

Refugee Politics: Dilemmas and Trade-Offs

Symposium at the Scottish Parliament

Friday, 15 June 2018

10 am – 5 pm, Edinburgh

You are invited to a symposium at the Scottish Parliament aiming to explore the dynamics and trade-offs of refugee policies and politics in **Germany, Greece** and the **United Kingdom** – and the implications of these for **Scotland**, at a time when the devolution of immigration policy is being considered. This event is sponsored by Colin Beattie (Member of the Scottish Parliament) and jointly funded by the UK's Political Study Association (Greek and German Specialist Groups) and the ESRC/AHRC as part of their contribution to the Global Challenges Research Fund (Award Reference: ES/P005189/1).

Presently, Greece, Germany and the UK stand for different policy approaches to address the challenge of refugee politics. Greece continues to be amongst the most important places through which refugees make their way into Europe and shows very acutely the difficulties of limiting and controlling immigration and organising the integration of immigrants. Germany has been the EU member state which has accepted, by far, the largest number of refugees and has maintained, until recently, a comparatively liberal refugee discourse and policy, which has, however, polarised society and facilitated support for the far-right. The UK, also a major destination for refugees, has, by comparison, adopted a more restrictive response to the refugee crisis, reflected in the small number of Syrian refugees admitted to the country and the predominantly hostile public discourses and attitudes. Scottish public attitudes and policy frames have been notably more positive than those in the rest of the UK.

In all three states, there are significant social, political and economic implications for both refugees and host populations, as well as lessons to be learnt about the intended and unintended consequences of adopting liberal or restrictive policies and communicative frames in order to manage forced displacement. This symposium provides a forum for stakeholders to come together for discussion and exchange, with the objective of developing policy ideas of relevance to Scotland, Britain and Europe as a whole.

The organisers hope that all participants can stay for the whole symposium - from 10am to 5pm - in order to fully contribute to the discussion. Due to the Parliament's security procedures, a final list of participants needs to be submitted a week before the symposium. Any late cancellations will therefore not free up places for those on the waiting list. Registration, as well as lunch and refreshments, is free but please **register by Thursday 7 June 2018** to reserve your place (subject to availability).

Register: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/refugee-politics-dilemmas-and-trade-offs-tickets-45465381179>

We would be delighted if you were able to join us and contribute to our discussions! Please contact us with any questions about the event.

Kind Regards

Dr Hartwig Pautz (Co-Convenor, German Politics Specialist Group) hartwig.pautz@uws.ac.uk

Dr Georgios Karyotis (Co-Convenor, Greek Politics Specialist Group) georgios.karyotis@glasgow.ac.uk

Programme

9.30 – Arrival and Registration. **Tea and Coffee** in the Members Room

10.00 – 11.30: SESSION 1

Welcome: Colin **Beattie** (MSP)

Comparative Perspectives on Refugee Migration (*The ‘Problem’*)

Chair: Dr Ben Colburn (University of Glasgow)

1. Dr Frida **Boraeng** (University of Gothenburg) “Welfare State Institutions and Admission of Forced Migrants”
2. Dr Kristinn **Hermannsson** and Dr Lesley **Doyle** (University of Glasgow) “Comparative Perspectives on the Skills, Aspirations, and Experiences of Young Syrian Refugees”
3. Dr Emilia **Pietka-Nykaza** and Prof Colin **Clark** (University of the West of Scotland) “Drivers and Challenges of Refugee Migration”

11.45 – 13.00: SESSION 2

Managing Refugee Migration (*The ‘Policies’*)

Chair: Dr Hartwig Pautz (University of the West of Scotland)

1. Dorothee **Hermanni** (Integration Project Officer, Germany) “The Exchange of Experience between Administrative and Civil Society Stakeholders: How Much Dialogue at Eye Level Can be Dared?”
2. Prof Antigone **Lyberaki** (Panteion University / SolidarityNow) “Engaging with Refugees in Greece: Grappling with a Vacuum in People’s Lives”
3. Dr Gareth **Mulvey** (University of Glasgow) “Perspectives on Refugee Resettlement: Syrian Refugees in England and Scotland”

