

Summary: ‘Rethinking Canada in the global refugee regime’

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[Rethinking Canada in the Global Refugee Regime]

Executive Summary

- Canada has been an active global actor on forced migration, shaped by a wide range of government and non-government actors, as well as regional and global contexts.
- Canada's contributions to refugee resettlement and humanitarian assistance are valuable, but the extent of their impact on areas of change remain unclear.
- Further research on Canada's ability to influence global refugee outcomes needs to consider if, when, and how Canadian domestic policy impacts its influence abroad.
- Looking ahead, the authors identify areas for further research, including refugee issues within adjacent fields such as peace and security, development, and regional contexts.
- Finally, the authors conclude by emphasizing the importance of understanding the complexity and diversity of actors within the global refugee regime.

The Global Refugee Regime

- The study of the refugee regime needs to include an understanding of the forms of power that are expressed and experienced within the regime itself.
- Distinguishing between the global and the local is essential in understanding the notion that the global refugee regime functions at a level distinct from the domestic context of states.
- The chapters of this volume conclude that the global refugee regime is a combination of principles, institutions, and decision-making mechanisms that are intended to promote cooperation, but do not automatically result in it.
- Thus, the global refugee regime is best understood as a goal that functions in response to the interests and actions of different actors.

Canada in the global refugee regime

- Canada has been an active global actor on issues of forced migration in various spaces of activity that have not been previously acknowledged in the literature.
- It is important to understand that Canada's global action on refugee issues is the result of a broad range of actors, including civil society, private sector, academics, and provincial and municipal actors, in addition to Government of Canada officials.
- In addition to understanding what Canada *is* in the global refugee regime, we also need to understand the complexity and regional diversity of the context in which Canada must operate. Regional and national dynamics impact global processes similarly to the other way around.
- Canadian domestic policy impacts Canada's ability to influence outcomes for refugees in global processes, which needs to be considered in future research.
- While Canada has made important contributions to refugee resettlement and humanitarian assistance, the authors question the causal significance of these contributions to particular areas of change. The intent is to prompt future research to determine whether the nature of Canada's contributions could ever be quantified.

- The authors acknowledge the importance of political action in finding solutions for refugees, but also warn that drawing refugee issues into political spaces has not always resulted in increased protection or durable solutions.
- Future research, policy, and practice must always be mindful of the complexity and history of refugee issues in order to understand Canada's future policies and actions.

Looking Ahead

- There are multiple dimensions of Canada's engagement on issues of forced migration that are not covered in this volume, such as the nexus of refugee issues with peace and security issues, trade, finance, and development policy from a Canadian perspective.
- Responses to specific causes of displacement such as climate change is another area of research that can be further examined in the future.
- The three regional chapters included in this volume fill a gap that is almost entirely absent from current literature, illustrating the need for similar analyses that could be undertaken to understand Canada's role in responding to forced displacement within other geographies.
- Finally, with keeping the ambition of the global refugee regime as our collective compass, it is important to understand the nuances of behaviour of diverse actors within it.