

EU at the crossroads of migration

Critical reflections on the 'refugee crisis' and new migration deals



Utrecht University

DAMR Spring Event 2018

DAMR Spring Event 2018 took place on May 7, 2018 in Utrecht as part of the EU at the Crossroads of Migration Conference hosted by DAMR, RENFORCE and UGlobe.

The first panel organised by DAMR focused on refugees, migrants and their integration at local level.

Prof. dr. Barbara Oomen presented her new research investigating the role of transnational refugee city networks in refugee reception and integration in Europe while Dr. Salvo Nicolosi discussed the temporary protection in EU Asylum Law. Zooming in from the EU perspective to the Dutch context, Dr. Karin Geuijen, Dr. Caroline Oliver and Dr. Rianne Dekker discussed the potential effects of local innovations to overcome the challenges of asylum seeker reception, with a particular investigation of the Utrecht case.



The second panel organised by DAMR focused on evidence and reflections on the (structural) integration of refugees in the Netherlands.

Dr. Djamila Schans and Dr. Mieke Maliepaard provided an historical overview of the long term integration of refugees and reflected on the current challenges the Netherlands may face. Prof. dr. Frank van Tubergen focused on the labour market integration of refugees in the Netherlands and emphasised the detrimental effects spending long periods of time in asylum centers may have on refugees. Finally, Dr. Floris Peters discussed immigrant naturalisation and labour market integration in the Netherlands and highlighted how crucial it is to provide legal rights to the most disadvantaged immigrant populations, like the refugees, to support their economic and social integration.

Panel 5: DAMR Panel ‘Refugees, migrants and integration on local level’

Chair: Dr. Hanneke van Eijken

Presentation 1

Name: Barbara Oomen (Faculty of Law, Economics and Governance, Utrecht University)

Title: Decoupling and teaming up: the role of Transnational Refugee City Networks in refugee reception and integration in Europe

Abstract:

Transnational Refugee City Networks are an important and often-overlooked set of actors in the multi-level governance of forced migration in Europe today. These networks connect cities across borders (horizontally) and with European and international organizations (vertically). Given the lack of literature on these networks this paper, on the basis of a database of 25 of such networks based in Europe, provides a description of the main characteristics of these networks and their functioning. It argues that a key function of these networks lies in the diffusion of norms pertaining to refugee reception and integrate that differ from those of the state, for instance via emphasizing the relevance of human rights. TRCNs can play a role in enforcing alternative normative frameworks, translating global norms to the local level but also in the formulation of new norms and ways of monitoring them. In teaming up across borders and with supranational actors, cities in TRCNs are thus supported in ‘decoupling’ local policies pertaining to forced migration from – more restrictive – national policies in order to strengthen the normative basis for refugee reception and integration.

Presentation 2:

Name: Dr. Salvo Nicolosi (International and European Law, Utrecht University)

Title: Let Sleeping Dogs Lie? Temporary Protection in Eu Asylum Law

Abstract:

Temporary protection is defined by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as “an arrangement developed by States to offer protection of a temporary nature to persons arriving en masse from situations of conflict or generalized violence, without prior individual [refugee] status determination.”

After introducing and defining the concept of Temporary Protection in international refugee law, the analysis will focus on the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) within the EU to reflect on its suitability as a tool to cope with the ongoing migratory pressure.

The key features as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the TPD will be outlined in the light of the current scholarly and policy debate in an attempt to understand why the Directive has not been implemented in the past 15 years and whether its implementation is still recommendable. .

It will be therefore suggested that, despite some practical advantages, a new machinery including a specific crisis mechanism can better guarantee a higher level of rights, in line with the paradigm of protection for the duration of risk which is at the core of international refugee law.

