

# **The Geopolitics of Forced Migration and Humanitarianism: A Critical Geopolitics Perspective**

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## **Abstract**

Forced migration today is broadly characterized as occurring due to three different coercive mechanisms: Violent Conflict, Economic Development Projects and Environmental Change. Despite the fact that these three forms of forced displacement demonstrate very similar outcomes (human right's violations, homelessness, landlessness and statelessness of socio-economically and politically marginalized groups), humanitarian responses to them are never consistent. By taking a critical geopolitics perspective this thesis argues that geopolitics – the primacy of borders, the competing hegemonic relations between and within nation-states, the political economy of a globalizing world – is the driving force behind both the genesis of all forms of forced migration and the deployment of humanitarian protection and intervention. The way in which the world is most commonly understood as a set of spatially distinct, sovereign political units called nation-states has a profound effect on the genesis of and responses to forced migratory flows. Taking a critical geopolitics perspective, I examine a number of contemporary diasporic migrations that have been caused by Conflict, Development and Environmental Change to make my case. Then I argue that the causal taxonomy utilized to distinguish the three different forms of forced migration is unnecessary as they are all, at their root, forms of 'geopolitical displacement'. I conclude by proposing that a global, humanitarian governing body that protects the rights of all forcibly displaced migrants should be enacted as our current system (i.e. the Global Refugee Regime) based in the conceptualization of world as distinct, sovereign states deals poorly with human rights protections of the displaced.

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## **I. Introduction**

### ***State-Centric Ideologies, Geopolitics, Forced Migration and Humanitarianism***

The Westphalian system in which all geographic territory is divided into spatially distinct, sovereign political units, or states, is pervasive and structures contemporary understandings of and interactions with our modern world. In fact, this state-centric rendering of global space is so entrenched that states, the borders that define their territorial boundaries, and the nationalistic identities of the people within them are typically assumed to be self-evident and naturally occurring. One rarely sees a map of the world or a globe that is not political; continental landmasses are regularly partitioned into disparate countries. It is how we make sense of the world. However, while these statist renderings of space are quite ubiquitous, they often do a poor job of reconciling humanitarian crises and human rights violations such as forced migration. The central aim of this thesis is to demonstrate how this taken-for-granted statist understanding of the globe that is mired in geopolitics has structured both the way in which contemporary forced migration is generated, and how humanitarian aid is deployed in response to it.

Increasingly a humanitarian ethos has emerged that aims to promote an ethic of impartial compassion extended to all of humanity and that recognizes a commonality between all people: their ‘human-beingness’. If humanitarianism is expected to be universal and impartial in its application, can we have a highly disjointed, state-partitioned world and simultaneously seek to support a unifying human rights ethic? Gerhardt (2009) recognizes the potential incompatibility, stating: “In a global and modern [state-centric] order the responsibility for life is viewed as universalized, applicable to the whole world, yet fragmented within a mosaic of distinct sovereign realms” (p. 494). If we have this humanitarian ethic, can we apply it through a

governing body or normative framework that is supra-statal and meta-sovereign by nature in a world ‘fragmented’ by states?

Forced migration is a hermeneutic lens through which the dissonance between humanitarianism and state-centricity can be examined. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), forced migration is defined as a “migratory movement in which an element of coercion exists, including threats to life and livelihood, whether arising from natural or man-made causes...” and it states that hundreds of millions of people in the world today have been forcibly displaced from their homes (IOM 2011). If the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is assumed as the basis of our humanitarian ethos, then forced migration clearly falls into the confines of human rights violations as it states that “No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence...” (UDHR 1948, Article 12), and “Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state” (*ibid*, Article 13.1). Arbitrary interference of the home and the proclamation of freedom of movement are both violated in cases of forced migration making it widely problematized as a humanitarian issue whereby people who subscribe to a universal humanitarian ethic expect themselves, their peers, national governments and the ‘international community’ (e.g. the United Nations) to respond to forced migration with humanitarian aid and legal and human rights protections for displacees.

Yet despite this, forced migration is often conceptualized in disparate categories based on the apparent causal mechanisms that generate it and/or where, in space, forced migrants end up after being displaced. For instances, in the academic literature on forced migration, three coercive factors are regularly identified as being responsible for displacements:

1. *Conflict* (Hentz 2010; Szanto 2012; Lang & Knudsen 2009)

2. *Development Projects* (Bose 2007; Bennet & McDowell 2012; Szablowski 2002)
3. *Environmental Changes* (Mallick *et al.* 2011; Leckie 2012; Johnson 2008).

Additionally, distinctions are often made between those who are displaced domestically (often referred to as Internally Displaced Persons or IDPs) and those who are displaced transnationally, across an internationally recognized state border (Abdul Rauff & Hatta 2013; Bury 2007; Cunliffe 1995; Fadines & Horst 2009; Kendle 1998). These distinctions based on causality and positionality can be problematic because they structure and prioritize the deployment of humanitarian aid for displacees. Conflicts and devastating natural disasters that induce displacements generally garner more humanitarian support than displacements that occur due to development projects or slow-onset environmental changes (such as rising sea levels or desertification). In fact, in the case of conflict in particular, there is a quality to those displacements that seems to render humanitarian action morally requisite, whereas development- and environment-induced displacements do not universally incite the same levels of objection and reaction. Likewise, IDPs provide a telling example of the disjuncture between universal humanitarianism and state-centric sovereignty. Because a central tenet of sovereignty rests on the concept of ‘non-interference’ – that states have the right to manage their own domestic affairs without foreign intervention – humanitarian intervention in IDP generating scenarios is often derailed or impeded by the self-determining principles of sovereignty.

Despite the seeming differences between all of these forms of forced migration, they all regularly exhibit similar outcomes, namely: homelessness, landlessness, and familial dislocation of socio-economically and politically disempowered and marginalized populations. In light of all this, the following questions arise that are the overarching and searching questions this thesis intends to explore. If forced migration is a human rights violation that repeatedly results in

similar outcomes, then why do we allow causality, territoriality and relative positionality to affect how one's human rights are protected? Why do we distinguish between and respond differently to the above-stated forms of force migration?

### ***Objectives***

I explore these questions by taking a critical geopolitics perspective, which is meant to challenge the taken-for-granted statist understanding of globe and expose how the dominant ideologies and discourses of hegemonic powers work to write our understanding of global space. I argue in particular that not only do all forms of forced migration exhibit similar outcomes but that they also exhibit notable causal similarities. Additionally, I contend that, due to the pervasive statist ordering of the world, the majority of humanitarian responses to forced migration (whether by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), other international organizations, The World Bank, state-governments, or NGOs) fail to assume a universally applicable, meta-sovereign human right ethos, making them far more geopolitical than humanitarian in nature.

I go about this by first dividing forced migration into three separate categories based on the coercive mechanisms mentioned previously. By considering several contemporary examples of these three forms of forced migration through an evaluation of primarily peer-reviewed literature, I demonstrate how, despite apparently causal differences, they are all initiated by similar geopolitical forces and how geopolitics structure the deployment of aid to each of these types of forced migrants. My perspective on forced migration and humanitarianism is particularly critical of the process of statecraft as it relates to the colonial and neo-colonial practices of the Western hegemony. More specifically, attention is paid to how (1) the delimitation of international borders, (2) nationalism and multi-nationalism, and (3) the modern

global political economy (all intrinsically geopolitical phenomena and by-and-large the product of colonialism and Westphalian notions of territoriality) dictate both the initiation of forced migratory flows and the humanitarian aid responses to these various cases of forced displacement. Then, in my analysis, in keeping my critical perspective on the statist geopolitical ordering of the world, I examine how these geopolitical influences render the three forms of forced migration discussed similar to the point that the causal taxonomy I have utilized is not necessary as they are each a by-product of modern geopolitics that exhibit very similar patterns and outcomes. I argue that the process of statecraft, nation building, and the articulation of both inclusive and exclusive statist identity narratives are derived from a state's colonial legacy and are also the root causes of contemporary forced migration. In this sense, the distinction between 'conflict induced displacement', 'development induced displacement', and 'environmentally induced displacement', need not necessarily be made. Rather, forced migration can be understood more broadly and all-encompassingly as 'geopolitically induced displacement'. It thusly critiques how humanitarian agencies, the UNHCR in particular, cannot help but respond to humanitarian crises of forced migration through a heavily geopolitical (and therefore biased and not fundamentally humanitarian) framework due to the fact that contemporary forced migration, and the UNHCR itself, are innately geopolitical. I conclude by positing that a globally governing body that is supra-sovereign and that responds to all forms of forced migration is necessary if we are to truly espouse and give credence to international human rights laws and humanitarian norms. The problem with the only current codified legal framework concerned for the rights of displaced persons – the UNHCR and its mandate – is that it is too entrenched in geopolitics and the statist ordering of the globe to truly act as a humanitarian agency. But in order to understand where international protections concerning forced migrations should end up,

it is helpful to first understand the present status of those protections and the current ‘Global Refugee Regime’.

## ***The Geopolitics of the Global Refugee Regime***

### *The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*

The UNHCR is by far the biggest global player in displacement aid. As an office established in 1951 by the United Nations General Assembly which is mandated “to provide, on a non-political and humanitarian basis, international protection to refugees and to seek permanent solutions for them” (Loescher *et al.* 2008), in 2010 the UNHCR had an annual budget of approximately \$3 billion for carrying out its mandate (UNHCR 2013). The UNHCR is significant not only in terms of the money it spends for aiding refugees, but also because its ‘*Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees*’ (hereafter referred to as the ‘Convention’) represents the only codified normative framework in international law intended to protect the human rights of and provide legal protections for refugees. These legal and human rights protections consist of offering three durable solutions for refugees: (1) integration into the country where refugees seek asylum, (2) resettlement and integration into a third country outside the country of asylum, or (3) voluntary repatriation to the country of origin (Lui 2002). However, despite the UNHCR’s significant contribution to humanitarian relief work for forced displacees, and its granting of legal protections to refugees, branding it as a humanitarian organization for forcibly displaced migrants is problematic for two primary reasons. First is that although a refugee may colloquially be conceived as being synonymous with a forced migrant, ‘refugees’ fall within the bounds of a strict definition that is enshrined in the UNHCR’s ‘Convention’. The UNHCR defines a ‘refugee’ as any person who:

“owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his

nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it” (UNHCR 1967, Article 1.A.1).

While refugeehood is couched in the idea of coercion – a ‘well-founded fear of being persecuted’ – the UNHCR definition is significantly less broad than the definition of a forced migrant provided by the IOM as it does not directly recognize the causal factors of Conflict, Development and Environment that are pervasive in the literature on forced migration. In addition, it adds a spatial conditionality – a refugee must be “outside the country of his nationality”. So despite the fact that the UNHCR’s ‘Convention’ draws from a number of articles articulated in the UDHR, understanding it as a humanitarian mandate for forced migrants is conceptually impossible because its causal limitations can, in some cases, eschew other UDHR articles (particularly the above-mentioned Article 12 and Article 13.1). Furthermore, its border-crossing provision which is added to respect “the principle of sovereignty and non-interference, an international norm that is seen...as crucial to order and coexistence” (Lui 2002, p. 30), demonstrates how the UNHCR allows sovereignty to take precedence over universal, meta-sovereign humanitarianism.

The second problem with classifying the UNHCR as a humanitarian office concerned with forced migration is that it has a well-documented history of bypassing the essential pillar in humanitarianism of impartiality due to the geopolitical milieu in which the office and its ‘Convention’ were born out of and through which they have operated. The UNHCR and the ‘Convention’ were created in the late 1940s and early 1950s by an *ad hoc* committee of representatives from 11 states (Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Denmark, France, Israel, Turkey, the UK, the US and Venezuela) as a response to pandemic displacement and statelessness brought on by the violence of World War II (Glynn 2011). The genesis of the

UNHCR and its resulting initial mandate decreed a temporal and a spatial limitation to the refugee definition – a person would only be granted refugee status if his or her ‘well-founded fear of being persecuted’ was “a result of events occurring in Europe before 1 January 1951” (UNHCR 1951) and it was signed into international law by the UN General Assembly (Glynn 2011). However, as Cold War-related violent decolonization and post-independence civil strife in ‘the Third World’ forced millions to migrate transnationally and massive flows of Eastern Europeans sought refuge in Western Europe to escape oppressive dictators beginning in the late 1950s, the UNHCR was able to lift the temporal and geographic constraints from its ‘Convention’ to accommodate the global nature of refugee crises (Loescher 2001). It is important to note here that the UNHCR, as an office of the UN, receives most funding to carry out its mandate through voluntary donations from UN member states and these donors typically dictate the terms through which their donations are allocated. Thus, throughout the Cold War Western powers (who donated the most to UNHCR), and specifically the United States, had a keen geopolitical interest in funding the granting of political asylum to refugees fleeing communist regimes (Cunliffe 1995; Loescher 2001; Glynn 2011; Barnett 2001; Neumann 2006). This was due to the fact that they were “perceived to be a useful, anti-Communist symbol in the Cold War” (Cunliffe 1995, p. 280) as they voted for democracy ‘with their feet’ (Loescher *et al.* 2008). There was also geopolitical interest from the Western hegemony (again, the U.S. in particular) in the refugee crises in the ‘developing world’ as there was a fear that the instability in these regions made them vulnerable to Soviet-communist influence in the structuring of their post-colonial, autonomous countries, so “Western governments came to perceive assistance to refugees as a central part of their foreign policy towards newly independent states” (Loescher 2001, p. 39). In the post-Cold War era, the geopolitical interests of the global hegemony have

certainly changed. Yet the fact remains that the UNHCR is still beholden to a significant institutional weakness as it continues to depend on voluntary contributions from UN member states and it thus has to bend to the geostrategic interests of the hegemonic powers who possess the capital to make substantial, geopolitically motivated donations. For example, while the durable solutions of asylum state integration and third country resettlement were primarily utilized during the Cold War era (because allowing refugees to repatriate in communist states ran counter to the anti-communist geopolitical interests of the Western hegemony – they wanted people to leave communism, not return to it) (Barnett 2001), in the post-Cold War era the UNHCR has increasingly been under pressure from donor states to emphasize repatriation as the preferred durable solution for two reasons. One is that donor states are economically motivated to encourage repatriation as it would “reduce their financial obligations [to resettled refugees]” (Cunliffe 1995, p. 289) and, as stated by former High Commissioner of the UNHCR Jean Pierre Hocké (1986-1989), it represents ‘the only realistic alternative to indefinite subsistence on charity’ (Loescher *et al.* 2008, p. 33). Another reason is that in our post-September 11<sup>th</sup> world refugees and transnational migrants more generally have been largely framed as national security threats to Western powers as fears of terrorist invasions and anti-terrorist and anti-Islamist extremist rhetoric have resulted in a tightening of domestic in-migration policies (Ó Tuathail 2010; Dalby 2008). Repatriation can coexist with these national security interests, while integration and resettlement are seen to run counter to them. Repatriation is, however, somewhat problematic for the UNHCR as part of its mandate concerns itself with the tenet of *nonrefoulement* whereby

“No Contracting State shall expel or return (“refouler”) a refugee in a manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion” (UNHCR 1951, Article 33.1).

