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### Runner up entry for 2023

Isa Amaro Varas

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**Name**

Isa Amaro Varas

**Title of Paper**

Connecting the Dots: Immigration Policy and Access to Higher Education for Refugees in France

**Class Year**

Senior

**Date Research Undertaken**

Fall 2022

**Citation Style Used**

APA

**Affiliated Course**

Independent Study (GOV 491)

**Faculty Name**

Professor Andrew Levin

**Student Major**

French & International Relations double major, Economics minor

## **Narrative Questions**

- 1. Describe how you came to choose your topic, specifically noting any pre-research that you did. What sources did you use in this pre-research? To what extent did you consult with librarians, faculty, or others? How did this pre-research lead you to your topic?**

Growing up in Guadalajara, one of the most popular cities crossed by migrants traveling north, I have always been interested in learning about ways to best support forcibly displaced people. During sophomore year, I decided to apply to CISLA and craft a project that would connect my interest in migration to my studies in International Relations, Economics, and French. For my application, I contacted the Reference Desk where I met Andrew Lopez. Working with Andrew I read other CISLA projects and used tools like OneSearch to learn about what research on this topic looked like. To get immersed in the political discourse on the topic, I read articles from think tanks (e.g. Brookings Institute and PewCenter). In the following semesters, I wrote an annotated bibliography on refugee integration in France and a research paper on the UNHCR. I also contacted Andrew, who showed me valuable library resources like the Libguides website and RefWorks. By the fall of 2022, the information I gathered over the past years and my experience interning in France, led me to the topic of Refugee Access to Higher Education in France and I began working with Professor Levin on the project. For my literature review, I met with Andrew Lopez who helped me use different search engines to get articles on this topic and connect with the authors of some of the articles I was reading. This process was pivotal for my project as it allowed me to clearly define my research question and methodology.

- 2. Describe your process of finding information for your project. Note specifically the tools you used to undertake your research, as well as the specific search strategies you used within these tools. (Note: “Ebsco,” being an umbrella vendor, is not a specific enough response when identifying tools; listing the “library database” is also an unacceptably vague answer. Specific tools include JSTOR, America: History & Life, Web of Science, etc., along with OneSearch, the new library system.)**

The background information I gathered to be able to complete this project came from a plethora of sources. Looking at my early pre-research process, I used different databases depending on the lens I was using to explore migration. When exploring migration from an anthropological perspective, I used AnthroSources. When looking at this topic from a Multilateral Organizations/International Organizations perspective, I got real-time data from the UN Databases. Once my research topic was more clearly defined, I mainly searched for articles using keywords on OneSearch. This allowed me to find many peer-reviewed articles such as “Refugee Education: Education for an Unknowable Future” which was later central to my research. From OneSearch, I discovered JSTOR as many of the articles I was reading were found there. This allowed me to find other articles on my topic as JSTOR has a function that will show you similar articles. Then I realized that to find more information about the topic in the context of France, it would be beneficial to search for information in French. With limited knowledge of French databases, I began my search in Google Scholar. This led me to discover the database Cairn International Edition, which later allowed me to find most of my French sources.

**3. Describe your process of evaluating the resources you found. How did you make decisions about which resources you would use, and which you wouldn't? What kinds of questions did you ask yourself about resources in order to determine whether they were worthy of inclusion?**

The measure I took to make sure I was using reliable sources, was to be careful about the platforms I was using to find them and be aware of the type of sources I was gathering. Given my experience using OneSearch, I used this database to sort through many types of sources from videos to books and articles. For my research, I eventually began to tailor my searches by looking into peer-reviewed journals on the topics of education policy and immigration policy. While tailoring my searches helped me develop certain criteria for my sources, I continued to do broader searches. This was especially important as a lot of more recent data available on this topic comes from the reports written by the European Union, UN Agencies, and NGOs. When working with sources like the aforementioned and others that did not come from peer-reviewed journals, I did additional research on the source itself. I kept notes on the information I found in case I included the data from these sources in my research. Finally, to evaluate all sources on an individual basis, I asked myself the following questions: 'When was this published?', 'Who wrote this and how are they qualified to be writing this information?', 'How accurate is this content? Does this piece use relevant and reliable sources?', 'What is the purpose of the publication (to sell information, to inform, to convince)?', and finally 'How is this relevant to my research?'