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TRAFIG

Transnational Figurations of Displacement

Dear friends of the TRAFIG project,

Our project just went through an [evaluation of the 1st year with mostly positive and very constructive comments by the external reviewers](#), for which we are grateful and which will help us to successfully continue our project. By early March, we not only started to realize that the emerging COVID-19-pandemic severely affects displaced people, but that it also radically alters the circumstances in which we all live and work. Our project's plans for 2020 – the year in which most empirical fieldwork in up to ten countries was supposed to take place – changed substantially since then.

As researchers and practitioners we live with the temporary travel restrictions, lockdowns, home office work and insecurities for ourselves, but also see the comparatively privileged position we are in. For the majority of displaced people worldwide, spatial restrictions, precarity and constant uncertainty about the future are and have been for many years an inevitable part of their everyday lives – and not only a temporary crisis. Under the current exceptional circumstances it, however, becomes quite apparent how much we all rely on our social networks and mobility, but also the particular risks that both being connected and being disconnected, and being able to move or being locked in one's place entail.

While some of our projects' work can nonetheless continue in the coming weeks and months as originally envisaged, other TRAFIG activities have to be postponed or completely altered. As the COVID-19-pandemic touches the core themes of TRAFIG, we are now planning to also look into the effects of the respective preventive and reactive actions by states on people affected by protracted displacement as well as refugees' own responses to the (additional) health risks, severe mobility restrictions and possibly enhanced reliance on social networks.

This newsletter gives you an overview of TRAFIG activities that took place in the first four months of 2020. It presents the key outcomes of our project work, including TRAFIG publications, visuals and other publications of TRAFIG members as well as an update of ongoing research activities. We also touch upon the COVID-19 crisis and the pressing humanitarian crises in the European border space in some more recent blog pieces.

We hope that you will find this newsletter informative and look forward to staying in touch with you – in person and/or virtually via mail, social media, webinars or other formats.

For any enquiries, comments or recommendations, please write to contact@trafig.eu.

Benjamin Etzold, Maarit Thiem and Gizem Güzelant on behalf of the TRAFIG team.

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[Output and Publications from TRAFIG](#)

TRAFIG Publications: Working Papers, Practice Notes, and Policy Briefs

[TRAFIG Working Paper No.2:](#)

Learning from the past - Protracted displacement in the post-World War II period

[Working Paper No. 2](#) analyses the history of the search for solutions to protracted displacement. By focusing on the Horn of Africa, East Africa, the Middle East and South Asia, the paper examines past policy responses that address situations of extended exile as well as the potential of translocal mobility and connectivity as an individual- or household-level solution to displacement. [Find out more.](#)



TRAFIG working paper no. 2 • 02/2020

[TRAFIG Working Paper No.3: Governing protracted displacement - An analysis across global, regional and domestic contexts](#)

[Working Paper No. 3](#) focuses on the legislative and policy frameworks of protection that apply globally, regionally and domestically. It examines the way in which these frameworks facilitate or hinder solutions for people in protracted displacement through comparisons of all eight of TRAFIG's focus countries:

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Governing protracted displacement

An analysis across global, regional and domestic contexts

Nuno Ferreira, Carolien Jacobs, Pamela Kea, Maegan Hendow, Marion Noack, Martin Wagner, Fekadu Adugna, Ali M. Alodat, Tekalign Ayalew, Benjamin Etzold, Camilla Fogli, Thomas Goumenos, Panos Hatziprokopiou, Md. Mudassar Javed, Khoti C. Kamanga, Albert Krafer, Fawwaz A. Momani, Emanuela Roman

TRAFIG working paper no.3 • 01/2020

Greece, Germany and Italy in Europe; Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Tanzania in Africa; and Jordan and Pakistan in Asia. Based on these insights, Working Paper 3 concludes with ten key messages regarding the shortcomings of the current governance system of displacement. [Find more information on the TRAFIG website.](#)

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practice note no. 2 • 02/2020

Addressing protracted displacement

Lessons from the past

Addressing protracted displacement has been a major concern since the beginning of an international refugee protection regime in the 1920s. The search for solutions has been a central theme ever since.

