

Bridging the Gaps: Understanding current mobilities in the Caribbean and Latin America and their policy implications

Abstracts

Keynote

[The Cartagena Declaration at 35 and protection of refugees in Latin America](#)

Liliana Jubilut, Universidade Catolica de Santos

In 2019 the Cartagena Declaration on Refugees will turn 35 and as Latin America faces relevant challenges in forced migration it is relevant to assess the regime created by it. Since 1984 with the adoption of the Declaration a regional regime on the protection of refugees has emerged, with norms (specially the increased possibility of recognizing refugees due to gross and generalized violations of human rights and the Declarations of San José, México and Brazil that derive from the Cartagena Declaration), principles (of expanding protection and “in solidarity” actions) and decision-making processes (with meetings of the States in the region every ten years). The regime has allowed for relevant developments in refugee protection in Latin America. However as the region sees the growth of forced displacement, specially intra-regional with the cases from Haiti, Colombia, the Northern Triangle of Central America and Venezuela, it is paramount that shortcomings are identified and dealt with so that the expansion of the humanitarian protection space in Latin America can be preserved, and maybe even further developed.

Political Dimensions

[Unintended effects of forced displacement on political stability](#)

Angel Alvarez, Universidad Central de Venezuela

The literature on population displacement interprets the diaspora as an indicator of state fragility and political instability. Forced migratory movements are the effect of severe socio-political and economic crisis--ethnic conflicts, religious persecution, revolutions, unemployment, hyperinflation and civil wars among others. Nonetheless, socially devastating events can have paradoxically unintended stabilizing effects. This paper challenges the mainstream approaches to forced migration and proposes that

population displacements can lead to reductions in political instability. Forced population movements reduce the costs of mass repression and lessen the strength of popular rebellions. Consequently, diasporas can help to stabilize governments with stateness problems, severe economic crisis, intense political polarization and high levels of socio-political violence. The study focuses on Venezuela and Colombia to elaborate a theoretical framework that can be extended to other cases in the region. It offers an exhaustive summary of the literature and analyzes almost four decades (1980-2017) of available time series on forced migratory movements (as reported by the UNHCR), state capacity and fragility (based on World Bank Governance Indicators and the Fragile State Index of the Fund for Peace) and index of political stability (provided by the V-Dem Project). The paper is a work in progress; therefore, it offers tentative conclusions open to discussion and revision.

[Movilidad forzada en perspectiva Comparada en América Latina](#)

Enrique Coraza de los Santos, El Colegio de la Frontera Sur

Las movilidades son una constante estructural con una profundidad temporal muy larga entre el mundo ibérico y el continente americano. Dentro de éstas, las de carácter forzado también. En materia de exilios, desde la salida de la corte portuguesa hacia Brasil, por la invasión napoleónica, al destino europeo para líderes políticos de las nacientes repúblicas independientes americanas, como José de San Martín, hasta los masivos del siglo XX como el portugués y el republicano español o los del Cono Sur y, por último, los de las guerras civiles centroamericanas. En el siglo XXI, las movilidades forzadas se han continuado, en la medida que la violencia que las genera se mantiene y hoy, asistimos a nuevas formas de migraciones forzadas por violencia, especialmente de centroamericanos buscando refugio. El objetivo de ese Simposio, es convocar a quienes trabajan dentro de la amplia diversidad de las movilidades forzadas en la historia reciente de la península ibérica y el continente americano para reflexionar bajo una metodología de estudios comparados sobre las semejanzas y diferencias que encontramos en la relación entre las circunstancias y la movilidad como estrategia para encontrar la seguridad perdida. El arco temporal que pretendemos abarcar es la totalidad del siglo XX hasta la actualidad y la territorialidad, tanto de origen como destino, se refiere a España y Portugal en Europa y a los países del continente americano, desde Canadá hasta Argentina y Chile.

[“Protecting” without a Protection Mandate: The International Organization for Migration’s Business with Refugees and Forced Migrants in South America](#)

Bruno Dupeyron, Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy, University of Regina

Since 2016, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has presented itself as “the UN Migration Agency”, following an agreement with the United Nations that mainly provides rights to IOM’s staff as a “related organization to the UN”, and reinforces

cooperation between the IOM and the UN system. The “protection of human rights”, coupled with the topic of origin-country development, is central to IOM’s discourse, which is often conveyed through periodic migration data and publications.

Although the IOM has no legal protection mandate, the IOM’s management of refugees and forced migrants is common practice. Focusing on IOM’s Regional Office for South America, which is understudied in IOM’s literature, the role of the IOM appears to be increasingly salient, due to IOM’s persistent work with refugees and forced migrants, originating from South American countries or from other continents.

