Research guide on internal displacement

Cathrine Brun
NTNU Research Group on Forced Migration
Department of Geography
Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU)
Trondheim, Norway

1. Introduction

The aim of this research guide is to give an introduction to some of the main debates regarding internal displacement. Although the guide concentrates on conflict induced internal displacement, causes of internal displacement are extremely complex and the displacement of populations due to environmental change, natural disasters, and development projects is often interlinked with and simultaneous to conflicts causing the forced movement of people (Banerjee et al. 2005, Birkeland 2003a,b, Cernea and McDowell 2000, Haug 2003, Lund 2003, Muggah 2003, Qadem 2005).

It is easy when discussing internal displacement to fall into an instrumental language and deal only with concepts, definitions and categories. This research guide aims to summarise the challenge of internal displacement at a policy level, but also to address its social consequences and explore the experiences of many internally displaced persons (IDPs) of physical dislocation, separation from everyday practices and familiar environments, social disruption and material dispossession.

Websites

The World Bank, Washington D.C. (Cernea & McDowell 2000)
http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDS_IBank_Servlet?pcont=details&eid=000094946_00050405310 52

Blackwells Synergy (Muggah 2003)
http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.0020-7985.2003.00259.x?cookieSet=1

2. 'Internally displaced persons' – the category

Recognition of internal displacement emerged gradually through the late 1980s and became prominent on the international agenda in the 1990s. The chief reasons for this attention were the growing number of conflicts causing internal displacement after the end of the Cold War and an increasingly strict international migration regime. The phenomenon of internal displacement, however, is not new. According to United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) (2003) the Greek government argued to the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in 1949 that people displaced internally by war should have the same access to international aid as refugees, even if they did not need international protection. India and Pakistan repeated this argument after partition.

Although the issue of internal displacement has gained international prominence during the last fifteen years, a single definition of the term remains to be agreed upon. Questions of who should be covered by the category whether it is a useful one and the consequences of applying it in humanitarian interventions are widely debated. The most commonly applied definition is the one coined by the former UN Secretary-General's Representative on Internally Displaced Persons, Francis Deng, and used in the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (GP):

Internally displaced persons are persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of, or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognised state border (OCHA 1999:6).

Websites

OCHA
http://ochaonline.un.org/

ReliefWeb, Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement
http://www.reliefweb.int/ocha_ol/pub/idp_gp/idp.html

IDPs and refugees

The main difference between IDPs and refugees is that the internally displaced remain within the borders of their own country. Refugee status entitles individuals to certain rights and international protection, while being an IDP is not a legal status because IDPs are still under the jurisdiction of their own government and may not claim any rights additional to those

shared by their compatriots (Hathaway 1991, Vincent 2000). However, IDPs are often in need of special protection, not least because the government responsible for protecting them is sometimes unwilling or unable to do so, or may itself be the cause of displacement.

Despite the differences in legal status and of entitlement to aid from the international humanitarian community, the causes of displacement and the experience of being displaced are often similar for both IDPs and refugees. Much like refugees, IDPs often feel like strangers in their place of refuge, where the local population may be from a different ethnic and/or religious group and/or may speak another language. Consequently, IDPs may not feel welcomed, despite sharing the same citizenship as the host population.

There has been some debate surrounding whether IDPs and refugees should be grouped as a single category, and consequently whether the challenges caused by them should be handled by the same institution(s). This argument was first raised in the pages of 1998 and 1999 editions of Forced Migration Review (FMR) (see Barutciski 1998 and 1999, Bennett 1999, Kingsley-Nyinah 1999, Rutinwa 1999, Vincent 1999). Barutciski (1998) argued that the attempts by some human rights advocates to extend the protection of refugees to the internally displaced may be counter-productive, as it would be detrimental to the traditional asylum option and could possibly increase containment. The discussion was revitalised in 2001, when the then US Ambassador to the UN, Richard Holbrooke, following a visit to Angola, argued that the bureaucratic distinction between refugees and IDPs was negatively affecting the lives of millions of IDPs (Borton et al. 2005, Holbrooke 2000, OCHA 2003).

Websites

Barutciski, Michael. 1998. Tensions between the refugee concept and the IDP debate. *Forced Migration Review* no 3: 11–14.
http://repository.forcedmigration.org/show_metadata.jsp?pid=fmo:4842

Barutciski, Michael. 1999. Questioning the tensions between the 'refugee' and 'IDP' concepts: a rebuttal. Forced Migration Review no.4: 35.
http://repository.forcedmigration.org/show_metadata.jsp?pid=fmo:4847

Bennett, Jon. 1999. Rights and Borders, Forced Migration Review, no. 4: 33.
http://repository.forcedmigration.org/show_metadata.jsp?pid=fmo:4845

Bonoan, R. 2003 Cessation of Refugee Status: A Guide for Determining When Internal Displacement Ends? *Forced Migration Review* **17**: 8–9, May 2003.
http://repository.forcedmigration.org/show_metadata.jsp?pid=fmo:4849

Kingsley-Nyinah, Michael 1999. What may be borrowed; what is new? *Forced Migration Review* no. 4: 32–33.
http://repository.forcedmigration.org/show_metadata.jsp?pid=fmo:4844