13.00 - 13.45: **Lunch**

13.45 – 15.15: SESSION 3

Implications of Refugee Migration (*The ‘Politics’*)

Chair: Dr Vasiliki Tsagkroni (Leiden University)

1. Prof Bill **Niven** and Amy **Williams** (Nottingham Trent University) “Caring Through Remembering”
2. Dr Ian **Klinke** and Dr Bharath **Ganesh** (University of Oxford): “Generation Identity and the Rise of the ‘Ethnopluralist Right’: Lessons from Germany”
3. Dr Georgios **Karyotis** (University of Glasgow), Marius **Mosoreanu** (Babeş-Bolyai University) and Dr Dimitris **Skleparis** (University of Glasgow) “Let the Right Ones In: Immigration Attitudes in Britain”
4. Prof Heaven **Crawley** (Coventry University): “Could We/Should We do Things Differently? Rethinking the Politics of Protection”

15.15 – 15.30: **Tea/Coffee Break**

15.30 - 16.45: SESSION 4 (Burns Room)

Roundtable: What Would a ‘Better’ Refugee System Look Like in Scotland?

This roundtable will be a structured and open discussion between symposium participants and key stakeholders from relevant institutions. Each speaker will speak for 5 minutes on how they see the future of the refugee system in Scotland. This will be followed by a general discussion about how we would go about creating such a system. Confirmed Speakers include:

- **Gary Christie**: Head of Policy & Communications, Scottish Refugee Council
- **Khaled Emkidh**: Syrian Refugee; Member of the Scottish Youth Parliament; Caledonian University Student.
- **Jamie Livingstone**: Director, Oxfam Scotland
- **Andy Morrison**: Chief Officer, Migration, Population and Diversity, Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)
- **Jackie Walder**: Policy Manager at Connected Communities in the Scottish Government

The discussion will be chaired by Professor **Alison Phipps**, UNESCO Chair in Refugee Integration through Languages and the Arts and Co-Founder of the Glasgow, Refugee, Asylum and Migration Network (GRAMNet).

16.45 – 17.00: **Concluding Remarks**

Contributions and Contributors

Session 1: Comparative Perspectives on Refugee Migration (The 'Problem')

Frida Boräng (University of Gothenburg): Welfare State Institutions and Admission of Forced Migrants

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What are the factors behind the very different choices countries have made over the last decades when it comes to immigrant admission? Why has the balance between inclusion and exclusion differed so much between countries and categories of migrants? This presentation focuses on the relationship between welfare state institutions and states' intake of forced migrants (refugees and asylum seekers). It shows that countries with generous welfare states have, from 1980 to at least 2008, accepted more forced migrants than other countries. The positive effect of welfare state generosity on the admission of forced migrants is larger than the effects of a number of factors often highlighted in migration research. This runs counter to the "welfare chauvinism hypothesis", which suggests that generous welfare states would accept fewer forced migrants. The relationship between welfare state institutions and forced migration is illustrated with the cases of Germany, Greece and the United Kingdom.

Kristinn Hermannsson and Dr Lesley Doyle (University of Glasgow) Comparative Perspectives on the Skills, Aspirations, and Experiences of Young Syrian Refugees