With the UNHCR so heavily tied to geopolitical interest, repatriation is, unfortunately, often accompanied by *refoulement* (Loescher *et al.* 2008).

This shift in the discourses surrounding which is the more favorable durable solution to implement in order to protect refugees is just one example of how the UNHCR, as a subsidiary to an inherently political United Nations; that defines ‘refugees’ in political terms; and that receives geopolitically interested funding from sovereign political units, is far from an apolitical organization as its mandate suggests. Thus, the deployment of its humanitarian aid and legal and human rights protections is far from impartial.

It should be noted that nowhere in the UNHCR’s mandate is it specified that it intends to be a humanitarian organization for forced migrants. However, since its conception in 1951 the UNHCR has vastly expanded its role as a humanitarian agency as it is now closely concerned with and provides material aid for those who fit its ‘refugee’ definition yet remain within their country of origin (known as internally displaced persons or IDPs), it has provided humanitarian aid for displacement that occurred as a result of the Pakistani and Haitian earthquakes in 2005 and 2010 respectively and the 2004 tsunami in the Pacific, and, based on UN General Assembly resolutions, is largely responsible for assisting ‘persons of concern’, which it defines as “refugees under the 1951 Convention, persons who have been forced to leave their countries as a result of conflict or events seriously disturbing public order, returnees, stateless persons, and... internally displaced persons” (UNHCR 2001). In addition, the UNHCR’s ‘Convention’, as previously mentioned, currently represents the only normative framework solely intended to codify any type of legal protections for displaced people at an international scale and the Office is widely regarded as the worldwide leader in deployment of humanitarian aid for displacees due to its legal and field-based expertise in dealing with ‘refugee’ and other related crises (Loescher

*et al.* 2008; Lui 2002). Therefore, expecting the UNHCR to be a humanitarian organization that provides assistance and protections for *all* forms of forced migration does not seem like too much of a stretch, and yet, it clearly does not. If there exists a meta-sovereign humanitarian ethic, should there not be a governing body that protects the human rights of forced migrants by acting on a supra-statal platform? As this thesis will demonstrate, the causal and positional differentiations concerning forced displacements that the UNHCR (and many other organizations, governments and people in general) employs are ensnared in geopolitics which greatly hinders humanitarian action. The Global Refugee Regime stands on weak legs when it is propped up by the prevailing statist understanding of global space.

## **II. Key Concepts**

This chapter outlines the key frameworks central to a critical geopolitics perspective on forced migration. First, it examines what a ‘critical geopolitics perspective’ is by providing an overview of the literature that discusses the key concepts of the discipline. Then, it will narrow in on three important concepts in spatial politics that are utilized to frame my critical perspective on statecraft: borders, (multi-)nationalism, and political economy. I consider how these concepts interact with forced migration, as well as demonstrate how they have been applied in practice and in the discipline and literature of critical geopolitics. My critical geopolitics perspective aims to understand the way that the geopolitics of the Westphalian state system controls the genesis of forced migration and the geopolitically infused action and actors that respond to it under the guise of humanitarianism. In this sense, the idea of the incompatibility issues between globalization, transnational migration and border securitization is central to this project in terms of how forced migration and responses to it are spatialized and geopoliticized, and how these incongruities could potentially be rectified. An investigation of the competing ideals of statehood between differing nations within a state and how the conflicts that ensue from those competing ideals cause displacement will be examined in Chapter 3. It will also consider how nationalism and multi-nationalism has affected forced displacements that occur due to economic development projects (Chapter 4) and due to environmental changes (Chapter 5) in terms of the treatment of racial, ethnic and socio-economic minorities, issues surrounding environmental justice, and the economic vulnerability and disempowerment of minorities and women in multi-national states. In addition, this thesis will demonstrate how the displaced (both before and after displacement) are consistently disempowered by an increasingly uneven distribution of capital at both the international and domestic scales, thus making political economy a highly influential

causal mechanism driving forced migration. Along the same lines, and as stated previously, aid given to forced migrants is intimately related to the political economy of geopolitics, as organizations such as the UNHCR, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, various NGOs and, unsurprisingly, states themselves are bound by the financial backing of geopolitical actors (Loescher 2001; Barnett 2001; Neumann 2006; Fadines & Horst 2009; Gerhardt 2009; Weber 2004). I conclude this chapter by briefly problematizing some central positions this thesis assumes when positing a critical geopolitics perspective.

### ***Critical Geopolitics***

As a discipline, critical geopolitics emerged in the late 1980s and early 1990s through the seminal works of three scholars in human geography: Simon Dalby, Geróid Ó Tuathail, and John Agnew. Dalby's *Critical Geopolitics: Discourse, Difference, and Dissent* noted that the introduction of critical social theory and post-structuralist themes in the contemplation of international relations theory of the 1980s resided in a realm close to that of the concerns of political geography with geopolitics (Dalby 1991). Thus, grounded in international relations theory and political geography, Dalby argues that a 'critical geopolitics' can challenge the statist organization of global political space by "exposing the plays of power of grand geopolitical schemes, and in turn, challenging the categorizations of discourses of power" (*ibid*, p. 280). Building from Dalby's work and from the Foucauldian premise that geography as a discourse is a form of power/knowledge itself (Foucault 1980), Ó Tuathail and Agnew claim that geopolitics needed to be

"critically re-conceptualized as a discursive practice by which intellectuals of statecraft 'spatialize' international politics in such a way as to represent it as a 'world' characterized by particular types of places, people and dramas...[because] geopolitics is the study of the spatialization of international politics by core powers and hegemonic states" (Ó Tuathail & Agnew 1991, p. 192).

In this sense, this seminal critical geopolitics is concerned with critically engaging with, interrogating, and exposing the production of ‘geopolitical knowledge’ and power hierarchies of the Westphalian order and the Manichean divisions that express a ‘with us’ (i.e. the hegemon) or ‘with them’ (e.g. communists/terrorists) articulated and practiced through the tropes and actions of hegemonic states (Chimni 1998; White 2002; Dalby 2008; Power & Campbell 2010).

In the two decades since its formulation, critical geopolitics has grown in terms of its conceptual purview and in its analysis of geopolitical influence. Ó Tuathail (1996a; 1996b) describes how critical geopolitics’ scholars problematize the ways in which geopolitics and statist worldviews are assumed as self-evident, natural realities and how they must be cognizant of the antecedent complexities of human history when assuming their critical perspective. The ways in which war, violence, militarism and national security interests intersect with critical geopolitics is explained by Dalby (1996). He argues that critical geopolitics can demonstrate how these violent political forces reproduce the disparities of the global capitalist economy through the “discourses in international relations in policing the global order and maintaining injustice, poverty, and violence” (*ibid*, p. 658). The establishment of the nation-state global ordering and how this has territorialized history and its linkages to statecraft, globalization, information networks and economic transformations has been central in critical geopolitical inquiries as is demonstrated in Luke & Ó Tuathail (1997) and Herod *et al.* (1998). Indeed, the ways in which critical geopolitics has expanded is recognized by Power and Campbell (2010) who discuss how the discipline’s theoretical contributions and methodologies have become somewhat more difficult to define because the field has diversified as it is now not solely focused on hegemony and greater powers but other states and non-state actors such as social movements, transnational organizations and forms of collective action. Power and Campbell also mention the 2008 ‘State

of Critical Geopolitics' conference held at Durham University which brought together one hundred contributors to the field to engage in a discussion of a wide array of topics that represented how critical geopolitics had changed in the past twenty years. Topics included sessions on

“histories of geopolitics, on boundaries and borderscapes, on geopolitics migration and asylum, on contemporary geopolitical practices and the War on Terror, on critical geopolitics and the regional and on geopolitics and (audio)visual culture. The conference also included two sessions on the theme of geopolitics and development” (Power & Campbell 2010, p. 244).

Scholars of critical geopolitics have also discussed potential new directions and areas ripe for further exploration in the field. Jones and Sage (2010) invited a number of human geographers concerned with critical geopolitics to offer what they perceived to be important future avenues for the discipline to probe. Gearóid Ó Tuathail suggested exploring enduring global issues such as climate change, global inequalities, migration, genocide and protracted state rivalry issues; Jennifer Hyndman argued for more work to be done in feminist critical geopolitics and the materiality of the body that engages with the undermining binaries that characterize conflict so as to consider the “transformative or embodied ways of knowing and seeing” (p. 317); Fraser MacDonald noted the paucity of literature concerning the critical geopolitics of science and religion; Emily Gilbert argued that critical attention should address race and money in terms of discriminatory inscriptions of racial identity and the role of race in social and economic organization; and Virginie Mamadouh encouraged scholars of critical geopolitics to not only be critical in their deconstruction of hegemonic discourses and power plays but to also offer solutions to those issues, as well as continuing the connections being made between critical geopolitics and the perception of nature, media studies and political economy (Jones & Sage 2010). As can be seen, much of what this thesis intends to explore is highlighted

by many of the concerns for further research these academics express (migration, climate change, inequality, conflict, race, political economy, etc.).

Perhaps the most relevant to this project is Dodds' discussion of the ways in which the discipline of geography has been actively engaged with issues concerning ethics, morality, human rights and humanitarianism and how that can manifest itself in studies of (forced) migration (Dodds 2001). He notes that "the geopolitical context of nation states continues to shape so many of our (western) debates on justice and human rights. Globalization also highlights the spatial extent of our moral responsibility for others" (p. 476) and that

"geographers have a valuable contribution to make to debates over nationalism and cosmopolitanism by highlighting how territoriality plays a part in defining particular spaces and regulating movement across boundaries... There remains the question of how we can organize political life without always falling back on territorial conceptions of community (and democracy) which may be ill equipped to deal with migration, hybrid cultures and diaspora (p. 477).

This is the critical geopolitical perspective assumed in this thesis. It critically analyzes the way that the geopolitics of the Westphalian nation-state system dictates forced migration and the geopolitically infused action and actors that respond to it. Then it explores a way to conceptualize humanitarian responses to forced migration that are not beholden to a seemingly self-evident and natural conceptualization of geopolitical territoriality established by borders, (multi-)nationalism and political economy.

### ***Borders***

Scholars such Beaume (1991), van Oostrom (2006), Anderson (1983) and Gellner (1983) each have different theories concerning how and when the modern nation-state system and international borders came into existence. However, the Peace of Westphalia of 1648 represents the historical moment where state-centric sovereignty was codified and the concept of modern international relations began to take true form. Farr (2005) notes that "after Westphalia the Holy

Roman Empire's ability to enforce its ecclesiastical and political hegemony was virtually destroyed...National sovereignty, characterized by autonomy and interstate competition became the primary governing system among European states" (p. 156). The Peace was based around the Hobbesian concept of sovereignty whereby states, rather than feudal principalities, are governed by a sovereign, rather than Papal authority, and international relations were prejudiced towards interference in another state's domestic affairs (*ibid*; Gerhardt 2009). Thus political boundaries demarcating states began to dominate cartographic representations of the European world which was vital in cultivating nationalistic identities. Identities increasingly became associated with political units and the sovereign, rather than primarily stark cultural contrasts, and borders represented a deciding line that differentiated oneself (as well as a collective identity) from the 'other' or 'others' who lived on the opposite side of the line.

