

Forced Migration Studies: Surveying the Reference Landscape

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The purpose of this article is to characterise the current status of reference sources available in the field of forced migration studies. The scholarly literature on refugees, internally displaced persons, and other forced migrants has grown rapidly since the 1980s. Has a corresponding increase in related reference titles also taken place? The study of forced migration is multidisciplinary, dominated by specialised terminology, and still evolving as a discipline. For these reasons, it is a challenging field in which to conduct re-

search. Because reference sources facilitate information retrieval and help with the clarification of concepts, they play a valuable role in supporting the research process, as well as promoting further growth of a field. This article introduces the phenomenon of forced migration, describes its growth as an academic field of study, and reports the results of a study conducted to document the existence of reference works in forced migration studies. It ends with several recommendations for the development of new resources.

Purpose

Although relatively youthful as a field, the study of refugees and forced migration has produced an extensive body of scholarly literature. As the research output of a field increases in both size and complexity, one normally would expect to see a concomitant growth in the corresponding bibliographic structure (Keresztesi 1982), that is, the reference tools that help users to identify relevant works and make sense of specialised concepts. However, despite the fact that refugees and other forced migrants represent a global phenomenon, the bibliographic landscape of this field of study has not yet been reviewed in the library literature.

The purpose of this paper, then, is to look at the current status of reference sources in the field of refugee and forced migration studies. The paper begins with an introduction to the phenomenon of forced migration and its growth as a field of study, characterises its scholarly literature, and identifies some of the challenges for conducting research in this area. It moves next to a survey of the extant reference sources, identifies gaps, and makes recommendations for the development of

new reference sources that would prove valuable contributions to forced migration studies.

What is forced migration?

Migration typologies often characterise population movements by the degree of choice involved in the decision to leave home. On one end of the spectrum, “voluntary” migrants exercise maximum choice when they head for new horizons, most often for economic reasons, while at the other end, “involuntary” migrants [1] exercise no choice when they are forced out of their homes. Over time, however, this bipolar view of population flows has been deemed overly simplistic. In reality, “few migrants are wholly voluntary or wholly involuntary. Almost all migration involves some kind of compulsion; at the same time almost all migration involves choices” (Van Hear 1998a, 42).

Forced migration flows occur because of a variety of causal factors, including persecution, natural and industrial disasters, development projects, environmental degradation, war and conflict, ethnic discrimination, etc. A number of paradigms have been produced in an attempt to

capture the full range of these causes (e.g., Richmond 1996, Robinson 1998). In general, the three categories of forced migrants most often discussed in the literature are refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and, increasingly, “oustees.”

Refugees

Much attention has been devoted to refugees, not only because their situation is legitimately dire, but also because of the complex network of laws and international organisations that has evolved since the 1950s to provide assistance and protection to them. Refugees are defined in the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees as persons who, “owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, [are] outside the country of [their] nationality and [are] unable or, owing to such fear, [are] unwilling to avail [themselves] of the protection of that country...” (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees 1995, 1:11). Two regional instruments in Africa and the Americas, respectively, enlarged the concept of refugee to include not only individual persecution, but also armed conflict and massive violations of human rights (UNCHR 1995, 2:4, 208). The key distinguishing element in these definitions is the stipulation that an international border must be crossed. This requirement effectively disqualifies millions of internally displaced people (IDPs) – who may have fled for the very same reasons as refugees, but remained in their countries – from refugee status. The refugee definitions also place emphasis on persecution or violence as causal factors, and therefore do not recognise disasters, catastrophes, or forced resettlement by governments as legitimate grounds for receiving asylum. The stakes for being “labelled” a particular way are significant, since those designated as refugees have access to certain rights and resources spelled out in the 1951 Convention and implemented in the national laws of receiving countries.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is the principal international body responsible for assisting and protecting refugees. At the end of 1998, UNHCR counted some 21.5 million people “of concern”; this figure includes 11.5 million refugees, 1.3 million asylum-seekers, 1.9 million returnees, and 6.7 million

others of concern (such as IDPs, returned IDPs, war victims, and stateless persons to whom UNHCR was asked to extend assistance, even though they do not fall under its traditional mandate) (UNHCR 1999).

