

UNIVERSITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM



# Researching the crisis

*IRiS work on the EU's handling of refugees and migrants*



[www.birmingham.ac.uk/iris](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/iris)

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# About IRiS

The Institute for Research into Superdiversity (IRiS) works to advance and promote the University of Birmingham's expertise in the emerging field of superdiversity. We use an interdisciplinary approach to researching contemporary society and processes of transformation brought by increasing human mobility. IRiS brings together over 60 academics from four colleges and 15 different schools including social policy, politics, theology, education, psychology, geography and sports sciences. Together we seek to answer the globally, nationally and locally important questions that emerge at the nexus of migration, faith, language, ethnicity and culture.

We work to drive forward the research, practice and policy agendas around superdiversity generating advanced, high quality research to underpin theory building, knowledge generation, policy making and public debate about the demographic, social, political and cultural changes brought by international migration, globalization and transnationalism and manifested in the increased complexity and stratification of contemporary societies.

The EU's current struggle to find a sustainable and humane response to the refugee crisis at its borders is, among other things, a fascinating laboratory for researchers in this area. The crisis has highlighted the fragility of the so-called 'fortress Europe' and of the EU political project more broadly. But the arrival of thousands of refugees and migrants has not only strained the EU and the relationship between member states, it also brings renewal to Europe's aging population and a new set of opportunities and challenges for European society as a whole.

The projects listed in this booklet offers a snapshot of IRiS recent research on Europe's refugee and migration crisis and capture the spirit of the work we do which benefits from the combination of different disciplinary perspectives: academically rigorous, conceptually and methodologically innovative, forward looking and committed to supporting positive change by engaging with policy and practice.

## **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:**

**[www.birmingham.ac.uk/iris](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/iris)**

**[www.superdiversity.net](http://www.superdiversity.net)**

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# Unravelling the Mediterranean Migration Crisis (MEDMIG)



## FUNDING

ESRC and DfID

## DURATION

September 2015 – August 2016

## IRIS LEAD

Dr Nando Sigona @nandosigona

## MAIN PARTNERS

University of Coventry  
University of Oxford

## CONTEXT

In 2015 more than 1,000,000 refugees and migrants crossed the Mediterranean, arriving at the shores of southern Europe in search of protection or a better life. In the same period more than 4,000 people lost their lives, drowning as overloaded and often unseaworthy boats sank into the sea.

This project is part of the 'Mediterranean Migration Research Programme' jointly funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the Department for International Development (DfID).

## RESEARCH

The project has three key aims:

- Shed light on the dynamics (determinants, drivers and infrastructures) underpinning the recent migration across, and loss of life in, the Mediterranean, mapping the geographies, routes, and journeys of migrants arriving at Europe's Southern border.
- Better understand the decision making processes which influence migrant journeys by uncovering the interaction of migrants with a multitude of state and non-state actors and opportunities and constraints along the way.
- Provide a robust evidence base to inform the development of policy responses by governmental, inter-governmental and non-governmental actors as well as bringing together a network of academics to engage in dialogue on the migration crisis

## METHODOLOGY

The project utilises a number of methods to define and underpin research:

- Fieldwork carried out in Greece, Italy, Malta and Turkey
- 500 qualitative interviews carried out with current and prospective migrants
- 100 interviews with stakeholders
- Observational practice

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

[www.medmig.co.uk](http://www.medmig.co.uk)

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# The Role of Social Capital in Refugee Integration: A Quantitative Study



## FUNDING

Nuffield Foundation

## DURATION

2012 – Present

## IRiS LEAD

Professor Jenny Phillimore

## CONTEXT

The term integration has been much contested with academics debating whether there is an identifiable integration process or whether the subjective and individualised nature of integration inhibits the development of process. A number of domains of integration have been identified through research studies. These generally focus upon functional indicators of integration including housing, employment or educational attainment and on types of social connectors, for example inter-community and extra-community relationships. While there is agreement that integration is multidimensional and domains are interconnected little research has been undertaken to explore connections.

The majority of work is small scale and qualitative, making the extrapolation of findings and development of empirically informed integration policy difficult. This study utilises data collected in a longitudinal survey of refugee integration commissioned by the Home Office, the Survey of New Refugees (SNR), to ask what impact do familial and social networks have on refugees' ability to integrate?

## RESEARCH

The project aimed to increase understanding about the impact of social capital, emerging from peer, friendship, institutional and familial networks, on refugee integration and to disseminate the findings to policymakers and practitioners at local, regional and national level through our existing policy networks and a seminar/workshop.

Objectives are to:

- investigate the role of different types of social capital/connections in refugee integration,
- isolate social capital from other kinds of capital /connections
- explore interrelationships between social capital/connections and different domains of integration
- inform integration and cohesion policy and practice.

## METHODOLOGY

Our analysis of the Survey of New Refugees database proceeded in three parts. First, we operationalised the different domains of integration (housing, health, language, social connections and employment) using key questions from the SNR.

