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Alessandro Monsutti with Dawn Chatty, Director of the Refugee Studies Centre



States, Sovereignties and Refugees: A view from the margins?

On Wednesday 6 June, the Refugee Studies Centre welcomed Professor Alessandro Monsutti to speak at the annual Elizabeth Colson Lecture at the Oxford Museum of Natural History.

Drawing from his research with the Afghan diaspora, Monsutti outlined a world witnessing shifting sovereignties in which the lines between the nation-state and transnational actors are blurred, and displaced people can increasingly be viewed as agents of their own lives rather than the passive victims seen from a state-centric perspective.

In the first part of the lecture, Monsutti argued that concepts such as 'state' and 'sovereignty' must be historicised and contextualised; the model of the Westphalian state is a bureaucratic ideal that has probably never been fully achieved or realised.

Monsutti emphasised that the global importance of the nation-state has far from faded in the last decade. Afghanistan was given as a salient example of a formal democratic state that depends almost entirely on foreign presence for the delivery of welfare services and for its security.

Beginning the second part of the lecture, Monsutti referenced the work of the RSC's Professor Roger Zetter, which described how people become labelled as refugees within the context of specific public policy practices and demonstrated both the extreme vulnerability of refugees to enforced labels, and how the bureaucratic process itself can be very alienating.

Although careful not to negate the specificity of 'refugee' in

legal terms or minimise the hardship they often face, Monsutti provocatively argued that many potential refugees around the world increasingly understand the alienating dimension of the refugee label and do not want such a regime of protection and assistance.

He cited the example of Afghans in Pakistan where refugees utilise services provided by the international aid regime but where the most successful people diversify their assets and options, going to urban centres to find menial jobs and discreetly integrating into the social fabric.

Monsutti contrasted the social strategies of mobility and blurred identities of forced migrants, exemplified by his study of Afghanistan, against the state-centric solutions of repatriation, integration and resettlement promoted by UNHCR, which are based on the notion that solutions are found only when movement stops.

In his concluding remarks he called upon the audience to recognise this disconnect and appealed for a more comprehensive framework which takes into account the full range of strategies and responses developed by the Afghan population.

An extended summary of the lecture is available at www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/news/states-sovereignties-and-refugees

Listen to the podcast at www.forcedmigration.org/podcasts

Forward, Backward, Stalling? Seminar series reflects on the completion of the Common European Asylum System

A Common European Asylum System (CEAS), including the establishment of an EU-wide refugee status, remains a central objective of the European Union as a self-proclaimed area of freedom, security and justice.

Convened by Jean-François Durieux and Violeta Moreno Lax, the Trinity term seminar series touched upon all three 'pillars' of the second phase of the CEAS, namely: further alignment of the Member States' asylum legislations; effective intra-EU cooperation and solidarity; and EU cooperation with the rest of the world. Importantly, all speakers brought human rights law, as codified in the European Convention on Human Rights and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, to bear on their critical reading of EU law development.

Cathryn Costello (Oxford) and H el ene Lambert (Westminster) discussed the roles of the judiciary, both at national and supra-national levels, and stressed the need for greater dialogue and complementarity between these judicial fora. Mar ia-Teresa Gil-Bazo (Newcastle) exposed the limits of EU-centred solidarity, proposing creative ways of correcting the weaknesses of existing devices for responsibility-sharing.

Violeta Moreno Lax (Oxford) examined the difficulties posed by an EU border and migration management policy premised on security concerns, revealing their possible incompatibility with legal obligations regarding access to international protection. Elspeth Guild (Queen Mary/Nijmegen) identified the wider consequences of the EU measures in the development of a new international framework of solidarity obligations of states towards those seeking asylum, challenging the 'minimum standards' logic pervading the 'first phase' of the CEAS and opening the horizon for a new approach to the 'second phase'.

Listen to podcasts from the series at www.forcedmigration.org/podcasts



Dana+10 workshop participants

Representatives of Mobile Indigenous Peoples Call For Respect of Human Rights

Ten years after the Dana Declaration on Mobile Peoples and Conservation was agreed in Wadi Dana Jordan in 2002, representatives of Mobile Indigenous Peoples met for a workshop at the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature's (RSCN) Dana eco-lodge in April to reflect on the achievements of the past decade and to consider future actions to promote the special needs and vulnerabilities of mobile indigenous peoples.

Professor Dawn Chatty, Director of the Refugee Studies Centre and a member of the Standing Commission for the Dana Declaration said: "Hundreds of millions of mobile indigenous peoples face dispossession, eviction and restrictions to their lifestyles and livelihoods. Without concerted global action, these peoples will become especially vulnerable and economically burdensome to the states they inhabit. However, with a few critical interventions by state and international actors, these peoples can help

guide the world to transitions towards a more sustainable future."

A number of representatives of the World Alliance of Mobile Indigenous Peoples (WAMIP) attended the workshop along with policymakers, researchers and practitioners from around the world concerned about the continuing marginalisation of many mobile indigenous peoples.