From "solutions" to "durable solutions"

In a historical perspective, efforts to resolve protracted displacement have been diverse, being devised in response to both domestic and international constraints and opportunities. Already in the 1920s, Fridtjof Nansen—the League of Nations' first High Commissioner for Refugees (1921-1930)—believed in refugees' own capabilities and thus pursued a "bottom-up" approach. His overarching aim was to make refugees self-reliant—this same goal is central in today's [Global Compact on Refugees](#).

It was not until the late 1940s that (voluntary) return, local integration and resettlement began to appear as the three central "top-down" solutions pursued by states to address refugee situations.

The term "durable solutions" is of more recent origin. It came to be used more frequently from the late 1990s onwards, in conjunction with the notion of "protracted displacement", a term coined by the UNHCR to denote situations "in which refugees find themselves in a long-lasting and intractable state of limbo".

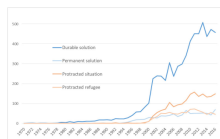


Figure 3. No. of documents found in REFWORKS related to durable solutions and protracted displacement, 1970-2018. © Albert Krafer

Employment and political considerations have been central for resettlement in the past

In the 1920s, one of the central protection instruments was the so-called "Nansen passport". This identity and travel document enabled refugees to move onward to countries to find employment. As result and in combination with an International Labor Organization (ILO) placement programme, unemployment among refugees was indeed significantly reduced by the late 1920s.

After World War II, resettlement was considered the most important tool to resolve displacement situations. In relative terms, resettlement peaked immediately after the war. As in the interwar period, resettlement was strongly linked to labour migration, which displaced persons always saw as important strategy to find protection and to sustain their lives in the longer run.

Skills-based resettlement was, however, often not pursued in contexts where skills did not match demand and where large cultural distances were perceived, such as in post-colonial African situations. Only the shift towards vulnerability-based criteria in the mid-1990s brought African refugees into resettlement programmes at a significant scale.

But already the resettlement of Indochinese refugees in the late 1970s and 1980s was based on political rather than employment considerations. Both in absolute numbers and in relative terms, resettlement from Indo-China constituted the largest resettlement effort since World War II.

The resettlement of Syrians never achieved the same scale.

TRAFIG Practice Note No.2: Addressing protracted displacement - Lessons from the past

Taking [Working Paper No.2](#) as a basis, [TRAFIG Practice Note No.2](#) highlights four key lessons drawn from the history of finding solutions to protracted displacement. [Find out more.](#)

TRAFIG Practice Note No.3: Bridging the gaps: Governance of Protracted Displacement across global, regional and national levels

[Practice Note No.3](#) accentuates the key aspects identified for closing the protection gaps and more effectively addressing protracted displacement based

on the analysis in TRAFIG's [Working Paper No.3](#). Find more information [here](#).

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Transnational Figurations of Displacement

practice note no. 3 • 01/2020

Bridging the gaps: Governance of protracted displacement across global, regional and national levels

The current institutional and governance system of displacement has become much more complex with the inclusion of ever more actors. But it still leaves open multiple gaps of protection. To close these protection gaps and to more effectively address protracted displacement, it requires a better collaboration and coordination between international, regional and domestic stakeholders, a long-term development rather than a short-term humanitarian approach and sincere recognition of displaced people's rights and their mobility needs.

78 per cent of the world's refugees live in protracted displacement

There has been a steady and significant increase over recent years in the number of displaced people, in particular in the number of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) who live in long-term situations of vulnerability, dependency and legal insecurity. The term protracted displacement refers to entrenched situations, in which the capabilities and opportunities for people to rebuild their lives after displacement are severely limited. In many cases, they can neither return home nor move on to other countries, nor really integrate in the country of first reception. The cyclical and protracted nature of many conflicts, a general decline in the support for durable solutions, mounting hostility towards foreigners in many countries and a challenging climate for multilateral cooperation are among the reasons for protracted displacement.