A second relevant refugee organisation with a more focused mandate is the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). UNRWA was established to assist Palestinian refugees, defined as “persons whose normal place of residence was Palestine between June 1946 and May 1948, who lost their homes and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict, and who took refuge in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Jordanian-ruled West Bank or the Egyptian-administered Gaza Strip refugees” (UNRWA 1999). Today, some 3.6 million Palestinians are registered with UNRWA.

Internally displaced persons (IDPs)

In recognition of the restrictiveness of the refugee definition, increasing attention is being paid to the plight of “internally displaced persons,” a category that encompasses a wider variety of the causal factors that contribute to flight. The United Nations (UN) defines IDPs as “persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to 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 generalised violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognised State border” (Commission on Human Rights 1998). At least seven different operational agencies [2] have varying mandates to become involved with IDPs, while the international human rights system has also begun to take an active interest. The Representative of the Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons is the only position within the UN to focus exclusively on this population, although it has limited authority and resources. Despite these mechanisms, “the international response system is far from adequate. It is too selective, organisations working on behalf of the internally displaced are poorly co-ordinated, protection and human rights concerns are sorely neglected, and reintegration and development support received insufficient attention” (Cohen and Deng 1998, 159).

Because no one agency is wholly responsible for IDPs, statistics are difficult to compile. The *World Disasters Report* quotes a world total of over 18 million IDPs at the end of 1998 (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies 1999, 158–9), but the actual figure may be much higher.

Oustees

A subset of displaced persons discussed in the literature is referred to as “oustees” by Cernea (1996a). These are “people forcibly ‘ousted’ from their habitat through government intervention, generally for the purpose of some development-required change in land or water use ...” (Cernea 1996a, 293). As the primary funder of such projects, the World Bank has developed a resettlement policy that calls for avoiding or minimising population displacement whenever possible, and requiring compensation and assistance for anyone that is displaced (Cernea 1996b).

While no formal statistics are compiled for oustees, Cernea estimates that the magnitude of displacement is “staggering. Over the last decade, at least 80 to 90 million people have been displaced by programmes in only two development sectors” (dams, urban and transportation infrastructure). If other projects are taken into consideration, such as “thermal plants, open-strip mining, parks and forest reserves,” then population displacement figures would be significantly higher (1996a, 300).

Despite these discrete categories of forced migrants, on the ground it is much more difficult to make very clear distinctions. As Van Hear observes, “In real situations ... these categories are often inextricably mixed, and it seems logically, practically and morally absurd to single out one category of forced migrant for protection and assistance over others” (1998, 348). The study of forced migration, then, ultimately aims to draw attention to, and find solutions for, the full range of uprooted persons regardless of cause or agency mandate.

Growth of the academic field of study

Studies of refugees and other forced migrants have been undertaken for many years. However, it was not until the 1980s that researchers began

to call for a more systematic approach to the issue. Many point to a special issue of the *International Migration Review*, published in 1981, as laying the foundations for a new field of study. The editors summed up the situation at that time as follows:

The scholarly inattention to refugee problems is understandable as refugee research does not fit neatly into distinct categories and is not a ready-made field of study. It lacks standard texts, a theoretical structure, a systematic body of data, and even a firm definition of the subject or the field. Generally, there has been a failure to learn from experience and to add to the cumulative body of knowledge Either unwilling or unable to examine the etiology of refugee movements, research has simply addressed systems and offered palliatives

The editors proposed to resolve this oversight by

“[p]rovoking new thinking and promot[ing] a comprehensive, historical, interdisciplinary, and comparative perspective which focuses on the consistencies and patterns in the refugee experience. Ideally, such work should build the foundations of a new field on Refugee Studies, clarify concepts, formulate the questions to be addressed more precisely, and define the parameters and priorities of such studies” (Stein and Tomasi 1981, 6).

The next two decades saw a significant increase in the volume of research conducted on refugees in particular. Hallmarks of a growing field of study include the creation of the Refugee Studies Programme in 1982 (recently renamed the Refugee Studies Centre) at Oxford University, whose objective was to provide a forum for academic research that was independent of the international agencies. A specialised *Journal of Refugee Studies* was started in 1988, with the expressed aim of promoting “cohesive, integrated and multidisciplinary research” (Zetter 1988, 2). Moreover, since 1990, regular meetings of the International Research and Advisory Panel (IRAP) have been held to review the state of the field and identify new research directions.

