

Insights from small island developing states in the Caribbean

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Abstract

Though not the first large-scale migration crisis in the Caribbean, the temporality of the Venezuelan crisis and its convergence with geo-politics in the region, has unearthed challenges in recipient states in this region. This paper will reflect on the experience of four small island developing states (SIDS) – Aruba, Curaçao, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago – in the Southern Caribbean. Relative to their (demographic and geo-physical) size, these SIDS have received some of the largest arrivals of Venezuelans in the Americas. Adopting a socio-legal approach, the paper will argue that unanticipated increases in Venezuelan arrivals have provided a necessary impetus to governments to reflect on deficiencies in social, economic, and legal systems. While the paper highlights challenges related to the reception and integration of migrants, it will also provide recommendations regarding the opportunities for SIDS afforded by migratory crises. It will therefore emphasize how migration crises can be tipping points for small island developing states, which struggle with managing migration and which face a number of constraints which hinder their capacity to respond to large-scale migratory crises.

Biography

Natalie Dietrich Jones is Research Fellow at the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies (SALISES) at the University of the West Indies Mona campus. Her interests include geographies of the border, governance of migration, and intra-regional migration in the Caribbean. Natalie is Chair of the Migration and Development Cluster, an interdisciplinary group of researchers exploring contemporary issues concerning migration in the Caribbean and its diaspora. Natalie holds an MPhil in Development Studies from the University of Cambridge and a PhD in Development Policy and Management from the University of Manchester. She is currently undertaking a multi-sited project on the response to Venezuelan migration in small island developing states in the Southern Caribbean. She is also Principal Investigator for the Jamaica (Kingston) component of South-South Migration and Migrant Food Insecurity: Interactions, Impacts and Remedies (MiFood Project), a multi-city research initiative which is led by the Wilfrid Laurier University.