Collaborating across global, regional and national levels

Global actors have developed integrated approaches to address the needs of, and to offer long-term perspectives for, refugees and IDPs and to tackle the challenges arising for local host communities. This is in line with the UN Global Compact on Refugees calling for the establishment of a multi-stakeholder and partnership approach, which foresees the involvement of a broad set of actors—including civil society organisations, local

communities and refugees themselves—in the design, monitoring and implementation of its actions. Tripartite agreements have been a particular strategy of UNHCR engagement with refugee-receiving countries and their countries of origin across various regions. Moreover, in recent years, more emphasis has been placed within regional approaches on improving host-refugee relations and promoting broader economic development in host communities to facilitate solutions.

Integrating development and humanitarian approaches

In Africa and Asia, refugees and IDPs are often seen to be the responsibility of the humanitarian community. Receiving country policies often restrict access to labour markets, limit mobility and do not provide long-term legal status, thus locking displaced people in continuous dependency to humanitarian support. Development actors might, however, be better positioned to work towards longer-term durable solutions, but refugees and IDPs are often not a specific target group for their interventions. The gap between short-term humanitarian aid and more future-oriented development policies and programmes needs to be bridged. The 2016 EU's policy framework on forced displacement is one right step into this direction as it aims to prevent displacement situations from becoming protracted through linking humanitarian assistance with development interventions and by facilitating moving from situations of "care and maintenance" to self-reliance. Regional development and protection programmes (RDPPs) have evolved as the main instrument to put the EU's development-humanitarian assistance approach into practice.

TRAFIG Policy Briefs

Policy Briefs provide short presentations and analysis/policy recommendations resulting from our Working Papers

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policy brief no.1 • 01/2020

Governing protracted displacement

What access to solutions for forcibly displaced people?

Marion Noack, Martin Wagner, Carolien Jacobs

The governance of displacement and access to protection are closely linked to solutions for displaced people that refer to both the capability of displaced persons to rebuild their lives after displacement and the opportunities available to do so. Current policies to address displacement follow the (often artificial) division of governance structures for displacement. Available solutions are usually closely related to the classification of displaced persons into different categories. The qualification of a person as a refugee, an internal displaced person (IDP) or a labour migrant entails what kind of solutions provided by the international community are accessible and whether a person can rely on the support by a dedicated agency, or whether the person is left unsupported. Governance structures, however, often overlap and lead to significant gaps at the same time, leading to protracted displacement characterised by vulnerability, dependency and legal insecurity owing to continuous cycles of displacement and a lack of durable solutions.

Central findings and recommendations

1 **Multiple actors and multiple frameworks govern displacement globally and at a regional level.** Their mandates partially overlap and the categorisation of displaced persons, closely linked to the institutional mandates and definitions in legal frameworks, result in protection gaps for certain groups concerned. Bridging the gap between humanitarian/emergency relief and protection and development assistance by forming integrated approaches will better account for the needs of displaced populations.

2 **The governance framework of displacement centres on the objective of providing protection.** Yet, protection in itself provides only part of the solution for individuals. With the endurance of conflicts and the increase in protracted displacement situations, this (short-term) protection need should be coupled with longer-term perspectives to access livelihoods and, as such, solutions.

3 **Solutions are often lacking or are not tailored to the needs of the individual.** People in protracted displacement will aim to find solutions on their own, making use of different forms of mobility and transnational networks. Current approaches to forced displacement and access to solutions need to be better equipped to support those individual strategies.

4 **Legal and policy frameworks and humanitarian action in the field of displacement are not yet reflecting protracted displacement sufficiently.** Policy development with regard to protracted displacement situations should be inspired by an in-depth understanding of the respective individual coping strategies and displaced persons' requirements for leaving those situations.