This paper will analyze how IOM’s discourse, policies and practices, executed without a proper mandate, are perceived by IOM’s stakeholders. First, this lack of legal protection mandate is not problematic for nation-states that often reproduce IOM’s discourse and praise its humanitarian work. Yet, other actors, in particular civil society organizations, human rights organizations and scholars critically assess this role, since the IOM has been found undermining refugee protection in several cases.

Settlement Experiences

Deportability y vida cotidiana de mujeres Guatemaltecas inmigrantes en Mexico

Martha Luz Rojas-Wiesner, El Colegio de la Frontera Sur

Las acciones de la política migratoria restrictivas en México han contribuido a la producción de migración en situación irregular y al incremento de la deportability (posibilidad de ser deportado) (De Genova, 2002), lo que ha ocasionado mayores vulnerabilidades en la vida de mujeres inmigrantes en México, quienes han tenido que usar distintas estrategias para pasar desapercibidas (invisibles) y no exponerse a una deportación y a una eventual separación de su familia en México. Ese temor fundado, debido a las restricciones reales para moverse entre los bordes (el espacio transfronterizo México-Guatemala), ha afectado su vida cotidiana, pues ha restringido aún más las pocas posibilidades que tenían del acceso a recursos o servicios y a la garantía de derechos en México. Una de las restricciones, por ejemplo, es la relativa al acceso al servicio de salud, al cual se recurría al lado guatemalteco, en donde las mujeres decían no sentirse discriminadas. Las restricciones a la salud y a otros derechos constituyen parte de una problemática cotidiana que se enfrenta en contextos de discriminación y construcción de una otredad que suele ser criminalizada. A partir de entrevistas que se han realizado en distintos momentos entre 2011 y 2018, el objetivo de la ponencia es analizar las experiencias de mujeres de Guatemala que viven en México en situación irregular en contextos restrictivos y de temor a la deportación.

Getting settled and negotiating identities: Refugee women's experiences in Sao Paulo

Sandra Trebunia, University of Lincoln

This study analyses the settlement challenges faced by refugee women in Brazil, and how social workers and NGOs can best support them as they settle in urban areas. Drawing on six months of fieldwork in 2017 with refugee women and practitioners in Sao Paulo, it enhances understanding of refugee experiences and policy/practice responses in the Global South. A qualitative approach was utilised: interviews with refugee women (n=17) and social work practitioners (n=16); six photo-elicited interviews with women to provide visual data about everyday life; and, ethnographic observations at 13 events with and for refugee women.

Although Brazil has an 'open-door policy' to refugees, there is limited state support to meet their social and economic needs. Refugee women are therefore expected to immediately integrate into the labour market. The research highlights that women need to be adaptive and creative while rebuilding their lives. By exploring women's daily struggles, activism and speech practices, this study engages with the debates about agency. The question on how to think about refugee women's agency allows to critically reflect on the existing settlement policies and practices. The paper concludes that further consideration is needed to develop programmes that recognise and value women's identities, priorities and skills.

Histories, mobilities and differential inclusion

Luin Goldring, York University

This paper considers the relationship between colonial legacies and processes of migrant/refugee inclusion. We consider Canada's relationship to the Caribbean and Latin America to frame Canadian migration and refugee policies toward people on the move from these regions. Using selected data from a survey of respondents born in the Caribbean and Latin America living in the GTA, we argue that colonial legacies have a long-term impact as they shape legal status trajectories and differential inclusion.

The role of the Andean Community of Nations and MERCOSUR in the management of the Venezuelan migratory crisis

Paulina Larreategui, University of Regina

Venezuela is facing a humanitarian crisis due to the hyperinflationary economic collapse and the complicated political situation. Worldwide, the number of Venezuelan refugees and migrants has already reached three million. More than 80% remain in South America and the Caribbean (Alto Comisionado de Naciones Unidas, 2018). This situation challenges regional migration policies agreed upon, for instance in the Andean Community of Nations and the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR).

Traditionally these regional organizations have been the communitarian spaces for integration and protection of human rights. However, South American States have declared that the unexpected flow of Venezuelans has overloaded their capabilities. They claimed that the existing regional mechanisms have not been enough to manage the current migratory crisis. Therefore, the affected countries have started to pursue further assistance at a broader international level seeking economic and political support. They called the attention of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and held two meetings in Quito-Ecuador, in September and November 2018 respectively. In September 2018, State parties adopted the Declaration of Quito on Human Mobility of Venezuelan Citizens in the Region. They agreed on its Plan of Action two months later. These instruments refer to the IOM and the UNHCR as key players. Besides, they mentioned the Andean Community of Nations and the MERCOSUR as participants, leaving these organizations in an apparent second level.