Rutinwa, Bonaventure. 1999. How tense is the tension between the refugee concept and the IDP Debate? *Forced Migration Review* no 4: 29–31.
http://repository.forcedmigration.org/show_metadata.jsp?pid=fmo:4843

Vincent, Marc. 2000. IDPs: rights and status. *Forced Migration Review* 8 August 2000: 29–30.
http://repository.forcedmigration.org/show_metadata.jsp?pid=fmo:4848

Internally displaced and other vulnerable groups on the ground

The discussions in FMR not only addressed the differences between refugees and IDPs, but also the usefulness and viability of the IDP category. It may be possible to identify two main views or schools in this debate. On one side of the debate are the UN and the Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement (formerly the Brookings-SAIS project) including such commentators as Dr. Francis M. Deng, Roberta Cohen and Erin Mooney and Professor Walter Kälin (since September 2004 the UN Secretary-General's Representative on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons). They have been advocates for a separate humanitarian category of IDPs, an argument that continues to dominate the tone of most research into IDPs. The opposing view is represented by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Based on humanitarian principles and the realities of the field, the ICRC is critical of working with internal displacement as a separate humanitarian category, and on the ground the ICRC does not separate between IDPs and other civilians affected by conflict:

In situations of armed conflict and internal disturbances the ICRC will in fact always try to give priority to those with the most urgent needs. Because of their precarious situation, displaced persons are frequently, although not exclusively, among the main beneficiaries of its work. Moreover, the host populations, which are sometimes minority groups or resident populations that have been unable to move away, often have to face a situation that is just as difficult, if not worse. Instead of developing programmes tailored to the needs of the displaced persons, it will then be necessary to adopt an overall approach and define the appropriate operational modes according to the context (Contat Hickel 2001:699).

The ICRC approach is supported by the findings of a collaborative evaluation of donor support to IDPs (Borton et al. 2005), which reported strong objections to the identification of IDPs as a separate category from among all actual and potential vulnerable groups. A more

fundamental source of objection reported in the evaluation was the belief that the separate identification of IDPs is at odds with the humanitarian principle that assistance should be determined by needs alone.

Websites

Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement:
http://www.brook.edu/idp

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
http://www.icrc.org/

Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC)
http://www.internal-displacement.org/

3. Dynamics of internal displacement

There are currently nearly 25 million people uprooted within their own country by conflicts and human rights violations, a number that has remained stable for several years during which some IDP situations have ended while others have begun or continued.

Regional overview of internal displacement

Africa is the region/continent worst affected with more than 13 million IDPs. Rebel activities and inter-communal violence were key factors in the displacement of civilians; although in several countries government armies or proxy forces also forced people to flee. In Latin America, the bloody conflict in Colombia with its complex displacement patterns still accounted for nearly all new displacements. The region also continued to struggle to find durable solutions for people uprooted in conflicts that had long ended. In Peru and Guatemala, the return and reintegration of the displaced was agreed in the mid-1990s, but these agreements have never been fully implemented.

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) estimates that, by the end of 2004, some 3,3 million people were displaced within Asia-Pacific region due to conflicts. In addition come the approximately 1,2 million people displaced by the tsunami disaster in December 2004, and the large number of people displaced by development projects. From 4,6 million two years ago, the number of IDPs has decreased by nearly 30 percent in the region. The intensification of ongoing conflicts opposing governments and rebel movements has been the main cause of new displacement during 2004.

In Europe, the number of internally displaced has decreased steadily during the last years, but there are still 3 million IDPs, most of them in Eastern Europe and the Balkans and the majority displaced for many years. In 2003, the Russian Federation (Chechnya) was the only country in Europe were people were still at risk of being forcibly displaced by ongoing fighting in 2003.

About half of the 2.1 million IDPs from the Middle East – in Israel, Syria and Lebanon – have been

displaced for two decades or longer. The largest group of IDPs in this region live in Iraq. Conflict and instability continue to generate internal displacement in Iraq.

Source: IDMC 2004, 2005a (http://www.internal-displacement.org/)

Causes

Causes of conflict-induced displacement can be divided into *root causes* and *proximate causes.* Root causes are those which initiate a conflict and its displacement, although these can be hard to isolate as most of today's conflicts must be understood as self-perpetuating and their resulting displacement can be seen not only as an effect of the conflict but also eventually as a cause of its continuation.

There is a considerable body of knowledge about the root causes of displacement. We know for instance that very few internally displaced are uprooted by inter-state conflicts. Most conflicts causing internal displacement are a combination of internal fighting and direct foreign military intervention, most often linked to civil war (IDMC 2005a). The causes are fuelled by deep structural problems, often rooted in acute racial, ethnic, religious and/or cultural cleavages as well as gross inequities within a country. During the Cold War, these differences, tensions, oppressions and repressions were often supported by the control mechanisms behind the two superpowers. The end of the Cold War removed these external interests and resulted in the intensification of many internal conflicts and related displacement flows (Deng 2003).

