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The Right to International
Protection

A Comparative Research Framework for
Studying the Global Refugee Compact's
Impact on International Protection



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A COMPARATIVE RESEARCH FRAMEWORK FOR STUDYING THE GLOBAL REFUGEE COMPACT'S IMPACT ON INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

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New policy initiatives to handle migratory movements and refugee inflows have emerged in various forms. The initiatives came from the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU), and the affected states. The most important of these are the UN's Global Compact on Migration (GCM), Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), the European Union's (EU) latest reform attempt about its Common European Asylum Policy (CEAS), and the European Commission's (EC) recent proposal on a New Pact on Migration and Asylum (the New Pact). The initiatives combine old and new policies. A noteworthy norm that is reinvigorated by both the UN and the EU is international solidarity. This is coupled with a governance mode based on the UN's multi-stakeholder perspective. However, the UN remains strategically silent about how solidarity is to be governed on regional and national levels. Similarly, the EU's "flexible and mandatory solidarity" is accompanied by a "human and humane" discourse and a supranationally coordinated governance mechanism. The EU too is silent about the governance modes needed at the member state level. Nevertheless, if successfully implemented, the new global and European policy initiatives may lead to significant changes in international protection. The intentions are good, but the consequences are not known.

In addition to much support to these initiatives, there are also signs that states may attempt to instrumentalize the GCR to install their own approaches to international protection as a global norm. This includes not only progressive approaches, but also the perspective that international protection should not be the responsibility of the international community. Earlier research shows that some states were able to circumvent their responsibility to protect the refugees. They did so by devising targeted governance mechanisms at borders and in asylum procedures. We have also witnessed that the Dublin Convention was used strategically to escape the responsibility to protect refugees. The EU's safe-country lists became a means to avoid the basic principle of non-refoulement. The same states also promoted discourses defining refugees as regular migrants to deny access to their territory to apply for asylum. Speeches given by some state representatives in the First Global Refugee Forum (GRF) in December 2019 indicate the same processes of dilution of the international law through national or regional governance modes and discourses may take place again in the implementation processes of the GCR and the New Pact. If the objective is to have a human-rights based international system, it is essential to have a systematic comparative knowledge of how certain norms, governance modes, and discourses function in the domain of international protection.

Hence, the success of the GCR, the New Pact, and other policy initiatives does not only rely on states or stakeholders' involvement in their implementation, but also on the norms, governance modes, and discourses they deploy when they participate in the implementation processes. Since the UN's and the EU's purpose is to introduce human rights-based approaches to international protection, this may involve abandoning their silence regarding their members' ways of implementing the GCR. In this paper, I endeavor to construct a comparative research framework to devise groundbreaking normative, governance, and discursive frames that can be used to advance a human rights-based international protection system. In this framework, the GCM is included as a contextual factor. The results can be used by the UN, the EU, and other regional inter-state unions for advising new policies to their member states and other stakeholders. They can also be used by states and other stakeholders to reform, enhance, or adapt their policies to new conditions, including crises.

1 Short on PROTECT's research concept

This paper builds on the conceptual framework of PROTECT, which is outlined in a separate paper (Sicakkan 2021). I reiterate the key features of the research concept briefly. The purpose of PROTECT is to assess whether or how the GCR can be an opportunity to bring international protection closer to high international human rights standards. This includes also the GCR's interactions with the GCM and regional protection frames like CEAS and the New Pact.

