The Problem of Refugees (classifying works on them, that is)

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Repository Citation
Holmes, Elizabeth Geesey, "The Problem of Refugees (classifying works on them, that is)" (2004). Articles, Chapters and Online Publications. 3.
https://digitalcommons.law.uga.edu/law_lib_artchop/3
This past Summer I was able to attend the Advanced Cataloging Institute before the AALL Annual Meeting in Seattle. One of the sessions, presented by Jolande Goldberg of the Library of Congress and author of many of the K schedules, was on LC Classification.

Ms. Goldberg addressed classification questions she had been given before the session. These questions were on various parts of the K schedule which even advanced catalogers have difficulty with. One question posed was “the Refugee question.” In a project re-classing JX4292.R4, Refugees, the question is – where do these books go?

**OPTION ONE IS K3230.R45**

Law in general. Comparative and uniform law. Jurisprudence Comparative law. International uniform law Constitutional law

- Individual and state
- Nationality and citizenship
- Special groups A-Z – Refugees.

This number should be used for works dealing with comparisons of the law relating to refugees in two or more countries in different regions, or for works dealing with refugees in general in terms of transnational law.

Example 1A: *International Refugee law: a primer*

Main subject heading: Refugees—Legal status, laws, etc.

Example 1B: *Asylum law and practice in Europe and North America: a comparative analysis*

Subject headings:

- Refugees—Legal status, laws, etc.—Europe;
- Refugees—Legal status, laws, etc.—North America;
- Refugees—Legal status, laws, etc.—United States.

**OPTION TWO IS KZ6530**

Law of nations

- Enforced settlement of international disputes. Law enforcement regimes. Law of armed conflict
- Law of war and neutrality. Jus belli
- Humanitarian law. Usus in bello
- Refugees. Population displacement. Forced migration

This would be used for population displacement, civil strife, refugee populations in rogue states and the international humanitarian law pertaining to refugees. All refugees from war or war time conflicts class here – keeping in mind that war includes civil conflict and warlords. The key point to remember here is that KZ6530 is for refugees under the topic of Humanitarian law. These books have to deal with the topic of refugees in the area of humanitarian law

Example 2A: *The international protection of internally displaced persons*

Main subject heading: Refugees—Legal status, laws, etc,

Additional subject headings: Refugees—International cooperation; Civil war; Humanitarian law

Example 2B: *Mass refugee influx and the limits of public international law*

Main subject heading: Refugees—Legal status, laws, etc,

Additional subject headings: Refugees—Protection—International cooperation; Humanitarian law

Example 2C: *Refugee protection in international law: UNHCR’s global consultations on international protection*

Main subject heading: Refugees—Legal status, laws, etc,

Additional subject heading: Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951)

[Do a search in the Library of Congress’ catalog for this title and follow the link to Full Text at the bottom of the full record display for more information on the subject of this work]

**OPTION THREE IS: K7128.S7**

Law in general. Comparative and uniform law. Jurisprudence Private international law. Conflict of laws

- Persons
- Natural persons
- Civil status
- Nationality and domicile
- Nationality
- Special topics, A-Z
- Stateless persons. Refugees

This seems to be used mainly for works on Dual nationality, Conflict of Laws on Citizenship, statelessness and the legal status of stateless persons. This number would be used when classing a work dealing with the conflict of laws relating to refugees in different regions. I think it is safe...
to say from my perusal of many online catalogs, that this number will not be the one to use for most works we encounter.

Remember that when looking at other online catalogs including the Library of Congress that many works classed in K should now be in KZ because they were classed before the creation of the JZ/KZ schedule. Also some works are not classed correctly as there has been some confusion between human rights and humanitarian law.

Also keep in mind that Class K is for comparative and uniform law, private international law (universal, i.e. inter-regional or supra-regional in scope or application), and global intergovernmental organizations as far as they do not belong to Class KZ. Class KZ on the other hand is for public international law, also universal in scope and application, including the global intergovernmental organizations belonging to the realm of public international law.

In the end as Jolande Goldberg said at the Advanced Cataloging Institute you just have to “make your own choices,” – or as we are so used to hearing, use cataloger’s judgment. This area deserves watching and possibly more clarification.

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**A Kinder, Gentler Time**

I like this column to be pragmatic, with a focus on resources to help collection development librarians in their daily work. But frankly, I’m running out of practical tips.

It’s not news to anyone that the legal publishing industry has changed dramatically in the last ten years. As a collection development librarian I’ve followed these changes closely and tried to remain optimistic about the effect of the new publishing environment on our library resources and services. Instead I am increasingly pessimistic about our ability to manage and shape our own collections rather than simply reacting to the latest developments in legal publishing.

I want to focus this column on three things that are troubling me, things that keep me awake at night.

- **Pricing** – I accept that there are sound reasons for companies to have different pricing models for different products and customers. Law librarians often say we want one price for all, but in fact we want to tailor products, services and prices to our specific situations. These days it is hard work understanding all the pricing options and negotiating the best deal for our libraries, but it would be worth the effort if we achieved a result that was cost-beneficial for our users. Unfortunately the price increases we have seen from all the major publishers in the past couple of years are backing us into a corner and forcing us to eliminate resources we once thought essential. When companies report a 15% profit and project 15% price increases at the same time that the Consumer Price Index rose only 2-3%, it’s impossible to comprehend how libraries are going to stay in business and meet the demands of their users. Our budgets simply can’t absorb the costs.

- **Branding and Product Development** – There was a time when a publisher’s name denoted a particular kind of product, either in form or in content or both. As global conglomerates have swallowed up legal publishers, those distinctions have diminished. Branding is a concept that I once thought would help maintain the unique identity of formerly independent publishers. Now it is clear that branding is a way to replace not only the name but also the essence of those publishers. Conglomerates are not interested in retaining the identity of the smaller publishers they acquire; conglomerates want to brand their own name on everything they produce. Companies now own multiple competing products in the same subject areas, and the quality of those products is diminishing rather than improving. Development of new and innovative products seems less important than the name recognition of the parent corporation.

- **Globalization** – This legacy of 20th century business expansion worries me the most, because it is driving the new look in the legal information industry. Mergers and acquisitions are expensive, and companies must recover their costs and improve their profit margins in order to satisfy their shareholders. Higher prices and branding of products are only two of the results of globalization. We are