In the light of the Venezuelan crisis, the Declaration of Quito, and its Plan of Action, the study aims to explore at which extend States that instrumentalize -and promote- regional organizations struggle to apply agreed policies in their domestic level when facing unexpected events.

Mobilities

[At a Crossroads: Migrant Caravans and the Viapolitics of Protection, Protest, and Pilgrimage](#)

Victoria Simmons, Mount Royal University

In October and November 2018, U.S. media closely followed a caravan of approximately 5,000 Honduran migrants as it made its way through Central America and Mexico toward the United States. For many in North America, migrant caravans seeking asylum are a novelty. Nevertheless, migrant caravans are not new. They are a phenomenon which has been growing in Central America and Mexico for more than a decade. This paper draws on in-depth interview data and media coverage of migrant caravans to trace the emergence and intersection of a viapolitics (Walters 2015) of protection, protest and pilgrimage in Mexico. The paper compares and contrasts the aims, rationales and practices of three different Central American migrant caravans which have gained visibility in recent years: The Caravan of Mothers of Disappeared Migrants which takes place each fall in Mexico; the annual Viacrucis del Migrante, or the Migrants' Stations of the Cross, which takes Easter as a moment to re-enact the march to crucify Jesus Christ and to accompany migrants on their marches to seek asylum in the United States, and; finally, the latest 2018 Honduran migrant caravan, which U.S. President Donald Trump labelled an invasion and deployed military troops to the U.S.-Mexico border.

Infancias en tránsito: niñas y niños centroamericanos migrantes que recorren la frontera sur de México

Josefina Barojas Sanchez

En comunidades fronterizas del estado de Tabasco, México, existen condiciones que propician situaciones complejas para niñas y niños migrantes, con respecto a la partida de sus seres queridos hacia Estados Unidos. Es por ello que se torna necesario indagar los cambios que se presentan en la infancia, en relación con la migración, desde nuevas expresiones psicosociales. Infantes provenientes de países como Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador y México, dan cuenta de esto, ya que la migración internacional forma parte de la cotidianidad de las familias. Niñas y niños van en busca de algún familiar, padre o madre, principalmente, con intención de reunificarse; sin embargo, no siempre lo logran, sobre todo, si son detenidos por autoridades migratorias. Esta investigación se sostiene en la premisa de que existe carencia de estudios que relacionen infancia y migración internacional en la frontera sur de México, específicamente en el Estado de Tabasco, donde niñas y niños son protagonistas y constructores de sus propias versiones respecto a la migración. La pregunta que dirigió este trabajo es ¿cómo experimentan los niños centroamericanos la migración hacia Estados Unidos? Esta interrogante pretendió identificar la manera en que aparece la niñez en la migración; resaltar la importancia de las versiones de niñas y niños; y analizar si está emergiendo otra forma de pensar la infancia en los movimientos migratorios. A través de un estudio etnográfico se realizaron encuentros con niñas y niños migrantes, en un módulo de atención a menores, coordinado por la Secretaría de Migración y el Programa para el Desarrollo Integral de la Familia, en Tenosique, Tabasco; donde se obtuvieron datos demográficos, sus testimonios vinculados a la migración y el impacto en su vida.

Methods that move? Experiences of mobility research in Central America and Mexico

Ailsa Winton, El Colegio de la Frontera Sur

This paper emerges from on-going research carried out on violence-based displacement in southern Mexico and Northern Central America, and is an attempt to reflect on the methodological challenges of researching the experience of complex mobility more broadly. In the context of an ongoing so-called “migrant crisis,” (which of course is only really a crisis for those many people forced to migrate), it is important to find new ways of looking at mobility in the region, starting not from a more political lens of categories and flows of movement, but rather as seeing mobility and displacement as integral to personal contexts, and so to the frictions and precarities of these contexts. These new ways of looking involve new methodologies. It is surprising that relatively little attention has been given to methodological concerns in migration research, given the particular challenges of researching subjects moving across borders. Mobile methods – championed among mobility scholars – are incipient attempts to go with people in a

range of ways, and as an approach, it has invited innovation in critically thinking through how we may study the context of movement, the sense of places as bodies move through them. Yet this body of work engages more with “everyday” mobility, than it does with for example, migration or displacement. These latter types of movement present particular challenges: how is it possible, for example, to “move with” those who are hidden, detained, or fleeing? The paper reflects theoretically and practically on experiences from the field, on attempts to create diverse ways of getting close to displacement, as it is lived through space and time. It concludes that this challenging and at times haphazard innovation is nevertheless crucial to finding new ways of understanding such complex, damaging mobility.