

“History and Memory in Refugee Research”

2nd Workshop of the German Research Foundation (DFG) Research Network
'Foundations of Refugee Research'

30. – 31. 10.2015, at the Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford

Despite some sporadic works on the history of international displacement and refugee protection these issues are largely absent in historiography and in turn, historiography is mostly absent in Refugee Studies. Due to a traditionally presentist outlook Refugee Studies often lacks rigorous historical research, with some notable exceptions. Refugee research is often limited to anecdotal perspectives on past events because historiographical methods, theories and secondary literature are seldom applied to issues of forced migration and therefore absent from most conceptual considerations regarding refugees.

This workshop will foster exchange and discussion about relevance, methods and problems of historiographical research in Refugee and Forced Migration Studies. It will emphasise the past as a crucial framework for the analysis of historical developments, of central terms and concepts as well as institutions, actors and regimes by which refugee laws and policies are negotiated. The workshop is particularly focused on epistemological challenges of historical refugee research, like the production of and access to sources. It will also interrogate how socio-political frameworks impact reconstructions of the past, in particular in social and political memories. The inclusion of the past in refugee studies poses ultimately, a number of ethical and normative questions, like the control of historical interpretations and claims of historical justice.

Workshop participants will discuss and analyse these challenges systematically to give impulses for more historical and historically aware Refugee Studies. Some of the questions under discussion will be:

- Which role do references to the past play in national and international refugee politics?
- What can historiography contribute to refugee research across disciplines? How can a historical perspective help understand situations of flight and refugee policies?
- Which historiographical methods (like archival research, oral history etc.) can contribute to Refugee Studies and what are their limits?
- How do refugees remember displacement and flight? How does that and social memories of the receiving society impact their self-perception and belonging in the country of asylum?

We invite all members of the RSC, including DPhil students, to participate in the workshop. In particular, we hope to bring together RSC and network members to enable stimulating discussion and fruitful exchange about the potentials of history and memory in refugee research.

Please register for attendance in the workshop by 23.10.2015: olaf.kleist@geh.ox.ac.uk

About DFG Network 'Foundations of Refugee Research':

<http://fluechtlingsforschung.net/grundlagen/>

Schedule

Friday, 30.10.2015 – Seminar Room 3

- **5pm, lecture: Prof. Dr. Michael Schwartz**, Institute for Contemporary History, Berlin
“Impacts of Forced Migrations - The German Case. History, Historical Research, and Policies of Remembrance”
- 6.30 pm reception
- 8.00 pm dinner

Saturday, 31.10.2015 – Seminar Room 1

- 9 - 10.30 am closed network meeting
- 10.30 - 11.00 coffee
- **11.00 - 1.00 am Session 1 *History in Refugee Studies***
What is the history and current state of Historical research in Refugee Studies? What are its benefits and what are its challenges? Which different purposes can a historical perspective fulfil? How does historiography relate to other disciplines in this multi- and inter-disciplinary field? Can history be an auxiliary discipline in Refugee Studies?
Contributors: Cathryn Costello; Gil Loescher; discussant: Marcel Berlinghoff
- 1.00 – 2.00 pm lunch break
- **2.00 – 4.00 pm Session 2: *Historiographical Methods in Refugee Research***
Which methods does historical research offer? How are historiographic methods different from other Social Science methods? What are the challenges of historical research, in particular in regard to researching refugees? What are different approaches to historical research? What are their ethical implications? How can historical research be presented?
Contributors: Tom Scott-Smith; Patrice Poutrus; discussant: Ulrike Krause
- 4.00 – 4.30 pm coffee break
- **4.30 – 6.30 Session 3: *Use and Abuse of the Refugee Past***
Does historical research have a practical purpose? Can we learn lessons from the past? How political is historical research? How is refugee history used for political ends? Can the past provide us with ethical norms for refugee protection? How do refugees remember the past? How can we research memories and why is it useful?
Contributors: Alexander Betts; Olaf Kleist; discussant: Matthew Gibney
- 08.00 pm dinner

Each session will consist of one or two short inputs (5-10 minutes) that will be discussed by a third respondent to start off the discussion.

Sunday, 01.11.2015

- 11.00 – 13.00 Guided Tour of Oxford

Refugee Studies Centre, Contributors:

Prof. Dr. Alexander Betts
Prof. Dr. Cathryn Costello
Prof. Dr. Matthew Gibney
Prof. Dr. Gil Loescher
Prof. Dr. Tom Scott-Smith

DFG Network Members in attendance:

Prof. Dr. Jürgen Bast, (Law) Giessen
Dr. Marcel Berlinghoff, (History) Osnabrück
Dr. Sybille De La Rosa, (Political Science) Heidelberg
Prof. Dr. Cordula von Denkowski, (Psychology) Hannover
Dr. J. Olaf Kleist, (Political Science) Oxford / Osnabrück
Dr. Ulrike Krause, (Political Science) Marburg
JProf. Dr. Boris Nieswand, (Sociology) Tübingen
Dr. Patrice G. Poutrus, (History) Wien
Prof. Dr. Albert Scherr, (Sociology) Freiburg
Prof. Dr. Karin Scherschel, (Sociology) Wiesbaden
Prof. Dr. Helen Schwenken, (Sociology) Osnabrück

Further confirmed workshop participants:

Prof. Dr. Michael Schwartz, Institute for Contemporary History, Berlin

Address:

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