As has been noted by a number of critical geopolitics' scholars (Ó Tuathail & Agnew 1992; Ó Tuathail 1996a; Power & Campbell 2010; Dalby 2008), The Peace of Westphalia has dominated understandings of the 'ideal' development of political entities and the way in which geopolitical knowledge is produced and perpetuated; the globe is made up of 'naturally occurring', self-determined, spatially distinct, sovereignized polities. This geopolitical perspective of global ordering is heavily reliant upon borders and, especially through the 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, has been repeatedly reinforced through the practice of border securitization. Dalby (1990) notes how national security tropes utilized by the United States and other Western powers have become one of, if not *the*, highest stated value of the state apparatus and are practiced through exclusionary spatial protection articulated by a militarized discourse that projects the threat of eternal enmity of the extra-territorial 'other'. Throughout the Cold War this 'other' was 'the communist, Soviet threat'. Since the end of the Cold War and even more so

since 11 September 2001 this ‘otherized’ enemy has increasingly been Islamist extremists and the threat of ‘global terrorism’. As Dalby points out: “US capital and military power dominated the post-war world. With this reorganization came the emergence of the ‘National Security State’, a permanent militarization of politics justified in terms of the protection of national ‘security’ [and appropriately termed ‘containment militarism’]” (*ibid*, p. 173). In this sense, borders become fortified, power becomes insulated, hyper-nationalist identities are harvested and sustained, and geopolitically rooted ‘otherizing’ rhetoric becomes naturalized, public discourse.

Borders and security discourses have been highly influential in terms of their impacts on forced migration. Both Coleman (2009) and Pickering (2004) point to how, since 9/11, the United States has constructed a “risk intensification for undocumented immigrants” and forced migrants through border policing and conservative immigration laws (Coleman 2009, p. 204; Pickering 2004). As will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 3 of this thesis, Hyndman (1996; 1999) notes how border securitization that is consistent with anti-immigrant (i.e. ‘anti-other’) national security rhetoric and the neoliberal economic agendas of Western powers has been implemented to contain refugee flows in Africa in the post-Cold War geopolitical climate. She argues that the border-crossing stipulation in the UNHCR’s definition of a ‘refugee’ created a situation in which would-be Somali refugees were contained within Somalia by positioning refugee camps within Somali borders and through the securitization of the Kenyan-Somali border, so as to limit the financial burdens and potential national security threats of refugee-hosting states (Hyndman 1999). She also argues that while

“a neo-conservative argument against immigration or refugee resettlement might code newcomers as ‘foreigners’ who simply fail to understand or fit into ‘our’ culture, a neo-liberal argument might use an econometric assessment of the average contribution of such a person as the basis for deciding whether such immigration is a good investment” (Hyndman 1996, p. 7).

Both arguments highlight the state-centric, border reliant ‘otherizing’ and economic conceptualizations of forced migrants, which firmly entrench responses to forced migration in geopolitical power tropes of the hegemon. Furthermore, borders and security are central to the debates concerning the generation of and responses to current and potential environmentally displaced persons as borders and national security interests not only restrict the movements of those displaced by environmental changes but they also result in a hegemonic discourse that understands transnational displacees, who primarily come from the ‘Third World’, as invasive security threats and economic burdens (White 2011). When the displaced are conceptualized as ‘threats’, or potential enemies, the moral impetus to provide humanitarian aid is eschewed. As we will see, however, borders acting as a division between two sides can create an ‘otherizing’ narrative just as easily as borders that circumscribe two or more factions and force them together.

### ***(Multi-)Nationalism***

Nationalism and multi-nationalism are closely tied to the issues of Westphalian ordering, border-crafting, nationalist identities and ‘otherizing’ discussed in the previous section, but have also been heavily influenced by the European imperial ethos of colonization. The Berlin Conference of 1884-85 which symbolized what has been deemed the ‘Scramble for Africa’ serves as a case in point. Between November of 1884 and February 1885 European imperial powers Germany, Austria-Hungary, Belgium, Denmark, France, the United Kingdom, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Sweden-Norway, and the Ottoman Empire convened to carve up Africa into 53 colonial outposts with natural and human resource accessibility being the primary motivation despite a preamble that speaks of “furthering the moral and material well-being of the native populations” (Hargreaves 1984, p. 17). The result was a political map of Africa that resembled the state-centric geopolitical ordering that was produced in Europe after

the Peace of Westphalia but that had drawn quite arbitrary borders reflecting imperial economic interests and ignoring Africa's human history. Since then, Africa has been "stuck with the ridiculous borders which, at many places, cut across homogenous ethnic groups, putting one half in one country and another half in another country; or forced former warring groups or enemies into unitary states, thereby ensuring that conflicts never ended..." (New African 2010, p. 12). Thus we see how a geopolitical production of knowledge in which the Eurocentric geography of statist territoriality becomes the dominant ideology of representing the globe through a forcible adherence to the economic agendas of the hegemony. As nationalism is (randomly) retrofitted onto the African continent, multi-national states begin to take form as culturally and ethnically dissimilar groups (many of whom have been at odds with each other for centuries) are expected to symbiotically coexist, creating states in which unnaturally straight-line boundaries box-in ethnically divisive groups.

The multi-nationalism of African states has, as mentioned previously by *New African*, created an African continent in which ethnic conflict and genocide seem eternal. For example, Darfur was an independent sultanate for three hundred years until 1916 when it was forced into the colonial state of Sudan. However, as it is an immensely large geographic region, its people fall into the post-Berlin Conference states of Sudan and Chad and thus a territorial war broke out in 2003 between an array of ethnically divided factions from both Sudan and Chad including Arabized and Arab Bedouin indigenous groups and the non-Arab Muslim Fur, Zaghawa and Masalit ethnic groups (Hentz 2010). The Darfur conflict will be further investigated in Chapter 3 of this project, but suffice it to say for now, that multi-national states born out of the Berlin Conference of 1884-85 have been extraordinarily influential in generating forced migratory

flows, brought on by conflict, economic development, or environmental reasons, throughout Africa due to ethnic tensions within states.

In assuming a critical geopolitics perspective one does not necessarily need to look towards the arbitrary border crafting of colonial powers to see how geopolitics can create forced displacements based on multi-national states. Though regions such as the Americas, the Middle East, Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands may not have had their own Berlin Conferences per se, the ways in which state-centric renderings of the global, geopolitical map have become ubiquitous and the ways in which nations strive to become autonomous, internationally recognized, political entities (an ideology introduced and enforced by hegemonic powers) have generated a plethora of multi-national states. For instance, Lang and Knudsen (2009) note how Sri Lanka (an island country whose borders are therefore dictated by its physical geography), with its desire to become its own independent state and join the Westphalian system by achieving independence from the United Kingdom, is now a multi-national state characterized by a number of ethnic groups (including the Sinhalese, Tamils and Moors) who were involved in a protracted civil conflict for over 30 years that displaced hundreds of thousands of people. No arbitrary borders were drawn in this case (though Sri Lanka does have a colonial history), yet the dominant and pervasive geopolitical understanding of the world which emphasizes nation-state crafting creates multi-national states in which ethnic, racial, socio-cultural and political tensions divide and displace people who attempt to co-reside within geopolitically and socially constructed state borders. This thesis will investigate the geopolitical nature of those aforementioned displacement-inducing conflicts, as well as others, in more detail in Chapter 3. It will also demonstrate how nationalism and multi-nationalism have influenced forced migrations that occur due to development projects (Chapter 4) and environmental changes (Chapter 5) vis-à-

vis treatment of disempowered and disenfranchised racial, ethnic and socio-economic minorities, environmental justice, and economic vulnerability of disparate minorities in multi-national states. In this sense, ‘otherizing’ not only occurs at an international scale between nations but at a domestic scale, within states, as well.

### ***Political Economy***

As can be seen from the previous two sections about borders and nationalism, it is difficult to discuss one of these themes in geopolitics without covering another. Political economy has been at the root of many of the references laid out in this chapter – Dalby’s (1996) critique of how war, violence, militarism and national security reproduce inequalities in the global capitalist economy; Luke and Ó Tuathail (1997) and Herod *et al.* (1998) demonstrate the linkages between nation-state crafting and economic transformations; the future research directions presented by a group of scholar in critical geopolitics in Jones and Sage’s (2010) work consider political economy to varying degrees; Hyndman’s (1996) structuring of the geopolitics of forced migration within neoliberal argumentation demonstrates the interconnectedness of political economy and borders; and the genesis of the Berlin Conference of 1884-85, ‘otherizing’ and multi-national tensions, and the perpetuation of a statist global perspective are each influenced by political economy (Hargreaves 1984; Lang & Knudsen 2009; Ó Tuathail 1996a).

With that said, there are some key political economic concepts within critical geopolitics discourse that require further exploration. Dodds (2001) notes that critical geopolitics is a corpus of work founded within the disciplines of political geography and international relations that it is “bolstered by post-structuralism and political economy” (p. 470). Indeed, geopolitics is about the dynamics of power struggles within international relations; and the ways in which these ‘power struggles’ are manifested within the global terrain significantly shifted in the 20<sup>th</sup> century,

particularly after World War II. With technological advancements in communication, transportation and mobility, the development of bi-lateral and multi-lateral trade agreements, as well as a saturation of domestic markets in western states that capped domestic product demand, an ideological shift that went away from framing the exertion of hegemonic power in terms of territorial expansion to a capitalist, neocolonial ideology that stressed economic expansion began to take traction, particularly in the United States (Flint 2004). Western economic powers saw the financial potential of tapping into the ‘global market’ as a source for economic growth. This accelerated the ‘capitalist world-economy’ of the ‘World System’ that was espoused by Immanuel Wallerstein, who argued that the modern, globalizing economic system that was established by the 19<sup>th</sup> century is characterized by a complex network of economic exchanges whereby the competition amongst states (and other actors) for capital and labor and the desire for perpetual financial accumulation amounts to frictions, irregularities and inequalities between actors (Wallerstein 1974). In the political economy of the 21<sup>st</sup> century this neocolonial ideology of hegemonic power structuring and hierarchies is identifiable both in the discourses and practices of the hegemon. Dalby (2008) notes that

“In line with George Bush’s phrase from the January 2003 State of the Union speech, that America “exercises power without conquest”...American power is uninterested in territorial control. Rather its mode of imperial rule defines the terms and conditions of trade and disciplines local regimes that do not follow policies broadly congruent with American financial and security interests” (p. 426).

Power is exerted through the control of the movement of goods and labor as well as through the investment (financial and material) in regional politics that will align themselves with large economic powers, rather than through direct territorial domination by way of conquest. China has also established itself as a neocolonial power with its large-scale investment and business establishment in resource rich areas of Africa that has been seen to discriminate and exploit

African workers and primarily benefit the Chinese economy, despite contributing to modernization and generating employment in those regions (Jauch 2011).

As monetary, rather than territorialized, influence becomes the currency of power, capitalism becomes the dominant geopolitical framework for which states are assessed, understood and utilized within the globalized political economy. States outside the hegemony are encouraged to ‘develop their economies’ through the extraction of valuable natural resources which are then typically exported for consumption in ‘the developed world’ rendering the undiversified economies of the ‘developing world’ highly vulnerable to exploitation, corruption, and the volatile market demands of the global economy. Therefore a ‘capitalist world-economy’, whereby financial capital is skewed towards highly industrialized states, is sustained, thereby perpetuating the hegemonic status quo. This plays a direct role in the generation of and responses to forced migratory flows. Croucher (2012) argues that the “hierarchical differentiation of populations along lines of race, ethnicity, gender, citizenship and migration status are not merely unfortunate by-products of neoliberalism, but structural elements of it” and the vulnerability of these structurally disempowered populations can be highly coercive in the genesis of forced displacements (p. 1349).

### ***Problematizing Critical Geopolitics***

The critical geopolitics framework assumed in both the presentation of case studies and the analysis to proceed is heavily couched in the seminal works of Simon Dalby, Geróid Ó Tuathail, and John Agnew. In a sense, this grounding may lead to the unfounded assumption that the central ideas and discourses of critical geopolitics sprouted into being in the late 1980s. However, by historicizing this framework it is apparent that critical geopolitics perspectives are rooted in earlier discursive analyses such as critical Marxism and even in non-academic

articulations of anti-state ordering from colonized people and even Albert Einstein who once stated that “Nationalism is an infantile disease. It is the measles of mankind”. Furthermore, there is potentially an inherent contradiction between arguing for a stateless world and holding states accountable for forced displacement. To wit: in a stateless world, would forced migration cease to exist? As this thesis will extensively argue, contemporary forced migration is largely the by-product of statist renderings of global space, but is a stateless world a peaceful and egalitarian one in which social, political and economic marginalization no longer coerces involuntary migratory flows? One may hope that this is the case, but if it is not then does the entire argument of this thesis fall apart? I would argue that it does not; that forced migration in a stateless world, even if it is the result of marginalization, would be explained by different incipient causal mechanisms and motivations that are not congruent with the political and economic grabs for power that one sees in the current global terrain. However, it is that case that, in attempting to problematize the state vis-à-vis forced migration, this thesis, at times, does not give more consideration to a broader sense of actors (such as Transnational Corporations or localized individuals) and agents (such as the proliferation of capitalism as the dominant form of economic exchange or states without a colonial history that still generate forced displacements such as China). These are facets that could potentially be explored in more detail in later works.

### **III. Case 1: Conflict and Displacement**

#### ***Introduction***

The nature of violent conflict has largely taken a new form in the post-World War II era. Traditionally, acts of war primarily centered around the state and its agents; conflict was either international (between states), or easily categorized as civil (between two well-defined factions within one state). But, as will be demonstrated below by investigating several contemporary conflicts, most conflicts now involve a multitude of both state *and* non-state actors with varied interests and desired outcomes, and they rarely have a discernable center of gravity as they can spill over state and cultural boundaries and as various actors and factions within the conflict become increasingly difficult to define (Hentz 2010). Keeping this fact in mind, this chapter will first examine the ways in which the three important concepts in geopolitics described in the previous chapter – borders, (multi-)nationalism, and political economy – have influenced the genesis of contemporary conflicts and the human displacements that have resulted in Darfur, Syria and Sri Lanka. Then, using the same critical geopolitics perspective, it will explore how geopolitics has structured humanitarian aid and interventions for displaced populations in each of the previously mentioned conflicts as well as conflicts occurring in Rwanda and Zaire/The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Somalia, and Colombia.

