

Security practices and resettlement

A widely held misconception about the terrorist threat is particularly evident in refugee resettlement practices, where refugees are placed on a security continuum alongside transnational criminals and terrorists. Although refugee protection itself is inscribed in international law, refugee resettlement depends on the discretion of the resettlement country and since 9/11 the United States and major resettlement countries in Europe have increasingly deployed security risk management practices within the resettlement selection process.

Predictions and decisions about the risk a refugee presents are made on the basis of a 'virtual' identity assembled through an accumulation of any available electronic records of activities, affiliations and so on. This predictive capacity is highly dependent on technologies that are often

unreliable yet which fundamentally affect people's future mobility prospects. This arbitrarily assembled identity focusing on the possible security threat posed by any particular refugee obscures from view their protection needs as a refugee.

Rather than **being** terrorists, refugees sometimes have protection needs as a **result** of terrorism. Keeping these applicants for resettlement away from the West is likely to increase the number of people resorting to illegal means through which to find somewhere safe to live. Ironically, in this way security practices within the resettlement process are themselves likely to produce the so-called threat of 'illegal' migration.

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