Keywords: temporary protection – displaced persons – mass influx - refugee flows – migratory pressure - relocation - Dublin Regulation – Common European Asylum System

Presentation 3:

Names: Dr. Caroline Oliver (University of Roehampton), Dr. Karin Geuijen (Utrecht University School of Governance) and Dr. Rianne Dekker (Utrecht University School of Governance)

Title: Local innovation to overcome the challenges of asylum seeker reception: the Utrecht Refugee Launchpad

Abstract

The dominant approach to asylum seeker reception is characterised by enforced passivity for asylum seekers, leading to delayed integration for those granted asylum. The Utrecht Refugee Launchpad (URLP) is an initiative led by Utrecht city council, in collaboration with a range of partners, including universities, co-housing and refugee NGOs and a social enterprise, that aims to develop a more dynamic, socially inclusive and 'future-free integration process' for asylum seekers. The project brings asylum seekers together with local young people in a disadvantaged community to live and learn together, through co-housing with local young people from the neighbourhood, English language classes and entrepreneurship programmes offered to inhabitants from both the centre and local neighbourhood. The aims of the project are to generate social bonding among participants, reduce local hostility, equip participants with new skills to facilitate integration there or elsewhere, and encourage a reframing of asylum seekers' narratives.

This paper will present findings from research into the first year of the project. We offer insight into multiple perspectives on the innovation drawn from surveys, interviews and participant observation, including from policy and civil society actors involved in setting up the project, people in the neighbourhood, the young people living in the centre and asylum seekers themselves. We consider the extent to which this experiment is working out as planned, draw learning from the findings of the research so far, and briefly reflect on the challenges of conducting research into this local level innovation.

Discussant: Dr. Tesseltje de Lange

Panel 11: Evidence and reflections on the (structural) integration of refugees in the Netherlands

Organizer: Dr. Özge Bilgili, Utrecht University

Presentation 1

Names: Dr. Djamila Schans, WODC (Ministry of Security and Justice, the Netherlands)
Mieke Maliepaard, WODC (Ministry of Security and Justice, the Netherlands)

Title: The integration of refugees in the Netherlands: Looking Back and Looking Forward

Abstract

In the mid-1990s, the number of asylum applications in the Netherlands showed a marked increase, with a total of 95,000 people applying for asylum between 1995 and 1999. The majority of this group settled in the Netherlands permanently. On the basis of two unique data sources, we assess the structural and socio-cultural integration of this group of refugees. We show longitudinal registration data of all asylum applicants who settled in the Netherlands between 1995 and 1999 (data collected between 1995 and 2012), and a survey among the largest refugee groups (SING 2009), to answer the following research questions: (1) To what extent has the integration in different domains been successful for this cohort of refugees, and how do they compare to regular migrants and native Dutch?; (2) How have these integration processes developed over time?; and (3) Which factors contributed to successful integration of this group? In addition, we will present a sneak preview of a new large scale longitudinal research project among refugees who arrived in the Netherlands between 2014 and 2016. Differences and similarities in characteristics of these two asylum populations will be

discussed. On the basis of the previous findings across integration domains, we develop suggestions for dealing with the current inflow of refugees.

Presentation 2

Name: Prof. dr. Frank van Tubergen, Utrecht University

Title: The labour market integration of refugees in the Netherlands

Abstract

This study focuses on the economically disadvantaged position of refugees. We use survey data of refugees from Somalia, Iran, Afghanistan, Iraq, and the former Yugoslavia in the Netherlands, to analyze refugees' odds of employment and their occupational status. In line with human capital and social capital theory, we find that host country specific education, work experience, language proficiency, and contacts with natives are positively related to the chances of employment and occupational status. The study shows that health problems, integration courses, and the time spent in refugee reception centers form important additional explanations of the economic integration of refugees.

Presentation 3

Name: Dr. Floris Peters (Maastricht University)

Title: The citizenship premium: Immigrant naturalisation and labour market integration in the Netherlands

Abstract:

What is the relevance of citizenship for the integration of immigrants? While international research suggests that naturalisation is associated with positive labour market outcomes, it remains unclear why – and by extension – to whom and under which conditions citizenship matters. In this presentation, I shed light on these questions by analysing the relevance of citizenship for the probability of employment and earnings from labour of first-generation immigrants in the Netherlands. I focus particularly on how the so-called citizenship premium is conditioned by the pathway to citizenship (i.e. the process by which citizenship is acquired), and how policy variation factors into this relationship for different migrant groups. To answer these questions, I draw on individual-level administrative data from Statistics Netherlands, based on the System of Social Statistical Datasets. Findings show that citizenship has the potential to kickstart the labour market integration of immigrants, particularly for the most disadvantaged migrant groups, but that its effectiveness depends on timing and functional institutional conditions.