5 **Individuals make use of various pathways to access protection and find a livelihood for themselves.** The notion of solutions should hence be broadened to encompass the range of options that pave the way for forcibly displaced people to exercise basic rights all human beings should enjoy.

TRAFIG Policy Brief No.1: Governing protracted displacement. What access to solutions for forcibly displaced people?

TRAFIG's [first Policy Brief](#) presents an analysis of how gaps in the governance of protracted displacement translate into gaps for finding solutions to these situations. In this context, it formulates five central findings and recommendations for governing displacement on various levels. The Policy Brief discusses the access to solutions with the case of Serge, an internally displaced person in the DR Congo. [Find out more.](#)

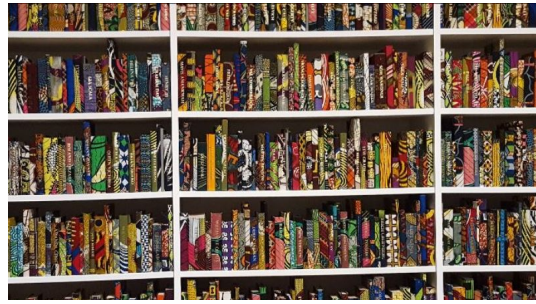
TRAFIG Internal Reports

As preparatory documents for publications or follow-up reports on events, TRAFIG's Internal reports provide detailed background information on chosen aspects of the research

Marion Noack: [Protracted Displacement](#)

[in the Horn of Africa](#)

As preparation for [TRAFIG Working Paper No. 2](#), this report analyses protracted displacement in the Horn of Africa, focusing on whether and how transnational and translocal connectivity and mobility contribute to solutions for persons affected. In addition, the study looks at policy responses to protracted displacement in the region. [Find the report on our website.](#)



Emanuela Roman: [Governing protracted displacement in Italy An analysis of legal and policy structures shaping protracted displacement situations.](#)

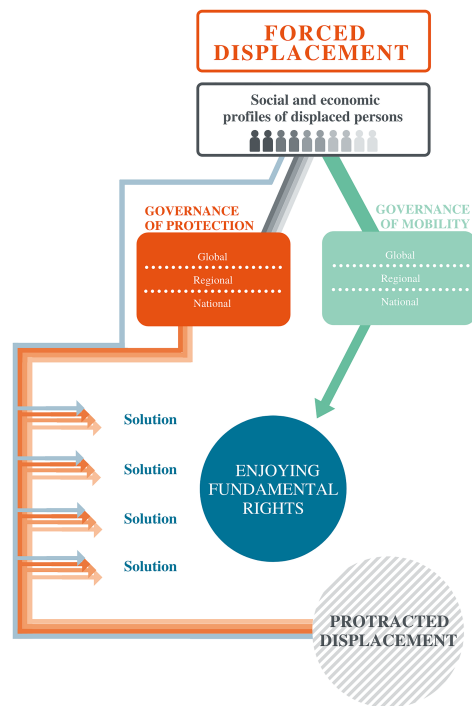
This internal report contributed to [TRAFIG Working Paper No. 3](#). It provides an analysis of the regulatory framework applied in Italy and its impacts on the daily lives and future aspirations of persons that are affected by protracted displacement. [Find out more.](#)

TRAFIG Infographics & Tools

TRAFIG's Infographics and tools display the outcomes of the projects in an easily accessible format.