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The protracted nature of the Syrian conflict has directed attention to policies designed to empower refugees to integrate socially and economically in host societies. Education and skills development for young people are at the heart of these efforts. Comparative research on forced displacement and education, in particular, is very limited; on youth it is almost non-existent. This paper proposes a new interdisciplinary theoretical synthesis to overcome this limitation. Theoretical approaches from education, economics and sociology will be explored for their relevance and utility in identifying and deconstructing young refugees' past learning and training experiences, their acquisition of new skills, and their transition and integration into new learning and training situations. Empirically, original data are analysed from face-to-face interviews with 500 Syrian refugees aged 18-32 years in each of the following three host states: a neighbouring host state (Lebanon), the main entry point to Europe (Greece), and a north European destination state (the UK). By analysing in a comparative context the aspirations and training needs of young refugees, this paper aims to simultaneously fill a gap in existing knowledge and focus attention on a demographic whose skills are key to economic prosperity. Our comparative approach will allow us to explore whether the currently observed limited impact of Syrian refugees on the labour market, including in culturally similar countries, can be explained by their lack of required skills that would be suited to the opportunities that exist in host countries or by constraints and barriers they face when they get there.

Emilia Pietka-Nykaza and Colin Clark (University of the West of Scotland): Drivers and Challenges of Refugee Migration

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This presentation outlines and problematises the drivers and narratives of recent refugee movement to Western Europe. In particular, we examine the dynamics of reception management and integration of refugees, as well as routes to, and experiences within, transit and destination countries (such as Greece, the UK and Germany). Further, the numerous challenges faced by refugees, community groups - as well as policy makers - will be critically appraised. The picture that emerges is both 'fuzzy' and complex. We argue that five factors are vital in helping to maximise humanitarian efforts in systems that are designed to be, in truth, lacking humanity, dignity or respect: early intervention and prevention, resilience and agency, recognising vulnerabilities, affording and nurturing partnerships and ensuring service sustainability. Taken together, these aspects can help, but are not a panacea.

Session 2: Managing Refugee Migration (The 'Policies')

Dorothee Hermanni (University of Applied Sciences Brandenburg and Refugee Academy e.V. Berlin): Exchanging Experience Between Administrative and Civil Society Stakeholders - How Much Dialogue at Eye Level Can be Dared?

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For many years, refugee aid and advisory services were often characterised by paternalistic approaches towards the refugees. Rarely were refugees accepted as equals. Recently, more and more initiatives in Germany aim at fostering cooperation and exchange between refugees and members of the majority society. What is still missing is a stronger implementation of continuous forms of cooperation between policy makers, innovative civil society actors and refugees. As an important step, Berlin's city government has been, since 2017, discussing a more participatory "master plan for integration and participation of refugees". For the first time, both civil society actors and refugees were invited to be part of the discussion. This talk will emphasise the significance of further increasing cooperation between stakeholders and the "target group". By analysing the discursive practice of "them" and "us", the foundations for a successful participatory policy could evolve.

Antigone Lyberaki (Panteion University/ Solidarity Now): "Engaging with Refugees in Greece: Grappling with a Vacuum in People's Lives"

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Population movements in our decade no longer conform to the model of 'economic migrant', nor of the 'political refugee' of previous decades. Misdiagnosing migration comes at the cost of magnifying economic and social problems. Seen in this light, integration policies acquire greater significance. However, to be successful, they need to be tailored to the specific characteristics, worldviews and aspirations of both sides. This talk explores the role of civil society, reflecting in the work of SolidarityNow, an organisation that plays a leading role in engaging with refugees in Greece, through designing flexible programs, valued by those forcibly displaced themselves, and which facilitate their integration. This talk reflects on the challenges faced in and the lessons learned from the Greek case.

Gareth Mulvey (University of Glasgow) "Perspectives on Refugee Resettlement: Syrian Refugees in England and Scotland"

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Refugee integration in Britain is no longer the preserve of Westminster but is effectively devolved to sub-national parliaments across the United Kingdom. The Scottish Government has taken both a more universalist and a more inclusive approach to refugee integration than the UK Government, particularly for those in the asylum system. This paper looks at some of the differences in the experiences of refugees in Scotland and England. It also seeks to highlight a few of the variations in experiences dependent on route of access to the UK. As such, the paper suggests that the better social provision available to refugees in Scotland, and the package of support available to resettled refugees leads to differential experiences of settlement. In particular it highlights differences in access to language support and ties this to the complex decision-making that refugees face, to access the labour market immediately or to develop language skills in the hope of accessing 'better' employment in the future.