During the same time period, other types of forced migrants were identified and contrasted with refugees, leading at some point to the re-coining of the field of inquiry as “forced migration studies.” Conscious attempts were made in the above-mentioned IRAP meetings to expand coverage of research topics away from a refugee-centric model. Moreover, in 1998 two milestones occurred to anchor forced migration more firmly

as a discrete field of study: the instituting of a master's program in forced migration at the Refugee Studies Centre and the establishment of the International Association for the Study of Forced Migration.

Patterns in scholarly publication

One effect of this growth has been an increase in scholarly output. What exactly comprises the literature of forced migration? Typically, scholarly publication moves through several stages. Initially, researchers communicate their findings in an assortment of distinct studies. Eventually, writers begin trying to make sense of scholarly ideas and perspectives by synthesising research and reporting their assessments in review publications. When sufficient consensus is reached within a community of scholars, what is "known" about a particular field is presented in some kind of cumulative or aggregated form [3]. While this is an extremely generic view of the publication process, it helps to have a sense of the kind of works that tend to become available over time, in order to more easily identify and locate them.

Reporting research

Grey literature

The literature of forced migration studies comprises a rich mélange of materials. It continues to be dominated by "grey literature" [4]. Typically, items that fall under this category prove more challenging to track down, simply because they are not routinely indexed or catalogued in mainstream research tools (e.g., conference papers, works-in-progress, in-house papers, technical reports, field studies, etc.). The Refugee Studies Centre Documentation Centre collects a diverse set of these documents, and is currently undertaking a Digital Library Project to digitise some of the more important titles in order to make them available to a wider audience.

Theses/Dissertations

A healthy number of theses and dissertations have been written on forced migration issues, dating back to the 1950s. The *Displaced Peoples and Refugee Studies: A Resource Guide* (Davies 1990)

lists over 200 titles, published through the late 1980s, while a search in UMI's *Dissertation Abstracts OnDisc* for various categories of forced migrants yields over 900 additional titles published between 1990 and 1997. With the growing number of graduates from academic programs specialising in this field, this form of scholarly output will necessarily increase.

Journals

Journals serve as an important vehicle for reporting new research and for keeping abreast of current developments in the field. Below is a list of several principal titles relevant to forced migration studies. Details of their availability on the World Wide Web (as of November 2000) are also provided.

- *AWR Bulletin: Quarterly on Refugee Problems*. Vienna: Braumüller, v. 1, 1963-. Quarterly.
- *Disasters: The Journal of Disaster Studies, Policy and Management*. Oxford: Blackwell, v. 1, 1977-. Quarterly. URL: <http://www.oneworld.org/odi/pubs98/intro.html> (click on "Disasters"; tables of contents, abstracts).
- *Forced Migration Review*. Oxford: Refugee Studies Centre, v. 1, 1998-. 3 per year. URL: <http://www.fmreview.org> (full-text).
- *International Journal of Refugee Law*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, v. 1, 1989-. Quarterly. URL: <http://www.oup.co.uk/reflaw/> (tables of contents, abstracts).
- *International Migration Review*. Staten Island, NY: Center for Migration Studies, v. 1, 1964-. Quarterly. URL: <http://cmsny.org/cmspage2.htm> (table of contents for most recent issue).
- *International Review of the Red Cross*. Geneva: International Committee of the Red Cross, v. 1, 1961-. Quarterly. URL: <http://www.icrc.org/eng/review> (in English, French and Spanish; full-text).
- *Journal of Humanitarian Assistance*. Cambridge: Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, University of Cambridge, 1995-. URL: <http://www-jha.sps.cam.ac.uk/> (online journal; full-text).
- *Journal of Involuntary Migration*. Palestine: Academic Programme for the Study of Involuntary Migration, v. 1, 1997-. Frequency not indicated.
- *Journal of Refugee Studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, v. 1, 1988-. Quarterly. URL: <http://www.oup.co.uk/refuge/> (tables of contents, abstracts).
- *Refuge: Canada's Periodical on Refugees*. North York, Canada: Centre for Refugee Studies, York University, v. 1, 1981-. 6 per year.

- *Refugee Survey Quarterly*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, v. 13, 1994–. URL: <http://www.oup.co.uk/refqtl/contents/> (tables of contents and abstracts). (OUP assumed publishing responsibilities with vol. 15, 1996.)
- *Review of Refugee Issues*. Dar Es Salaam: African Refugee Study Centre, University of Dar Es Salaam, v. 1, 1989–. Frequency not indicated.
- *Tolley's Immigration and Nationality Law and Practice*. London: Butterworth, v. 1, 1986–. Quarterly.