For this purpose, we need to define the parameters of an effective human rights-based international protection system, which is resilient in times of crises. We set out to identify the norms, governance modes, and discourses that best serve this objective. This will be done by scrutinizing how the existing rich variety of policy approaches have been performing over a long span of time. It is important to remember that not all measures introduced by the GCR are completely new. Many of them were previously utilized by states. Assessing the past performance of these measures gives us an opportunity to anticipate the viability of the GCR. Where past examples are not available, we will devise the needed elements in form of hypotheses. The best performing norms, governance modes, and discourses will then be put on the following tests:

- Cleavage-pressure test (measuring the pressure on policymakers by the groups contesting within the GPCS with big media data)
- Citizen tolerability test (measuring the pressure on policymakers by the citizens through surveys of citizens and civil society organizations' attitudes)
- Crisis tests (measuring policy performance during the times of crises, including economic, political, mass migration, and Covid-19 crises)

2 The overall comparative framework

We are searching for the best performing norms, governance modes, and discourses in the EU, Canada, and South Africa that can be used in the implementation of the GCR and other international protection frameworks. Comparing the EU with Canada and South Africa in this policy area is worthwhile because the EU has been developing its CEAS since the 1990s and has newly proposed the New Pact, which aims to further harmonize its member states' migration and asylum policy. As the portrayal in the beginning implies, the EU is inclined to behave almost like a state in its international protection policy.

Why study the impact of GCR in so radically different regions? The logic is simple: If a policy measure works well in several countries that are different from each other, it is likely to work also in other countries that are not included in the comparisons. On the other hand, comparing cases from three continents is expedient for assessing the impacts of the GCR, which has global ambitions.

Despite its relatively harmonized refugee and asylum policy, the EU must be embodied by its different member states in different parts of this comparative design. The countries included in different comparative analyses are strategically selected, depending on the evidence needed in the overall project. The selections are done with respect to countries' degree of European integration, geographical location and exposure to migration (being inland or border EU states), historical citizenship models, type of migration regime (GPCS), and degree of commitment to the GCM.

Comparison of EU member states that are Europeanized in different degrees will help us to consider the EU's ability to pull its member states towards the objectives of the GCR in a concerted way. As shown in Table 1, the EU's core founding member states, except Luxembourg, are in the sample. All waves of EU enlargement since the Coal and Steel Union are represented in the sample.

Geography and geopolitics play a decisive role in states' responses to international protection challenges. Member states bordering third countries (e.g., Austria, Greece, Hungary, Poland) and those with shores to open seas (e.g., Greece, Italy, France, Spain) are exposed in different ways. Many EU countries that are not exposed to refugee influxes are skeptical to responsibility sharing (Zaun 2017) because they want to continue using the advantage of their geographical location. Big countries that are located conveniently far from the EU borders both benefit from this advantage and act generously when they are called for help.

States' historical citizenship conceptions and traditions are also a crucial factor in their approaches to international protection (Sicakkan 2008). Small countries whose populations have an ethnic collective identity react differently to international protection obligations than countries with collective citizenship identities deriving from non-ethnic territorial belonging (ibid.). Countries with monocultural citizenship often have different responses to refugees than countries with multicultural citizenship (ibid.). The different citizenship models that the EU member states have are represented in

a balanced way in the country selection, something which will enable us to look at the citizenship-international protection nexus comparatively.

Table 1: Contextual variation in selected countries

Country	Citizenship Model	Migration Regime	GCM Response*	Work Package
Austria	Communitarian	Regionalist	-	3, 5, 6, 7, 8
Belgium	Communitarian	Regionalist	+	3, 5, 6, 8
Canada	Libertarian	Market-globalist	+	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
Croatia	Republican	Regionalist	+/-	6
Czech Republic	Ethno-national	Nativist	-	3, 5, 6, 7, 8
Denmark	Ethno-national	Nativist	+/-	3, 5, 6, 7, 8
Estonia	Ethno-national	Nativist	+/-	6
France	Republican	Nation-statist	+	3, 5, 6, 7, 8
Germany	Communitarian	Regionalist	+	3, 5, 6, 7, 8
Greece	Ethno-national	Nation-statist	+	3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
Hungary	Ethno-national	Nativist	-	3, 5, 6, 7, 8
Italy	Liberal	Regionalist	+	3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
Lithuania	Ethno-national	Nation-statist	+/-	3, 6
Netherlands	Communitarian	Nation-statist	+/-	3, 5, 6, 7, 8
Norway	Communitarian	Nation-statist	+/-	3, 5, 6, 7, 8
Poland	Ethno-national	Nativist	-	3, 5, 6, 7, 8
Romania	Ethno-national	Nativist	+/-	6
Slovakia	Ethno-national	Nativist	-	5, 6, 7, 8
Slovenia	Republican	Regionalist	+	5, 6, 7, 8
South Africa	Liberal	Human rights-globalist	+	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
Spain	Liberal	Human-rights globalist	+	3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
Sweden	Communitarian	Regionalist	+	3, 5, 6, 7, 8
EU	<i>Mixed</i>	Regionalist	+	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
Mexico	Republican	Human-rights-globalist	+	6
Turkey	Republican	Market-globalist	+	6
UK	Liberal	Market-globalist	+	3, 5, 6, 7, 8
USA	Liberal	Market-globalist	-	5, 6, 7, 8