There is surprisingly little systematic research on the proximate or immediate triggering causes of displacement and on how different causes converge to necessitate people to move. Such information is mainly garnered from personal accounts in ethnographic studies. An exception is the work of Birkeland (2003 a, b) which concludes that displacement in the Angolan highland region of Huambo is triggered by the deterioration of land and restricted access to food and other necessities caused by war, rather than by the war itself. The study shows how analysis of the true complexity of displacement can result in a deeper understanding of proximate causes and potentially contribute to improved assistance and even an end to displacement.

Internal displacement and the international migration regime

The reasons why people forced to flee remain within the borders of their country are many and various. Safe travel all the way to a border may not be possible, or factors such as age, disability, and health may impede their transit (Mooney 2003a). Restrictions on travel and the right to seek asylum may also be imposed by external countries. These are among the many

global issues that must be taken into account when exploring the nature of internal displacement.

The number of refugees in the world is currently lower than it has been in many years, but this does not mean that the number of forced migrants has declined. During the 1990s it was estimated that up to 12 million refugees had returned to their countries of origin (Koser and Black 1999), but many returnee populations remained displaced within their country upon return.. This was, for example, the case with the return of most Kurdish refugees to northern Iraq after the Gulf War. (Dubernet 2001).

During the 1990s, stricter immigration policies in the Western world, together with the growing scale of the refugee problem and the changing nature of the international and political order, encouraged a new approach for dealing with forced migration advocated by the United Nations' High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (Ogata 1995). This new approach emphasised 'preventive protection' and focused less exclusively on the situation of refugees in countries of asylum and more systematically on the situation of vulnerable populations in countries of origin (Barutciski 1996, Duffield 1997, UNHCR 1997). The preventive protection approach is thus more concerned with the 'root causes' of forced migration and with preventing refugee flows by protecting and assisting people before they are forced to cross a border (Ogata 1993) – in other words emphases on 'the right to leave' and 'the right to seek and enjoy asylum' have been replaced by 'the right to remain' (Hyndman 1999, Ogata 1993). Many consider the establishment by US and European troops of 'safe havens' for internally displaced Kurds in Iraq during the 1991 Gulf crisis as a turning point marking a new willingness among the international community to intervene on behalf of the internally displaced (Hyndman 2000, Van Hear 1993).

The 'right to remain' has been a disputed policy, as it touches on sensitive political considerations - in particular the principle of sovereignty. The idea that outsiders should not intervene in the internal affairs of a country had been pivotal to the international community's approach to dealing with IDPs. In the post-Cold War period, formal sovereignty has been upheld, but has been reshaped to create the space for external involvement. This change in the way sovereignty is understood is based on the view that international involvement becomes essential and legitimate when a humanitarian crisis is caused by a government's failure to fulfil its responsibility to its citizens (Cohen and Deng 1998a, Martin 2000).

The 'right to remain' strategy is also problematised by the fact that in situations of civil war, many internally displaced find themselves within the war zone, often in great danger and with little possibility of being reached by aid agencies. This situation has led some policy analysts to contend that the 'right to remain' policy violates the right to leave one's country and to seek asylum as outlined in the UN Declaration of Human Rights (Hyndman 2003).

Websites

Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC)
http://www.internal-displacement.org/

UNHCR
http://www.unhcr.org/

4. Dealing with IDPs

Institutional developments

Unlike refugees, IDPs do not benefit from a specific international regime exclusively devoted to ensuring their protection and assistance. Instead, they are subject to the many actors involved in providing assistance, protection, and development aid in a conflict situation , including UN agencies, human rights organisations, and international and local NGOs.

During the 1980s, assistance to IDPs was generally ad hoc and often controversial in the eyes of host governments. The easing of Cold War tensions opened new possibilities for assistance to the internally displaced, but how such assistance would be delivered remained unclear. The institutional developments that followed during the 1990s were driven by some major displacement crises. 'Operation Provide Comfort' in Northern Iraq was a turning point for international activism and the debacles of the Somalia and Balkan wars highlighted the need for progress in developing international mechanisms for the protection of the internally displaced (OCHA 2003). Much of the early momentum behind the push for greater international attention to the needs of the internally displaced was generated by the advocacy efforts of the NGO community in the late 1980s and early 1990s (OCHA 2003) - a sector which had already proved to be among the most important actors assisting IDPs.

In 1992, as a result of a concerted NGO advocacy campaign (Weiss 2003), and at the request of the Commission on Human Rights, the UN Secretary-General appointed Dr. Francis M. Deng as Special Representative on IDPs,. Early in his mandate he suggested three alternative institutional arrangements for dealing with the internally displaced (Deng 2000, Mooney 2003a):

1) the creation of a new agency for IDPs;
2) the assignation of responsibility for IDPs to an existing agency (a lead agency); or

3) the development of a collaborative approach among the different relevant agencies coordinated by a central mechanism.

The political and financial infeasibility of the first option put its realisation into doubt. For the second option, it was suggested that the UNHCR should take up the responsibility given its expertise in providing protection to displaced populations, including IDPs. However, it was argued that the existing organisation did not have the capacity to take up responsibility for a group of people who outnumbered the global refugee population by several million. The third option has thus become the preferred one in the international community, where many argue it is the best solution because it allows for a comprehensive and holistic response, involving various agencies and spanning all phases of displacement (Krill 2001, Mooney 2003a, Weiss 2003). In the same year that Deng tabled his three options, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee for Internal Displacement was established and in 1997 an Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) was appointed as the focal point within the UN for issues pertaining to the internally displaced and was assigned responsibility for coordinating UN actions on their behalf (OCHA 2003).