#### ***The Geopolitical Generation of Displacement-Inducing Conflict***

##### *Darfur*

The perpetuation of a Westphalian, statist ordering of the world through what was called the ‘geopolitical production of global knowledge’ in the previous chapter is where I will begin my examination of the forces driving contemporary conflict. In the three cases I consider in depth this pervasive territorialization of political entities entrenched in the concepts of

sovereignty, autonomy and intrastate competition has time and again proven to be one of the most prevalent incipient mechanisms behind conflict generation. On the African continent the aforementioned Berlin Conference of 1884-85 has consistently displayed its staying capacity with regards to conflict.

Despite a long history (several hundred years) of being an independent sultanate in which the territory and its borders were expanded and diminished as a result of conflict, conquest and the physical geography (not unlike the ways in which European territories were established), Darfur was unceremoniously incorporated into the Berlin Conference state of Sudan in 1916 by Anglo-Egyptian forces due to British fears that the sultanate would potentially fall under Ottoman influence (Joyce 2009). However, this has proven to be problematic as Darfur is a geographic area roughly the size of France and Darfuris are ethnically diverse and located in both Sudan and neighboring Chad. As the Sudanese state has developed, Darfur has been continually beleaguered by conflict throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries due to political instability rooted in the ongoing ethnic tensions between various factions in both Sudan and Chad (Hentz 2010). The present day ‘Darfur conflict’ began in 2003 with an attack by insurgents of the non-Arab, black African Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa tribes on government military outposts due to government favoritism towards Arab herdsman encroaching on their farmlands, and then a counter-attack by Sudanese government officials and Janjaweed Arab militias (UNHCR 2006). What has ensued is widespread killings, rapes, abductions, and crop and village torching by Janjaweed militias and rebel forces lead by Minni Minawi, massive offensive retaliations by the Darfuri, non-Arab, Sudanese Liberation Army (SLA) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), countless ceasefire violations by both sides, and the displacement of over 500,000

refugees and over 2.4 million IDPs, the large majority of whom are non-Arab, black Africans (Mahmoud 2004; UNHCR 2012).

Not only are the tensions between the black African Sudanese groups and Sudanese Arabs ethnic in nature, but socio-economic and political as well. In Sudan all effective political and economic power is in the hands of President Omer al-Bashir and the National Islamic Front (NIF) party who gained power following a coup d'état in the late 1980s and went on to establish Islamic (Sharia) law in Sudan, overhauling Darfur's tribal governance systems (Joyce 2009; Mahmoud 2004). The authoritarian nature of the Sudanese political system has seen the establishment of an Islamic political and economic elite in central Sudan and the capital, Khartoum, that has systematically discriminated, abused and neglected the non-Arab rural and urban poor populations in Darfur and other peripheral areas of the country (Hentz 2010). As Mahmoud (2004) argues; "The crisis is political and state-made. It results from the misadministration, abuse of authority, and economic greed of a governing elite committed against the powerless Africans of Darfur. [It] demonstrates a deep disrespect for human dignity by the fundamentalist religious ideology of Arab supremacy" (p. 3). Furthermore, the Sudanese economy was traditionally reliant upon agriculture to export cotton, livestock and sugar and was strenuously faltering due to an immense foreign debt burden (\$20 billion USD) (Lado 2002). However, the discovery of oil in Southern Darfur and elsewhere in 1979 has allowed the country to rely less on foreign imports, it has allowed the central government in Khartoum to wield greater economic power and authority, and it has brought a number of foreign oil companies (Canadian Talisman Energy, China National Petroleum Company and Petronas of Malaysia) into the region (Large 2007). As the Bashir government aims to protect and control oil-rich areas while relying on foreign development of the oilfields (due to the technological and logistical

capabilities of foreign companies), conflict has intensified both *in* these areas due to their econometric potential and *because of* these areas as they have provided the Sudanese government the financial security to enable it to spend the approximately \$1 million dollars per day it utilizes to sustain the conflict (Lado 2002).

### *Syria*

The Syrian Arab Republic (Syria) has a tumultuous history of statehood imposed by European colonial and statist ideologies that is in many ways similar to the African Continent. Hinnebusch (2009) notes that “Syria exemplifies the problematic of nation-building as few states have been afflicted with such a radical disjuncture between territory and identity” (p. 1616). After World War I, the signing of the Anglo-French Declaration of 1918 gave France and Great Britain the power to ‘establish democratic governments’ in countries that had previously been part of the Ottoman Empire (*ibid*). Despite the altruistic and democratic language in the document – “The goal envisaged by France and Great Britain...is the complete and final liberation of the peoples who have for so long been oppressed by the Turks and the setting up of national governments...deriving their authority from the free exercise of the initiative and choice of the indigenous populations” (Anglo-French Declaration 1918) – the declaration ultimately resulted in French and British control of the regions into the 1940s (Dahi 2012). Syria, whose borders were drawn by French and British diplomats, became a League of Nations state in 1920 but did not escape the military occupancy of a French mandate until 1946 when France’s weak, post-World War II government was pressured by Syrian nationalists and Great Britain to evacuate their troops (*ibid*). Thus, the newly independent state (originally drawn by Europeans) of Syria was established with an extremely ethnically and religiously diverse population that included

“its Sunni Muslim Arab majority alongside a multitude of minorities: Sunni Kurds; Armenian and Arab Christians of Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant denominations; Assyrians; Circassians; Kurdish Yazidis...; and the quasi-Shiite Muslim sects of Druze, Ismailis, and Alawites...[as well as] several thousand Jews” (Glass 2012, p. 86-87).

Due in large part to the *ad hoc* state craftsmanship and the multi-national state that ensued, from independence until the 1970s Syrian history is replete with upheavals, military coups, political and martial fragmentation, an unsuccessful union with Egypt, a failed attempt at tripartite unification with Iraq and Egypt, and hostilities with Israel; all of which culminated in the ousting of the civilian party leadership by way of a military coup by Alawite Minister of Defense Hafez al-Assad and the establishment of his Arab Socialist Ba’ath Party in 1970 (Dahi 2012). Hafez al-Assad maintained power (though not without challenge, particularly from the Sunni Muslim majority) until his death in 2000 when his son, Bashar al-Assad, was ‘elected’ president by referendum in which he ran unopposed, thus maintaining his father’s Ba’ath Party authoritarian regime (*ibid*).

In early 2011, in conjunction with uprisings against oppressive dictators in Tunisia and Egypt, a national movement of peaceful protests sought to bring an end to the nearly 50 year period of a “state-of emergency” in Syria (which effectively suspended most constitutional protections thus allowing the Assad regime to remain in power, and has been justified due to the state of war that continues to exist in Israel/Palestine) (BBC 2011). President al-Assad ultimately responded by ordering the Syrian Army to open fire on the demonstrators which caused protestors to form an armed rebellion, thereby commencing the Syrian Civil War (‘the Syrian Uprising’). Owing to the various ethnic and religious Syrian national groups, the conflict is complex and involves a multitude of national and international actors. On behalf of the Syrian government the Syrian Armed Forces, the Alawite and Shi’a dominated Jaysh al-Sha’bi armed militia, Iranian Revolutionary Guards and Basij paramilitary, the Lebanese Shi’a Islamic militant

group Hezbollah, and Iraqi Shi'a militias have been involved in the conflict to varying degrees; while defected members of the Syrian Armed Forces and primarily Sunni Muslim rebel fighters (The Free Syrian Army) backed by Turkey, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, the Kurdish national Popular Protection Units, and a number of Mujahideen and jihadist militant groups have rebelled against the Syrian government (Glass 2012; BBC 2012; Al Jazeera 2013). The large number of interest groups involved represents two crucial aspects of the conflict. First is the idea of the 'radical disjuncture between territory and identity' mentioned by Hinnebusch (2009). As diverse ideologies (from Syria and abroad) that are far more based in philosophical and theological identity narratives than territorial ones coalesce in attempts to establish Syrian statehood, conflicting visions for the future of the state of Syria create bifurcations amongst both government and rebel supporters, thus sustaining conflict. Ismail (2011) notes how the ideological divides concerning Syrian statehood percolate down to religious minorities as well, stating:

“the engagement of religious minority groups in the uprising has been uncertain. It is not possible to examine all the factors that have inhibited such sectors of the population from joining the uprising; the issue of sectarianism, however, presents itself as a significant if not determining one. In a sense, the question of sectarianism has interrogated the identities of both those participating in the uprising, as well as those who have stood on the sidelines or have actively opposed it” (p. 539-540).

Ismail goes on to state that a number of religious minorities simultaneously support the idea of ousting the non-democratic Assad regime yet are unsure of how they may be received if a more non-sectarian governance is established in Syria (*ibid*). Essentially what has occurred in Syria is a situation in which a host of nationals are fighting to establish their ideal versions of a pre-delineated colonial state, rather than an ideal version of a state being established *and* delineated by nationals.

The second crucial aspect represented by the expansive number of parties interested in the Syrian conflict has to do with the fact that the UNHCR has estimated that the violence has generated at least 1 million refugees and 1.2 million IDPs and counting, the majority of whom have been economically disempowered by the Assad regime for years (Reuters 2012; BBC 2013). The socio-economic implications of the conflict are worthy of note here. In 2005 Syrian leadership adapted its Social Market Economy which, as Haddad (2011) argues, relied “on the dysfunctional socioeconomic trade-off of reducing state subsidies while encouraging unaccountable big-business endeavors...[which] harmed the middle and lower classes and threatened the stability that the regime so valued” (p. 46-47). Haddad goes on to point out how the agricultural sector was the hardest hit by Syria’s new(er) economic policies (13.5% decrease of GDP) and that most Syrians were unable to benefit from the macroeconomic gains the country enjoyed since the slight reforms in 2005 (*ibid*). In this sense, the socio-economic divide between political elites and the disenfranchised were not only a driving force behind the uprising, but were also influential in determining which socio-economic classes became refugee and IDPs. Furthermore, the sustained violence and the overwhelmingly large number of Syrians pouring into nearby Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt have, in addition to putting an incalculable strain on the refugees themselves due, in large part, to the abhorrent nature of the conflict they are fleeing and the horrendous conditions of the refugee camps they are housed in, put a significant strain on the budgets of these host countries and the UNHCR.

### *Sri Lanka*

Sri Lanka, formerly Ceylon, represents an interesting case in that the fact that it is an island nation created a situation in which border crafting was dictated by its physical geography. However, the country’s colonial history clearly demonstrates the problematic of statecraft,

despite the fact that straight-line national boundaries were not necessarily drawn in a room full of European colonizers or diplomats as was the case with Sudan and Syria. Sri Lanka has seen a number of European (Portuguese, Dutch, British) explorers (i.e. colonizers) arrive at its shores since the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, but by the early 19<sup>th</sup> century Great Britain and its British East India Company dominated coastal Sri Lanka and by 1833 had established European style executive and legislative councils to govern the whole island (Abdul Rauff & Hatta 2013). As in the other two cases previously discussed, Sri Lankans are ethnically diverse, with three groups making up the majority of the population – the predominantly Buddhist, Sinhalese make up the majority (74%), the predominantly Hindu, Tamils make up the largest ethnic minority (18%), and the predominantly Muslim, Moors account for almost 8% of the population (*ibid*). As such, since gaining independence from the British in 1948, attempts at building a cohesive, multi-national Sri Lankan state have been greatly hindered by ethno-political violence and tensions. Although a number of scholars point out that ethnic relations between the Sinhalese, Tamils and Moors were not necessarily harmonious before colonization and independence (Abdul Rauff & Hatta 2013; Bandarage 2009; Imtiyaz & Stavis 2008; Rampton 2011; Lang & Knudsen 2009), the idea that the island should be understood as an autonomous state of ethnic consociation has led to deep ideological divides along ethno-religious lines and has instigated a protracted civil conflict beginning in 1983 (Rampton 2011).

Much of the genesis of the Sri Lankan Civil War can be traced to Sri Lanka's colonial underpinnings and the favoritism of British rulers towards the minority Tamils, who were allowed to occupy administrative positions during colonial rule (Imtiyaz & Stavis 2008). As Imtiyaz and Stavis argue:

The colonial process created borders, which included or divided ethnic groups and defined the demographic mixture of the colonies that eventually became countries.

Colonialism's divide-and-rule policies, census taking, and promotion of ethnic identities all enhanced (and sometimes even created) cultural and ethnic distinctions in colonial societies...[Furthermore], colonial rulers favored and allied with a particular group, often a minority, to help in colonial administration. A minority, after all, could be more trusted to ally with an outside power. The minority might preferentially receive education and then share in political and economic power. When independence came, such a group found itself in a precarious position, as the majority group sought to gain political and economic power. When the majority groups seize power from the former administrators and marginalize the minority group politically and economically, then the minority might either struggle for power or for secession (*ibid*, p. 136-137).

