities: that individuals who have previously experienced violence and/or displacement are less likely (Hypothesis 1a) or more likely (Hypothesis 1b) “to support hosting refugees” than others. Hypothesis 2 derives from “**contact theory**,” suggesting that “[c]ontact with Syrian immigrants is associated with individuals' support for hosting refugees.”

More broadly, the authors are interested in whether these personal experiences facilitate the development of the sort of “mutual regard” that builds the trust and empathy necessary to cooperate for the common good and redistribute resources where they are needed (e.g., from citizens to the refugees they are hosting). Developing such “mutual regard” can be a challenge, especially given the dehumanizing language often used in the

media to discuss refugees. Even calling them “illegal immigrants” rather than “refugees” or “asylum-seekers” can negatively affect public attitudes.

The data used to test these hypotheses comes from a survey of 2,400 Lebanese citizens in 2017. To determine their attitudes towards Syrian refugees, respondents were asked three questions: how much they support “the Lebanese government’s decision to host refugees,” whether they would be willing to “hire a refugee,” and whether they would “allow their child to marry a refugee.” To identify the personal experiences that may have contributed to their attitudes, respondents were asked four questions: whether they were “exposed to violence during the Lebanese civil war,” whether they “left their homes” (i.e., were displaced) during the civil war, whether they have Syrian friends, and whether they have “had any contact with a *displaced* Syrian.”

Through statistical analysis, the authors find no clear relationship between previous exposure to violence or experience of displacement and the likelihood that someone will support refugees (Hypotheses 1a and 1b). This could indicate that these personal experiences have no bearing whatsoever on attitudes towards refugees or that these experiences have opposite effects on different people—making some more likely to welcome refugees and others less likely to welcome them—effectively canceling each other out in the statistical analysis. Another possibility is that these previous war-time experiences might have made Lebanese citizens more empathetic to Syrian refugees initially but that this effect wore off as the years went by (by the time of the survey in 2017) and greater numbers of Syrians arrived in the country.

The authors do, however, find strong evidence for Hypothesis 2. Whether Lebanese citizens have Syrian friends or simply have had contact with displaced Syrians, they are more likely than others to “support hosting, hire, or allow their children to marry refugees.” Put simply, while someone who has no Syrian friends and no contact with displaced Syrians has only a 16% chance of strongly supporting the country’s hosting of refugees, that likelihood rises to 24% for someone who does have some form of contact with Syrians. And when it comes to more personal forms of support, respondents who have some form of contact with Syrians are more than twice as likely to be willing to hire or to allow their children to marry Syrian refugees than those who do not have such contact. In short, “contact with Syrians has the effect of reducing prejudice and hostility.” This finding suggests that greater contact between refugees and host communities should be encouraged, and governments should reconsider where they locate refugee communities, moving them “out of isolated... camps and into local communities.”



Continued reading:

Maclin, B. (2017). *Little by little: Exploring the impact of social acceptance on refugee integration into host communities*. Baltimore, MD: Catholic Relief Services.
<https://www.crs.org/sites/default/files/little-by-little-study-results-brief.pdf>

de Richoufftz, C. (2018). *From research to outreach to action: Community-based approaches to the integration of refugees and asylum seekers in Montreal*. Samuel Centre for Social Connectedness.

<http://www.socialconnectedness.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Community-based-approaches-to-the-integration-of-refugees-and-asylum-seekers-in-Montreal-I.pdf>

USAHello. (N.d.). *How to welcome newcomers to the USA*. Retrieved July 23, 2019, from <https://usahello.org/help-refugees/how-can-i-welcome-refugees/>



Organizations/Initiatives:

Welcoming America (Welcoming Refugees): <https://www.welcomingrefugees.org/>

Portland Meet Portland: <http://www.portlandmeetportland.org/community-building> and <http://www.portlandmeetportland.org/raising-voices>

American Friends Service Committee (Sanctuary Everywhere): <https://www.afsc.org/sanctuaryincities>

TALKING POINTS

In the context of Syrian refugees in Lebanon:

- Contact with refugees “reduc[es] prejudice and hostility” towards them.
- Contact with refugees is associated with a 50% increase in one’s likelihood to strongly support the country’s hosting of refugees and a doubling of one’s likelihood to be willing to hire or to allow one’s children to marry refugees compared to someone who does not have such contact.
- There is no clear relationship between previous experiences of violence or displacement and the likelihood that someone will support refugees.

Photo Credit: UNHCR/ M. Hofer.

Lebanese Town Opens its Doors to Newly Arrived Syrian Refugees
Exhausted and uncertain about the future, a line of Syrian women
and a young girl queue to register at an impromptu registration centre
set up by UNHCR and partners just outside Aarsal.



INFORMING PRACTICE

Although the findings of this study may not be surprising, sometimes it can be powerful to have evidence for common-sense conclusions: individuals who have direct contact with refugees (or with those from the same country as refugees) are more likely to have favorable attitudes towards refugees and to welcome them. The question becomes, then, how do we create opportunities for refugee communities and host communities to come together, especially in countries where these communities are segregated and/or where negative or even hostile attitudes towards refugees and immigrants prevail? Current programs provide some idea of what is possible. In the United States, civil society groups coordinate everything from host families for arriving immigrants and refugees to ESL tutors to dialogues between new arrivals and host communities. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the relationships that can be formed through these initiatives can be transformative and long-lasting: newcomers find community and become oriented to their new surroundings, while hosts may have preconceived notions shattered as they get to know individuals from a place they may have only heard about in the news.

One problem to overcome, however, is the fact that those who have negative attitudes towards refugees are unlikely to seek out such opportunities for contact in the first place. How is it possible to engage people who are not already predisposed to meet refugees in their communities? The answer to this question will necessarily be different in each context, depending on the patterns of interaction in a locale and the opportunities that exist. Perhaps doing so involves building links between refugee communities and traditional institutions like houses of worship or Rotary Clubs, places where individuals are more likely to be moved by the welcoming ethos of their fellow congregants or club members. In any case, as recommended by the online resource for refugees called USA Hello, a good place to start is by listening to the “fears and worries of non-welcoming community members.”¹ Even if their concerns—about the economic burden, possible security threats, or cultural difference of incoming refugees—are unfounded, it is important to meet people where they are in order to then open them up bit by bit to the real people behind whatever rumors or inflammatory news reports they may have heard.