Second, we used a series of bivariate analyses to examine the nature and patterns of social connections and the three dimensions of integrations: means and markers; facilitators and foundations. Third, drawing on a battery of questions from the SNR and using factor analysis, we identified the underlying dimensions of bonding and bridging social capital. The 'factors' derived were used in multivariate analyses to model the associations between bonding and bridging capital, and integration outcomes in housing, employment, controlling for other forms of cultural and human capital such as formal qualification and language ability. In doing so, we took into account any gender, cultural, country origin and regional difference in the integration process.

## OUTPUTS

Project report

[www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/college-social-sciences/social-policy/iris/2013/nuffield-refugees-integration-research-report.pdf](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/college-social-sciences/social-policy/iris/2013/nuffield-refugees-integration-research-report.pdf)

Cheung, S.Y. and Phillimore, J., 2013. Refugees, social capital, and labour market integration in the UK. *Sociology*, p.0038038513491467

Papers forthcoming looking at refugee gender and integration and comparing the impact of the asylum seeker reception programmes on refugee integration in the UK and the Netherlands.

Papers in progress on refugee integration and health and language competency and integration.

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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# Knowledge into Integration Governance (KING)



## **FUNDING**

European Integration Fund

## **DURATION**

2013 – 2015

## **IRIS LEAD**

Professor Jenny Phillimore

## **CONTEXT**

From the European Union to the local authority, a series of different levels of governance enter into play and give rise to different integration results from one place to another. Seizing the phenomenon requires the conduction of a multilevel analysis that takes account of multilevel governance, as the cornerstone of integration policies, but that also takes account of a wide range of policy fields and variables such as the analysis of demographic features (past and future), emerging economies, rural-urban migration or else intra-Europe migration. For that reason, KING offered a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approach guaranteed by the knowledge and expertise of the researchers participating in the project from 12 EU



countries. The project's intermediary results supported the elaboration of the new post-Stockholm Programme and the renegotiation of the EU's Common Basic Principles for Migrant Integration.

## RESEARCH

The UK dimension of the project aimed to increase understanding about good practice in migrant integration at local level

Objectives were to:

- identify good practice in local integration approaches
- make recommendations about policy measures that might be adopted across the EU to facilitate migrant integration
- work closely with new migrants to understand from them their integration needs and how they might be met
- inform integration policy and practice.

## METHODOLOGY

Our approach was two pronged

- 1 A multidisciplinary review of integration practice across Europe using existing policy, practice and academic literature identified through systemic searching in English and Polish language databases
- 2 Retrospective interviews with new migrants identifying the integration resources used to support initial settlement and the ways those resources were accessed.

## OUTPUTS

Migration and integration, A local and experiential perspective by Gary Craig

[www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/college-social-sciences/social-policy/iris/2015/working-paper-series/IRiS-WP-7-2015.pdf](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/college-social-sciences/social-policy/iris/2015/working-paper-series/IRiS-WP-7-2015.pdf)

Social networks, social capital and migrant integration at local level – European literature review by Marta Kindler with Vasselina Ratcheva and Maria Piechowska

[www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/college-social-sciences/social-policy/iris/2015/working-paper-series/IRiS-WP-6-2015.pdf](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/college-social-sciences/social-policy/iris/2015/working-paper-series/IRiS-WP-6-2015.pdf)

Integration practice in the European Union.

Initiatives and innovations by institutions and civil society by Rachel Humphris

[www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/college-social-sciences/social-policy/iris/2014/working-paper-series/IRiS-WP-3-2014.pdf](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/college-social-sciences/social-policy/iris/2014/working-paper-series/IRiS-WP-3-2014.pdf)

KING: Evidence for migrants' integration in Europe Gilardoni, G., D'Odorico, M. & Carrillo, D. (eds) [http://king.ismu.org/wp-content/uploads/KING\\_Report.pdf](http://king.ismu.org/wp-content/uploads/KING_Report.pdf)

Academic outputs are in process on reciprocity in integration, the use of new communication technologies and the role of faith in supporting migrant settlement.

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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# Reception and integration for refugees undergoing resettlement: knowledge exchange training and toolkit



## FUNDING

ESRC Urgency Fund

## IRIS LEAD

Dr Lisa Goodson and  
Professor Jenny Phillimore

## DURATION

February 2016 – Present

## CONTEXT

Europe is in the midst of a refugee crisis described as being on a similar scale and intensity to the post-WWII refugee crisis. Refugees have arrived in Europe in their 100,000s from war torn regions to Italy and Greece by sea and on foot via the Balkans then making their way to Northern Europe. The EU has agreed quotas for a relocation programme from which the UK is exempt. However under pressure from NGOs, the media and the electorate, the UK has agreed to take up to 20,000 Syrian refugees from refugee camps and urban settings in countries adjacent to Syria. They are selecting the most vulnerable refugees from the Levant region who are likely to include families with young children. The Government are paying

for the programme using resources from the overseas development budget. Integration support is likely to be funded for a period of 12 months. The body of research around refugee integration indicates that many refugees arrive with significant levels of skills and qualifications but struggle to access secure housing and employment, to build diverse social networks and achieve good health: key integration indicators. Many of the local authorities accepting Syrian refugees have no experience of refugee resettlement or of working with this group. There is no doubt that the UK faces a major challenge in supporting the refugees and achieving equitable social policy outcomes.