As Sinhalese politicians began to successfully utilize ethnically polarizing rhetoric to gain support from the Sinhalese majority and to win positions of political power, Tamils and Moors became increasingly disempowered politically as the Sinhala language and Buddhism were given special status in both state and public sectors and several public and heavily publicized acts of violence against Tamils were carried out through the 1950s, 60s, 70s and early 80s that were mostly ignored or even instigated by the Sinhalese dominated government (Rampton 2011). So, in 1983 a Tamil separatist movement – the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam (LTTE) – attempted to violently secede and create a Tamil state in northeast Sri Lanka as it engaged in a local armed conflict with government security forces. The conflict has generated a grotesque number of targeted civilian killings and brutality towards all ethnicities by both sides, the razing of Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim shrines and religious buildings, suicide bombings, and attempts at ethnic cleansing (Imtiyaz & Stavits 2008). Forced displacement has been an endemic feature of the conflict as well. Because of the protracted nature of the war the number of Sri Lankan refugees and IDPs is difficult to discern due to the duration of the violence and because a large number of refugees who sought asylum in India in the late 1980s were repatriated as there was an intermittent cessation of violence that did not last and thus the same people were re-displaced (UNHCR 2013). But in 2007 the UNHCR estimated that there were over 500,000 IDPs and 150,000 Sri Lankan refugees and asylum seekers, the majority of whom (80%) are Tamils (Lang

& Knudsen 2009). However, Abdul Rauff & Hatta (2013) note how there are structural, regional and ethnic differences in the forms of forced migration throughout the island as a large number of Tamil civilians were escorted to 'safe zones' in the north of the country by the LTTE while no such precautions were taken for the Moors that lived in the same region and a number of illegal taxations enforced by the LTTE on the Moors prevented the Muslim peasantry from farming their paddy land in Tamil dominated areas. The socioeconomic realities of the conflict should not be overlooked either, as it has primarily been socioeconomic and political elites of both the Tamils and the Sinhalese who have gained power due to their control over Sri Lanka's lucrative tea and rice industries and who have maintained dominant roles in the development and sustainment of the conflict, while it has been the socioeconomically disempowered civilians who have taken the brunt of the casualties and have been displaced the most (Bandarage 2009).

In 2009 the conflict seemingly came to an end as a large number of arms smuggling vessels belonging to the LTTE were destroyed and the LTTE lost financial support. The Sri Lankan government overtook the LTTE and proclaimed victory and the LTTE admitted defeat (Rampton 2011). However, despite the fact that the LTTE has dropped its separatist demands, localized violence still continues as ethnic tensions remain high due to the ethnic 'trichotomy' that ensued in an attempt to create a Sri Lankan state (Abdul Rauff & Hatta 2013) and repatriation and resettlement issues of refugees and IDPs has remained complex and highly complicated due to the fragile peace that exists (UNHCR 2013). It remains to be seen whether a federal solution that disperses power in a consociational fashion can be achieved in Sri Lanka.

### ***The Geopolitics of Humanitarian Aid and Intervention in Conflict***

Whereas the preceding section of this chapter was primarily concerned with the antecedent historical, socio-political and economic mechanisms that generated the displacement-

inducing conflicts discussed, now I will explore the experiences of the forced migrants more thoroughly and the ways in which various actors have responded to their plight. If the nature of conflict has changed, in many regards the manner by which aid organizations respond to those displaced by conflict has changed as well. As mentioned previously, the UNHCR has increasingly turned towards repatriation as the desired 'durable solution' for aiding refugees. And while, as I and others argue, this is primarily done to appease the economic and national security interests of the hegemonic powers that financially back the UNHCR, the UNHCR, as a perceived humanitarian organization, cannot say that this is what motivates repatriation. Without much choice, it began to utilize the rhetoric of 'returning home' so as to sound humane. For instance, Lui (2002) argues that by "appealing to home and belonging, the discourse of repatriation represents refugeehood as a condition of abnegation and non-recognition in a world of rootedness. The representation of refugees as figures of lack and loss gives a distinctive social and psychological meaning to 'return'" (p. 31). In essence, repatriation, for the most part, is no longer voluntary, but the UNHCR can still seem to be acting humanely because it is 'helping people return home'. At the same time the "moral benchmark is no longer whether the totality of rights available to refugees are defended and honored but rather whether one course of action is more likely to provide better protection to refugees – according to UNHCR's assessment" (Barnett 2001, p. 261).

The practice of early repatriation can be seen in a number of conflict related refugee-generating scenarios. In the late 1980s, due to so-called 'refugee fatigue', the Indian government pressured the UNHCR to repatriate some 40,000 Sri Lankan refugees who had sought asylum in India, as a tenuous (at best) peace had been agreed upon between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government (Kendle 1998). What resulted was the UNHCR setting up a presence within in Sri

Lanka and a clear breach of its tenant of '*nonrefoulement*' as a majority of the repatriated Sri Lankan refugees were integrated into a volatile climate and were re-displaced (or worse) as fighting re-intensified by 1990 (*ibid*). As the conflict unfolds in Syria the issues of repatriation and '*refoulement*' will be important to monitor. Currently, with over 1 million refugees in neighboring countries, the UNHCR is reporting that it lacks 75% of the required funding for aiding such a large influx of displacees and that it has only received 20% of the \$1.5 billion it was promised by international donors in January of 2013 (BBC 2013). As host countries begin to feel the economic strain of granting asylum, it will be interesting to see if borders become increasingly securitized so as to contain refugee flows or if involuntary repatriations begin to occur.

The conflict and genocide in Rwanda in the mid-1990s that forced millions of Rwandan Hutu into refugee camps established by the UNHCR in Zaire/Democratic Republic of the Congo also serves as an exegetic example of the geopolitics of repatriation. In an unprecedented move, the UN Secretary-General put the impetus of addressing the entire security issue on the UNHCR, thus abdicating its maintenance of peace and security auspices to its humanitarian subsidiary (Mills 2004). But when the Zairian government announced a deadline for the repatriation of Rwandan refugees because the camps had turned into Hutu militant bases, the UNHCR was forced to support the deadline due to pressures from its international donors who wanted to see its financial obligations to the camps come to an end. As soon as the refugees were returned to Rwanda "the Rwandan government, supported by the US, declared the refugee problem solved, saying that no refugees were left in Zaire...Much of the impetus for this support came from guilt arising from the US standing on the sidelines as the genocide [in Rwanda] occurred" (*ibid*, p. 175). However the UNHCR contended that hundreds of thousands of refugees remained in Zaire

(not in camps) where, as tensions from Rwanda spilled into Zaire, Zairian Tutsi militias began slaughtering many of the ethnic Hutu refugees. These horrific events unfortunately highlight the way in which geopolitical agendas marginalize the UNHCR in its humanitarian endeavors as it is coerced into accepting '*refouling*' terms and is unable to do more than watch as humanitarian crises pass beyond its grasp due to inadequate funding from its donor countries in situations that are of little economic or security interest to them.

Beyond the security and economic dilemmas that restrict the financing of humanitarian aid, the concepts of borders and nationalism within the context of Westphalian geopolitical ordering should not be lost in the above stated examples. While humanitarianism is expected to be metastatal in its application, the examples from Sri Lanka, Syria and Zaire demonstrate how the 'otherizing' ethos that is established when borders become entrenched realities in nationalist identity crafting allows for host states and UNHCR donor governments to conceptualize refugees as economic burdens. Furthermore, although IDPs are typically accounted for, they generally receive far less aid than those displacees who have crossed a border. The fact that displacees are expected to seek out borders in order to receive 'aid', typically in the form of substandard living conditions in crowded camps, exemplifies the way in which statist understandings of the world do a poor job of dealing with issues of forced migration. Despite the development of "The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement" by Francis M. Deng in 1993 which draws from existing human rights laws to outline a normative framework for the protection of IDPs, IDPs cannot obtain a legal status and international protection because they are still under the jurisdiction of their own state. As Fadines and Horst (2009) note "being an internally displaced person is not a legal status, and imposing the Guiding Principles on any state is impossible because of the salience of territorial sovereignty (p. 118). In Colombia for example, the UN has

identified the situation in the country as the worst humanitarian crisis in the Western hemisphere as forced internal displacement of millions caused by brutal political violence has been going on for decades (*ibid*). Due to some of the worst income distribution in the Americas which has been amplified by neoliberal economic development beginning in the 1980s that concentrated wealth in the hands of landowners and political elites, millions of poor *campesinos*, indigenous peoples and Afro-Colombians have been displaced over violent struggles for land ownership. However, even with the implementation of ‘Law 387’ which draws heavily from Francis Deng’s ‘Guiding Principles’, protection for Colombian IDPs has been limited both at the state level due to a lack of territorial control by the state in many of the areas where the displacements are occurring, and at the international level by the UNHCR due concerns about sovereignty and, arguably, a lack of an international media presence to promote awareness of the issue (*ibid*).

Somewhat similarly, the containment of forced migrants has also been utilized as a humanitarian rhetorical device. While Article 13.2 of the UDHR states that “Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country” and Article 14.1 states that “Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution” (UDHR 1948), the UNHCR has shifted its emphasis from ‘the right to leave’ one’s country when faced with persecution to the humanitarian trope of ‘the right to remain’ (UNHCR 1995). This has resulted in so-called safe areas (camps) for refugees which “are intended as a temporary solution for refugees seeking safety and basic material assistance, [but] are becoming increasingly permanent” (Hyndman 1999, p. 107). In the late 1990s Kenya was host to nearly 500,000 refugees living in camps, the majority of whom were from Somalia. As the Kenyan government was financially stressed by the massive flows of refugees pouring into its borders and UN donor countries had little interest in prolonged funding, the UNHCR (at the request of

the UN Secretary-General) initiated a 'Cross-Border Operation'. This involved the establishment of a 'preventative zone' in Somalia just over the Kenyan border where refugee camps were set-up and UN peacekeeping troops provided relief supplies for potential Somali refugees and it encouraged repatriation of Somali refugees already in Kenya (*ibid*). Hyndman (1999) notes that "Under the...rubric of neo-liberalism and its perceptive fiscal restraint, individual states are reconsidering the form and function of their welfare states. Refugees are seen to lean heavily on social spending, so the impetus to accept refugees for resettlement in these countries is low" (p. 110). Thus we see refugees being forced into camps as an economically viable 'solution' to the 'problem' of refugees. In addition, it is interesting to note here how with the 'Cross-Border Operation' in the context of Somalia (which is largely viewed as a 'failed state'), economic concerns take precedence over sovereignty as the UNHCR entered Somalia without permission from the Somali government.

The crisis in Darfur is a prime of example of how 'humanitarianism' in the form of camps becomes a geopolitical tool of faux-altruism utilized by the Western hegemony. The refugee camps in Darfur and eastern Chad that have become seemingly permanent features on the landscape are some of the more miserable locations within the crisis as they are sites of high mortality due to disease, highly unsanitary conditions, endemic malnutrition and pervasive gender based violence (Walden *et al.* 2005; Soguel 2007). And yet, the international 'humanitarian' response to the Darfur crisis (and most refugee generating crises) continues to be setting-up camps. In this regard, a country like the United States can appear to be acting ethically in its response to the Darfur crisis as it calls the atrocities genocide and claims that it has 'provided an enormous amount of humanitarian aid to the people of Darfur' while this 'humanitarian aid' goes to funding camps that are

“containers of bare life..., minimalist interventions that intend to demonstrate that a normative global [humanitarianism] is still applicable to the space of Darfur, even if it is not fully operational,...[but] that guarantees nothing more than the indefinite sustenance of minimum bare life, where life becomes nothing but survival” (Gerhardt 2009, p. 499).

Humanitarian aid for ‘others’ that suffer beyond the borders of the state’s sovereign realm is expected, so aid is extended that merely seeks to sustain the biological life of the displaced rather than to afford them an Aristotelian existence of being socio-political actors. The fulfillment of moral obligations is claimed to be achieved through the guise of misguided utility calculi in which states assume they’ve ‘done their part’ based on the amount of money spent on aid, rather than the outcomes of the aid itself.

## **IV. Case 2: Development and Displacement**

### ***Introduction***

Displacements that occur as a result of economic development projects are conceptualized quite differently than conflict induced displacements considered in the previous chapter. Whereas conflict's displacees (largely referred to as refugees or IDPs) are almost universally understood (in theory) as people whose human rights have been unacceptably violated by inarguably 'bad', human-induced circumstances that need to be rectified, development's displacees are often understood as unfortunate by-products of necessary (or even ethically requisite) economic development projects. Proponents of development projects that generate large-scale forced displacements often employ utilitarian argumentation in defending the project; that the moral thing to do is that which, when all is said and done, produces the most good. So proponents may argue that a project benefits more people than it hinders through displacement (or even that displacees are 'better off') and therefore the project is ethical and necessary. By examining three instances of contemporary economic development that have been responsible for displacing millions of people – the construction of hydroelectric dams in India's Narmada Valley, conservation in Botswana's Central Kalahari and extensive mining in Andean Peru, – this chapter investigates the geopolitics of statecraft, nationalist identity narratives and statist economic functioning that generate development-induced-displacement (DID) with particular attention being paid to how these cases represent the geopolitics of state-centric utilitarian moral philosophy. Similar to the previous chapter, I will then discuss the geopolitics that structure aid responses to development's displacees from the above-mentioned as well as other development projects. I will focus on the primacy of 'resettlement projects' in the deployment of human rights protections for displacees.