Although the collaborative approach has been the preferred one among the international community, there are still a number of critical voices in the ongoing debate over the management of IDPs. In 2000, for instance, Ambassador Holbrooke suggested removing the bureaucratic distinction between IDPs and refugees. His statements spurred a number of responses and temporarily raised the profile of a lead agency model. The discussion that followed lead to the formation of the Senior-Inter-Agency Network on Internal Displacement, which was charged with proposing ways of improving the international response to IDP needs. In 2001, the Senior Network recommended the creation of a non-operational IDP office within OCHA, with the primary aim of promoting an improved inter-agency response to displacement situations and supporting the ERC in his role as coordinator of international responses to IDP needs (Borton et al. 2005). In 2004, the unit was upgraded to a Division.

The collaborative approach is also highly criticised for not working efficiently on the ground, and it is not considered able to adequately address operational issues in the face of the large and financially well-established operational agencies, who do not always recognise its authority and leadership in the area of IDPs. Moreover, where responses do occur they typically focus predominantly or even exclusively on assistance, leaving many internally displaced persons without the protection they need (Mooney 2003a).

The development of the international response

Late 1980s	Internal displacement emerges as an issue on the international agenda

1991	End of the Gulf War and flight of Iraqi Kurds up to Turkish border prompts 'Operation Provide Comfort' which creates a 'safe zone' for IDPs in Iraq.
1992	On request from the UN Commission on Human Rights, the UN Secretary General appoints Francis Deng as Representative Secretary General (RSG) of Internally Displaced Persons. Interagency Standing Committee (IASC) is established. Sets up internal displacement task force and designates Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) as UN reference point for protection and assistance to IDPs. The UNHCR adopts a working definition of internal displacement enabling it to work directly with IDPs who fall within its original mandate.
1993	RSG issues first annual report and recommends the creation of a new UN agency or modification of the mandate of an existing one (such as the UNHCR) to cater more specifically for the needs of IDPs.
1996	Faced with resistance to the idea of a dedicated/lead UN agency for IDPs, the RSG alters his position and supports the IASC's collaborative approach among UN agencies. Global IDP project established in Geneva by the Norwegian Refugee Council.
1997	UN Secretary General appoints Emergency Relief Coordinator as focal point for IDPs in the UN system.
1998	Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement presented to the UN Commission on Human Rights.
1999	Global IDP project launches IDP database at the request of the UN.
2000	Interagency Standing Committee adopts IDP policy. ERC establishes Senior Inter-Agency Network on Internal Displacement.
2001	Global number of IDPs reaches 25 million and remains largely unchanged for the following years.
2002	Internal Displacement Unit (since 2004 division) created within OCHA.
2004	UN Secretary General appoints Walter Kälin as Representative on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons. IASC adopts revised IDP Policy Package to strengthen the 'Collaborative Response'.

Sources: IDMC 2005a:11 and Borton et al. 2005: 48–49.

Websites

Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC)
http://www.internal-displacement.org/
OCHA
http://ochaonline.un.org/

ReliefWeb, OCHA
http://www.reliefweb.int/ocha_ol/pub/

Protection

Protection must be seen both as a legal and a social issue. Protection may be defined as the challenge of making states and individuals meet their humanitarian responsibilities to protect people in situations of war, and filling in for them as much as possible when they fail to meet these responsibilities (Slim and Eguren 2004). Protection should cover the full range of rights enumerated under international human rights law, including civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights (OCHA 2003). But in situations of internal displacement, although a legal system is in place, protection may not be secured: the state which is supposed to protect its citizens is sometimes itself instrumental in the displacement, and internal displacement commonly causes loss of social networks and security which may in turn lead to increased insecurity.

Major developments in the efforts to secure the protection of IDPs have taken place in the humanitarian community. While there is no single legal framework covering the protection needs of IDPs, their rights may be covered by existing frameworks such as the national laws of the country of which the IDPs are citizens, international human rights and humanitarian law, or legal and institutional provisions relating to particular situations of internal displacement (Borton et al. 2005). Additionally, although not directly applicable to IDPs, refugee law is instructive in pointing to the particular types of protection required by persons in refugee-like situations which are not necessarily specifically addressed by human rights or international humanitarian law (Mooney 2003a). For instance an important principle borrowed from refugee law is that of ‘non-refoulment’, which provides protection for refugees against forced return to a situation where they would be at risk.

The application of these different bodies of law to the protection of IDPs is complicated (Borton 2005). The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (GP) were developed in order to simplify the process and create a normative framework (Mooney 2003a). These bring together in one document the many norms of specific importance to the internally displaced, which were previously diffused among many different instruments and therefore not easily accessible or sufficiently understood. The 30 principles spell out what protection should mean during each phase of internal displacement, and although not a binding document, the GP reflect and are consistent with international human rights and humanitarian law. (Kälin 2000, Mooney 2003a).