1. USAHello. (N.d.) How to welcome newcomers to the USA. <https://usahello.org>

The Refugee Crisis and Seeing the World Through the Eyes of Others

Source | Glăveanu, V. P., & de Saint Laurent, C. (2018). Taking the perspective of others: A conceptual model and its application to the refugee crisis. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 24(4), 416-423.

Keywords

refugees,
perspective-taking,
otherness,
us vs. them

At a time when hate speech, intolerance, and exclusion take place in the political spotlight of Western liberal democracies and the familiar “us” is cast against the dangerous “other,” the authors explore how people can take the perspective of others. In the current context of a global refugee crisis, refugees are the distant and unknown “others.” Do local people imagine themselves as the foreign “other” or in the refugee situation, or do they make assumptions about the foreign “other” or the refugee situation? In this article, the authors explore social and psychological processes involved in perspective-taking, “how we come to ‘take’ the perspective of other people.” They ask why it is so hard to take the refugees’ perspectives when there are humanitarian crises with refugees from war-torn countries such as Syria and how people can “succumb to fear and denial.” In the current refugee crisis, representations of refugees commonly emphasize difference over similarity. Refugees are frequently portrayed as non-White, Muslim men with foreign values and cultures, linked to the threat of terrorism. In research literature, psychological models on perspective-taking assume that the information people have about themselves and stereotypes are the primary ways to perceive less familiar “others.” Sociocultural models suggest that the origins, expression, and consequences of perspective-taking are socially driven, meaning that people’s exchanges, communications, and shared histories shape perspectives. Building on both psychological and sociocultural models, the authors introduce their own model of perspective-taking. The model distinguishes between four non-mutually exclusive processes by which perspectives may be constructed:

Commitment to similarity and the person	“If I were him or her”
Commitment to similarity and the situation	“If it happened to me”
Commitment to difference and the person	“People like this are”
Commitment to difference and the situation	“People in this situation are”

The authors illustrate their model based on their previously conducted study of four Internet memes about refugees (see image)—two of which are meant to provoke sympathy for refugees and two of which are meant to provoke disdain—and the almost 800 online comments written in response to these in late 2016. This time period marked the height of the European refugee crisis. By showing concrete examples of the social media comments and discussions, they highlight positive and negative consequences of the four types of perspective-taking. While a commitment to similarity might



Continued reading:

In the context of perspective-taking:

Couzin-Frankel, J. (2017, May 15). How can we blunt prejudice against immigrants? Retrieved July 23, 2019, from <https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2017/05/how-can-we-blunt-prejudice-against-immigrants>

Rotunno, M. (2019, June 11). Older Colombians and Venezuelans take care of each other under the same roof. Retrieved July 23, 2019, from <https://www.unhcr.org/news/stories/2019/6/5cfff16c4/older-colombians-venezuelans-care-other-under-roof.html>

In the context of wars and war prevention:

Shahshahani, A., & Hilal, M. (2018, March 12). If we want to support refugees, we need to end the wars that create them. Retrieved July 23, 2019, from Foreign Policy In Focus website: <https://fpif.org/want-support-refugees-need-end-wars-create/>

In the context of U.S. policies:

IRC. (2019, June 18). New IRC analysis of U.S. Refugee Resettlement shows vastly reduced arrivals at a time of record global need and consistent popular support; Refugees targeted by country-of-origin, Muslim arrivals facing sharpest decline. (2019, June 18). Retrieved July 23, 2019, from International Rescue Committee (IRC) website: <https://www.rescue.org/press-release/new-irc-analysis-us-refugee-resettlement-shows-vastly-reduced-arrivals-time-record>



Organizations/Initiatives:

Portland Meet Portland: <https://www.portlandmeetportland.org>
International Rescue Committee: <https://www.rescue.org>

imply a more sympathetic view toward refugees than a commitment to difference, the analysis showed that each of the four processes can be used for both tolerance and discrimination. Participants in the online forums created eight main perspectives about refugees that they used to make their case for or against welcoming them:

Negative perspective-taking	Positive perspective-taking
Aggressors	Victims
Worthless	Valuable
Unethical	Ethical
Unable to integrate	Able to integrate

The authors illustrated those main perspectives by providing excerpts from the online comments. For example, phrases like “these people” resulted in a clear distinction drawn between “us” and “them.” Humanizing the refugee perspective—“take enough humans from any background”—suggested that engaging with “others” was not riskier than any human interaction. Placing religion at the roots of terrorism made it normal to “defend oneself against newcomers.” Emphasizing similarity based on refugees’ assumed desire to assimilate suggested a somewhat paternalistic perspective—“with some help, the other could become more like us.” Imagining the situation of refugees and oneself in that same situation was understood as a call for reflection among those engaged in the online forum conversations. In a negative sense, however, this same perspective has been used by forum commenters to imply cowardice by refugees for not standing and fighting for themselves.

