Children make up more than half of the world’s estimated 21.3 million refugees (UNHCR 2017) with more than a quarter (365,000) of the 1.26 million first-time asylum claims lodged in Europe during 2015 made by applicants under 18 years of age (Sigona & Humphris 2017). Whilst regional and national laws in Europe provide a solid basis for protecting these children under international law, they have not systematically translated into positive outcomes for children’s wellbeing (UNHCR et al. 2017). Instead, children, state institutions, and non-governmental actors often find themselves confronted with complex, confusing, costly, and bureaucratic procedures which fail to take adequate account of children’s best interests and can leave them destitute, vulnerable and lacking access to either international or social protection.

It is precisely this situation that The Child in International Refugee Law seeks to address. As the author Jason Pobjoy points out in his introduction to the book, children are the victims of some of the most devastating examples of state-sanctioned and private human rights abuse, yet they often find it difficult, if not impossible, to secure protection under international refugee law. Children, Pobjoy argues, face two main difficulties when applying for protection. Firstly, they are often invisible, especially if they arrive as part of a family group: whilst media and political attention has focused on the experiences of unaccompanied children, a much larger number arriving in families find it even more difficult to make claims to protection under international refugee law. Secondly, children’s experiences are often understood and interpreted through an adult-centric lens. Even where children are able to articulate their claims, what they do and what is done to them is often viewed as not falling within the meaning of Article 1(A) of the 1951 Refugee Convention, the cornerstone of the international refugee regime.
Pobjoy’s book centres on the idea that these issues can be addressed by bringing the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)—which recognises that all children, regardless of their migration status or citizenship, have distinct needs—to bear directly on the interpretation and application of the Refugee Convention. Drawing on extensive and original analysis of 2,500 cases involving refugee children, *The Child in International Refugee Law* explores the relationship between international refugee law and international human rights law enshrined in the CRC, arguing that the CRC can not only enable children to more actively participate in the process of refugee status determination but can act as an interpretative tool for understanding how children’s claim for protection can be understood to ‘fit’ within the meaning of the Refugee Convention. Moreover, he argues, the CRC can offer alternative protection for those children who are not considered refugees within the meaning of international law but who nonetheless should not be returned to their countries of origin.

This argument is forcefully made through a detailed and eminently readable analysis that guides the reader though the key elements of the Refugee Convention drawing on the framework developed by James Hathaway (1991), the world’s leading refugee law scholar and editor of the series within which *The Child in International Refugee Law* is published. Tracing the evolution of both international refugee and children’s law in Chapters 1 and 2, Pobjoy insists that whilst the Refugee Convention may not have been drafted with the experiences of children in mind, it is more than capable of adapting and responding appropriately, to them. This argument has, of course, also been made for several decades in relation to gender-related persecution and the asylum claims of women (Crawley 2001).

With this in mind, *The Child in International Refugee Law* takes each of the key elements of the refugee definition in turn, unpacking those aspects that are specific to children and illustrating, through reference to policy and practice, the limitations of the existing interpretation and possibilities opened up through reference to the CRC. In Chapter 3, Pobjoy highlights that children may lack the ability to understand or appreciate any risk of future harm or, in cases where a child is aware of, and appreciates, the nature of risk, he or she may nonetheless have difficulty in articulating this fear to a decision maker. A child’s perceived vagueness or inconsistency may be viewed as undermining credibility of the application, as may his or her demeanour. The absence of country of origin information which sufficiently identifies the distinct risks faced by children may render it difficult for the child to prove, via his or her legal representative, that the fear is well-founded. Chapter 4 turns to the interpretation of ‘persecution’, drawing on the core human rights framework and