The GP have been translated into many languages and widely disseminated. They have even been incorporated into the domestic law of some countries: Angola was the first to do so in

2001, and has since been followed by Burundi, Sudan, Uganda and Colombia. However, Borton et al. (2005) identify a considerable gap between the law and its implementation on the ground, and Francis Deng (2000) has emphasised that the GP only serve as morally binding statements. It is hoped that they will eventually attain the status of customary international law (Banerjee et al. 2005).

Assisting and protecting the internally displaced: complex political spaces

In Post-Cold War humanitarianism, agencies have had to deal with a growing number of non-state actors, which can make it difficult to distinguish between civilians and soldiers and introduce new ethical dilemmas (Raper 2003). The humanitarian imperative can also conflict with strategies for addressing the political foundations of forced migration and other symptoms of socio-political crisis (Maley 2003).

Serving the internally displaced is, according to Raper (2003), often more precarious than serving refugees because the conflict is often ongoing, their own government is sometimes the attacker, they are constantly on the move, or armed groups exist within their community. This makes them difficult to reach, and introduces security as an issue for both IDPs and aid workers:

Agencies are present on sufferance of the state or of the de facto authorities. It makes a big difference whether or not a peace agreement has already been reached and is being honoured. Fighting may make access impossible, or terrain or meteorological conditions do not allow passage of relief goods, or convoys are looted. Difficulties in gaining access are frequently man-made and intentional. These impediments can lead to disastrous consequences, as events in Somalia, Bosnia, or southern Sudan have shown (Raper 2003:361)

Although by definition the internally displaced do not stay in the conflict zone, they often represent important political symbols and as such do play a crucial role in the conflict and one that can impede the assistance and protection of humanitarian actors. In the case of the South Caucasus, for example, people have been displaced for more than a decade with few prospects of return. However, there is no willingness on the part of the authorities to encourage integration or more sustainable lives for the displaced – instead they would rather that IDPs return in order to reclaim territories. The result of this attitude is that assistance has been relief- and advocacy- oriented rather than focused on long-term development.

Websites

ALNAP, *Humanitarian Protection*, Guidance Booklet (Slim & Eguren. 2004) http://www.alnap.org/pubs/pdfs/protectionbooklet3.pdf

ReliefWeb, OCHA
http://www.reliefweb.int/ocha_ol/pub/

5. Solutions to internal displacement

There are considered to be three 'durable solutions' to situations of displacement: voluntary repatriation, resettlement in a third country (or third location), and local settlement (also termed local integration). The main idea behind the durable solutions, originally devised by the UNHCR in relation to the plight of refugees, is to help the displaced to become self-sufficient, independent from aid, and to enable forced migrants to participate fully in social and economic life, either in their new home or back where they fled from (Stein 1986). Discourse on durable solutions was out of fashion between the late 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s, but has recently gained renewed prominence.

For both refugees and IDPs, the most accepted solution to displacement is considered to be repatriation, since most crises of displacement, even protracted ones, are regarded as temporary (Frelick 1999, Jacobsen 2001). However, due to limited prospects of a *safe* return, repatriation is often a poor alternative in many of the protracted conflicts generating internal displacement and the emphasis on repatriation as the preferred solution may create false expectations with long, frustrating and dangerous waiting games in which uprooted people insist upon 'their right to return' (Frelick 1999). We have also experienced – for instance in the South Caucasus – situations where the focus on return is strong amongst both the authorities and the IDPs themselves, but where the reasons for this differ greatly. The authorities encourage return as a political tool for reclaiming territories, while the IDPs seek only to reclaim their homes and livelihoods.

When return is possible, returnees often face a number of challenges relating to land and property rights, infrastructure and social services. Socio-economic status and livelihood opportunities have often suffered as a result of displacement, and new disputes between social groups have emerged. People do not generally return to the exact life and community they left behind, thus making return an ambiguous solution.

Because of the numerous protracted situations of displacement, many IDPs find themselves in circumstances where their needs cease to be addressed long before a satisfactory durable

solution has been identified. In such cases, when people can neither return nor continue to live in the dire camp or other temporary shelter conditions, resettlement to a new and safe area within the country could be a third alternative.

A main question arising from discussions of the solutions to internal displacement is – when does displacement end? Unlike for refugees, for whom the 'cessation clauses' contained within the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees detail the circumstances in which their need for international protection comes to an end, there is no formal process for recognising that IDPs are no longer regarded as displaced (OCHA 2003:98).

Peace is a precondition for the end of internal displacement. However, it does not in itself guarantee its end. Nine years after the Dayton Peace Agreement, for example, some 310,000 people are still living as internally displaced in Bosnia and Herzegovina (IDMC 2005b). Other preconditions are therefore necessary. OCHA (2003) defines the opportunity to establish a stable existence in an area of *relative* peace as an ingredient. In other words becoming 'ordinary citizens' – with some degree of both legal and physical safety, some land and property rights and access to a sustainable livelihood – is the main precondition for the end of displacement.