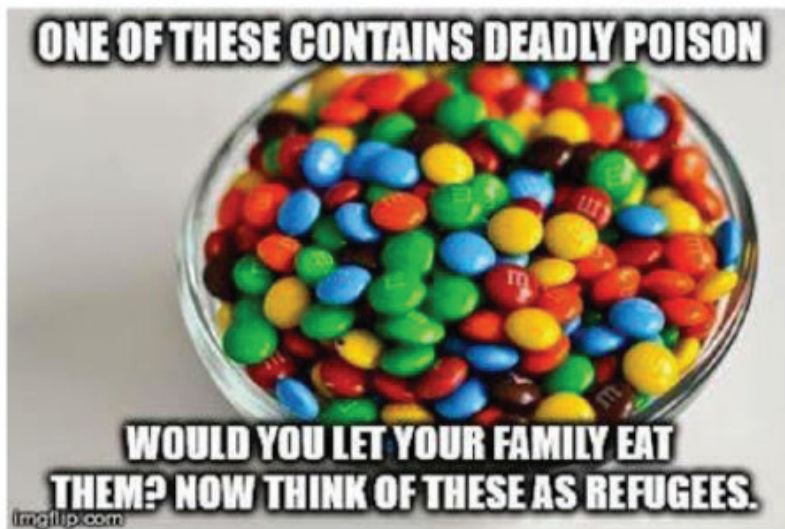
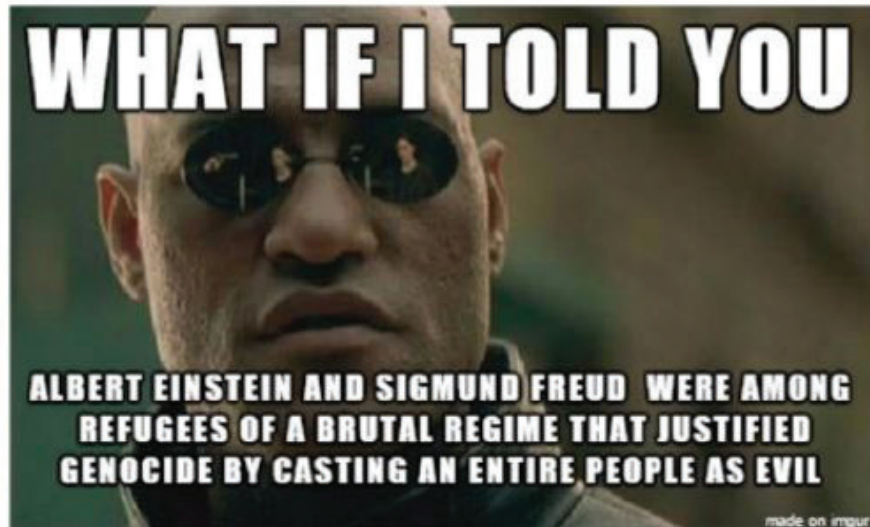
So how do people take perspectives? Importantly, perceptions of refugees are rarely shaped by interactions with them but rather by interactions online forum commenters have with their co-nationals. Refugees are rarely part of the conversation about themselves. Perspectives that people in the online forums take, then, are limited to their own pre-perceptions, information available, the context of the conversations, and interactions among themselves. Furthermore, the analysis revealed that it is not enough to assume that a commitment to similarity is positive and a commitment to difference negative. When examined in context, the different processes of perspective-taking can be used “to promote tolerance and openness or, on the contrary, closed and discriminatory attitudes.”

TALKING POINTS

In the context of online conversations about memes depicting refugees during the European refugee crisis in 2016,

- The perception of refugees is rarely shaped by an actual interaction with them.
- Local people take perspectives on refugees by 1) imagining themselves as the foreign “other” or in the refugee situation or 2) making assumptions about the foreign “other” or the refugee situation.
- Perspectives of the “other” based on similarity can be both positive and negative.
- Perspectives of the “other” based on difference can be both positive and negative.

Refugee memes used in the study



INFORMING PRACTICE

The study examined online discussions at the height of the European refugee crisis in late 2016. As we are publishing this special issue of the *Peace Science Digest*, hateful rhetoric, child-detention policies, and plans to deny asylum rights and bar refugees from entering the United States all come from the very top of the U.S. administration. The narrative of the inferior and dangerous “other” is not only tweeted out but also turned into an increasingly central pillar of the Presidential campaign. A chilling low point—to date—were the July 17, 2019, “send her back” chants at one of Donald Trump’s campaign rallies. In fact, ever since the President announced his run for office, the nativist rhetoric driving his campaign and policies has been informed by an overly simplistic “commitment to difference and the person,” as this study puts it, framing statements along the lines of, “people like this are...”

Awareness is a first step toward action. There needs to be a commitment to self-reflection. By understanding how we take the perspective of “others” more generally, it is possible to transform the destructive patterns of which we are currently part. The authors suggest, “it might be useful to consider, individually and collectively, not only how we take the perspective of others, but also what these processes say about us, the selves we are, the selves we are becoming, and the selves we would like to be.”

If Americans from all parts the political spectrum are serious about their common reaction to the current treatment of refugees, asylum-seekers, and immigrants—“this is not who we are”— they need to engage in a collective process of reflection as well as concrete steps to show who they are instead.

An inspiring model in our own hometown here at the *Peace Science Digest* is that of Portland Meet Portland. The organization aims to create a multicultural community with inclusion and belonging for refugees and immigrants. They focus on immigrant and refugee voices, their agency and access to power in society, advocacy by developing strong allies and speaking in concert with them, and accompaniment through community members supporting immigrants and refugees in walking their own journey.

When refugees and immigrants are constantly depicted as a threat, violence against them and against the places they come from is encouraged. Individual attacks by white supremacists on refugees and immigrants in the U.S., such as the recent shooting in El Paso, become predictable, just as on the international stage the waging of war against an “evil regime” such as Iran can be justified “because they hate us.” Local programs like Portland Meet Portland are bound to draw out the positive aspects of perspective-taking with those who are in immediate contact with refugees and immigrants but also those who take perspectives from the outside by changing the narratives they receive. Portland Meet Portland and likeminded organizations counter practices and narratives that depict the “other” as a threat. Refugees and immigrants are not passive recipients of programs concerning their well-being but should be part of the dialogue that will help to transcend locally held perspectives on them that are based on stereotypes and limited information.

What Makes Some Refugees More Likely to be Approached for Armed Group Recruitment?

Source | Haer, R. & Hecker, T. (2018). Recruiting refugees for militarization: The determinants of mobilization attempts. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 32(1), 1-22.