Monographs

Book publishing in forced migration studies is likewise a burgeoning area. Several monograph series on refugee and forced migration issues have been initiated, for example, Berghahn Books' "Refugee and Forced Migration Studies" and "Migration and Refugees," and Martinus Nijhoff's "Refugees and Human Rights" series. Other regular publishers in this field include Edward Elgar Publishing (a specialist in migration studies), Greenwood Publishing, Kluwer, and Oxford University Press. The Committee on Refugees and Immigrants, a section of the American Anthropological Association, also publishes a "selected papers" series. New titles are regularly reviewed in the *Journal of Refugee Studies*, *International Journal of Refugee Law*, *International Migration Review*, and *Disasters*, while the *Refugee Survey Quarterly* highlights a select bibliography, abstracts and books received section in each issues.

Syntheses of research

The most systematic attempts at synthesising and assessing research in forced migration have taken place under the aegis of the International Research Advisory Panel meetings referred to above. First, reports of each of the meetings convened are regularly published in the *Journal of Refugee Studies* (see Robinson 1990, Gasarasi 1991, Sword 1992, Cooper 1994, Koser 1996). Moreover, beginning with the 1994 meeting, an explicit request was made to contributors to present state of the art reviews of research conducted on particular aspects of forced migration. Literature reviews are another variation on this format that combine bibliographic essays with comments on under-researched areas or suggestions for new research directions (Cooper 1994).

Cumulations of research

Typically, what is *known* about a particular field is presented in an encyclopaedia, dictionary, or even a textbook. Although at this point in time such works have yet to be published, several handbooks present useful overviews of certain aspects of refugee and forced migration studies, such as the *Cambridge Survey of World Migration* (Cohen 1995), *The Refugee in International Law* (Goodwin-Gill 1996), and *The Global Refugee Crisis: A Reference Handbook* (Loescher & Loescher 1994).

Research challenges

Despite these advances, forced migration studies is still experiencing growing pains. These, in turn, present certain challenges for conducting research in this field. Examples of four of these challenges are enumerated below.

Evolving field

In 1990, Robinson identified the following weaknesses in forced migration studies: "lack of a shared vocabulary," "scarcity of sustained long-term research," "paucity of multidisciplinary research," "the need to borrow theory rather than pioneer our own," and "shortage of comparative work" (1990, 6–9). Four years later, Cooper reported that "[c]alls for theory building, for conceptual rigor, for methodological improvements, for more comparative and historical work, and for a firm establishment of what the guiding questions of the area are, hounded the 1994 meeting [of IRAP] as much as, if not more than, in previous years" (1994, 16). In 1998, summarising discussions held at a meeting entitled "The Growth of Forced Migration: New Directions in Research, Policy and Practice," Van Hear concluded, "Nearly two decades on, it is debatable if the objectives set out by Stein and Tomasi have yet been accomplished, even though the number of people active in the field has proliferated. In fact, if anything, the 'field' has become more and more diffuse as time has gone on" (1998b, 341–2).

At the heart of the matter lies a lack of consensus on the actual scope of forced migration studies. Despite the stated aim of organisations like the International Association for the Study of

Forced Migration to promote a more “inclusive” field of study (Hansen 1996), Lammers notes that “... both scholarly and humanitarian attention is almost exclusively oriented towards those who ... become designated as refugees” (1999, 27). At the same time, some delimitation of the field is necessary in order not to become “infinitely elastic” (Van Hear 1998b, 348). Thus, while extensive publication, meetings, and the establishment of educational programs have helped to disseminate new ideas and thinking, forced migration has yet to evolve into a fully formed and coherent field of study.

Specialised terminology

Technical jargon, particular concepts and special terms that require greater clarification and definition dominate the field of forced migration. For example, the term “refugee” is often casually used to encompass other types of forced migrants. To Hansen, this amounts to scholarly irresponsibility:

“Scholars who are concerned about the fate of the forced migrants in the study utilize the refugee label to express outrage and perhaps stimulate others to help the displaced people or help stop the cause of the forced migration. This motivation may be commendable, but it subordinates the responsibilities of the scholar to provide clarity and serves instead the role of the practitioner” (1996, 10).