One problem with much of the debate on when internal displacement ends is that it is largely focused on the policy point of defining when the internally displaced are no longer in need of special protection and assistance (see, for example, Bonoan 2003, Cohen 2003, Frelick 2003, Kälin 2003, Mooney 2003b). The debate only to a very limited extent takes into consideration the experiences of the internally displaced themselves, and fails to examine how the IDP category develops particular local meanings and often becomes its own social category or identity (see Mooney 2002 for a discussion of this).

Websites

Forced Migration Review (Bonoan 2003)
http://repository.forcedmigration.org/show_metadata.jsp?pid=fmo:4849

Forced Migration Review (Frelick 2003)
http://repository.forcedmigration.org/show_metadata.jsp?pid=fmo:4850

Forced Migration Review (Mooney 2003)
http://repository.forcedmigration.org/show_metadata.jsp?pid=fmo:4820

Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC)
http://www.internal-displacement.org/

UNHCR, New Issues in Refugee Research (Jacobsen 2001)
http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/research/opendoc.pdf?tbl=RESEARCH&id=3b7d24059

ReliefWeb, OCHA
http://www.reliefweb.int/ocha_ol/pub/

6. Actor oriented perspectives on internal displacement

In addition to the more policy-oriented discussion of the legal and institutional aspects of internal displacement, an understanding of its social consequences and the way the internally displaced live and cope with it is instrumental to protecting and assisting them. This section places the internally displaced themselves at the centre of the discussion.

A growing body of literature applies an understanding of the internally displaced (and other displaced populations) as both victims and agents. Without denying the devastating impact that violence, persecution and flight may have on the actions and self-perception of displaced people, agency and creativity rather than passivity and resignation are more accurate characterisations of the way people reflect on and verbalise their experiences of displacement and exile (Shanmugaratnam el al. 2003). The research and literature exploring the experiences and practices of displaced populations are to a large extent informed by the ideas of the so-called 'actor oriented perspective' (Long and Long 1992, Long 2001). Inherent in the actor oriented perspective is an understanding of the individual as an active subject, with the capacity to process social experience and to invent new ways of coping with life, even under extreme coercion.

Social consequences for different groups of displaced people

A recurring challenge when working with internal displacement is how to make visible the heterogeneity of the individuals labelled as IDPs. Most case studies on internal displacement examine only the background to displacement and the conditions experienced by IDPs at a national level (Banerjee et al. 2005, Cohen and Deng 1998b, IDMC 2002, Hampton 1998). Although this is useful as it allows for an exploration of the global variations within internal displacement situations, analyses of how individuals and small groups of IDPs are affected by

and cope with war and displacement are usually missing. Some small-scale summaries, particularly of gender differences are, however, available.

Displacement often leads to dramatic changes in family structure and gender roles, relations and identities (Mertus 2003). In conflict situations, many women are suddenly thrust into the role of head of household because the men are recruited to combat, stay behind to maintain land, or migrate in search of work (Cohen 1998) (see Forced Migration Review no 9 for a special issue on Gender and Displacement). Cohen examines the relationship between land, property and gender. Internally displaced people are likely to lose some or all of their land as a result of displacement. In Colombia, for example, it is estimated that as much as 87 percent of the displaced people who owned land have had to abandon it (OCHA 2003). The high number of female headed households in conflict and displacement situations makes pre-existing restrictions on women's ability to own, acquire, manage or dispose of property an impediment to their reintegration. Cohen (1998) gives examples from Burundi and Rwanda, where women are unable to inherit land or other immovable property from either their husbands or parents (unless they have sons) and therefore often lose the property to their deceased husband's relatives.

Another issue which has attracted some attention is the relationship between vulnerability and the effects of displacement. Banerjee et al. (2005) show that the most vulnerable and marginalised communities bear the brunt of displacement in most South Asian countries. It has been noted that it is often members of national or local minorities who are displaced and that notions of belonging, 'the other,' and perceived rights to resources and access to power usually play a role in displacement. Land ownership is often another, related element in displacement. In Sri Lanka, for example, interviews with IDPs since the ceasefire have shown that many of the displaced who cannot leave the camps and return to their homes are landless people who have no land to return to.

One way of categorising IDPs is to look at differences between the displaced living in camps and those being self-settled. It is often the case that those internally displaced who remain in camps belong to the lower classes/castes (Schrijvers 1999), while people with wider networks and/or access to more resources tend to move out of the camps and stay in rented houses, acquire good jobs, or even move abroad. It has also been documented that when social structures and support systems break down in camps, both men and women become vulnerable to discrimination, physical violence, and other forms of abuse (Mertus 2003). There are major gaps in our knowledge about IDPs who move out of or never move into camps, due to their invisibility.

Rebuilding lives and livelihoods

War and displacement cause permanent transformations in people's lives and livelihoods. Rural to urban migration is an especially common consequence. Scott (1998) recorded this shift in Liberia, where disruption to food production and destruction of assets and market structures caused by the war made it difficult for much of the 75 percent of the population who gained their livelihood through agriculture to return to farming. Many Liberian farmers found other means of survival during displacement, and a return to agriculture was not desirable. This is a common outcome of displacement. Marc Vincent and Birgitte Refslund Sørensen (2001) have compiled case studies of these response mechanisms of the internally displaced in several different contexts, thus contributing to an understanding of the variables in displacement situations and shedding light on how the international community could respond in specific contexts.