Keywords

recruitment, militarization, refugees, refugee camps, economic deprivation, combat experience, social networks, armed groups

One of the most common reasons given by host governments to restrict the flow of refugees is the supposed security threat posed by the presence of refugees within one's country. Although politicians have exaggerated this security threat for political gain—as noted elsewhere in this issue, refugees are often themselves subjected to violence rather than the cause of it—it is still worthwhile to examine those cases where members of the refugee community are mobilized for participation in armed groups in order to understand how best to limit such mobilization. Previous research on refugee recruitment has focused mostly on general, structural conditions (e.g., the characteristics of the host country, the relationship between the host and home countries, or the geographic and other features of particular refugee camps) to explain the militarization of refugee populations but has largely neglected refugees' individual-level characteristics that might make them more attractive targets for recruitment. Rather than seeing refugees as indistinguishable—each one equally susceptible to militarization once they are in a refugee camp—the authors are interested in examining what makes some refugees more likely than others to be approached by recruiters.

The authors contend that recruiters face a problem when seeking refugees to recruit into armed groups that is similar to that faced by others who need to “hire an agent...to perform a certain task”: they do not know whether the individual being selected has the qualities needed for the task at hand. Recruiters may have limited information about which refugees would actually be willing and capable fighters. This problem is particularly acute in this context, since recruiters are trying to recruit refugees for an illicit activity, so being wrong about a recruit could be risky for the recruiter or the armed group. Theoretically, to address this problem, “recruiters can... gain valuable information about new recruits” by observing features of these recruits that convey information about their likely willingness to participate in an armed group. Based on these theoretical assumptions, the authors argue that “recruiters will highly likely only approach those refugees who signal a (high) level of willingness for militarization.”

But which characteristics do recruiters look for in refugees that signal this willingness to militarize? The authors focus on four characteristics in



Continued reading:

Seeley, M. (2019, February 10). Dignity and the needs of young Syrian refugees in the Middle East. Retrieved July 25, 2019, from <https://www.lawfareblog.com/dignity-and-needs-young-syrian-refugees-middle-east>

Koser, K. (2015, February 20). IDPs, refugees, and violent extremism: From victims to vectors of change. Brookings. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2015/02/20/idps-refugees-and-violent-extremism-from-victims-to-vectors-of-change/>

Martin-Rayó, F. (2011). Countering radicalization in refugee camps: How education can help defeat AQAP. Working Paper, The Dubai Initiative, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs. https://www.belfercenter.org/sites/default/files/legacy/files/Countering_radicalization-Martin-Rayó.pdf



Organizations/Initiatives:

Mercy Corps: <https://www.mercycorps.org>
 American Friends Service Committee (Counter-recruitment program): <https://www.afsc.org/resource/counter-recruitment>
 War Resisters League (Counter-recruitment program): <https://www.warresisters.org/counter-recruitment-0>

particular: a high level of ethnic (in-group/out-group) identification, a high level of relative economic deprivation, a feeling of insecurity in the refugee camp, and knowing someone in one's social network who has already been recruited by an armed group. The thinking is that these factors will make someone more likely to join an armed group—and therefore recruiters are more likely to approach individuals who exhibit these characteristics. To investigate the relationship between these factors and recruitment attempts, the authors focus on the Nakivale refugee settlement in Uganda where, in 2014, they conducted 285 interviews with male Congolese refugees, the demographic in the camp most often targeted by recruitment efforts (though the camp also hosted refugees from Rwanda, Burundi, South Sudan, and Somalia). Through statistical analysis, and controlling for additional factors such as age, previous exposure to violence, and previous combat experience, they find that relative economic deprivation (as perceived by the refugees themselves), knowing someone who has been recruited into an armed group, and previous combat experience (one of the control variables) are related to recruitment attempts. In other words, refugees exhibiting these characteristics are more likely than others to be approached for armed group recruitment. (It is important to clarify that this finding says nothing about those who are actually more likely to *join* armed groups.) Strong ethnic identification plays a less important role in recruitment attempts than anticipated.

The authors note a few caveats that should be considered along with these findings. First, interview respondents who were approached for recruitment necessarily include only those people who had not (yet) left the refugee camp to enlist with armed groups, so they represent either individuals who did not agree to join armed groups or individuals who did agree but were still awaiting marching orders. Although the former possibility would mean a systematic bias in the research towards those approached for recruitment who decided against militarization, the authors have reason to believe that at least some were those who were awaiting orders to leave. Second, it is important to consider the specific conditions that apply in a refugee camp setting in a country bordering refugees' country of origin and how recruitment might play out differently with refugees in a non-camp setting or in a country further away from the country of origin.

TALKING POINTS

In the context of male Congolese refugees in a Ugandan refugee camp:

- To overcome limited information about the people they wish to mobilize into armed groups—namely their willingness and capacity to be fighters—recruiters may rely on “signals” they observe in these individuals to decide whom to approach for recruitment.
- Refugees who exhibited a greater degree of relative economic deprivation, who knew someone who had been recruited into an armed group, or who had previous combat experience were more likely than others to be approached for recruitment into armed groups.
- Strong ethnic identification on the part of refugees played a less important role in recruitment attempts than anticipated.



Photo Credit: UNICEF Ethiopia. Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 2.0 Generic (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)
Somali Refugees in Dolo Ado, Ethiopia
Recently arrived refugees from Somalia board a bus bound to the transit center at a reception center in Dolo Ado, Ethiopia June 11, 2012. Due to recent poor rain and continuing insecurity, the number of new arrival has increased. June 2012

A woman wearing a vibrant, multi-colored headscarf and a patterned dress is shown in profile, looking towards the left. She has a thoughtful expression. The background is a bright, outdoor setting with a blue sky and some structures in the distance.

INFORMING PRACTICE

Practically speaking, the findings in this research—though drawn from the specific context of a refugee camp in Uganda—highlight the attention that should be given to economic deprivation, social networks, and previous combat experience when policy-makers consider how to address the problem of military recruitment among refugee populations. Although refugees present the same variation in humanity found anywhere else—some eager fighters but many more folks just interested in raising their families and getting by—the finding here on relative economic deprivation underscores the element of vulnerability that might make some refugees more susceptible to military recruitment. As is the case more broadly, those who are economically precarious may appear to be easier “prey” for military recruiters than those with more options for their livelihoods. As the authors note, this provides yet another good reason for smart policies around micro-economic development and job creation in refugee communities. (See Lenner & Turner’s research elsewhere in this issue for a discussion of one such program called the Jordan Compact.) Everyone wins as refugees become economically empowered in their host countries. The authors also recommend that host governments coordinate targeted counter-recruitment efforts around the social networks of those who have already been recruited and among former combatants to decrease the chances that individuals from either risk group will also be recruited.

