

Notice of Doctoral Dissertation Examination

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PhD Global Governance

"Refugees from Syria Caught between War and Borders: A Journey towards Protection"

Mon April 1st
10:00 AM

BSIA 1-23

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the global crisis of protection through the lens of the Syrian refugee crisis and the particular experiences of refugees' journeys from Syria to Sweden. Informed by the knowledge of refugees and through their stories, the dissertation develops a conceptual framework of refugee journey. It addresses the journey as an act of survival and resistance that is messy and complex and involves high degrees of agency and yet precarity which entails transformative impacts on refugee's role, positionality, and identity. The dissertation centralizes refugees as the prime source of knowledge and presents them as real individuals with various backgrounds and aspirations. It focuses on people's own experiences and stories which are left out of policy making, and are absent at high-level discussions between government leaders, policy makers, and international organizations including the United Nations. In doing so, the dissertation challenges the dominant narratives that represent refugees either as victims, who deserve aid while seeking refuge in neighboring countries in the region, or as a threats, when they exert their agency and undertake journeys towards the global north. In the same vein, the dissertation problematizes the dominant narrative of the "European crisis of migration" and proposes that the "unauthorized" arrival of refugees in Europe is a reflection of a global crisis of protection, a crisis that develops as a result of a failing protection regime and bordering practices against refugees from the global south. These practices are based to a large degree

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on government policies designed to contain refugees in their regions and deter them from reaching countries in the global north where they believe they can have better access to rights. The dissertation argues that such practices do not deter desperate refugees from arriving in the global north, but rather increase the “human cost” of their journeys by reducing the legal and safe pathways and forcing refugees into illegality and precarity. The Dissertation shows how, refugees arrive at their intended destinations with a heavy load of pain, fear, and confusion which influences their sense of identity and belonging and affects their ability to integrate into their new localities.

Dissertation will be on deposit in the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies and available for perusal.