Focusing on security and protection strategies allowed Vincent and Sørensen to turn on its head the humanitarian perception of IDPs as helpless victims. For instance, their book documents the ability of IDPs to rely on existing structures, such as members of their family, village, community or other social networks, and proves that cultural continuity and resilience are key ingredients of displacement situations. This realisation is crucial to a better understanding of the fact that conflict and displacement do not inevitably lead to a total disruption of community, and teaches humanitarian actors that they must grasp the prior social structures and histories of the displaced in order to offer effective assistance.

Studies of the response mechanisms of the internally displaced also illustrate the varied set of economic activities that IDPs often partake in. It is crucial to understand IDPs as both victims and actors of change. Displacement causes marginalisation, but in many cases this in turn inspires new and innovative survival tactics (Brun & Lund 2005, Lund 2003, Shanmugaratnam et al. 2003, Skonhoft 1998). However, structural barriers such as restrictions on leaving the camp and authoritative regimes that limit involvement in decision-making often prevent IDPs from obtaining their own livelihood or planning their own future. This author's work in Sri Lanka (Brun 2003a,b) showed that although a wide range of economic activities were available to the internally displaced, livelihood activities were often not sustainable and did not go beyond survival.

As this section has shown, living with displacement is not only about survival, but also about planning for the future, rebuilding lost assets and making a life in the place of displacement. It is important that the humanitarian sector learn from these findings and invest in devising ways

to assist people in rebuilding their lives and livelihoods that make use of their own, pre-existing resources.

Relationships between people and places

Displacement is often experienced and expressed as loss: loss of home, of possessions, of social networks, and even of culture and identity. Although the latter may not in fact be lost, pressures put on them often contribute to a feeling of loss and effect people's perceptions of self and society. However, not everything changes due to displacement – the levels of cultural continuity are often remarkable and the continuance of everyday practices is often noted as a coping strategy and a starting point for life in a new place.

Displacement necessarily changes people's relationships to and identification with specific places, and can introduce cleavages between groups of people which can prove irreparable. Where displacement is protracted and people have lived as IDPs for 10-30 years, linkages are necessarily established in the place of refuge – both with IDPs from other villages with and members of the host population – while those with their original home are simultaneously maintained. A common strategy for many displaced is thus to develop 'translocal' connections, which they rely upon both during and after displacement. While internal displacement is often thought of as a highly localised phenomenon, linkages between the internally displaced and international migration must be taken into account. In Sri Lanka for example, many of the internally displaced have family members abroad who assist in times of crisis (Van Hear 2002), and many others leave Sri Lanka to work in the Middle East on short term labour contracts (Brun 2005).

The changing and multiple relations between places caused by displacement must have implications for the way we think about solutions. The durable solutions discussed above take as their starting point the assumption that people belong to one place, or at least that they only relate to one place at a time. This assumption informs the conviction that integration, resettlement or return are the only desirable solutions to displacement. However, the extensive use of translocal strategies among some displaced populations indicates that these may at least be considered as 'enduring' if not 'durable' solutions to displacement (see Van Hear 2003).

Websites

Forced Migration Review
http://www.fmreview.org/

Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC)
http://www.internal-displacement.org/

OCHA Inter-Agency Internal Displacement Division
http://www.reliefweb.int/idp/

ReliefWeb, OCHA
http://www.reliefweb.int/ocha_ol/pub/

7. Consequences of the IDP category

'Internally displaced persons' is a label – a politically and socially constructed category established to deal with specific people in a specific context. It was developed within a particular and increasingly restrictive policy context and has come to embody concrete relationships of power and influence the way we categorise vulnerable groups, think about them and act on their behalf (Escobar 1995). The IDP category is now taken for granted, and its unintended consequences are not often addressed.

Labels that include and exclude

Andrew Shacknove (1985) claims that for many people on the brink of disaster, refugee status is a privileged position. In contrast to other impoverished people, refugees – and increasingly also IDPs – are entitled to many forms of international assistance. This suggests how labels work to include some but exclude others. A contradictory but common understanding of the IDP and refugee labels is that people who fall within these categories are 'out of place', that they belong somewhere else. And being labelled as 'out of place' and only temporarily present tends to have the effect of excluding refugees and IDPs from certain entitlements. For example, IDPs in Sri Lanka are excluded from exercising some citizenship rights because they are not formally registered as local citizens in their place of refuge (Brun 2003c).

Many forced migrants are even excluded from consideration as IDPs – labour migrants and those forced to move due to irrigation projects or environmental change, for instance (Cernea and McDowell 2000, Lund 2000, Sørensen 1996). Moreover, many would-be forced migrants are prevented from fleeing at all due to a lack of resources, physical inability to travel, restrictions on internal movement, or the closure of borders.

A consideration of the impact of forced migration on host populations is also missing from the IDP label. Host populations are closely affected by forced migration, and while they do not have to move, welcoming large groups of forced migrants may place a considerable burden on and cause large-scale changes in their lives. Despite being highly involved in and affected by processes of forced migration, the IDP label serves to separate the host population from these processes and consequently limit their access to or even consideration by humanitarian agencies.