There is a fine line, however, between benign violence prevention activities and repressive monitoring and profiling of “at-risk” communities as part of a broader counterterrorism or counterinsurgency strategy. Perhaps the measure of a benign policy should be whether it is desirable in and of itself for the individuals involved regardless of the violence/recruitment prevention benefit it may bring. Do the counter-recruitment efforts support and empower refugees or supplant their agency and limit their options? In addition, as other research in this issue (Savun & Gineste) reminds us, it is all too easy for host countries to fall into the pattern of seeing and marking refugees as a security threat, making them more vulnerable to violence themselves. So, any efforts undertaken to limit the likelihood of refugee recruitment into armed groups among former combatants or friends/family members of current recruits should take pains to emphasize the humanity of the refugee population and the way the vast majority of that population is made up of individuals just trying to build better lives for their families. Furthermore, rather than displacing all concerns about danger and insecurity onto populations that come from “outside,” concerned parties should turn the same amount of energy and attention devoted to preventing recruitment among refugees back onto counter-recruitment efforts among host citizens themselves, both into non-state armed groups and into national militaries.

Challenges to Integrating Refugees into the Formal Economy in Jordan

Source | Lenner, K, & Turner, L. (2019). "Making refugees work? The politics of integrating Syrian refugees into the labor market in Jordan." *Middle East Critique*, 28(1), 65-95.

Keywords

Jordan, Syria, refugees, work, economy, humanitarian aid

What happens to refugees once they arrive in a receiving country? In many cases, refugees are caught in protracted situations, living in countries foreign to them for upwards of five, ten, fifteen, or more years.¹ Most receiving countries tend to be lower- or medium-income, developing economies with limited resources to extend and their own domestic politics to contend with. This results in a thorny situation for refugees and the countries that host them: refugees are presented with few livelihood options, receiving countries are resistant to offering pathways to employment or permanent residency because of competing demands with their resident population, and both rely heavily on humanitarian aid and foreign assistance.

To address these challenges, the government of Jordan along with numerous international partners developed the Jordan Compact in February 2016. This is a work program created to integrate Syrian refugees into the formal economy by providing work permits in particular sectors in need of labor. The Government of Jordan declared that it would grant work permits to as many as 200,000 Syrian refugees (as of May 2017, 51,000 work permits were issued). It is supported by trade deals with the European Union aimed towards bolstering Jordan's export economy. Additionally, this program gained international support as a means to prevent refugees from attempting a journey to Europe.

This article reviews the effectiveness of this program, understanding that programs like the Jordan Compact have gained international popularity among foreign aid, humanitarian, and donor communities. These programs frame refugees not just as "objects of humanitarian care" but as "unused human capital, which can be made productive." Before similar programs are implemented in other countries with large refugee populations (the U.K. is currently pursuing one in Ethiopia), this article suggests that designers take more care to consider the local economic context to ensure that these programs achieve what they set out to achieve.

1. Devictor, X., & Do, Q.-T. (2016, September 15). How many years do refugees stay in exile? World Bank Blogs. Retrieved July 17, 2019, from <https://blogs.worldbank.org/dev4peace/how-many-years-do-refugees-stay-exile>



Continued reading:

Buffoni, Laura. (2019, July 9). The Jordan Compact would work better if we listened to refugees. News Deeply. Retrieved August 12, 2019, from <https://www.newsdeeply.com/refugees/community/2018/07/09/the-jordan-compact-would-work-better-if-we-listened-to-refugees>

UNHCR. (2015, March 26). The entrepreneurial spirit is alive in refugee camps. USA for UNHCR. Retrieved July 17, 2019, from <https://www.unrefugees.org/news/the-entrepreneurial-spirit-is-alive-in-refugee-camps/>

Botzung, M. (2019, July 17). What can the private sector do to alleviate the refugee crisis? World Economic Forum. Retrieved July 17, 2019, from <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/07/what-can-the-private-sector-do-to-alleviate-the-refugee-crisis/>

International Finance Corporation. (2019, April). Private sector & refugees: Pathways to scale. International Finance Corporation. Retrieved July 17, 2019, from https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/region_ext_content/ifc_external_corporate_site/sub-saharan+africa/resources/psr-pathways-to-scale



Organizations/Initiatives:

UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR): <https://www.unhcr.org>

Refugees International: <https://www.refugeesinternational.org>

Specifically, the article calls out three “underlying dynamics” in the Jordanian economy that have undermined the success of the Jordan compact: 1) zonal development strategies, 2) a “nationally-segmented labor market that builds on specialized, precarious migrant labor,” and 3) the pervasiveness of the informal labor market. Zonal development strategies seek to attract investment and support an export economy by creating business opportunities in specific industries, like garment or textiles. Yet, because Jordan is a destination for multiple refugee and migrant communities, many industries benefit from (and prefer) migrant labor. For instance, migrant workers from Southeast Asia dominate the garment workforce in Jordan because of their willingness to bear long hours and low pay. Employers also benefit from an informal labor market that is engrained and tolerated in social and political structures. The informal labor market is a popular option for refugee and migrant populations. Most recent figures from 2013 by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) estimate that informal employment accounts for 44% of all private sector employment in Jordan. This number has likely increased due to the influx of Syrian refugees since 2013.