Hansen calls for “more precision in nomenclature and terminology” and “the formulation of a set of terms that serve the purpose of analysis and investigation” (1996, 8, 10).

Research dichotomies

Cernea points out that

“[w]ithin the social science literature dealing with displaced populations ... there exists an excessive separation between, on the one hand, the study of post-war and disaster-related refugees and, on the other hand, the study of population uprooted by development projects. ... Indeed, these two bodies of social science research virtually do not ‘speak to each other’” (1996a, 293).

He argues that greater integration between the two would prove mutually beneficial and in the end might resolve some of the weaknesses enumerated above. Robinson echoes Cernea’s obser-

vations when he notes that much of the research conducted continues to reflect a particular disciplinary perspective:

“Convention refugees are studied by those in refugee studies, development-induced oustees by those in anthropology, ecological migrants by those in the field of disaster studies, ethnic and racial ‘misfits’ by sociologists, and state slaves by social historians Potentially, such a variety of disciplinary perspectives undoubtedly has much to offer, but equally it means that research effort is dissipated or duplicated, with important parallels, contrasts and policy lessons missed” (1998, 206).

Hansen concurs, and concludes that

“Our work should not be determined by these traditional categories or by the limitations of current literatures. There is an immense potential for theoretical advances in our understanding of human behavior (in general and in crisis situations) by comparative studies of already-existing case material in currently-separated literatures” (1996, 8).

Thus, there is need for a greater cross-pollination of ideas, methodologies and approaches both across disciplines and even within the purview of forced migration itself.

High-scatter effect

As a multidisciplinary field of study, forced migration is of interest to anthropologists, economists, geographers, health specialists, historians, lawyers, political scientists, psychologists, sociologists, as well as a wide variety of researchers in related fields such as conflict studies, development studies, and ethnic relations. A practical consequence of this is that relevant literature potentially can be published in any of the various resources associated with these disciplines. Successful research in so-called “high-scatter” fields thus complicates the information-seeking endeavour:

“[T]he literature, indices, journals, professional associations, and experts with information are numerous and varied with no central source containing a significant proportion of the available resources” (Westbrook 1999, 39).

Research becomes a question of magnitude – conducting a journal article search requires looking in five disciplinary indexes rather than just one – making it that much more challenging to keep abreast of the latest developments.

The function and value of reference sources

Reference sources constitute a category of publication that bring order and coherence to a mass of scholarly literature. A very basic typology of reference sources includes two distinct classes: sources that provide information, such as encyclopaedias, dictionaries, handbooks, directories, atlases, yearbooks, and so forth, and sources that help with the location of information, or library catalogues, bibliographies, and indexing and abstracting services (Smith 1995). Another identifying characteristic of many reference sources, regardless of the class they fall into, is their form, i.e., their structure facilitates the looking up of information, whether it is substantive, as might be found in an encyclopaedia, or locational, as in a bibliography.

The preceding discussion revealed that forced migration as a field has produced a sizeable body of scholarly literature; at the same time, it suffers from a lack of a clear conceptual and theoretical framework, definitional dilemmas, methodological issues, and scattered research output. These realities point to the need for appropriate reference sources; for example, an encyclopaedia or dictionary to define concepts and key terms or bibliographic resources to help aggregate relevant publications from different disciplines. The question remaining, then, is what reference sources actually exist in this field and what observations can be made about them as a class of works? Moreover, what recommendations can be made for the development of new reference sources to address needs that are not currently being met?

Methodology

To answer these questions, a bibliographic survey was conducted to locate reference sources that cater to the information and research needs of forced migration scholars; in other words, bibliographies, directories, dictionaries, atlases, etc. that have as their principal focus one or more of the various forced migrants identified above and/or the regimes established to assist them. To identify relevant reference sources (both in print and electronic formats), searches were conducted in the library catalogues of the principal refugee and migration documentation centres, the major research libraries, booksellers, and a wide variety

of discipline-specific indexing and abstracting services, as well as on the Web.

Two different search strategies were employed, depending on the source searched. In the refugee and migration catalogues, simple searches were undertaken in the subject heading field for different reference formats (e.g., bibliographies, directories, etc.). In other sources, because they were not subject-specific, the search query combined variations of the following terms with reference formats: refugee, forced/involuntary migrant, displaced person, asylum, resettlement, and humanitarian assistance.