In a statement for the Rio+20 'Earth Summit' meetings held in Brazil in June 2012, representatives invited governments and civil society organisations to incorporate "a fundamental obligation to respect human rights of Mobile Peoples as defined under the UN guiding principles on business and human rights" into any future resolutions, and to recognise the contributions which mobile peoples make to local and regional economies.

Download the workshop report and read the full statement at www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/publications

Migrant Children Fall Through the Net

A new report entitled 'No Way Out, No Way In: Irregular Migrant Children and Families in the UK', shows an estimated 120,000 children living in the UK without legal immigration status are at risk of destitution, exploitation and social exclusion because of contradictory and frequently changing rules and regulations which jeopardise their access to health-care, education, protection by the police and other public services.

The study, carried out by a research team led by the RSC's Dr Nando Sigona at The Centre on Migration, Policy and

Society (COMPAS), recently featured in an article in *The Economist*.

Dr Sigona said: "The point of the report is to identify the situation that these children are in, and the difficulties that this places on the public service providers with whom they come into contact. Teachers, GPs and social workers should be allowed to do their jobs without having to act as de facto immigration control officers".

Read the press release at www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/news/no-way-out

The Arab Spring and Beyond: Human mobility, forced migration and institutional responses

Ayla Bonfiglio, Researcher, International Migration Institute

On 20 March 2012, the Refugee Studies Centre (RSC), in association with the International Migration Institute and Oxford Diasporas Programme, convened an international workshop to examine the extent to which political and economic developments in North Africa and the Levant have impacted migration dynamics and migration and refugee governance since the start of the Arab Spring. The workshop built upon the insights gained at a symposium that IMI and RSC organised in May 2011 following the height of the migration crisis in the region.

The Arab Spring serves as an important and instructive case, both in terms of migration theory and practice, to examine migration patterns under conditions of conflict, crisis and regime change, and appropriate institutional and policy responses. Several key issues emerged during the workshop. One of the most important themes was the diversity of migration patterns resulting from, interacting with and related to the revolutions and crises associated with the Arab Spring. Far from being a catalyst for waves of refugees to flee to European shores, participants argued that the Arab Spring played a greater role in generating intra-regional displacement, constraining and changing migration patterns, and drawing attention to pre-existing migration flows. Another theme was the way in which the Arab Spring impacted migrants differently, according to their ethnic group, language fluency, dress and appearance, legal status and possession of identity documents.

A third theme was the necessary cooperation of migrant and refugee organisations to address the different protection and assistance concerns arising from the population movements generated and constrained by the Arab Spring. One of the initial steps taken by IOM and UNHCR in Libya was to jointly recognise the majority of movements connected to the revolution as being a part of a 'migration crisis' rather than a 'refugee crisis'. Crucially, this meant that most movement required IOM's mandate

and operational expertise in 'migration management' and in ensuring that states fulfil human rights obligations towards migrants. Participants agreed that the Libyan crisis was a unique operation for UNHCR and IOM as it required that they merge their mandates, expertise, operations and institutional cultures to prevent the crisis from escalating into a humanitarian or a protracted displacement crisis, and it obliged them to coordinate their efforts to provide assistance and protection to migrants as part of 'mixed' flows. Positioning movements related to the Arab Spring as a 'migration crisis' has also had important implications for migration flows to Europe, for it allowed European governments to categorise arrivals to their borders as economic migrants who needed to be returned to their countries of origin, rather than as asylum seekers deserving protection.

Lastly, the presentations and discussions raised some key questions and issues for future research. First, how can researchers develop a more holistic approach to studying displacement, which accounts for constraints but more importantly recognises and examines the exertion of migrant agency? Second, does the Arab Spring provide a case to explore the extent to which migration acts as a valve to relieve social, economic and political pressure on governments with high unemployment and high youth populations? Finally, while UNHCR and IOM were prompted to merge and coordinate their operations on an ad hoc basis, because of the unanticipated nature and scale of the intra-regional migration crisis, how should the two agencies proceed to develop operation and protection procedures to respond to future 'mixed' migration crises?

Download the workshop report at www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/publications

Listen to podcasts from the event at www.forcedmigration.org/podcasts

Forthcoming Events



6 October 2012

Workshop on South-South Humanitarianism in Contexts of Forced Migration

This workshop aims to provide a space for critical reflection upon the various histories, modes of operation and implications of diverse 'alternative' models of humanitarian action.

15 October 2012

Special seminar: Ambassador William Lacy Swing

The RSC welcomes Ambassador William Lacy Swing, Director General of the International Organization for Migration, to speak on the subject of forced migration.

27-28 October 2012

Short course on Statelessness and International Law

This two-day, non-residential course will be presented by some of the leading experts on the issue.

7 November 2012

Annual Harrell-Bond Lecture: Mariano-Florentino Cuéllar

The RSC welcomes Mariano-Florentino Cuéllar, Co-Director, Stanford Center for International Security and Cooperation, to speak at the annual Harrell-Bond Lecture.