[Infographic No.1: Governance of and solutions for forcibly displaced people](#)

[TRAFIG's first Infographic](#) illustrates the connection between the governance of displacement and finding solutions for persons affected by protracted displacement. It shows how governance laps reinforce protracted displacement situations as well as the implications and consequences of these situations. The infographic depicts which aspects to consider while expanding solutions to them. Additionally, it includes a summary of the milestones of governing displacement. [Find the Infographic here.](#)



Publications from TRAFIG Team Members

- **Demirdirek, M.** (2020). [What do SIM cards have to do with citizenship?](#) *Innovative Research Methods Blog*.
- **Etzold, B.** (2020). [\(Im\)Mobilität im Kontext von Gewalt: Stand der Forschung und wichtigste Forschungslücken](#). *FluchtforschungsBlog*.
- **Etzold, B., Pastore, F., Roman, E., Hatziprokopiou, P., Papatzani, E., Kraler, A.** (2020). [EU am Scheideweg: „Europa vor Flüchtlingen abschirmen“ oder „Geflüchtete schützen“?](#) *BICC-Kommentar*.
- **Jacobs, C., Almeida, B.** (2020). [Research report: Land and climate change: Rights and environmental displacement in Mozambique](#). Leiden University, Van Vollenhoven Institute for Law, Governance and Society (VVI).
- **Jacobs, C., Almeida, B.** (2020). [Policy Brief: Land and climate change: Rights and environmental displacement in Mozambique](#). Leiden University, Van Vollenhoven Institute for Law, Governance and Society (VVI).
- **Kassaï, M.** (2020). [The Tragedy Of The Stupid Nation](#). Edited by **Wilson, C.** Langaa RPCIG.
- **Rudolf, M., Schetter, C., Schmitz-Pranghe, C.** (2020). ["Leaving them behind" - Global trends in forced migration](#). BICC Policy Brief Series No. 1/2020.
- **Rudolf, M.** (2020). [Immobilisation, restricted spatial mobility and displacement in violent conflict](#). BICC Working Paper series No. 1/2020

TRAFIG Blog Articles

- **Jeff Crisp:** [After the Forum: new directions in global refugee policy](#). January 2020.
- **Emanuela Roman:** [Exploring asylum governance in Italy: the mismatch between regulatory frameworks and protection needs](#). February 2020.
- **Ferruccio Pastore, Emanuela Roman, Panos Hatziprokopiou, Eva Papatzani, Albert Kraler, Benjammin Etzold:** [The EU's shield and the institutionalisation of protracted displacement](#). March 2020.
- **Ferruccio Pastore:** [Migrant integration in times of the lockdown. Some reflections from Italy](#). March 2020.
- **Carolien Jacobs:** [I'd say 100% of the IDPs are still connected to the place of origin in one way or the other - Notes on data collection, analysis and COVID-19 in Congo](#). March 2020.
- **Muhammad Mudassar Javed:** [COVID-19 and its impact on displacement situations in Pakistan](#). May 2020.

TRAFIG Project Activities

Stay informed about the project developments.

TRAFIG Fieldwork

Africa

In the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, most of the qualitative fieldwork was concluded by the end of 2019. Subsequently, the DR Congo team organised a three-day workshop for discussing the analysis of the collected data. Among other things, the team consulted about how to connect the data to the TRAFIG themes, and how to make the outcomes in the local context available.

The workshop also allowed the team to begin with the implementation of the TRAFIG survey. Shortly after, from 17 February to 2 March 2020, the team already went on collecting a total of 300 surveys in Bukavu.

On our [Blog](#), **Carolien Jacobs**, TRAFIG colleague from [Leiden University](#), provides an insightful report on the the data collection and analysis in the special case of Bukavu. The article includes reflections of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the DR Congo, especially on displaced persons, as well as the consequences for the research process. Find the article [here](#).