With this in mind, the effectiveness of the Jordan Compact thus far has been mixed. Opportunities were contingent on economic sectors, since work permits specify the industries in which refugees must have employment. Shortly after the Compact was finalized, a plan was developed to recruit 2,000 Syrian refugees for work in the garment industry beginning in April 2016, since it was among the more successful export industries in the Jordanian economy. However, by the end of 2016, only 30 Syrians had been employed through this plan. It failed because it implicitly targeted Syrian women who were particularly unwilling to travel long distances for work, had concerns about the availability of childcare, and were uncomfortable working in factories with men. In other cases, Syrian refugees avoided signing up for formal work permits for fear that it might affect their access to financial assistance or refugee resettlement, opting instead to seek employment informally in sectors like construction, wholesale, or agriculture. Despite this prominence of the informal labor market among refugees, the agricultural sector did see some success in formalizing refugee work through the Compact by allowing for work permits through agricultural cooperatives. By working with agricultural cooperatives that allowed refugees to work for more than one employer, the Compact successfully issued 16,000 formal work permits for Syrian refugees by May 2017.

TALKING POINTS

- The Jordan Compact is a work program for Syrian refugees created by the Government of Jordan and numerous international partners that frames refugees not just as “objects of humanitarian care” but as “unused human capital, which can be made productive.”
- The success of the Compact has been undermined by three underlying dynamics in the Jordanian economy: zonal development strategies, nationally segmented labor, and pervasive informal employment.
- While the Jordan Compact was driven by a desire to create “generalizable global policy models,” this article argues that designers should take more care to consider the local economic context to ensure programs like it achieve what they set out to achieve.


A photograph of a young girl with dark hair, wearing a light blue hoodie, looking towards a man in a green hoodie. They are in a grocery store, with shelves of food items and bags of goods visible in the background. The man is wearing a green hoodie with white text and a logo. The girl is holding a small yellow and green object in her hands.

Photo Credit: Medair/EU/ECHO/Kate Holt. Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 2.0 Generic (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0).
Walking with Ali: Making life easier for refugees with disabilities
Mohammad Raabah, 71 years old and from eastern Damascus, and who has lived in this disused building for over two years, sells some children some sweets in the small shop he has set up in the one room he lives in, in the town of in Zahle, Lebanon Monday, Feb. 29, 2016. Mohammed owned his own grocery business in Damascus but left when the war intensified. He has subsequently learnt that his families house has been destroyed...

INFORMING PRACTICE

The human cost of war extends beyond casualty numbers and impacts the millions who flee and those who accept the responsibility to care for them. For refugees, fleeing to a neighboring country means leaving behind their livelihoods for an uncertain future. How might they not only provide for their families but also fulfill their own desires and aspirations? For receiving countries, there is a strong humanitarian and ethical impulse but also a set of political and economic challenges compounded by the refugee crisis. International support is critical. But international support can be capricious. The protracted scenario in which many refugees find themselves means a reliance on humanitarian aid for decades. This combination, the need for long-term support and the unreliable options for that support, calls for a more sustainable approach.

Other research examined in this special issue (Haer & Hecker's work on refugee recruitment) highlights the need for economic development for refugees. The authors find that a lack of economic opportunity makes refugees more vulnerable to attempts at armed group recruitment. In cases like these, programs like the Jordan Compact could effectively deter recruitment and therefore, ultimately, violence. Economic development programs in these contexts can be viewed, therefore, both as sustainable solutions to the refugee crisis and as peacebuilding activities in fragile or conflict-affected contexts.

The Jordan Compact was framed as a win-win strategy among the various stakeholders involved in developing it—including the Government of Jordan, various international organizations like the World Bank and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and numerous international civil society, donor, and private sector communities. The author notes that the Compact is a “remarkable compromise” that “mobilized a range of actors, agencies, and agendas, and tied them together in a joint project.” All of these were driven by “a shared desire to create development policy successes and generalizable global policy models.”

This article demonstrates that, while the Jordan Compact has the right intentions, the practice of implementing “generalizable global policy models” must be tailored to the social, economic, and political conditions of the specific context. This is an important but by no means easy task. Perhaps the most efficient way is to develop an iterative model that incorporates learning from the challenges and successes of a program to improve its design. There are examples of this approach in humanitarian work. For instance, International Medical Corps has launched a toolkit for integrating mental health capacity into humanitarian settings.¹ It develops a three-step model where monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning are cross-cutting components. This approach, adopted elsewhere, would create a built-in method for adapting programs to local circumstances.

1. International Medical Corps. (N.d.). Toolkit for the integration of mental health into general healthcare in humanitarian settings. Mental Health Innovation Network. Retrieved July 16, 2019, from <https://www.mhinnovation.net/collaborations/IMC-Mental-Health-Integration-Toolkit>

Refugee Resettlement as a Form of Transnational Peacebuilding

Source | Coffie, A. (2018). Tapping into resettlement for rebuilding: Lessons from peacebuilding engagement activities of resettled Liberian refugees in Canada. *African Conflict & Peacebuilding Review*, 8(2), 38-62.

Keywords

refugees, refugee resettlement, peacebuilding, Liberia, Canada, remittances

The role of refugees in supporting peacebuilding efforts in their country of origin is an emerging theme in refugee studies. There is evidence of refugees in neighboring countries or refugees who have returned to their country of origin participating in peacebuilding efforts. But very few studies have looked at similar efforts on the part of resettled refugees. Particularly, how does the experience of resettlement shape refugee engagement with peacebuilding efforts in their country of origin? This research shows that refugees can play a role in supporting peacebuilding, even when they reside in countries distant from their country of origin. They do so through remittances, social capital,¹ and political engagement in their host country.

This research provides a qualitative and exploratory case study based on the experience of Liberian refugees in Canada. The author conducted thirty-five interviews with Liberian refugees who had lived in Canada for five or more years. Additionally, the author interviewed officials in the Canadian government and non-governmental organizations involved in refugee resettlement. Individuals and/or families selected for refugee resettlement receive permanent status in the countries that receive them. They are provided resources and training to help integrate into their new communities, like language classes and access to welfare services. Refugee resettlement is often framed as a burden-sharing tool between neighboring countries that receive an influx of refugees during a violent conflict and (largely) wealthier countries that are willing to offer a path toward permanent residency. The policy discourse on refugee resettlement has “evolved from a protection tool and durable solution for refugees towards an acknowledgement of the benefits accruing to the host state and the international community.” Host countries benefit from gaining both international status as a “humanitarian state” and a means to regulated refugee immigration.

