A global perspective on refugees and asylum-seekers:

HOW FORCED MIGRATION TRENDS IN EUROPE AND AUSTRALIA CAN INFORM THAI POLICY-MAKING AND PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

Kate Coddington
IBRU Centre for Borders Research
Durham University
August 2015
The time has come for us to take a global view on migrants. There are more displaced people in the world today than at any other time since the second world war. People fleeing persecution, poverty and conflict are risking their lives to find refuge. The Rohingya refugees, 25,000 of whom have taken to the seas this year, say they would rather take their chances with people-smugglers than remain in Burma to face certain death.

The truth is, we are entering an age of migrants, and we must adjust our sense of fairness and morality, and even our concept of national borders, accordingly.

outline of talk

Introduction to Kate
Disciplinary framework
Previous research projects:
   (a) Island Detention Project
   (b) Geographies of Containment
Introduction to current research project
Three international trends informing Thai experience:
   (a) Cultures of silence
   (b) Struggles for regional solutions
   (c) New questions
field research
disciplinary framework

political geography: spaces of politics, politics of spaces

States
Territory
Governance
Boundaries
Uneven development
Mobility
Security
Imagined geographies
critical geopolitics: contextualizing geopolitics

political geography & international relations →

Exploring the social construction & constant negotiation of spaces (states, boundaries, etc.) and identities (nationality, citizenship, etc.)
feminist geography: 
human security vs. national security

Unequal relationships based on difference (e.g. gender)
Multiple scales of analysis
Attention to everyday
Social justice
qualitative research methods

- Semi-structured interviews
- Participant observation
- Archival research
island detention project
field research for the idp
Christmas Island

Refugees travel to Christmas Island, 2013, Photo by Joel Van Houdt for the New York Times Magazine
Australian Navy arrives with asylum seekers rescued offshore, Christmas Island, K. Coddington
Australian Navy intercepts boat of asylum seekers, Christmas Island, K. Coddington


*“Touching the Dream,” by Saad Tlaa, Iraqi asylum seeker, in detention for 15 months at time of painting.*
darwin research
logics of containment

Photos by Emma Murphy; Darwinaboriginalrights.wordpress.com
Wickham Point Detention Centre
Blaydin Point APOD
NO WAY
YOU WILL NOT MAKE AUSTRALIA HOME

The Australian Government has introduced the toughest border protection measures ever.

- If you get on a boat without a visa, you will not end up in Australia.
- Any vessel seeking to illegally enter Australia will be intercepted and safely removed beyond Australian waters.
- The rules apply to everyone: families, children, unaccompanied children, educated and skilled.
- No matter who you are or where you are from, you will not make Australia home.

THINK AGAIN BEFORE YOU WASTE YOUR MONEY. PEOPLE SMUGGLERS ARE LYING.


Authorised by the Australian Government, Capital Hill, Canberra
Coddington, K. and J. Micieli-Voutsinas (under review) Mapping Geographies of Trauma: An Introduction, *Emotion, Space and Society*

Coddington, K. (under review) Tired advocacy: Contagious trauma’s embodied effects, *Emotion, Space and Society*


introduction to current research project

Indonesia as key transit country, Human Rights Watch
Migrants' routes to Australia, ABC News and United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime
regional deterrence

Storyboard targeting asylum seekers from Afghanistan produced by the Australian Customs Department, customs.gov.au

Australian government promotional material

If you come here by boat without a visa
YOU WON'T BE SETTLED IN AUSTRALIA

Life boat that came ashore in West Java, Indonesia, news.com.au
Australia’s regional border enforcement strategies
How were other countries in the region dealing with migrants, particularly asylum seekers?
‘navigating migration’

Why Thailand?
• Key transit hub
• Regional policy-making center
• Active NGO and advocacy communities
• History of dealing with displaced people/ refugees
• Intertwined groups of migrants
methods

Interviews:
- policy-makers
- international and Thai NGOs
- academics
- no migrants

Confidentiality

British Council of Thailand funding
How can forced migration trends in Europe and Australia inform Thai policy-making and practical experience?
Example 1: Australian cultures of silence

- 2014—PM stops holding briefings related to asylum seekers, refuses to acknowledge purchase of life boats used to tow asylum seekers to Indonesian waters

- 2015—Border Force Act with 2-year jail sentence for detention centre employees who speak out about conditions or care

IINKCINCT Cartoons, 2007
Has silence changed asylum seeker trends?

Boats may not be landing…

Australia turned back 20 asylum seeker boats with 633 people in past 18 months

But many asylum seekers are in in detention…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>As of 30 June 2015</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>All People</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People living in the Community on BVE</td>
<td>28,588</td>
<td>857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Forms of Detention</td>
<td>4,802</td>
<td>642</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration Detention (Australian Mainland and Territory)</td>
<td>2,013</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Detention</td>
<td>1,189</td>
<td>642</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manus Island Detention Centre</td>
<td>945</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nauru Offshore Detention Centre</td>
<td>655</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Asylum Seeker Resource Centre
Some for long periods of time…
And are generally given refugee status.
Reports from Thailand

Silence doesn’t solve forced migration problems.

MEDIA

Improve access to information and freedom for whistleblowers.

LEGAL SYSTEM

Design legislation with greater legal acknowledgement of different categories of migrants.
Example 2: European struggles for regional solutions
Uncoordinated policies

- **Overwhelmed ports of entry** (Greece, Italy, Hungary)
- **Faltering burden-sharing** (Germany and France in, UK out)
- **Deadly failure of naval patrols in the Mediterranean** (Italy ends own program, but EU’s unsuccessful)
- **Humanitarian failures** (Greek reception centres, human rights in Bulgaria, asylum processing times everywhere)
- **Continued protection issues in countries of origin** (1—Syria, 2—Eritrea, 3—Afghanistan)
How have European policies affected refugee numbers?
Endangered migrants...

GLOBAL OVERVIEW: 2,870 MIGRANT DEATHS TO DATE IN 2015

MISSING MIGRANTS PROJECT
MissingMigrants.iom.int
Deaths during migration around the world 4/8/15
And political impacts.
Reports from Thailand

Addressing forced migration requires regional cooperation.

TARGET COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN
Strengthen pressures on countries where protection issues are occurring.

DEVELOP REGIONAL BURDEN-SHARING OPTIONS
Accept responsibility for forced migrants.
New Questions

**HOW DO THE ‘POLITICS OF VISIBILITY’ INFORM POLICIES TOWARDS FORCED MIGRANTS?**

- TIP Report
- EU Yellow Card (fisheries)
- Public awareness of Rohingya migrants

Photo: Restless Beings
New Questions

HOW DO FORCED MIGRATION ISSUES IN THE INDIAN OCEAN REGION REFLECT A NEW PARADIGM OF REFUGEES BEYOND THE CONVENTION?

Photo: New York Times, global refugee flows 2015
The age of migration

“We are witnessing a paradigm change, an unchecked slide into an era in which the scale of global forced displacement as well as the response required is now clearly dwarfing anything seen before. It is terrifying that on the one hand there is more and more impunity for those starting conflicts, and on the other there is seeming utter inability of the international community to work together to stop wars and build and preserve peace.”

UN High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres
Dr Kate Coddington
Postdoctoral Research Associate
IBRU Centre for Borders Research, Durham University

e: kate.coddington@durham.ac.uk w: http://katecoddington.weebly.com/

This research was made possible by the British Council of Thailand Newton Fund Research Links Travel Grant