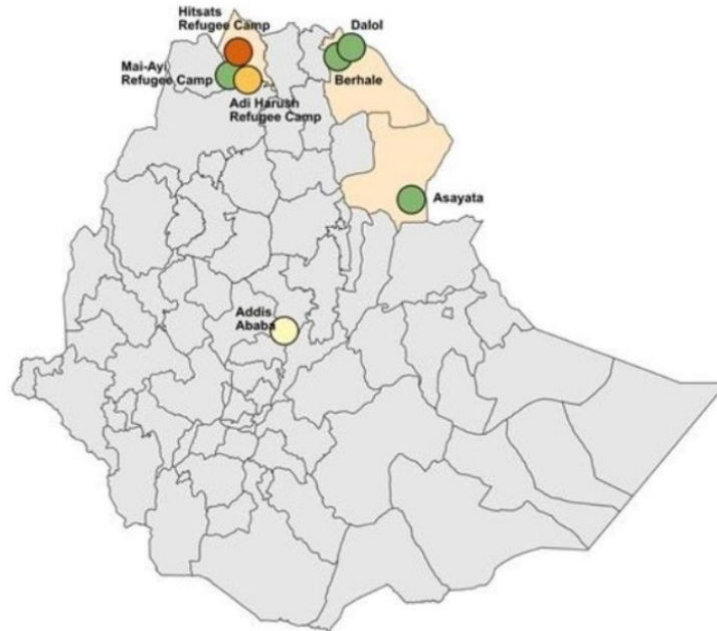


Safety measures were already taken in Bukavu - for instance by **Patrick Milabyo**, TRAFIG Team member and research coordinator in the DR Congo.

Picture: Carolien Jacobs/ Leiden University

By February 2020, the TRAFIG Team in **Ethiopia** had collected a total of 84 qualitative interviews such as expert interviews and group consultations with displaced persons in the different sites (as seen in the map below).

Due to the pandemic, the team was forced to postpone several events that were organised for the next months, including a stakeholders workshop in mid-March 2020 and a community consultation meeting in April 2020. The TRAFIG survey was set to start in the same timeframe and had to be postponed as well. The TRAFIG Team is currently working on adjusting the plan and the methods of the project, also looking at how to include the impact of the pandemic on the living situations of displaced people into the research.



Asia

In **Pakistan**, the TRAFIG Team had already conducted interviews with 61 persons in Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi. As it is the case for the other research sites, the fieldwork in Pakistan was interrupted due to the safety measures taken for containing the COVID-19 pandemic. The team is organizing how to continue with the fieldwork as soon as it is possible - and safe- again.

On our Blog, **Muhammad Mudassar Javed**, TRAFIG colleague from [SHARP Pakistan](#) shares his insights about the developments after the outbreak of COVID-19 in Pakistan and how these affect displaced persons. [Find out more.](#)

Picture: *Muhammad Mudassar Javed, SHARP Pakistan*



Until March 2020, the TRAFIG Team in **Jordan** had already collected more than 120 qualitative interviews before measures had to be taken for containing the further outbreak of the virus.



On 9 February 2020, TRAFIG's first interactive stakeholder workshop took place in Irbid. The workshop aimed at discussing viable policy options and practices for supporting the identification of possible solutions to protracted displacement. It allowed for a discussion of the [preliminary research findings in the specific context of Jordan](#) and was

supported by many contributions from the workshop participants.

[Find out more about the workshop and the insights gained.](#)

In a webinar organised by the University of Bergen, **Sarah Tobin**, TRAFIG partner from the [Chr. Michelsen Institute](#), presented new insights on how the COVID19 pandemic and respective government's responses impact Syrian refugees in Jordan. Find more information and access to the webinar [here](#).

Europe

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic had a strong impact on the fieldwork in Europe, as most of it was planned for 2020.

The **Greece** Team was able to collect almost 30 interviews before the research had to be interrupted due to the pandemic. Most of the interviews so far took place in Athens. Currently, the TRAFIG team is adjusting the implementation of the fieldwork.



Italy, as well as Greece, was heavily affected by the outbreak of the pandemic. As travel bans, quarantines and a general prohibition of non-essential movements and contact to other persons were introduced as safety measures, the fieldwork could not continue as planned.