* "+" means full support to the GCM; "-" means rejected the GCM; "+/-" not full or conditional support to GCM

Mainstream migration regimes are represented in Table 1. Following PROTECT's conceptual approach (cf. Sicakkan 2021), these are the migration regime approaches foreseen by the four ideological groups in the GPCS. Migration regime differences are especially important because, in this crisis-affected period, we are increasingly witnessing attempts by states to embed international protection within national migration policies. Such embedment means that governments prioritize their migration policy goals instead of refugee protection, not only when faced with humanitarian emergencies, but also in the daily running of international protection. This often results in dilution of the Convention's refugee definition and applying in practice ordinary migration laws and rules to people who ask for international protection (Sicakkan 2008). In many cases, this contrasts with the GCR's intentions and the Convention, which clearly states that regular entry and admission rules shall not apply to refugees and asylum seekers. However, the challenge may be addressed with discourses and governance modes that are both human-rights and nation-state oriented and, at the same time, acceptable to states and

their citizens. This selection of countries allow us to identify the human rights-based norms, governance modes, and discourses that work in these kinds of situations.

Whether states have committed to the GMC or not is also a country selection criterion. States that have committed, conditionally committed, or not committed to the GCM are listed in Table 1. As one of PROTECT's goals is to use the GCM as a contextual factor for the success of the GCR, this country selection will enable us to observe whether or how different degrees of commitment and involvement in the GCM processes affects countries' participation in the implementation of GCR. We have been witnessing that it is difficult to protect the human rights of people who are crossing borders. The GCM is the first international agreement that explicitly mentions the human rights of migrants independent of their migration status. Although the protection that the existing human rights instruments aim to give should cover migrants in principle, this has not been the case in practice. This explicit mention in the GCM may or may not affect states' behavior towards the intending asylum seekers on the move. Nevertheless, a consideration of this should be expected in border asylum procedures of transit and arrival countries. At least, this is a point of intersection between the GCM and GCR that can be studied comparatively. This choice of countries allows us to do this kind of inquiry as well.

The 26 countries in three continents that are included in this study provide a rich contextual variation for a study endeavoring to devise norms, governance modes, and discourses for a human rights-based international protection. This diversity will be used as a macro-level explanation for why some policy measures do not work in some contexts as well as an initial condition for devising policies. Equally importantly, it will be used to devise new context-sensitive policy tools.

3 Comparative designs in research components

As the above discussion suggests, the comparative framework has been designed to achieve a global applicability – that is, we are endeavoring to obtain results that are applicable beyond the set of countries that are included in the different research components. As Table 1 shows, totally 26 countries are studied in different work packages; however, they are not analyzed altogether in every research component, except the citizen attitude survey (see below). In these countries, we are searching for the best performing norms, governance modes, and discourses on international protection. We are searching these in states':

- constructions of the relationships between the GCR and human rights (doctrinal studies)
- history of building asylum institutions (historical case studies)
- asylum determination procedures (quantitative mapping)
- handling of entries and arrivals at border zones (ethnographic fieldworks)
- civil society's attitudes and involvement in international protection (organization surveys)
- citizens' attitudes to international protection (country surveys)
- media's framings of international protection related news (media study, big data)