6-7 December 2012

RSC 30th Anniversary Conference: Understanding Global Refugee Policy

The RSC's 30th Anniversary Conference aims to examine and theorise the policy-making processes relating to refugees and forced migration at the global level.

For more information, calls for papers, and to register for events, please visit www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/events

New Policy Briefing on 'Displacement, Transitional Justice and Reconciliation'

Written by Dr Megan Bradley (Fellow in the Foreign Policy Programme at the Brookings Institution in Washington DC), this new policy briefing explores the links between reconciliation, forced migration and transitional justice, bringing into focus the ways in which displaced persons figure in transitional justice processes, and the potential implications of this involvement for reconciliation.

The briefing addresses the interlinked conceptual and practical challenges associated with trying to advance reconciliation in post-conflict societies affected by large-scale displacement, and highlights some of the ways in which policymakers and practitioners have sought to support reconciliation between displaced popula-

tions and other actors. It analyses some of the assumptions that have characterised these efforts, and suggests ways in which the challenges surrounding the interface of displacement, transitional justice and reconciliation may be more effectively navigated.

A successful launch event was hosted by the Canadian High Commission in London on 25 June 2012. The briefing provided a departing point for a policy discussion with international experts, researchers, policymakers and practitioners; a smaller, more informal discussion took place at the RSC on 26 June.

Policy Briefing 9 is available to download at www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/publications

Forced Migration Review: North Africa and displacement 2011–2012

The latest issue of FMR, online at www.fmreview.org/north-africa, reflects on some of the experiences, challenges and lessons of the Arab Spring in North Africa, the implications of which resonate far wider than the region itself.

The issue comprises 20 articles by a range of authors from academia and the international humanitarian community, including introductions by UN High Commissioner António Guterres and IOM Director General William Lacy Swing. Also included is an article entitled 'Migration and revolution' co-authored by Nando Sigona, RSC Senior Research Officer, and Hein de Haas, Co-Director of the International Migration Institute.

Alongside this issue, we are also publishing an updated version of our 2008 supplement on 'Islam, human rights and displacement', available in English and Arabic at www.fmreview.org/human-rights.htm

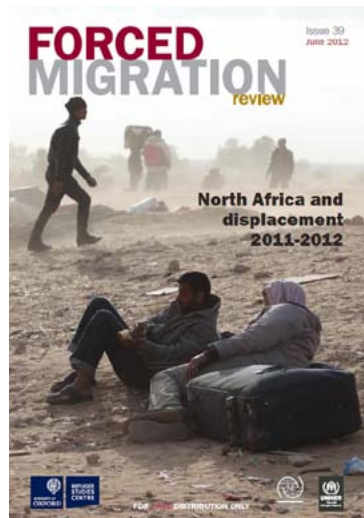
Forthcoming issues of FMR

In July we will publish an issue of FMR focusing on 'Being young and out of place'. Young people can be susceptible in particular ways to the stresses of being physically and socially dislocated at a time when they face important changes, rites of passage and the formation of adult relationships. Food, shelter,

water, sanitation and health services and income-generating programmes address essential physical requirements but it is up to young people themselves and whatever community exists for them to satisfy their social and other needs, including finding how to become socially adult.

Future themes include 'Preventing displacement' (due out December) and 'Fragile states' (due out early 2013). See www.fmreview.org/forthcoming.htm

Keep up to date with FMR issues – sign up for email alerts at www.fmreview.org/alerts.htm, email us at fmr@qeh.ox.ac.uk, or follow us on Facebook and Twitter.



The Roma in the New EU: Policies, frames and everyday experiences

A special issue of the Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies on the Roma in the new EU, edited by the RSC's Dr Nando Sigona with Professor Peter Vermeersch, University of Leuven, was published in June and is now available at Taylor & Francis Online. The contributors examine Romani mobilities in the context of contemporary European politics and policies on migration and ethnic minority protection.

The collection includes an article written by Dr Sigona based on fieldwork in Kosovo, entitled 'Between Competing Imaginaries of Statehood: Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian (RAE) Leadership in Newly Independent Kosovo'. Drawing on in-depth interviews with RAE leaders, the article shows how they are caught between multiple and conflicting agendas and power structures namely the Kosovo government, the Serbian state and the international community, as well as being under pressure from the Kosovo RAE diaspora that fears forced return to Kosovo.

Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies is available at www.tandf.com

Other New Publications

Iraqi Protracted Displacement

Héloïse Ruaudel, Workshop Report, April 2012

This report provides a brief overview of the themes explored in the 'Iraqi Protracted Displacement' workshop and goes on to present the main outcomes, laying out proposals for policy development.

A Normative Assessment of the Aims and Practices of the European Border Management Agency Frontex

Nina Perkowski, RSC Working Paper, April 2012

The paper traces the historical development of Frontex's discourse and practices as they relate to its goals and values.

All publications are available to download at www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/publications