



Migration: displacement and development in the MENA region

Saturday January 27, 2018, Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter

In the past fifteen years the MENA region has been in the eye of the refugee displacement storm, experiencing dramatic waves of refugees and forced migration. Although episodes of forced migration are not new in this part of the world, today there are 20 million displaced people in the MENA, a number that rises to 54 million when including economic migrants. This massive movement of peoples is having profound effects on territorial fragmentation, societal transformation and the practice of sovereignty. In this context, migration is not unidirectional but multi-directional; it creates an intricate web of trajectories moving within and across national borders, to and from the region, reaching European shores and in some instances moving back, as with the recruitment of jihadi fighters among European nationals.

What the MENA region is experiencing is a migration oriented towards many destinations, and a displacement occurring on different levels – geographical, political, economic as well as virtual. The seemingly endless wars in Syria and Iraq have produced the greatest share of the Middle East's refugees, while many others have fled wars and failed states in Afghanistan, Yemen, Libya and Sudan. Neighbouring countries have faced serious challenges in absorbing millions of refugees, while North African states and Turkey have turned into transit hubs for refugees willing to seek refuge in Europe. This flow of displaced people fleeing conflicts and protracted crisis intersects with another flow of people: those seeking better life conditions and economic opportunities.

In light of the salience of this phenomenon the study of migration and displacement in the context of the MENA region and the wider Mediterranean has become unavoidable. This symposium intends to tackle the issue of migration through an interdisciplinary, multi-sided approach, which is also peculiar to the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies at the University of Exeter. The objective is to bring together scholars whose interest in migration in the Arab world and the wider Mediterranean can trigger meaningful comparative debate. By focusing on several themes and with different perspectives, this would allow a comprehensive discussion of major aspects of migration and displacement that is affecting the region and its people. One major contribution of this symposium would be to discuss this phenomenon through different lenses of analysis, in terms of subjects and areas affected, as well as going beyond the only geographical meaning that migration indicates.

Programme

Symposium “Migration: displacement and development in the MENA region”

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09.30 - 09.45 Tea and coffee

09.45 - 10.00 Welcoming session - Introduction by Billie Jeanne Brownlee, University of Exeter

10.00 - 11.00 Keynote session. A post-imperial lens on displacement and development in the Middle East
Emeritus Professor Dawn Chatty, University of Oxford, Department of International Development

11.00 - 11.15 Tea and coffee

11.15 - 13.00 Panel 1. Labor migration in the MENA region

Chair. Michael Dumper, University of Exeter

Cosmopolitanism in denial. The illiberal politics of migration and everyday diversity in the Gulf cities
Hélène Thiollet, CNRS Sciences Po and Laure Assaf, L'École des hautes études en sciences sociale (EHESS)

Labor Migrants as Political Leverage – Migration Interdependence & Coercion in the Mediterranean
Gerasimos Tsourapas, University of Birmingham

Paradoxes of the Israeli Asylum Regime: has Israel's Military Establishment become more Humane than its Government?

Gilad Ben-Nun, Marie Curie Fellow, University of Leipzig-Verona

13.00 - 14.00 Lunch break

14.00 - 16.00 Panel 2. The refugee crisis in the MENA region

Chair. Irene Fernandez-Molina, University of Exeter

The Palestinian Refugee Question in Light of the New MENA Refugee Crisis, 2011-2017
Ilan Pappé, University of Exeter

The Right of Return in Iraq
Kyra Luchtenberg, LSE

The micro-politics of refugee crisis management: the case of Lebanon's municipalities
Billie Jeanne Brownlee, University of Exeter

The internal order of refugee policies. Unravelling the regional scale of the Afghan refugee regime
Giulia Scalettaris, University of Lille

16.00 - 16.15 Tea and coffee

16.15 - 18.00 Panel 3. The European dimension of the refugee crisis in the Middle East

Chair. Nicole Hoellerer, ASYFAIR ERC research, University of Exeter

European migration governance in the Mediterranean pre- and post-‘crisis’
Luca Lixi, University of Sheffield, co-authored with Hadj Abou Leila, EUI-Florence

Coping with Migration in the Central Mediterranean: Challenges and Dilemmas
Derek Lutterbeck, University of Malta

The IDPs of Tawergha: discussing blackness in Libyan society
Antonio Morone, University of Pavia