Table 2: Countries included in PROTECT’s research components

	Norms	Discourses	Governance	Cases	Work Package No.
Constructing the links between GCR and Human Rights	X	X	X	GRC CEAS The New Pact	1, 2, 3
Asylum Procedures / External Policy	X	X	X	Canada South Africa UK 14 EU Countries* + Lithuania	3
History of asylum institutions	X	X	X	Canada South Africa 6 EU Countries***	3
Border Zones	X	X	X	Canada South Africa 4 EU countries****	4
Citizen’s attitudes	X	X	X	Canada South Africa Mexico Turkey UK USA 20 EU Countries**	6
Civil Society attitudes	X	X	X	Canada South Africa USA 14 EU countries*	5
Media framings	X	X	X	Canada South Africa USA 14 EU countries*	7

* EU14: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Spain, Sweden

** EU14 above + Croatia, Estonia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia.

*** Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, and the Netherlands

**** Greece, France, Italy, Spain

2.1 Constructions of the legal relationships between the GCR and human rights

This research component compares the EU, Canada, and South Africa. It probes into the diverse ways of linking the GCR with the pre-existing human rights instruments through doctrinal studies. It assesses how the GCR is received, how it is interpreted, and how it is implemented by organizing expert panels in the EU, Canada, and South Africa. It scrutinizes the interactions between the GCR, GCM, and the regional or national legal frameworks. This is done by conducting case studies of Canada, South Africa and the EU along selected themes, including how Covid-19 is affecting the GCR’s implementation in particular, and international protection in general. In this research component, we treat EU like a state because it has the highest degree of regional integration (Bauböck 2018, Lavenex 2020) in the world regarding migration and asylum policy.

The Canadian and South African cases bring into our research their American and African regional contexts. Thus, the comparative framework here is quite simple: By comparing the EU, Canada, and South Africa, it will be possible to nail down the impacts of continental conditions and migration flow systems on international protection, including how they change in times of crises. Canada's cooperation with the USA on international protection, refugee flows into South Africa from other African countries, and how these are handled within the context of GCR and GCM will provide valuable evidence about the norms, governance modes, and discourses within the legal frameworks of these three entities. Mapping the consequences of these will provide knowledge about whether or how these can contribute to devising a human rights-oriented international protection.

2.2 Asylum determination procedures (comprehensive quantitative mapping)

We are searching for human rights-based governance modes also in countries' asylum determination procedures. The comparative framework of this research component includes Canada, South Africa, and 15 EU member states (see Table 1, Work Package no. 3). Also here, the countries are selected with respect to the different criteria in Table 1. This variety of country features will contribute to generating research results that are applicable beyond the countries included in this comparative analysis.

We are coding 17 countries' legal frames and institutional architectures of asylum determination between the years 2000 and 2020 along more than 1500 variables and testing how their different components have been performing. All stages of an asylum determination procedure are included, from border procedures to normal and appeal procedures. This also includes the legal norms that the asylum procedures are based on, special measures for vulnerable groups, and changes introduced because of the Covid-19 pandemic. In a separate sub-component, third country involvement in governance through the EU external policy is assessed.

One of the central issues addressed is to what extent states share their decision power in asylum cases with other stakeholders – e.g., with international organizations, refugee aid organizations, and civil society organizations. Some states, for example, include their country's refugee council in the asylum appeal board with the right to vote. Some give veto right to the UNHCR in admissibility cases. Some give observer status to civil society organizations in appeal instances and border procedures. These are important quality-check elements in international protection whose consequences for the quality of asylum determination should be scrutinized (Caestecker 2017, Sicakkan 2008).

The performance test of asylum governance modes is done by estimating their effects on asylum recognition rates in comparison to the effects of the Convention grounds for granting refugee status (e.g., among many others, severity of conflicts, political terror, deaths caused by states, etc.).