## RESEARCH

The aim of the project is to build the capacity of authorities and institutions to facilitate refugee integration for resettled Syrians.

The objectives are:

- To develop a partnership of institutions, NGOs and academics specialising in refugee integration
- To create a training programme and toolkit to develop the capacity of institutions to facilitate refugee integration
- To pilot the programme through delivering it in authorities hosting Syrian refugees across the West Midlands
- To evaluate the programme
- To finalise the programme and toolkit and seek funds for a national roll-out.

## METHODOLOGY

We are devising a training programme and toolkit which will provide institutions working with newly arrived refugees with the information they need to know about the refugee experience and how it shapes needs and outcomes in country of refuge; the information needs of newly arrived refugees, ways to communicate positive messages about refugees to local residents; effective and affordable approaches to supporting refugee integration; common misunderstandings and how to communicate effectively with newly arrived individuals.

Approaches adopted are as follows:

- A day long workshop with IRiS academics, local experts and NGOs to identify the information to be included in the training and toolkit
- Preparation of training materials in collaboration with NGOs
- Six training sessions will be run in West Midlands authorities allocated refugees as part of the Government programme with all interested parties in those areas.
- Production of toolkit in the form of a paper and online handbook bringing together the learning from the workshop and training and making it freely available to local authorities and other agencies.

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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# The Violent Abandonment of Refugees in Europe: Life in the Calais Camp



## FUNDING

ESRC Impact Accelerator

## IRIS LEAD

Dr Arshad Isakjee

## DURATION

April 2015 – ongoing

## MAIN PARTNER

University of Warwick

## CONTEXT

One of the de-facto consequences of EU and state failure to manage the rise in refugee numbers has been the growth of informal and unplanned refugee camps deep within EU borders. In informal camps, state provision is not guaranteed and migrants must fend for themselves, living in self-made structures. The migrant/refugee camp in Calais often referred to as the new 'Jungle' is the largest such camp in Europe. In the last 10 months the camp has grown rapidly in size from around 1000 inhabitants in April 2015 to approximately 6000 by February 2016. The implications are clearly political – but also environmental and social. Living in the poor conditions of the Calais camp has profound implications for the health

and wellbeing of the camp's residents. Utilising expertise in human geography, social policy and environmental health, this inter-disciplinary project explores the reasons migrants live in Calais and the impacts it is having on their lives.

## RESEARCH

The project has three key aims:

- Explore the environmental health conditions of the Calais camp to understand the impact of camp life on its residents
- To understand the reasons for which migrants are living in the Calais camps, in relation to documentation and migration status.
- To trace the development of the informal camp in time, involving interventions by NGO actors, state agents, European agencies and migrants themselves.

## METHODOLOGY

The project employs a mixed-methods approach, reflecting its inter-disciplinary nature:

- Environmental Health Surveys to evaluate living conditions in Calais
- Interviews with migrants on the details of their objectives, their journeys
- Participatory visual data to understand everyday life in informal camps
- Observational data on the changing architecture and infrastructure of the camp

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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## Becoming Adult: conceptions of futures and wellbeing among migrant young people in the UK



### FUNDING

ESRC

**DURATION**  
September 2014 – October 2017

**IRiS LEAD**  
Dr Nando Sigona

**PARTNERS**  
University College London  
University of Oxford

### CONTEXT

The project examines the lives of former unaccompanied young people from Albania, Afghanistan, Eritrea and Vietnam who have migrated to the UK. It studies their transition to adulthood and determines whether it is possible for them to achieve their aspirations and a sense of wellbeing in light of policy and practice around immigration and social care.

### RESEARCH

The study will enhance understanding about:

- The lived experiences of young men and women who migrated alone to the UK as children as they make the transition to 'adulthood'

- How young people in this situation understand and seek to realise their futures and maintain a sense of wellbeing
- The extent to which there is a fit between young people's conceptualisations of their futures

### METHODOLOGY

The research consists of three closely linked work packages:

#### *Young people's conceptions of futures and wellbeing*

In-depth longitudinal work; biographical narrative interviews; social network mapping; monitoring wellbeing outcomes.

#### *Cultural conceptions of futures and wellbeing*

Analysis of different cultural media (including poetry, music, soap operas, fictional literature, social media and oral histories) and how (if at all) they influence young people's decisions and actions.

#### *Policy discourses and bureaucratic practices*

Analysis of policies; interviews with international, national and local stakeholders; documentary analysis of 'pathway plans'; generating a national profile of outcomes for former independent migrant children transitioning to 'adulthood'.

### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

[www.becomingadult.net](http://www.becomingadult.net)





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