



Special Issue Call for Papers:

Conceptualizing, Theorizing, and Measuring the Contributions of Business to Refugee Crises

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In the last decade we have witnessed the largest forced displacement of people in history. As of August 2019, there were more than 25.9 refugees and 3.5 million people seeking asylum in the world (UNHCR, 2019). A significant percentage of refugees have fled conflict and civil war in countries such as Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and South Sudan. However, there are other refugee crises that are important but have not gained the same level of attention, such as the Rohingya refugees of Myanmar, people fleeing violence in Central America, and refugee flows within India to name but three. In March 2020, refugees fleeing persecution, violence, and poverty attempted to cross from Turkey into Greece, creating a political crisis for the European Union. Although the large majority of refugees live in neighbouring countries in the Middle East and Africa, many of them have sought asylum or been resettled as humanitarian migrants in the United States, Europe, Canada and Australia (UNHCR, 2018). Refugees often face significant challenges in trying to find safe places to live, including risks to their safety. Once they have settled in another country, they then face significant difficulties in supporting themselves, finding social and educational services, and acclimating to a new society (Newman, Bimrose, Nielsen, & Zacher, 2018). The economic pressures brought about by the current COVID-19 pandemic will fuel still further flows of refugees, once cross-border travel restrictions are lifted. As long as there is deprivation, oppression, and the possibility of a better life by leaving countries of origin, there will be people seeking refuge. Refugee issues will, tragically, continue to be important issues of global concern into the future.

While the humanitarian issues associated with refugees for individual societies and regions are clear—and the suffering of many refugees is manifest—the nexus of this issue to business is perhaps less well specified. It is certainly the case that businesses are affected by refugee crises and in turn can act in ways that benefit refugees as well as host communities and countries, but in and of itself this does not necessarily give rise to either a normative obligation or a business imperative for businesses to act. Indeed, in helping refugees either through hiring them or advocating for their inclusion in society, businesses may face opposition from host communities and countries who are opposed to the presence—and perceived economic competition—from refugees. Businesses therefore face significant challenges—institutional, political, ideological, and discursive—in developing and implementing responses to refugee crises.

Refugee crises are a kind of “grand challenge” that should force us to think about the relationship and boundaries between business and society as well as the proper role of business in domains for which they do not necessarily bear direct responsibility. As such, refugee crises raise important questions about the relationship between business and society as well as the content of business’ responsibilities for seemingly exogenous crises. We also suggest that refugee crises surface new questions about how we conceptualize and theorize the relationship between business and society. Refugee crises also push us to think about the ways that we theorize the relationship between business and society, as well as whether existing frameworks and constructs are adequate in the global environment in which business operates, or if new frameworks and normative groundings for business responsibility are needed. Put another way, what do refugee crises illustrate about the changing nature of the relationship between and society. In a related vein, do refugee crises require us to rethink not only the boundaries of that relationship, but also the nature and content of the ethical responsibilities of business? In this respect, we suggest that there are a variety of literatures within traditional business and society scholarship (crisis management, social movements) as well as outside of it (development studies, labour economics, emergency management) that might be brought to bear on this topic as well as useful for the business and society field generally.

Although growing research has examined how people from a refugee background re-establish their livelihoods after leaving their home countries (e.g., Ager & Strang, 2008; Bache, in press; Campion, 2018) or refugee issues as a labour market problem (Collier & Betts, 2017), limited work has examined the implications of the refugee crisis for business (Richardson, Karam, & Afiouni, in press). This special issue will build on recent work that has examined business responses to the refugee crisis (Guo, Al Ariss, & Brewster, in press; Hesse, Kreutzer, & Diehl, 2019; Naccache & Al Ariss, 2017; Wang & Chaudhri, 2019) by calling on researchers to examine the following and similar questions:

Consequences of refugee flows for businesses

- What effects do refugee flows have on external business environments, whether in countries that send, host, or are transit points?

- How do businesses respond to social and economic instability associated with refugee crises?
- Do refugee flows bring benefits to businesses in addressing labour shortages and skill gaps (Wang and Chaudhri, 2019)?
- How do refugee issues intersect with frameworks such as business ethics, CSR, and business and human rights (Einwiller, Ruppel, & Strasser, 2019; Goethals et al., 2019)?

Barriers to and ideological concerns affecting business actions related to refugees

- What are the dominant ideologies guiding business responses to refugee issues between and across countries?
- How do, can, and should businesses navigate tensions between host-country expectations (including governments and communities, both of which may or may not be hostile to refugees) and their responsibilities in this domain (Szkudlarek et al., in press)?
- What are the sociocultural, legislative and/or geopolitical barriers restricting or discouraging businesses' roles in supporting in refugee integration (Hesse et al., 2019)?
- What roles have businesses played or can, in future, play in lobbying or pushing for national legislative or transnational governance frameworks to facilitate refugee employment? Should they play a leading or a reactive role?

Integrating refugees into host societies

- How might businesses work with other stakeholders such as governments and humanitarian agencies to support people from a refugee background to re-establish their livelihoods? In particular, what role do cross-sector social partnerships have to play (Hesse et al., 2019)?
- What are the links between the role of business in the refugee crisis and the broader conversation on development-oriented CSR or on business for peace movement (Oetzel and Miklian, 2017)?
- How can businesses support humanitarian agencies in their work (Wang & Chaudhri, 2019)?
- What role does business have to play in engaging government in refugee-oriented human resource development policies (Naccache & Al Ariss, 2017)?
- How can businesses foster refugee integration into host societies (Guo et al., 2020)?
- What innovative strategies are in place to encourage businesses to integrate refugees (Collier & Betts, 2017; Guo et al., in press)?

We welcome research from a variety of paradigms—including normative, critical, and empirical—as well as research using grounded theory and case study methods. We also welcome research from cross-disciplinary research teams and from researchers outside of business schools with an interest in this topic.

Interested authors are encouraged to submit a six-page proposal (double spaced, excluding references and exhibits) to Alexander Newman (a.newman@deakin.edu.au) through email by **November 20, 2020**. The guest editors will provide developmental feedback and invite authors of suitable proposals to submit a full paper to the special issue. A manuscript development workshop (most likely in a virtual format; details to follow) will be held in late January 2021. In addition, potential authors may contact any of the guest editors to discuss initial ideas for papers. While interested authors are encouraged to make use of the guidance of the guest editors before submitting full papers, full papers may be submitted (and will be equally welcomed) without prior consultation with them.

The deadline for submission of all full papers (including papers that received feedback on their proposals and/or that participated in the manuscript development workshop) will be **June 1, 2021**. Authors should submit their manuscripts through ScholarOne Manuscripts at <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/bas>. Manuscripts should be prepared following the *Business and Society* author guidelines: <http://www.sagepub.com/journals/Journal200878/manuscriptSubmission>. All articles will be subjected to double-blind peer review and editorial process in accordance with the policies of *Business & Society*.

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