This research will identify which norms and governance modes are the best performers in providing a human rights-based international protection. It will generate the basis for devising

innovative governance modes for asylum determination at the state level, something which neither the GCR, nor the CEAS or the New Pact, are addressing.

2.3 History of building asylum institutions (historical case studies)

This component assesses which institutional architectures of asylum determination may be instrumental in achieving high international standards in asylum policy implementation in the EU, Canada, and South Africa. While the quantitative component of asylum procedures that is presented above aims to find general patterns and select the best performing governance modes, this component focuses on the same in fewer countries, covering a longer time span (cf. Caestecker 2017).

Unpacking the “black box” of the state to understand better the role of the asylum determination institutions in protecting refugees, it also probes into a specific, and a central, feature of asylum determination institutions: the degree of asylum institutions’ dependence or independence from the state apparatus. It does so with an in-depth historical comparative study of multiple cases. Thus, this component does not only inform the overall project about which institutional arrangements have historically worked the best in different situations, but also how such institutions can be built by casting a gaze at the history of eight countries.

Following the comparative logic of the overall project, Canada, South Africa, and four founding member states of the EU that have a long history of institution building since 1970s (Belgium, France, Germany, and the Netherlands) are included in the historical analysis. In addition, Greece and Italy are added as countries with a more recent history of institution building and more exposure to refugee inflows. This diversity of countries will give us the norms, governance modes, and official discourses that have functioned well over a long time-span.

2.4 Handling of entries and arrivals at border zones (ethnographic fieldworks)

By studying international protection in border zones ethnographically, this research component addresses another essential dimension of international protection. It endeavors to find the best performing norms, governance modes, and discourses in refugee-intense venues like the border zones. It compares Canada, South Africa, and the EU (France, Greece, Italy, Spain).

Through participant observation, focus groups, and interviews with refugees, authorities, international and national non-state organizations, and other stakeholders involved in international refugee protection at border zones, this research component will identify the best discourses, methods of collaboration, and networking to create an effective multi-stakeholder governance mechanism in the fieldwork sites. Stakeholders involved in international protection at refugee-intense border zones are usually different from those involved in regular asylum determination procedures. The challenges are also different from those faced in the regular asylum determination procedures dealing with

individual asylum seekers' entries and applications. Further, the severity of refugee situations at border zones, which often involves refugee camps, affects people's require special measures.

Therefore, we compare a set of strategically selected refugee-intense sites where the most vulnerable refugees are handled to observe the limits of countries' responses to vulnerability. In the EU and South Africa, we do fieldwork in Lesvos, Thessaloniki, Catania, Ceuta, and Mussina. In Canada, we include reception centers in the Toronto city. The reason is that there are not refugee-intense border zones in Canada as in Europe because most asylum seekers and refugees are arriving by plane. Reception centers are the closest one gets to a refugee-intense zone in Canada.

By comparing these sites, we will be able to observe which norms, governance modes, and discourses are applied when faced with vulnerable people, how this relates to the GCR's multi-stakeholder perspective and its norm of international solidarity, and to which extent these contribute to advancing a human rights-bases international protection.

2.5 Civil society's attitudes and involvement in international protection (multi-national survey)

We search for the best performing norms, governance modes, and discourses of international protection also in civil society organizations' (CSO) refugee protection work. By conducting a survey of CSOs in Canada, South Africa, the UK, the US, and 14 EU countries, this component aims to map the CSOs' networking and collaboration patterns as well as their discourses of international protection.

The CSO-survey shares a large body of questions with the citizen survey (see the next section). The survey asks questions to map the CSOs' positioning within the GPCS (nativist, nation-statist, regionalist, globalist), their approaches to international protection, their tendency to accept the concrete international protection tools mentioned in the Convention, the GCR, the CEAS, and the New Pact as well as some new protection tools that pop up in policy debates.