This article suggests that the discourse on the benefits of refugee resettlement should include the support it provides for peacebuilding efforts in conflict-affected countries, particularly those from which refugee communities originate. Peacebuilding initiatives can include top-down activities (those that are implemented by the state or international organizations) or

Refugee Resettlement:

As defined by the UN Refugee Agency, “the transfer of refugees from an asylum country to another State that has agreed to admit them and ultimately grant them permanent settlement.” Resettlement is rare. For example, only 50,500 refugees were resettled in 2018.

UNHCR. Resettlement. Retrieved July 11, 2019, from <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/resettlement.html>

1. Defined by the author as “ideas about democracy, citizen’s rights, and responsibilities and skills.”

bottom-up activities (those that focus on wide participation in activities at the local community level). These activities can include the provision of basic services, economic revitalization, and support for a new political process. The author argues that refugee resettlement presents an opportunity for both top-down and bottom-up peacebuilding activities. For instance, the host country plays a role in supporting peacebuilding activities by offering safe haven for refugees, providing essential social services, and educating refugee communities about good governance,² which, should a refugee voluntarily support such efforts, can be applied to the refugee's country of origin.

Continued reading:

Chenoweth, E. & Young, H. (2016, January 26). Seeing flight as a non-violent option: One way to change the discourse about the world's 60 million refugees. *Political Violence @ a Glance*. Retrieved on July 9, 2019, from <http://politicalviolenceataglance.org/2016/01/26/seeing-flight-as-a-non-violent-option-one-way-to-change-the-discourse-about-the-worlds-60-million-refugees/>

Moorthy, S. & Wright, T. M. (2017, February 10). Refugees, host country politics, and human suffering. *Political Violence @ a Glance*. Retrieved July 9, 2019, from <http://politicalviolenceataglance.org/2017/02/10/will-moore/>

Seyle, C. & Coolidge, K. (2017, February 24). Fact sheet: Refugees and U.S. national security. OEF Research. Retrieved July 10, 2019, from <https://oefresearch.org/publications/fact-sheet-refugees-and-us-national-security>

UNHCR. (2019, February). Refugee resettlement facts. UNHCR. Retrieved July 17, 2019, from <https://www.unhcr.org/resettlement-in-the-united-states.html>

Organizations/Initiatives:

Canadian Council for Refugees: <https://ccrweb.ca/en/information-refugees>
 UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR): <https://www.unhcr.org>
 Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO): <https://irco.org>
 Union of Liberian Associations in the Americas: <http://ulaalib.org>

From interviews with Liberian refugees in Canada, the author finds support for linking refugee resettlement to peacebuilding activities in Liberia. Refugees faced many challenges integrating into their new communities, which included job security, housing, access to quality education, and safety. Yet, despite these challenges, Liberian refugees reported that they were supporting peacebuilding activities in Liberia. This was primarily expressed through remittances, or the sending of money and goods back to Liberia. Financial resources make up the majority of these remittances and are used for everything from the basic survival of family and friends to the establishment of small-to-medium-sized businesses in Liberia. These constitute a form of economic revitalization for peacebuilding.

A few of those interviewed were involved in the transfer of social capital, which includes knowledge-sharing about democracy or good governance. Because of the low skill capacity of many resettled refugees and residency requirements for Canadian citizenship, refugees avoid traveling to Liberia prior to attaining Canadian citizenship. However, some interviewees discussed wanting to focus their attention on learning more about the Canadian system of government so that one day they could return to Liberia and apply those lessons.

Finally, while Liberian refugees generally assumed that peacebuilding was an activity undertaken by political elites and international NGOs, they also discussed their role in lobbying the Canadian government to extend resettlement opportunities and contribute to peacebuilding activities. This effort was coordinated by community organizations included in this research project, like the Liberian Community Association in Ottawa-Gatineau Region. The leaders of this group report seizing on the political moment of the Ebola crisis in 2014-2016, particularly Canada's increased involvement in Liberia, to translate into "continuous support for Liberia's health care and social needs." They report developing a relationship with the Canadian government, which included an invitation by the Minister of Foreign Affairs to discuss the travel ban and support for Liberians impacted by crises.

2. Good governance is a subjective term that is used to describe key values, like rule of law, transparency, or responsiveness, that characterize public institutions that work well.

TALKING POINTS

- Refugee resettlement can contribute to top-down and bottom-up peacebuilding activities.
- Liberian refugees in Canada reported being involved in peacebuilding in Liberia primarily through remittances, but smaller numbers reported involvement through the transfer of social capital and engagement in the Canadian political process.
- Liberian refugees organized into community associations that advocated for Canada's increased involvement in Liberia, seizing on the increased attention to Liberia during the 2014-2016 Ebola crisis.

Photo Credit: IOM/Muse Mohammed 2015.
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Canadian Resettlement, Jordan
Canadian flags at the departure airport in Amman.

INFORMING PRACTICE

Refugees are often perceived as passive and devoid of choice, victims of warfare rather than potential agents for change. Some scholars have pushed back on this perception, arguing that refugees make an active and nonviolent choice: “Given the choice between staying and fighting, staying and dying, or fleeing and surviving, today’s refugees fled—meaning that, by definition, they actively and purposefully chose a non-violent option in the context of mass violence raging all around them.” Despite their choices to flee and survive, refugees are often undervalued resources whose deeply personal knowledge of and experience with violence in their country of origin do not receive the attention they deserve in national or international conversations on peacebuilding. For example, this article mentions a capacity development program in Liberia initiated by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). The stated purpose of this program is to help with the social and economic administration of post-conflict countries like Liberia by tapping into diaspora communities (the dispersed people from any country of origin). However, interview respondents in this article said this program focuses on elite Liberians living abroad. As one respondent said, “Why will those big organizations and guys want to employ a former refugee or think of a refugee as having the skill capacity? They [the UN and government of Liberia] seem to believe that we lack resources and expertise because we spent so many years in refugee camps.”