As **Emanuela Roman**, TRAFIG partner from [FIERI](#), reports, the partners tried to adjust to this situation as soon as possible:

"(...) The partners immediately engaged in discussing and developing possible ways and methodologies (such as digital ethnography) to continue with their empirical work, notwithstanding the difficult circumstances everyone is currently undergoing – researchers and respondents included. (...) the Covid-19 pandemic should not be considered only as an obstacle hampering the European fieldwork as it was originally planned, but it should also be considered as a specific object of research. Indeed, the Covid-19 pandemic and the preventive measures taken by governments are seriously affecting the daily lives and future prospects of people in protracted displacement. "

Due to the impossibility of travel and face-to-face meetings, the FIERI team started exploring how to conduct expert interviews online and was able to collect 11 virtual interviews already.

As interviews with displaced persons can neither take place in person, the FIERI team has developed strategies of engagement via online/digital conversations by making use of a more flexible and dynamic interview style. These strategies are based on multiple conversation sessions, photovoice techniques and other participatory research methodologies. They make use of photos, videos, music, poems and other expressive means, as this methodology is considered helpful to fostering migrants' engagement and active participation. The methodology is currently being tested and will soon be applied.

Ferruccio Pastore from the Italy Team shared his reflections about the implications of the lockdown in Italy in view of migrant integration. The article touches on the issue of ethnic stigmatisation and the risks for stigmatized persons and explains the consequences that systemic crises and risk situations, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, imply for migrant integration. [Find the article on our Blog.](#)

In the context of the "[GLOBUS student days: Migration and global justice](#)", organized by the University of Bologna, **Ferruccio Pastore** had the opportunity to share his insights in a webinar about *Migration politics in times of pandemic and lockdown* on 22 April 2020. [Find more information and a recording of the webinar here.](#)

As third country of research in Europe, the fieldwork in **Germany** is set to start in 2020. Germany, as well, has introduced safety measures for containing the outbreak of COVID-19. Therefore, the team is currently adjusting the fieldwork planning to make sure that the research will not be impaired - for instance by looking into virtual methods for following the networks of displaced persons.

Meet the TRAFIG Team

Get to know the people who are part of the international TRAFIG team and find out about their personal motivations and perspectives.

The TRAFIG team counts 69 members affiliated with the [Consortium of 12 partner organisations](#) from 11 countries. The Consortium is supported by local researchers that make the fieldwork possible.

Meet **Muhammad Mudassar Javed** from the TRAFIG team at [SHARP Pakistan \(Society for Human Rights & Prisoners' Aid\)](#):



"Working with refugees offers an opportunity to reflect on the contributions of refugees, to celebrate their courage, and to reflect on small things we can all do together to make their lives and journeys more beautiful, significant and productive by providing them social, economic and emotional support."

Muhammad Mudassar Javed is the project director at [SHARP Pakistan](#). As a Social Anthropologist, he has collected many years of experience in working with refugees, asylum seekers, IDPs, prisoners, and children. Learn more about his inspiration for working in the context of forced displacement, as well as the insights he has gained in his many years of this work [on our TRAFIG Blog](#).

Horizon 2020 Sister Projects

Get to know related Horizon 2020 projects and their innovative approaches.

A call by concerned researchers for immediate action and radical revision of current EU policies on mobility and migration governance

TRAFIG supports the call of concerned EU-researchers directed to Mrs. Ursula von der Leyen, the President of the European Commission, in response to the violation of fundamental human rights and refugees' rights at the Greece-Turkey border in March 2020. Researchers from our H2020 sister project [ADMIGOV](#) had initiated this letter of concern, which has then been signed by more than 300 researchers who work within EU-funded projects in the field of mobility and migration governance.

In the letter, the signatories – among them many TRAFIG members – express their deep frustration with the unfolding situation, how it has been handled by the Greece authorities, and the general strategic orientation of current EU policies around containment and deterrence. Yet, based on the belief of evidence-based policy making, the researchers offer their expert knowledge to reformulate the EU's migration and asylum policies and to help to sustainably improve refugees and other migrants' access to protection and rights. The letter with a list of signatories can be found [here](#).

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The TRAFIG Consortium



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