For the purposes of our project, a CSO is defined in broader terms than usual as non-state organizations, including private sector actors, which are engaged in refugee protection work. They engage in protection work in border zones, asylum determination procedures (in some cases as co-decision makers), and reception centers. They are also in regular border entry zones as observers or aides to asylum seekers. Further, some of them are heavily engaged in politics and policymaking on international protection. As organized citizen groups, they can influence policymaking on international protection. Thus, what they think and do about international protection and how they participate is crucial. The norms and discourses that they provide and their networks and collaboration with other stakeholders are a key element of the global governance of international protection.

Initially the organizations included in this comparative survey are selected based on their involvement in public debates through media. We include the organizations that are the most visible in public debates in social media and the internet editions of other media sources on topics regarding

international protection. This method of selecting organizations links our research on CSOs to PROTECT's research component on international protection discourses and norms in the media. While PROTECT's media study maps discourses and stakeholder networks that have high visibility in media platforms, the CSO study probes into the most visible non-state organizations' discourses and collaboration patterns with additional method tools.

However, since our media data sources comprise primarily the globally most visible CSOs, the CSOs that are nationally influential but not globally visible are left out. To correct this sampling bias at the national level, we engage the project partners' country expertise to identify such nationally significant CSOs. Further, the CSO survey questionnaire contains questions about which other organizations they collaborate with. The answers given to these questions give us an opportunity to expand the CSO sample through snowballing, whereby nationally significant but internationally not so visible CSOs are identified and added to the sample.

Following the overall comparative framework of PROTECT, this research component compares the contributions of CSOs to international protection and their policy approaches in Canada, South Africa, the UK, the USA and 14 EU countries. The USA is included in this research component because the US non-state organizations have a significant role in international protection in terms of norm diffusion, involvement in global governance, and formation of global discourses (Yang and Saffer 2018).

2.6 Citizens' attitudes to international protection (multi-national survey)

In this component, we compare Canada, South Africa, the USA, the UK, Mexico, Turkey, and 20 EU countries. The aim is to identify which policy approaches are acceptable to citizens, which in turn will be used in citizen tolerability tests of policy initiatives in the GCR, the CEAS, and the New Pact. This will also feed into our mapping of the GPCS.

The citizen survey shares a substantial number of questions with the CSO survey. It is designed to map, among others, citizens' position with respect to PROTECT's four-fold typology (that is, if they are nationalists, nation-statists, regionalists, globalists), their preferred governance modes, the roles they want to give to the stakeholders mentioned in GCR in international protection, their acceptance of international solidarity in refugee protection, tendency to accept shrinking or expansion of the refugee definition, their willingness to introduce special measures to protect vulnerable groups, accepting more refugees, acceptance of particular protection tools (from individual asylum, resettlement, relocations, paying money instead of accepting relocations to creating safe zones, diplomacy, military intervention in conflict zones, etc.). In other words, we are asking questions needed to assess the citizens' acceptance of the concrete measures mentioned in the GCR, the CEAS, and the New Pact. The findings on the GPCS, norms, governance modes, and discourses from this research component will be comparable with the findings from the CSO-study and the media study.

The comparative design aims to map citizen attitudes to international protection in countries belonging to three distinct migration systems: the American, the European, and the Southern African. The logic is based on comparing the major host and transit countries across three migration systems. In America, the US and Canada are the major refugee hosting countries, and Mexico is the main transit country. In Europe, the EU and the UK are the major host polities whereas Turkey is the main transit country. Mexico and Turkey are also functioning as collaborators in the US's and the EU's migration governance as migration-buffers by preventing migrants from reaching the US and the EU. From the Southern African region, only South Africa is included in the cross-continental comparison. This is because the African countries bordering South Africa are not functioning as migration-buffer countries in the same way as Mexico and Turkey. On the other hand, in addition to being a major host country, South Africa is as well functioning as a major transit country because many migrants from other African countries are travelling through South Africa on their way to Western Africa, Australia and New Zealand, North America, and Europe (cf. Udelsmann Rodrigues and Bjarnesen 2020). Zimbabwe could be included as a transit country here in order to match the comparative design for America and Europe, but since this country does not have a migration-buffer role, it is not possible to have the same design for Southern Africa.