## ***The Geopolitical Generation of Development-Induced Displacement***

### *Narmada Valley Dams, India*

The Indian subcontinent, the geographic entity, has an incredibly long history of human occupancy dating back thousands of years. The Republic of India, the political entity, was created in 1947 upon the completion of the ‘Partition of India’. The Partition established the national frontiers for two sovereign states – India and Pakistan (the latter eventually split into Pakistan and Bangladesh) – within the British Indian Empire, which were based on religious demographics (between majority Hindus and majority Muslims) and drawn by exiting British colonialists (Mioche 2007). Though scholars such as Chatterjee (2005) convincingly argue that the demarcation of Indian sovereignty and Indian nationalism is rooted far earlier than the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the idea of the Indian state is very much the product of British colonial rule with its establishment of the British Indian Empire, and its modern state-territory delimitations are a result of the ‘Partition of India’.

The formation of the Indian state has resulted in one of the most demographically diverse countries in the world and this incredible diversity holds a tremendous amount of political and socio-economic significance within the state. India contains over 2,000 different ethnic groups, over 1,500 languages and dialects spoken, every major religion is represented, and 70% of its population of approximately 1.2 billion lives in rural areas (CIA 2013). The country’s hierarchic caste division of labor, broken down into four strata (Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra) as well as three ‘lower’ classes (Schedules Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes (OBCs)), has been criticized for homogenizing and discriminating against various ethnic, religious and indigenous minorities, and for making upward social and economic mobility difficult (Doron 2009). Though India’s caste system is far more complex politically and

sociologically than will be covered here, it is important to note that discrimination of OCBs, or ‘subaltern’ classes, particularly the *adivasis* (indigenous peoples) plays a central role in the development patterns of hydroelectric dams in post-colonial India (*ibid*; Bose 2007).

The Narmada River, the fifth largest in India, flows through the states of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat in Western India. Bose (2007) notes that

“[before] 1947, no major attempts to harness the power of the river had been made, but following independence, engineers began to draw up plans to rectify this over-night in the light of the new vision and demands of industrializing independence, common throughout the third world, and in the image of rapid industrial development as characterized by Soviet communists...Massive hydroelectric projects were an integral part of the post-colonial vision of a secular and modernized India that was embraced by many of the nation’s political leaders...One of the architects of that development dream, the first prime minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, famously hailed high dams as ‘temples of modern India’...” (p. 189).

The Narmada Valley Development Project (NVDP) envisions 30,000 water-harvesting schemes and over 3,000 dams (30 of which are considered ‘major dams’) (*ibid*), with the most important of these major dams (the Sardar Sarovar project) promising to “irrigate 1.8 million hectares of land, provide drinking water to at least thirty million people, supply over five billion units of electricity, [and] offer a potential annual employment for over 600,000 people...” (Kurian 2000, p. 842). Yet despite these benefits, the NVDP does not come without misfortune and contestation. It is estimated that 200,000 people will be forcibly displaced by the project, nearly 60% of whom are *adivasis* (*ibid*), the land of 140,000 farmers will be inundated, and if one accounts for the adverse effects of the dam on populations residing downstream (who are not accounted for in government statistics of ‘Project Affected Persons’), nearly one million people will be displaced or have their livelihoods radically altered by the project (Bose 2007).

In light of both the positive and negative outcomes of the NVDP, those in favor of the project and the prospect of modernization it promises appeal to state-centric utilitarianism to

justify the displacement. Dwivedi (1999) argues that when

“displacement results from development activities it is often justified as costs borne by some people for the greater public good. On a theoretical plane, these costs can potentially be off-set through the compensatory principle - in a developmental intervention, if gainers gain more than losers lose, the gainers potentially compensate the losers” (p. 44).

Dam induced displacement is justified by the argument that hydroelectric power, irrigation, drinking water for drought stricken areas and “a process of modernization equated with large-scale industrialization [that represents] a movement forward from a state of backwardness to come on par with the West” (Kurian 2000, p. 845), outweighs the negative impacts of displacement, therefore the NVDP is a net ‘good’. In fact, some supporters even argue that the displacement, particularly of the *adivasis*, is necessary and good because the ‘integration’ that ensues allows tribal peoples the opportunity to ‘develop’ and ascend from poverty (Mukta 1995). However these utilitarian ideals that see the NVDP benefitting the state as a whole deflect critiques that question why the majority of the displaced are *adivasis* and why their voices are not heard in the decision-making process. As Kurian (2000) notes:

“To be a ‘tribal’ in a society where tribals are a minority group is to face systematic societal marginalization on all fronts: economic, cultural and political. At the same time, the constitutional rights vested in tribal peoples in India are too often ignored by the state that sees them, at times, as challenges to its sovereign right to determine the fate of its people” (p. 851).

Thus the development of a project that will not be completed until around 2040 is pushed forward because benefits accrued by the state take precedence over the benefits afforded to individuals, especially the most marginalized groups of society.

### *Central Kalahari Game Reserve, Botswana*

The crafting of the state of Botswana is rooted in the aforementioned ‘Scramble for Africa’ and the Berlin Conference of 1884-85. The Berlin Conference designated Botswana

(originally Bechuanaland Protectorate) as a British colonial outpost in Southern Africa, however British presence in and economic development of the territory was somewhat limited due to the regions mostly arid climate and the fact that it was landlocked, making the exportation of goods expensive (Hillborn 2011). Nonetheless, the impact of British colonial rule and European border drawing has had a profound and lasting effect on the Batswana state. As seen in other states previously discussed, Botswana's borders were drawn around a multitude of ethnic and tribal groups. In Botswana there are over 26 languages spoken (Resnick 2009) and, as Makgala (2009) argues, there "is hardly any sense of mutually exclusive identities in Botswana but multiple and layered identities" (p. 226). Yet despite the Batswana ethnic plurality, the Tswana, who currently makeup 80% of the country's population, have established themselves as the dominant presence in Batswana politics. Makgala (2009) traces this development back to the colonial period, pointing out that when "Tswana-speaking polities...fell under British colonial rule in 1885 they were the only ones recognized by the British" (p. 227) and were given positions of political power within the colonial administrative offices. What ultimately ensued was that, since gaining independence in 1966 through negotiation rather than through militant and anti-imperialist conflicts (Hillborn 2011), the Tswana-speaking groups in Botswana have maintained political power and socio-economic dominance, and have marginalized other ethnic groups through a constitution that only recognizes the existence of Tswana-speaking tribes and that subordinates minority languages by making Tswana the only official language besides English (Makgala 2009). This created a situation in Botswana in which the "Tswana elite perpetuates the claim that everyone has equal opportunities even though access to education and political power depends on how well one adopts Tswana cultural norms and speaks [Tswana]" (Resnick 2009, p. 65).

Another colonial legacy that has displayed critical post-colonial staying power was the

establishment of the Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR) in 1961 by the British colonial government. The 52,800 square kilometer reserve was created for two, interrelated reasons. First, it sought to protect the region from environmental destruction and wildlife depletion (Marobela 2010). The purpose for this type of ecological protection stems from British fascination with the San people (also known as ‘Bushmen’ or Basarwa), whose hunter-gatherer subsistence lifestyle was viewed (and continues to be viewed) through a romanticized lens which posited them as prehistoric ‘human treasures’ residing on “the threshold of the Neolithic” (Wilmsen 2009, p. 58). Intrigued by the San’s seemingly symbiotic and primitive interaction with nature, the British wanted to protect the CKGR region so as to establish “a wildlife reserve in which [nearly 49,000 San] could maintain their ‘natural’ hunting life and play ‘Bushman’ with bows and arrows...” (*ibid*, p. 57), thus essentializing the San as an attraction to behold and take pictures of while exploring the ‘African bush’.

Upon gaining independence in 1966 the Batswana government favored maintaining the CKGR and supporting the San (as well as the Bakgalagadi) living there primarily because the reserve and the San presented an opportunity to diversify the country’s diamond and beef export reliant economy through tourism (Hillborn 2011). However the government’s support of the San in the CKGR progressively waned through the rest of the 20<sup>th</sup> century for a number of reasons. Resnick (2009) contends that, with the preeminence of the Tswana majority in positions of power, the Batswana “government’s approach to nation building...relies on fostering a myth of Botswana’s ethnic homogeneity” (p. 56) so as to maintain socio-political harmony and dissuade fractionalization. Thus in the early 1970s the government began a ‘Bushman Training and Settlement Project’, which sought to offer the San (who refer to themselves as ‘mobile’ with the idea of fixed permanent housing being largely foreign) subsistence plots and houses at sites with

water holes, medical clinics and schools (Bennett & McDowell 2012). Despite growing foreign tourist interest in the San, particularly after the international release of the film *The Gods Must Be Crazy* in 1984 which perpetuated the romanticized ideals of the ‘Bushmen’ held by British colonizers to a highly receptive international audience, Botswana’s nation-building strategy of prizing assimilation over cultural diversity persisted. In the late 1990s and into 2002 an estimated 2,300 San were forcibly removed from the CKGR by the government and relocated into official settlements (Odysseos 2011), and the government announced in 2001 that it would cut services (maintenance of water access points, funding of health care clinics and schools, and providing housing) within the park so as to ensure the removal of the remaining residents (Resnick 2009).

The forced displacement of the San from the CKGR by the Botswana government did not come without criticism from both local and international NGOs. Survival International (SI), a London based NGO that campaigns for the rights of ‘indigenous and tribal’ people, argued that despite the government’s asserting the removal was done to conserve its tourism generating environment and wildlife, the interest in diamond prospecting and establishing mines in the reserve were the true motivation (Wilmsen 2009). The government has rejected such claims (though diamond mines have since been approved in the CKGR), and has justified the San removal through the utilitarian language of ‘development’. Resnick (2009) notes how the government claimed that the San living in the CKGR should be offered greater opportunities for development and that former president Festus Mogae demonstrated his support for the displacement by rhetorically asking, “How can you have a stone-age creature continue to exist in the age of computers? If the Bushmen want to survive, they must change, or otherwise, like the dodo, they will perish” (p. 60). In this sense, the argument that defends the forced removal from the CKGR is heavily entrenched in the ideals of a state and all of its people becoming

‘modernized’; that Eurocentric and ‘Western’ conceptions of development in the ‘age of computers’ represent the only successful livelihoods for any state or person living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Despite the altruistic tropes of former Minister of Local Government, Margaret Nasha who stated that all the government wanted “to do [was] treat [the San] as humans not game, and enable them to partake of the development cake of the country” (Hitchcock & Vinding 2002, p.68), Odysseos (2011) suggests that the removal is intimately concerned with Botswana’s push towards ethnic and national homogeneity. She says:

“The [government] denies that the relocations form a plan of ‘eviction’ or ‘persecution’ of a minority or an indigenous group. Instead, it justifies its relocations of the Bushmen from the CKGR as part of its wider program of development and modernization as a progressive and modern state. The [government’s] much-praised economic and political success story – due to its natural resources in the form of diamonds and other minerals, its political stability and advancement within its regional context – is widely regarded to be amongst the few exceptions in Africa...the ‘darling of Africa’” (*ibid*, p. 442).

Botswana’s political stability largely stems from the fact that the Tswana have maintained a monopoly on political and socio-economic power since 1966. By exerting its hegemony over the San to (further) coerce them into ‘adapting’ to their ideals about modern life, they potentially sustain a ‘strong’ and progressive developed-state.

Unfortunately, the displaced San faced the same socio-economic and political marginalization and poor development indicators outside the reserve as they did inside of it, just in a ‘more modern’ setting. Infant mortality and illiteracy remain one of the highest of any group in Botswana, a majority live below the poverty line, few jobs exist in the new settlements, and many reimbursements promised by the government have failed to be paid (Resnick 2009). While the state has also argued that providing ‘modern services’ to the San “was not only out of place in a game reserve, but would be largely expensive, due to the area to be covered” (Bennett & McDowell 2009, p. 100), the fact remains that these services have largely failed to be provided

now that the San have been removed.

### *Andean Mega-Mine Development, Peru*

Shifting our gaze to the Americas presents a somewhat different colonial history than what was explored in Africa and Southeast Asia in previous sections and chapter of this thesis. While in the cases previously discussed independence movements that established autonomous states largely saw the ousting of colonial rulers (though not their statist ideologies) by local populations, in South and Central America many independence movements were instigated by colonial descendants (creoles), mixed-race mestizos *and* indigenous populations. Peru is an exegetic example. The Viceroyalty of Peru was a Spanish administrative district created in 1542 that established and delineated a political territory encapsulating much of Spanish-ruled South America (Cahill 2011). A number of disputes, agreements and signed treaties between Spain and Portugal kept border denominations in flux into the early 19<sup>th</sup> century when wars of independence began in 1810 (Thurner 2006). Cahill (2011) notes that

“There is an implicit assumption in the revisionist independence historiography that the numerous Indians and mixed-race underclasses were prepolitical and may safely be sidelined as inarticulate spear carriers for the creole precursors – independence as the ‘white man’s burden’...However, there is a need to pluralize our understanding of Peruvian nationalism and, by inference independence itself” (Cahill 2011, p. 205-206).

Cahill’s point demonstrates how the various interest groups and multitude of nationalities invested in the Peruvian wars of independence were fighting for the establishment of an autonomous state whose territory was still ambiguous, as groups had varying ideals and imaginings of the political map of an independent Peruvian state (*ibid*). Even after independence was won from Spain in 1824, a number of territorial disputes with Bolivia (Peru-Bolivian Confederation), Chile (War of the Pacific and Treaty of Lima) and Ecuador (Ecuadorian-

Peruvian War and the Itamaraty Peace Declaration) shaped and reshaped Peruvian territory, with its border dispute with Ecuador not being formally resolved until 1999 (Thurner 2006).