This article helps to demonstrate that many refugee populations do have transferable skills that can directly impact peacebuilding efforts in their country of origin. They present an untapped resource and are potentially powerful advocates for nonviolence. Identifying pathways for their integration into the policy discourse on peacebuilding in the country of origin (in this case, Liberia) provides an exciting option to both tap into refugees’ power and help create a culture of nonviolence in the communities from which they originate.

TESTIMONIALS



This Magazine is where the academic field and the practitioners meet. It is the ideal source for the Talkers, the Writers and the Doers who need to inform and educate themselves about the fast growing field of Peace Science for War Prevention Initiatives!

The Late John W. McDonald

U.S. Ambassador, ret.

Chairman and CEO, Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy



As a longtime peace activist, I've grown weary of the mainstream perception that "peace is for dreamers." That's why the Peace Science Digest is such a useful tool; it gives me easy access to the data and the science to make the case for peacebuilding and war prevention as both practical and possible. This is a wonderful new resource for all who seek peaceful solutions in the real world.

Kelly Campbell

Executive Director, Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility Co-founder,

9/11 Families for Peaceful Tomorrows



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Aubrey Fox

Executive Director (FMR), Institute for Economics and Peace



The field of peace science has long suffered from a needless disconnect between current scholarship and relevant practice. The Peace Science Digest serves as a vital bridge. By regularly communicating cutting-edge peace research to a general audience, this publication promises to advance contemporary practice of peace and nonviolent action. I don't know of any other outlet that has developed such an efficient forum for distilling the key insights from the latest scholarly innovations for anyone who wants to know more about this crucial subject. I won't miss an issue.

Erica Chenoweth

Berthold Beitz Professor in Human Rights and International Affairs at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University



Peace Science Digest is a valuable tool for translating scholarly research into practical conclusions in support of evidence-based approaches to preventing armed conflict.

David Cortright

Director of Policy Studies at the Kroc Institute of International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame



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Joseph Bock

Director, School of Conflict Management, Peacebuilding and Development



We must welcome the expansion of peace awareness into any and every area of our lives, in most of which it must supplant the domination of war and violence long established there. The long-overdue and much appreciated Digest is filling an important niche in that 'peace invasion.' No longer will anyone be able to deny that peace is a science that can be studied and practiced.

Michael Nagler

Founder of the Metta Center for Nonviolence



The Peace Science Digest is a major contribution to the peace and security field. It makes complex issues more understandable, enabling professional outfits like ours to be more effective in our global work. The Digest underscores that preventing war is about more than good intentions or power; it is also about transferable knowledge and science.

Mark Freeman

Founder and Executive Director of the Institute for Integrated Transitions (IFIT).



The distillation of the latest academic studies offered by the Peace Science Digest is not only an invaluable time-saving resource for scholars and policymakers concerned with preventing the next war, but for journalists and organizers on the front lines, who can put their findings to good use as they struggle to hold the powerful accountable and to build a more just and peaceful world.

Eric Stoner

Co-founder and Editor, Waging Nonviolence



Peace Science Digest is an invaluable tool for advocates for peace, as much as for educators. In it one quickly finds the talking points needed to persuade others, and the research to back those points up.

David Swanson

Director, World Beyond War



"The Digest is smartly organized, engaging, and provides a nice synthesis of key research on conflict, war, and peace with practical and policy relevance. The Digest's emphasis on "contemporary relevance," "talking points," and "practical implications" is a breath of fresh air for those of us trying to bridge the academic-policy-practitioner divides. Highly recommended reading."

Maria J. Stephan

Director, Nonviolent Action at United States Institute of Peace

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<h2>OUR VISION</h2>	<p>Our vision is a world beyond war by 2030 and humanity united by a global system of peace with justice.</p>
<h2>OUR MISSION</h2>	<p>Our mission is to advance the Global Peace System by supporting, developing and collaborating with peacebuilding efforts in all sectors of society.</p>
<h2>OUR CORE VALUES</h2>	<p>Nonviolence – We promote strategic and principled nonviolent solutions over any kind of armed conflict.</p> <p>Empathy – We view social problems through the eyes of others and respectfully communicate with each other in the pursuit of mutual understanding.</p> <p>Planetary loyalty – We consider ourselves global citizens, living in harmony with humanity and nature.</p> <p>Moral imagination – We strive for a moral perception of the world in that we: (1) imagine people in a web of relationships including their enemies; (2) foster the understanding of others as an opportunity rather than a threat; (3) pursue the creative process as the wellspring that feeds the building of peace; and (4) risk stepping into the unknown landscape beyond violence</p>
<h2 style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">AREAS OF FOCUS</h2>	<h2>WE SUPPORT</h2> <p>Support Rotary International’s focus on peace by aiding the Rotarian Action Group for Peace with human, logistical and content-related resources.</p> <p>Support development of effective strategies to convince Americans that the United States should not promote war, militarism or weapons proliferation, but rather embrace conflict resolution practices that have been shown to prevent, shorten, and eliminate war as viable alternatives to local, regional and global conflicts.</p> <p>Support building grassroots social movements seeking a world beyond war.</p>
	<h2>WE EDUCATE</h2> <p>Actively contribute to peace science and public scholarship on war prevention issues.</p> <p>Share information and resources with multiple constituencies in an understandable manner.</p> <p>Provide evidence-based information on peace and conflict issues with immediately potential doable policy advice to public policy makers.</p> <p>Advance the understanding and growth of the Global Peace System.</p>
	<h2>WE ENGAGE</h2> <p>Convene national and international experts in ongoing constructive dialog on war prevention issues via our Parkdale Peace Gatherings.</p> <p>Connect likely and unlikely allies to create new opportunities.</p> <p>Participate in peacebuilding networks and membership organizations.</p>
<h2>UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS</h2>	<p>We are at a stage in human history where we can say with confidence that there are better and more effective alternatives to war and violence.</p> <p>A Global Peace System is evolving.</p> <p>Poverty, employment, energy, education, the environment and other social and natural factors are interconnected in peacebuilding.</p> <p>Peace Science and Peace Education provide a path to a more just and peaceful world.</p> <p>Multi-track diplomacy offers a sectoral framework for creating peacebuilding opportunities</p>