USA citizens should be assumed to exert considerable influence on global governance and the formation of global discourses through their government. It is therefore essential to include US citizen attitudes in the equation when assessing which policies are globally acceptable. Among US citizens, a presence of a diversity of attitudes towards immigration, including nativist attitudes, has been shown; however, the current general picture is pro-immigration (Wright and Levy 2020). On the other hand, as a multilevel governance system that must often adopt the minimum standard among its member states as the common policy, the EU may have hard time achieving high international human rights standards in its international protection policy despite its reformed CEAS. It seems that nativist and Eurosceptic attitudes among EU citizens are on the rise along with increased asylum applications to the EU (Harteveld 2018), which may be a serious challenge to achieving the goals of the GCR and agreeing on the New Pact. Similar xenophobic attitudes are not less of a challenge in South Africa (Amusen and Mchunu 2017), which often affect government policies on international protection. A comparison of the attitudes in three migration systems is expected to give clues about citizens' tolerability of a series of policy initiatives of the UN, the EU, and the states. For this purpose, the citizens of 26 countries are asked the same question on concrete policy initiatives that are included in the GCR, the CEAS, and the New Pact.

2.7 Media's framings of international protection (media study, big data)

A media study will be conducted to assess the public discourse pressure on policymakers in the countries we are studying. Public discourses on international protection in the media will be categorized in terms of PROTECT's four-fold model – nativists, nation-statists, regionalists, globalists. Also, stakeholder networks around these discourses will be identified and compared with networks found in other research components.

Concerning media focus on refugees and international protection, earlier studies document a huge impact on how refugees are perceived by citizens (e.g., Esses et al. 2013, Hickerson & Dunsmore 2016, Parker 2015, Rettberg and Gajjala 2012). On the other hand, it is well documented that the relationship between public opinion and policy output is reciprocal and that policies respond to people's preferences (e.g., Page&Shapiro 1983, Wlezien 1995, Burstein 2003). In addition to this chain reaction from media through citizens to government policies, it is also an established knowledge that media framings do affect government policies directly (Soroka et al. 2012).

The mediated public discourses will be used to test the impact of the GPCS pressure on policymakers when they attempt to introduce new policies, including GCR, the New Pact, and state policies. The media data will be supplemented with the above-mentioned surveys of CSOs and citizens to give a more complete depiction of the international protection approaches in the GPCS. The relative strength of the discourses within the overall GPCS will be used as an indicator of the GPCS pressure on a particular policy initiative.

Following PROTECT's overall research design, we include Canada, South Africa, and the EU in the media study component. We also add the USA for the same reasons for including this country in the CSO and citizen surveys. The USA has a decisive role in shaping the discourses in the GPCS. It is also one of the major players in the global governance of international protection. By classifying the discourses in social media platforms and editor-controlled internet media with respect to the four approaches in GPCS – globalists, regionalists, nation-statists, and nativists, which are delineated in PROTECT's concept paper (Sicakkan 2021) – we identify the main political groups in the GPCS that are contesting to make their own approaches the premise for international protection worldwide.