The exclusion of some groups from a category strengthens identities and consolidates differences between the included and the excluded. These identity formations may become the breeding ground for antagonism or even hostility. They also contribute to the development of stereotypes and the essentialisation of a person's experience, whereby being an IDP overshadows other sometimes more important axes of identity such as gender, ethnicity, class or caste. Thus we see how labels include and exclude, and may even conceal other properties and power relations.

Labels which essentialise social categories

Certain stereotyped identities are designated to refugees and IDPs. IDPs are commonly represented as being in need, powerless and 'out of place', as a result of which they are viewed as 'clients' (see de Voe 1981). Such stereotyping and homogenisation is reinforced by the humanitarian regime, the members of which assist the displaced, represent them, but also label them. As a result, any opposition to the labels from the displaced themselves may become invisible.

Labelling has the effect of separating individuals from their context, their former lives and the causes of their displacement. Hence, labels tend to depoliticise, de-historicise and universalise identities (Rajaram 2002). Roger Zetter (1991) terms these identities as 'misconceived and spoilt', because they do not represent the ways the group would choose to perceive themselves. When the displaced represent themselves to outsiders, they commonly deploy the language and labels of the refugee regime because they need the entitlements associated therewith, thus reinforcing these stereotyped identities. However, this does not mean that people conform passively to the stereotyped identities.

The IDP label also conceals the fact that individuals within it are treated differently. For instance, ethnicity and other group identities can effect one's experience of being an IDP, as can one's location in a camp vs self settlement. In such cases, the IDP label depoliticises the issue of forced movements and conceals the importance of identity politics. When differences among forced migrants are accounted for, they are often based on gender. This gender focus is often limited to women, which though useful in many respects can also be seen as problematic, as it reinforces the primacy of female differences over other identity attributes, and can further entrench unequal gender relations between women and men (Hyndman 2000).

8. Is the IDP label useful?

Labels determine the rules of and access to particular resources and privileges. In order to secure these entitlements and be successful in their dealings with the institutions involved, individuals often have to accept and adjust to categorisation and conform to existing humanitarian labels (see, for example, Stepputat and Sørensen 2001). Bolton et al. (2005) summarise the unintended and undesirable consequences of labelling and thus isolating 'people in need' or 'people of concern':

- *The homogenising effect of the label* – the sense that it reduces the diversity of individuals to a single characteristic that they themselves would not normally use to identify themselves
- *The stigmatising effect of the label* – the possibility that IDPs may, by virtue of their being defined in terms of their displacement, be regarded as people who do not belong where they are and do not have a right to stay there
- *The localising effect of the label* – that it promotes and lends credence to the idea that people are naturally rooted to a single place of origin and that the lasting solution to their displacement is to return to the place of origin which is based on a simplistic understanding of the meaning of 'home' and 'locality' in human social life
- *The privileging effect of the label* – the potential effect of diverting attention from others in comparable or even greater need.

Highlighting such negative effects might make it difficult to see the usefulness of the IDP-category. But according to Zetter (1985), a non-labelled solution cannot exist: there is no escape from terms like 'refugee' and 'IDP' if we are going to assist people forced to migrate from their homes. And there are reasons for maintaining some sort of labelling system. The use of the term *forced*, for example, helps to prevent the normalisation and even

romanticisation of the forced migration experience, which is in danger of becoming viewed as normal in today's globalised world. .

Rather than doing away with labels, Zetter suggests redefining policy-making perspectives so that the focus is on the people covered by the label rather than the label itself. Others suggest increased participation from the 'labelled' (Mazur 1988, Wood 1985). According to Mazur (1988), displaced populations should be actively involved in defining their needs, collaborating in the generation of resources, and improving access to essential goods and services. However, as Harris argues, participatory approaches assume consensus and collectively prioritised needs, and ignore points of divergence and root causes of problems.

In order to most effectively assist the millions of forced migrants worldwide, the tone of current policy, terminology, and focus must be questioned, challenged and changed.

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Electronic Resources

Academic and research

Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement: http://www.brook.edu/idp

Forced Migration Review (FMR): www.fmreview.org

Forced Migration Online (FMO): www.forcedmigration.org

Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC): http://www.internal-displacement.org/

Refugee Survey Quarterly: http://rsq.oupjournals.org/

IRIN Web Special on Internal Displacement: http://www.irinnews.org/webspecials/idp/default.asp

Refugee Studies Centre – University of Oxford: www.rsc.ox.ac.uk

Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU): IDP Research Network: www.idp.ntnu.no

United Nations

Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons: http://www.ohchr.org/english/issues/idp/index.htm

OCHA Inter-Agency Internal Displacement Division: http://www.reliefweb.int/idp/

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP): www.undp.org (see in particular http://www.undp.org/bcpr/archives/internal.htm)

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA) Reliefweb: www.reliefweb.int

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR): www.ohchr.org

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR): www.unhcr.org (see in particular the section on IDPs and the research and evaluation unit; New Issues in Refugee Research.

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC): http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/