Session 3: Implications of Refugee Migration (The 'Politics')

Bharath Ganesh and Ian Klinke (University of Oxford): Generation Identity and the Rise of the 'Ethnopluralist Right': Lessons from Germany

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A new far right movement is gaining traction in the UK - Generation Identity. Claiming to be distinct from the 'old' anti-Semitic right, GI, also known as the identitarian movement, is an 'ethnopluralist' youth movement that seeks to secure 'the survival of indigenous Europeans' from the influx of refugees and migrants from the Middle East and North Africa. Gaining impetus since the worsening of the Syrian refugee crisis in 2015, GI has organised a large number of direct actions across Europe including vigilante anti-refugee actions in the Mediterranean and the Alps. It calls for the repatriation of non-white migrants from what it refers to as "Fortress Europe". This talk will outline how this new movement sits in relation to other far right and anti-refugee movements and discuss some of the ways in which it has been combated in Germany and Austria.

William Niven and Amy Williams (Nottingham Trent University): Caring through Remembering

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The presentation focuses on the role played by memory of the past in current refugee debates. In Germany, memory of the Holocaust, the postwar expulsions of Germans from Eastern Europe and flight from the GDR have been evoked to inspire empathy for today's refugees. In Britain, the focus has been quite specifically on memory of the Kindertransport, an event which has also featured in the "memory agitprop" of The Centre for Political Beauty in Germany. We ask which stakeholders use memory in the context of the refugee crisis in Germany and Britain, how they use it, and how effective the deployment of memory is. We also argue that the potential of memory to sensitise a range of stakeholders to the needs of refugees has not been fully realised. We suggest a number of concrete "memory" policies which might be implemented within the areas devolved to Scottish parliament.

Georgios Karyotis (University of Glasgow), Marius Mosoreanu (Babeş-Bolyai University) and Dr Dimitris Skleparis (University of Glasgow): "Let the Right Ones In: Immigration Attitudes in Britain"

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Drawing on original survey data collected in October 2017, we seek to provide a nuanced analysis of the drivers of immigration attitudes in Britain. We employ a conjoint experiment to identify the type of immigrants who are supported for admission by the general public by asking a representative sample of British citizens to rank and choose between different profiles, with varied and randomised immigrant attributes. Findings demonstrate that the skills that immigrants possess is the single biggest driver of attitudes: high-skilled immigrants are six-times more likely to be supported for admission, although more so in England compared to Scotland. The reason for migrating is the second biggest influence, with forcibly displaced people preferred over economic migrants, a normative influence that is particularly pronounced in Scotland. The marital status of immigrants is also statistically significant, with single, younger people -perhaps surprisingly- preferred over older applicants who are married with children. The gender and the origin of immigrants does not influence attitudes, contrary to public representations during the EU Referendum. Overall, for the first time in Britain, this innovative approach allows us to compare the desirability of key attributes on a single scale and across the UK.

Heaven Crawley (Coventry University): "Could We/Should We do Things Differently? Rethinking the Politics of Protection"

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Debates on providing protection in Europe for refugees have, over the past 25 years, become increasingly politicised and polarised with those in favour and opposed to extending the rights of EU citizens to others arriving from outside headlocked over the appropriateness or otherwise of policy responses. The so-called 'anxious middle' meanwhile remains anxious. Reflecting on this debates, Professor Heaven Crawley will suggest that a new approach is needed, one which connects the experiences of refugees and other groups of migrants with broader debates about the nature of the societies in which we currently live including deep (and growing) inequalities at the local, national and international levels and a myriad of social injustices which have become associated with late capitalism.



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Thank you for your interest in our event. We look forward to lively and impactful debates!