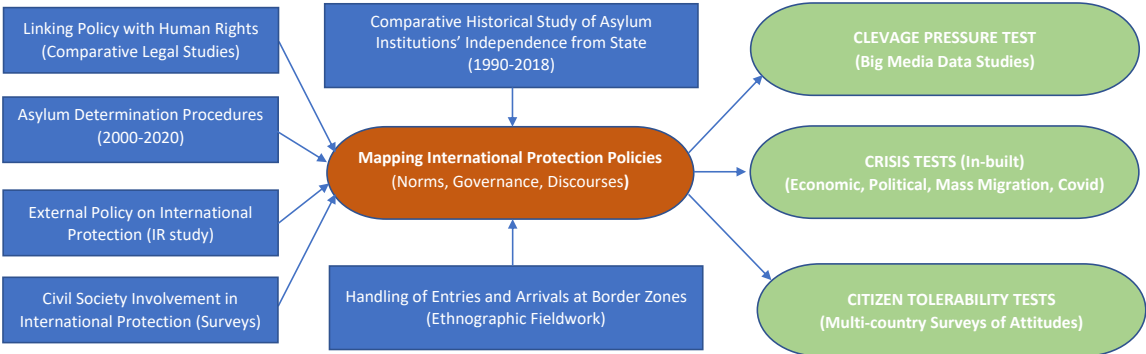
3 The links between research components

As repeatedly underlined, in all research components, we are searching for the norms, governance modes, and discourses that are performing the best in achieving high human-rights standards in international protection. This is done by devising research components that are strongly linked with each other both in terms of topics addressed and countries included in the comparative analyses.

3.1 Thematic links across research components

There are five main themes that are addressed in all the research components in Figure 2, which I reiterate below from the PROTECT’s concept paper (Sicakkan 2021). First, the norms, governance modes, and discourses are mapped in all research components and categorized with respect to the international protection approaches in the GPCS (globalist, regionalist, nation-statist, nativist). Second, conceptions of vulnerability and special measures for helping vulnerable groups are mapped. Third, the performances of these are evaluated in providing high international human rights standards in international protection, as defined in current international human rights instruments. Fourth, the performances of these in times of crisis are assessed by comparing the functioning of policies in normal and crisis times, including economic, political, mass migration, and public health crises.

Figure 2: Themes of PROTECT Research Components



Source: Sicakkan 2021

The GPCS pressure and the citizen tolerability tests will be done in the final comparative study, which brings together the elements in Figure 2. In practice, this means assessing how acceptable the best performing policies are among citizens and which chances they have for prevailing in the GPCS.

3.2 Country overlaps across research components

The quantitative research components all include Canada, South Africa, the UK and the EU14 (see Tables 1 and 2) as common cases in their comparative frameworks. Norway is included in the EU14 because this country adopts almost all EU legislation and policy, including the Schengen Agreement, the Dublin Convention, and partly also CEAS. The CSO and citizen attitude surveys include the USA in addition to the above. Further, the citizen survey expands the country sample by including six more EU countries in order to provide a better picture of attitudes in the EU system (see Tables 1 and 2). The additional countries include two Baltic countries and two East European countries as well as Mexico and Turkey as major migration-buffer countries in the American and European migration systems.

The comparisons in the remaining three research components aim to do in-depth assessments of specific themes in international protection. Therefore, these are designed as qualitative comparative studies. As mentioned, the legal-doctrinal study compares Canada, South Africa, and the EU, treating the EU as a polity, in order to explore ways of linking the GCR with the pre-existing human rights instruments. Thus, the number of the cases are three in this component.

The ethnographic research part studying the handling of vulnerability in refugee-intense and border zones has also the same three cases – with one fieldwork site in each of Canada and South Africa and five fieldwork sites in the EU – to remind, two sites in Greece and one in France, Italy, and Spain. This is to compensate for the currently more de-centralized handling of external borders in the EU compared with Canada and South Africa. Despite this, the entities to be compared in these two qualitative research components match.

In the historical comparative study of asylum institutions, the logic is the same. The EU, Canada, and South Africa are compared. Also here, we take into consideration the more diverse national institutional frames by including six EU countries in the comparison – Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, and the Netherlands. The reasons for selecting these countries are already discussed above. Regarding EU countries, the overlap between the ethnographic study and historical study samples comprises Greece, Italy, and France. Together with Canada and South Africa, the overlap between these two research components is five.

4 Conclusion

PROTECT's comparative research frame is devised to identify the best performing international protection policies – that is, norms, governance modes, and discourses – in the above-outlined parts of the international protection system. We endeavor both to discover innovative configurations of the best performing norms, governance modes, and discourses and devise new ones where needed. In the end, we will provide models that can be used to fill the policy gaps that the GCR and the New Pact have hitherto left unaddressed.

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