Peru, whether understood as the Viceroyalty, the present state, or any territorial permutation in between, has drawn people in for hundreds of years due, in large part, to an abundance of natural resources. Replete with an array of minerals (copper, gold, lead, silver, tin, zinc, etc.), especially in its Andean highlands, Peru has long been characterized by its mining potential, with mineral richness being a large reason for Spanish colonial endeavors (Kicza 1997). In the 1970s, the government of General Juan Velasco introduced Marxist, populist reforms which included (among other things) the creation of a large state-owned sector, agrarian reform of the *hacienda* system of land governance, and the expropriation of foreign companies (Coxshall 2010). In addition, Coxshall also notes that, with their emphasis on socio-economic rather than ethnic class delimitations, the reforms

“introduced the class term *campesino* to replace the racial-ethnic term *indio*, which was considered to be racist. ‘Peasant’ [(*campesino*)], by contrast, was deemed to be a neutral term that reflected the agricultural livelihoods and occupations of the rural population as well as their ‘underclass’ status in Peru. In effect, however, this reinforced their ‘inferior’ status as marginalized peoples. Being a peasant in Peru still indicates that a person is poor, or *waqcha* (orphaned/abandoned) in Quechua, the main language spoken in the Andes” (*ibid*, p. 45).

Coxshall’s point about the marginalization of rural dwelling *campesinos*, particularly the Quechua speaking populations that live in Andean highlands and their conceptualization as ‘inferior’, is important as it sets the stage for the current and ongoing struggle between highland communities in Peru, and the shared interests of transnational mining companies and the Peruvian state.

Velasco’s reforms endured into the early 1990s when President Alberto Fujimori implemented a set of neoliberal economic reforms that

“sought to integrate the country into the rapidly globalizing international economy by opening all sectors of the economy to foreign direct investment and lifting restrictions on remittances of profits, dividends, royalties, access to domestic credit, and acquisition of supplies and technology abroad. In addition, the government offered investment incentives and tax stability packages, it privatized major sectors of the economy, and it ratified bilateral and multilateral investment guarantee treaties” (Bury 2007, p. 378-379).

Peru’s new openness to foreign investment sent off a mining boom as a number of transnational mining corporations quickly swooped in to take advantage of the country’s highly profitable mineral base. Companies such as Great Britain’s Monterrico Metals (Río Blanco copper mining project in Piura), the United States’ Newmont Mining Corporation (Yanacocha gold mine in the Cajamarca region), Canada’s Barrick Gold Corporation (Pierina gold mine project in Ancash), Canada’s Compañía Minera Antamina S.A. (Antamina copper mine development in Ancash), China’s Chinalco (copper mine projects in Morococha), and a long list of others established a presence in Peru within 10 years of the neoliberal reforms (Coxshall 2010; Bury 2007; Himley 2012; Szablowski 2002; Gonzalez-Vicente 2012). These mining developments in Peru are not surprising. Foreign investment is an appealing option for ‘developing’ nations with rich mineral resource bases because metal and mineral prices have soared on the global economic market “as the race to control the world’s depleting supplies of natural resources intensifies and dictates the struggle for power in the ‘new world order’” (Coxshall 2010, p. 43). As a great number of the mining activities underway in Peru take place in its Andean highlands, in regions that are home to predominantly agrarian *campesino* communities that have traditionally been plagued by high rates of poverty, unemployment, malnutrition, illiteracy and socio-political marginalization (Bury 2007; Szablowski 2002), a central tension in mine development rears its head. While mining companies and the Peruvian state argue that the introduction of mines can bring “transformative economic opportunities – such as salaried employment, improved infrastructure and services, the promise of “development”, and a market for local goods” (Szablowski 2002, p.

258), the reality of these promises is much less optimistic. Most mining operations in Peru are large-scale open-pit mines which generally involve highly invasive removals of copious amounts of soil and ore, forest clear-cutting, burning vegetation, ground-water table infractions, heavy mechanization, and the creation of acid mine drainage. This has therefore ensured the displacement of nearly all families living near mining sites (Bury 2007). While some of these families willingly sold their land to mining companies, they did so under the impression that the mines would provide stable, long-term, well-paying employment. However, despite the fact that Peruvian-based mining companies generate billions of dollars in profit annually and that Peru's neoliberal market reforms have rendered its economy one of the fastest growing economies in the world (Bury 2004), most local employment has been temporary and rotational and pays extremely poorly due to the historical marginalization of *campesinos* in Peruvian society and the fact that most decent paying, mine-based jobs are designed for a highly trained, highly skilled workforce with experience in operating heavy machinery (Himley 2012). Those who resisted selling their land to mining companies because they were wary of the mine's adverse effects and of being unfairly compensated ran into the similar utilitarian tropes from the state to enact their removal as seen with the NVDP in India and the CKGR in Botswana. Desperate for the economic solvency that the hard currency and exports mining provided, the Peruvian government made the establishment of, and investment in, mines a 'national priority' (Szablowski 2002). Thus, despite the fact that the agrarian reforms of the 1970s officially recognized members of *campesino* communities as Peruvian citizens and created community laws to govern them, the Peruvian state and the ministers of energy and mining argued that "the peasant community laws did not give community members the right to veto matters of *national and state interest*" (Coxshill 2010, p. 42, emphasis added). The justification for displacement is

that mining is for the ‘public good’ of the state’s citizens, yet is ironic in that mine development amplifies *campesino* marginalization as the fruits of the billion dollar industry are generally only reaped by socio-economic and political elites – many of whom are multi-national corporations and not necessarily Peruvian (Bury 2004).

Finally, it should be noted that not only does the initial development of mining operations displace *campesino* communities, but the inherent unsustainability of mines does so as well in the long term. Himley (2012) points out that for “the mining industry..., given the non-renewable character of mineral resources, production necessarily depletes existing reserves, which makes continued accumulation predicated on new deposits, or expansion into ‘new ground’” (p. 397). As Peru continues to stress mine development as a ‘matter of state interest’, mine companies will continue to pursue new areas to exploit, potentially displacing more people. Furthermore, the environmental destruction that results from pit mines (as well as cyanide heap leaching sometimes used to extract gold) – which includes desertification, deforestation, habitat loss and/or fragmentation, acid mine drainage and contaminant leaching into water resources, soil and mine waste erosion, particulate, pollutant and greenhouse gas emissions, and incidental mercury discharge – creates large tracts of unusable land when mining is completed which puts future populations at risk and can make surrounding areas uninhabitable creating secondary displacements (ELAW 2010; Bury 2004).

### ***The Geopolitics of Humanitarian Aid and Intervention in Development***

Perhaps one of the most notable differences in responses to DID when compared to conflict-induced-displacement is the fact that the UNHCR plays little to no role in administering humanitarian aid or legal protections for displacees. This, most likely, is due to the fact that (a) the World Bank has a set of protocols in place for transnational corporations that predict

displacements will occur as a result of their development projects, (b) as stated at the outset of this chapter, development does not seem hold the same associations with inherent ‘badness’ and imminent volatility that conflict does, and (c) the majority of those who are displaced by development projects are internally displaced. All three of these reasons are important to consider when assessing the geopolitics of ‘humanitarian’ responses to DID, and I will begin with the World Bank’s protocol.

Codifying rights-based protections for peoples displaced by development projects has increasingly become a demand of social equality advocacy groups such as NGOs and community organizations. Szablowski (2007) notes that

“globalizing industries such as mining have witnessed an intensifying battle over the development of large-scale projects in the global South...[Advocacy] campaigns have been successful in conveying the plight of many local and indigenous communities faced with dispossession, environmental degradation, and impoverishment as a result of megaproject development. The critiques have done damage to the legitimacy of parties involved in developing these projects, including private-sector corporations, financial institutions, multi-lateral development banks, and governments. As a result, a fiercely contested and many-sited debate is taking place concerning the principles that ought properly to govern relations between such projects and local communities impacted by their operations. This is a battle to define what will be required of project developers (often over and above state legal requirements) before their operations can be deemed to meet a new benchmark: ‘social acceptability’” (p. 33).

As the World Bank is ever more involved in providing financial services aimed at kick-starting development projects in the global South, it has established an ‘Operational Directive’ which intends to promote ‘social acceptability’ and ‘social responsibility’ with regard to DID, and which operates at a transnational scale ‘above’ sovereign laws. Principally, compliance with the World Bank’s ‘Operational Policy 4.12 and Bank Procedure 4.12 on Involuntary Resettlement’ is mandatory for “all mining projects that contract for financial services from one of the private sector arms of the World Bank Group: the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA)...[which] have as their mission the

promotion of private sector development in developing countries in order to reduce poverty” (Szablowski 2002, p. 249). The policy has three objectives aimed mitigating the “severe economic, social, and environmental risks” (World Bank OP, para. 1) that accompany DID: (a) avoiding or minimizing involuntary resettlement by exploring all viable project designs, (b) executing sustainable development programs, allowing displaced persons to share in project benefits and consulting with displaced persons, if it is not feasible to avoid resettlement, and (c) assisting displaced persons in improving their livelihoods to pre-displacement levels (*ibid*, para. 3). Despite the humanitarian and altruistic language, the economic interests of development companies are truly what is at stake here. Again, Szablowski (2002) recognizes that mining companies want, in addition to access to land, peaceful relations with local communities. He says that

“Local trouble, particularly when publicized through transnational advocacy and media linkages, can cause a mining company substantial long and short-term problems with a company’s access to capital, favourable regulatory treatment, and new exploitation sites...[The] industry’s financial stakeholders are strong drivers of the trend towards addressing community issues...Spending on community relations is an investment in goodwill that is thought to have two potential effects. It may provide ‘insurance’ against problems that could affect project viability...[and] it may also act as a ‘social license’ that facilitates access to capital and favourable treatment” (*ibid*, p. 259).

These economic motives, in and of themselves, are not necessarily unscrupulous so long as they actually lead to social justice. However, a second problem that arises with the World Bank’s Directive is that it is excessively vague and largely places the interpretation of its policy on the development companies themselves. It does not divulge what terms and phrases such as ‘minimizing resettlement’, ‘sustainable development’, ‘sharing project benefits’, ‘consulting with’ displacees, and ‘assisting and improving livelihoods’ entail. What results, in practice, is far less rosy than what the World Bank outlines. In Peru for instance, mega-mining projects (a number of which are financially backed by the World Bank) consistently failed or hardly tried to

implement ‘socially responsible’ resettlement programs (Bury 2007; Coxhall 2010; Himley 2012; Bury 2004; Szablowski 2007). In the case of Compañía Minera Antamina (CMA) in the District of San Marco, ‘resettlement’ merely involved the payment of what the company deemed to be fair market value to land holders, despite initially offering infrastructural and social investment in a new community and employment in the mines (Szablowski 2002). Elsewhere, some of the rural dwelling highlanders displaced by mines sold their property, but found it difficult to reestablish their livelihoods as land prices in some areas increased 600% due to mining activity (Bury 2007) or because livestock have been concentrated and land use intensified making subsistence increasingly difficult (Bury 2004). Similar failed World Bank resettlement projects have occurred with other development projects in other countries as well. The Yacyretá Dam on the Parana River that forms the border between Argentina and Paraguay was a joint venture pursued by the Argentine and Paraguayan governments with backing from the World Bank. The dam has been mired in controversy as its construction ran approximately \$10 billion over-budget, it has been ecologically devastating, it has been dysfunctional, it has caused health problems for proximate populations, it displaced over 50,000 people, and “the banks never consulted local residents in drawing up resettlement plans, they never provided adequate supervision of the project, and they never held borrowers to their contractual obligations” (Notisur 1997, p. 1).

In India, the task of resettling the primarily *adivasi* displacees from the NVDP, (which was to supposedly be beneficial as it would allow the *adivasi* to ‘integrate’ and ‘develop’ (Mukta 1995)), has largely rested on the Indian government. Narmada Valley rehabilitation is codified in the Narmada Water Disputes Tribunal (NWDP) Award. Among other things, the Award essentially codifies the appropriate responses for governing the resettlement of displaced families

and can be seen as progressive as it orders land, rather than solely monetary, compensation for Project Affected Persons (Ramachandra 2006). However, it is difficult to view resettlement and the NWDP Award as successes for two primary reasons. One reason is that

“the land provided is often unusable or already inhabited...[The] new homes for the displaced often consist of little more than metre-square plinth covered by a tin roof...Many of the resettlement sites consist of poor-quality land that is not irrigable and is sometimes less than two square hectares in size...Additionally,...in many cases, land is simply not available for resettlement” (Bose 2007, p. 193).

When the NWDP Award does offer cash compensation rather than land, this usually facilitates urban in-migration into crowded slums rather than providing the opportunity to purchase land and continue rural livelihoods, thus destroying traditional subsistence and economic practices and social interactions (Mukta 1995). Furthermore, The NWDP Award also grossly underestimated the number of families it projected would be displaced by the dam rendering it impractical (Ramachandra 2006).