Because *Displaced Persons and Refugee Studies: A Resource Guide* (Davies 1990) highlighted a number of reference titles, only reference sources published within the last 10 years (1990–1999) were selected. An exception would have been made for an index or recurrent bibliography that was initiated prior to 1990. Moreover, for practical reasons, searches were limited by language, specifically English, French, Spanish, or German.

Findings

Both classes of reference sources – substantive and locational – were represented among the retrieved titles.

On the substantive side, reference categories include:

- Atlases that document forced migration movements over the ages, such as *An Atlas of International Migration* (Segal 1993).
- Biographical sources, primarily historical in orientation, e.g., *Biographical Dictionary of Medical Emigrés to Great Britain 1930s–1950s: The Forced Emigration and Resettlement of European Medical, Dental and Scientific Refugees* (Decker and Weindling 1997).
- Dictionaries, in the formal sense, are not yet available. This category is represented largely by informal or in-house glossaries, such as the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada's *Lexique de la CISR = IRB Glossary* (1995).
- Directories that list assistance agencies, research centres, or individuals and their expertise. Most are limited to particular geographic regions, e.g., *Repertoire des associations de défense du droit d'asile et des réfugiés en Europe Occidentale* (France Terre d'Asile 1995).
- Handbooks that distil a large amount of information and present it in a more accessible manner, e.g., *Refugees in America in the 1990s: A Reference Handbook* (Haines 1996).

- Statistical sources compiled primarily by intergovernmental or governmental agencies, such as the UN High Commissioner for Refugees' annual *Refugees and Others of Concern*.
- Yearbooks or annual surveys that report trends and developments during the previous 12 months, e.g., the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies' *World Disasters Report*.

On the locational side, reference categories include:

- Bibliographies that bring together a variety of materials – books, articles, conference papers, theses, both published and unpublished – and that tend to focus on a particular region or theme (children, women, etc.), e.g., *Afrikanische Flüchtlinge: Vertreibung und internationale Migration: eine Auswahlbibliographie* = *African Refugees: Expulsion and International Migration: A Selected Bibliography* (Farwer 1993) and *The Gender Dimensions of Internal Displacement: Concept Paper and Annotated Bibliography* (Benjamin and Fancy 1998).
- Indexes and abstracts that provide access to very specific collections, such as EXCOM in Abstracts: A Bibliographic Description of Documentation Issued in the Context of UNHCR's Governing Bodies and Major International Refugee Conferences 1951–1990 (UNHCR 1990), or cumulative indexes to individual periodical titles, e.g., *International Migration Review* (Michaud 1997). No services exist that index or abstract forced migration as a whole.
- Library catalogues exist for most of the principal refugee and migration collections, and many are accessible via the Internet, e.g., the Refugee Studies Centre Documentation Centre Catalogue (<http://www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/rsc>), UNHCR Centre for Documentation and Research Literature Database (<http://www.unhcr.ch/refworld/refworld/biblio/reflit.htm>), the Norwegian Refugee Council Library (<http://www.nrc.no/library.htm>), etc. One exception is the Danish Refugee Council, which very recently disbanded its library altogether, an unfortunate development that hopefully will not become a trend.

Certain general observations can be made about these materials. First, the individual reference sources tend to focus on one type of forced migrant only, in particular, refugees and asylum-seekers. Second, many of the reference sources fall into the category of “grey literature.” Thus, as tools designed to help researchers facilitate access to the literature, if they themselves are not easily accessible, then they will not achieve their objective. Third, the field lacks key substantive reference sources in the form of encyclopaedias and dictionaries that can help to clarify concepts and

define terminology in a comprehensive manner. Finally, there is a problem of currency and continuity with many of the reference sources. Directories, for example, require regular updating. But there are several instances when a title has been discontinued after two or three editions, e.g., the *Refugee and Immigrant Resource Directory, 1994* (Schorr 1994) and *The Directory of Research on Refugees and Other Forced Migrants* (Refugee Studies Programme 1993), both stopped after the third edition. The reason is most likely a lack of resources. However, it would be interesting to investigate other possible explanations such as a problematic format, limited market, etc.

Recommendations

The above assessment suggests there is room for a number of new reference sources to be developed. Judging from the research challenges identified above, there is certainly a great need. As a starting point, recommendations for four basic tools – that approach forced migration more comprehensively – are described below.

