



Australian Population Association

13th Biennial Conference

Population Policy and Australia's Destiny

5-8 December 2006 - University of Adelaide

The impact of visa category on the settlement experiences of refugees: is policy more important than theory?

Julia Hinsliff, PhD Candidate, GES, University of Adelaide, (julia.hinsliff@adelaide.edu.au)

The settlement experiences of refugees are increasingly being influenced by the migration policies of the countries in which they settle. While theories and typologies relating to the settlement and adjustment process of refugees continue to be developed, the influence of migration policy on the settlement experience has been somewhat overlooked. This paper draws on evidence from Australia and will demonstrate the significant influence that refugee visa categories are having on early settlement experiences. Settlement experiences of refugees are not only being influenced by the nature of their visa (temporary or permanent) but also by Australia's current system of differential access to government funded settlement assistance, depending on visa category. The possibility of incorporating the influence of visa categories into a new typology of settlement will be discussed.