Substantive reference sources

Encyclopaedia

An encyclopaedia would reflect the current state of knowledge relating to forced migration. Its objective could be to clarify concepts and define key terms, as well as show the mosaic of interacting disciplines and how they influence and are influenced by the study of forced migration. In this way, it could begin to address many of the research challenges identified above. An encyclopaedia format versus a dictionary would allow more room for a discussion of concepts as well as reflect evolving rather than “set-in-stone” ideas.

Sample entries might include the various causes of forced migration, definitions of different types of forced migrants or typologies of involuntary migration, refugee and humanitarian assistance organisations, prominent forced migrants, elements of the forced migration cycle, country profiles with retrospective reviews of forced migration movements in both directions, along with summaries of research and main issues, profiles of forced migrant groups, historical forced migration movements, disciplinary approaches, etc.

Annual review of research

This type of publication would serve as the forced migration research complement to the annual, and more practitioner-oriented, *World Refugee Survey*. In order to promote a greater cross-pollination of ideas, it could include a review of research trends, research on particular geographic areas, research by discipline, etc. It could also include a directory of research centres and names of researchers, theses/dissertations produced, announcements/reviews of new books, grant/funding sources, etc. It could be organised in such a way that under-researched areas and gaps become more obvious.

Locational reference sources

Literature index or abstract service

This resource would facilitate access primarily to the journal literature, as well as help researchers to keep current on new developments in the field. As noted above, in an interdisciplinary field, relevant articles can potentially be scattered across a variety of discipline-specific journals. Prior to undertaking the development of such a tool, however, it would be useful to first try to identify a core set of journals, determine the extent to which they are already indexed by other services, and evaluate the coverage currently provided by existing indexes.

Journal contents web search

In the interim, a search engine could be developed that searches the tables of contents, abstracts and/or full-text of refugee and migration periodicals that are posted online. Coverage could be expanded to other social science periodicals that are deemed relevant. While such a facility would not provide as comprehensive a coverage as an indexing or abstracting service, it would facilitate access to the contents of some of the most relevant journals.

Conclusion

Reference sources are worth promoting for a variety of reasons. Normally, they are developed in a fairly arbitrary, even random, fashion. As McInnis (1978, 122) points out, there is no grand

design, no committee that determines when to publish another title. Once a particular field of study has grown in size and complexity, it becomes that much more difficult to find anything within it and to be clear about its exact parameters. As such, individual reference sources respond to perceived needs, with prescribed and focused objectives. Yet, when taken as a whole, they can also be viewed as epistemological constructs. Because they simplify access to a body of literature, clarify concepts, and synthesise “what is known” in a discipline, they help to move the research process forward. As McInnis notes, “If no attempt were made to distil scientific literature into an ordered and coherent format, following the course of inquiry in a given field would present tremendous difficulties” (1978, 124). In this respect, reference sources contribute to the production of knowledge, even if this was not their intended objective. Thus, their value goes beyond mere function.

It is evident that the field of forced migration studies as a whole has sufficient research needs to stimulate the development of new reference sources. Given the numbers of forced migrants around the world whose lives and livelihoods might benefit from a greater understanding of the complex issues surrounding the question of displacement, it is equally evident that research in this field should be cultivated, facilitated and supported. Reference sources can contribute positively in this role.

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Notes

1. Robinson (1998) attributes the coining of “forced migration” to Petersen (1958), who conceptualised the phenomenon as follows: “If in primitive migrations the activating agent is ecological pressure, in forced migration it is the state or some functionally equivalent social institution. It is useful to divide

this class into *impelled* migration, when the migrants retain some power to decide whether or not to leave, and *forced* migration, when they do not have this power" (1958, 261).

2. These include the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, International Committee of the Red Cross, United Nations Development Programme, World Food Programme, United Nations Children's Fund, World Health Organisation, and International Organisation for Migration. For a good overview of these organisations' mandates, see chapter 4 in Cohen and Deng 1998, 126–186.
3. See Freides (1973) for a useful discussion of these stages.
4. Defined by the Third International Conference on Grey Literature (1994) as "That which is produced on all levels of government, academics, business and industry in print and electronic formats, but which is not controlled by commercial publishers." For more information see the URL: <http://www.konbib.nl/infolev/greynet/1.2.htm>.

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