The case of the CKGR in Botswana is somewhat similar to the case of the NVDP in that the Botswana government enacted a forced resettlement program of the San living in the reserve, though there are a few factors that render it somewhat unique. First, is simply the fact that conservation, unlike dam construction (or mining), is peculiar in that the land that is being ‘developed’ actually remains largely intact and habitable. In the case of CKGR the state did not recognize the San’s interaction with property that “involves being bound within a set of reciprocal obligations among persons and things” (Wilmsen 2009, p. 54) as it viewed its claim to the land as superseding the San’s and giving the state the legal authority to displace the San. In other conservationist models (such as the rather ubiquitous practice of establishing protected national parks that seek to either preserve biodiversity or keep symbolic natural landmarks pristine by denying human habitation and extractive activities so as to bolster tourism), the

state's power to exert eminent domain is evoked to remove any current inhabitants (Murray 2007; Szablowski 2007). 'Compensation' is usually far from equal value or negligible, and in the case of the resettled San "promised public services in the new resettlements were slow to materialize...,[few] jobs existed, hunting was prohibited, and there was little food to gather" (Resnick 2009, p. 61). The case of the San is also distinct in that their plight garnered international attention and sympathy due to idealized notions of their way of life. As mentioned, the NGO Survival International (SI) claimed that diamonds motivated the displacement and launched an aggressive anti-diamond campaign that "spared no effort to malign the Batswana government in world media and funded a drawn out litigation against it" (Wilmsen 2009, p. 57). However good-hearted the intentions of Survival International may have been, ultimately they fell prey to the persistent romanticization of the idyllic hunter-gatherer and became so preoccupied with allowing the San to 'maintain their culture' they provided substantial financial aid aimed at fighting legal battles that would allow them to return to the CKGR. In the 'CKGR judgement', the Batswana court ruled that the San could return to the reserve without restriction but it also ruled that the Batswana government was not required to provide any type of social welfare (Hitchcock 2002). Wilmsen (2009) argues that, as a result, the San

"find themselves ossified as 'Bushmen', constructed in a hegemonic meta-narrative to which they increasingly themselves subscribe. For...international organizations must reframe [the San's] claims, tactics and even their identities for foreign audiences. As a consequence, SI has made CKGR San more dependent on this vicious interventionist cycle. Essentialist and racist representations of 'primitive' peoples, of our original ancestors, of living human fossils, of 'Bushmen', serve to confine peoples so stigmatized to subordinate positions and defeat attempts to alleviate conditions of poverty in which most of them live, as the CKGR judgment so starkly testifies...[This] Euroamerican meta-narrative has pernicious effects: it imposes arbitrary meanings on a people, and paradoxically makes generic precisely the diversity it wishes to advance...[The] true qualities of a people's culture and social life are lost, their existential being becomes defined by others, and they become dependent on foreign protectors as never before" (Wilmsen 2009, p. 62).

These varied attempts at providing development's displacees with aid, whether it is mere lip-service or misguided altruism, demonstrate a fundamental problem that will be further explored later in this thesis. And that is that there are no consistent humanitarian responses to what are clear violations of international human rights norms. The fact that nearly all instances of DID result in internal displacement elucidates the poor job that a Westphalian statist ordering does in managing forced displacement. There are no codified *and* enforceable international normative frameworks that protect against or provide consistent aid for DID because state sovereignty and self-determination take precedence over human rights laws; human rights laws that are, in theory, supra-sovereign and should be territorially blind.

## **V. Case 3: Environmental Change and Displacement**

### ***Introduction***

One area of inquiry concerning forced migration that has received increased recognition since the 1980s is ‘climate induced migration’ or ‘environmental refugees’. Debates abound concerning how many people are and will be displaced due to changing environmental conditions, and how, exactly, an ‘environmental refugee’ should be defined (and whether the use of the word ‘refugee’ is appropriate). Gemenne (2011), for instance, notes that there is a divide amongst those concerned with the issue of environmentally induced migration between ‘alarmists’ (with high displacement estimates and broad definitions of ‘environmental refugees’) and ‘skeptics’ (with appreciably lower estimations and predictions and who view migration as multi-causal by nature). For example, in 1997 Norman Myers estimated that there were “at least 25 million environmental refugees..., a total to be compared with 22 million refugees of the traditional kind” and he anticipated that by 2025 over 200 million people would be displaced worldwide due to the impacts of a changing climate (Myers 1997, p. 167). Conversely, Koser (1996) and Brown (2008) were skeptical of Myer’s and other’s ominous estimations due to the fact that they lacked empirical research. Thus these, and other so-called ‘skeptics’, urged for the adoption of more critical perspectives so as to avoid allowing ‘misperceptions’ to predominate.

As for conceptualizing who ‘environmental refugees’ are, Gemenne’s ‘alarmist’-‘skeptical’ dichotomy is also apparent in the literature and discourses that concern themselves with the subject. In 1985 Essam El-Hinnawi introduced the phrase ‘environmental refugees’ when he defined them as

“people who have been forced to leave their traditional habitat, temporarily or permanently, because of a marked environmental disruption [(i.e. any physical, chemical and/or biological changes in the ecosystem or resource base that render it...unsuitable to support human life)]...that jeopardized their existence and/or seriously affected their quality of life” (El-Hinnawi 1985)

However, others, such as Suhrke and Visentin (1991), criticized El-Hinnawi's definition for being

“so wide as to render the concept virtually meaningless...Uncritical definitions and inflated numbers lead to inappropriate solutions and compassion fatigue. We should not, however, reject outright the concept of environmental refugees. Instead we should formulate a definition that is more narrow but precise” (p. 73).

They, along with scholars like Richmond (1993) and McGregor (1993), argued that the conceptualization of ‘environmental refugees’ must acknowledge the environmental factors *and* the social, economic, political, cultural and technological factors that influence environmental migrations. The UNHCR has involved itself in the debate as well. Coming from a legal perspective, in 2009, the Office stated that it

“has serious reservations with respect to the terminology and notion of environmental refugees or climate refugees. These terms have no basis in international law...UNHCR is actually of the opinion that use of such terminology could potentially undermine the international legal regime for the protection of refugees whose rights and obligations are quite clearly defined and understood...UNHCR considers that any initiative to modify this definition would risk a renegotiation of the 1951 Refugee Convention, which would not be justified by actual needs” (UNHCR 2009, p. 8-9).

Though the UNHCR recognizes that environmentally displaced persons may be ‘persons of concern’, according to the UNHCR the use of the term ‘refugee’ in describing them misrepresents these populations and could be detrimental to those that fall under its Convention, or ‘traditional’ refugees as Myers (1997) called them.

Despite these debates, it is quite clear that climate induced migration (CIM) is, and will continue to be, a reality. Though I think the label of ‘skeptic’ is somewhat of a misnomer (it seems to suggest a denial of CIM entirely), the critical geopolitics perspective of CIM that considers borders, (multi-)nationalism and political economy, and which I will maintain in this chapter (as in the previous two chapters), fits in well with an understanding of CIM that

investigates an array of causal factors that initiate it. I will also be loose with my terminology when describing ‘environmental refugees’ because I believe these deliberations over linguistic and legal technicalities distract from the actual reality that there are and will be a great number of people displaced due, in part, to climatological and environmental disruptions. In keeping with the structure of the previous two chapters, I will begin by discussing the geopolitical mechanisms that have created (or threaten to create) climate refugees in three different locations: Bangladesh, Papua New Guinea and the United States. I will then consider the geopolitics of responses to CIM in these, and other, cases.

### ***The Geopolitical Generation of Climate Induced Migration***

#### *Bangladesh*

Similar to India, the establishment of the Bangladeshi state is rooted in the region’s British colonial legacy and the aforementioned 1947 Partition of India. Though the Bangla (Bengali) language was distinct in the Bengal region by the 7<sup>th</sup> century and there was a Muslim majority by the 12<sup>th</sup> century (thus distinguishing themselves culturally and linguistically from their Indian neighbors), the Partition of 1947 was based on religion rather than language, so despite a desire to establish an independent Bangla-speaking state, the eastern part of Bengal became part of Pakistan and the western part became part of India (New Internationalist 2001). After Partition relations between the predominantly Urdu speaking West Pakistan and the predominantly Bangla speaking East Pakistan were tumultuous. Despite a much larger population in the East than in the West, political and military power were dominated by elites in the West. This, unsurprisingly, created a bifurcated society and a highly tenuous Pakistani state. For instances, the promotion of Urdu as the national language; a military coup dominated by west Pakistanis in 1958; the repeated jailing though the 1960s of Bengla resistance figure

Mujibur Rahman by the military; and a gruesome and deadly offensive launched by West Pakistan's army in 1971 against the East to stymie calls for secession, steadily fueled Eastern discontent with and contempt towards the West (Harris 1989). Ultimately, Mujibur Rahman and his Awami League political party declared independence while in exile in India and with the aid of the Indian military in late 1971, West Pakistani forces were removed from the East and the state of Bangladesh was established.

Deviating from other states previously examined in this thesis, Bangladesh's population of over 163 million is 98% ethno-linguistic Bengali, the majority of whom are Muslim, making it the most ethnically homogeneous state considered (CIA 2013). However, Bangladesh and the Bengal region has a long history of social stratification based on socio-economic class which Harris (1989) argues is rooted in the promotion of "a particular cosmological order in which society was divided into four classes" that resulted from the establishment of Hinduism 4,000 years ago (p. 267). He goes on to state that

"Hindu social structure, composed of...four basic divisions [(which placed farmers and serfs at the bottom of the social hierarchy)], provides the first evidence for inequality in the social system of the region. The four-fold division eventually crystallized and expanded into the caste system in which social class, ritual purity and occupational structure became hereditary" (*ibid*, p. 267).

Though Moguls colonized the region by the 12<sup>th</sup> century establishing a Muslim majority and slightly altering the Hindu caste system, many of the frameworks that disempowered the rural peasantry remained entrenched. The same can be said of British colonization of Bengal as they were

"more responsible for a codification of the land system than for its creation. The land system of Bengal was largely in place and evolving along a particular trajectory when the British took over. The British, with their emphasis on a formal legal system, attempted to expand land rights through legal means...The modern transition to independence has not been accompanied by a corresponding shift in the agrarian power structure... Land

reform... was not forthcoming due to the control of government and industry by many of the ‘landed elite’” (*ibid*, p. 271).

This long history of rural marginalization through socio-economic stratification is, in conjunction with the volatile milieu in which the Bangladeshi state gained independence, largely responsible for the current unfavorable state of the country’s rural population. Seventy-two percent (over 115 million) of Bangladeshis live in rural areas and, despite a rapidly developing market-based economy, of those rural dwellers 31% (over 35 million) live in chronic poverty (Johnson 2009). This socio-economic exclusion of rural Bangladeshis, through systemic social stratification and limited social welfare investment by a state that has begun to gain macroeconomic salience, dramatically impacts the issue of CIM.

It should be noted that the country’s physical geography is influential in making it susceptible to flooding and inundation. Ten percent of the territory is located only 1 meter above sea-level, its monsoonal climate brings regular, yet substantial, rainy seasons, the Bay of Bengal generates approximately 5 cyclones per year, and its large riverine deltas are flooded annually by melting snow from the Himalayan highlands to the north (MOEF Bangladesh 2005). Considering these facts, it would be easy to simply attribute environmentally induced displacement in Bangladesh to the fact of unfortunate geographic positioning. However there is much more at play here than that. There are an estimated 40 million Bangladeshis living in the country’s coastal regions, the majority of whom lack “adequate institutional and infrastructural supports” (Mallick *et al.* 2011, p. 640). Mallick *et al.* (2011) argue that this, more so than its precarious location, makes Bangladesh vulnerable to CIM:

“Most of the industrialized countries of the North have several established state sponsored programs to respond on the vulnerability issues of their coastal areas – for example, the Netherland’s or Germany’s coasts are secured through extensive embankment construction, and other measures; which primarily cannot be seen in most developing countries. Neither technical knowledge and relevant government

responsibilities nor appropriate material resources are available in the developing countries; some appear as an unmatched dream forever for those poor countries of the South in comparison with the high technical and societal standards of the North” (*ibid*, p. 630).

Perhaps the sentiment is somewhat over-dramatic and over-simplified, but it is nonetheless the case that displacements in Bangladesh are occurring due, in large part, to socio-structural challenges the country has faced since establishing statehood that have inhibited the development of mitigation infrastructure and have led to an issue of overpopulation. If sea-levels continue to rise due to melting polar ice caps and thermal expansion of ocean waters brought on by a warming climate, if cyclogenesis in the Indian Ocean continues increasing in frequency, and if Himalayan glaciers continue to retreat causing more intense spring flooding (all of which are expected to happen), millions of more rural Bangladeshis are predicted to be rendered landless and displaced; seeking refuge both in other areas of the country and abroad (*ibid*; Carney *et al.* 2011).

### *Papua New Guinea*

Papua New Guinea (PNG) is an archipelago state made up of about 600 islands and is located in the southwestern Pacific to the north of Australia. Despite the fact that its territory is composed of islands, PNG has not been free of European border crafting, and the establishment of the Papua New Guinean state is deeply rooted in its complex colonial history. Its largest and most populated region comprises the eastern half of the island of New Guinea which was arbitrarily split by a Dutch and British drawn border in 1824 that followed the 140° East meridian, with the formerly Dutch, western half of the island becoming part of Indonesia (Jell-Bahlsen & Jell 2012). Until 1942 PNG was comprised of two distinct jurisdictions – Papua and New Guinea – controlled by Great Britain and Germany. But after World War II, Australia received a mandate from the League of Nations to govern the archipelago bringing the entire

territory under one jurisdiction called Papua New Guinea, which eventually gained independence in 1975 (*ibid*). Reilly (2008) points to the problem of Eurocentric statecraft in PNG, noting that

“The state of Papua New Guinea is a colonial construct. Unlike parts of neighbouring Indonesia, there was no history of state-like organization in the country before European contact. Instead, society was made up of thousands of small, acephalous and largely independent tribal units... On most measures of ethno-linguistic diversity, Papua New Guinea is probably the most heterogeneous country in the world. At the latest count, some 852 different languages are spoken by a population of 5.3 million people. This extreme degree of linguistic diversity translates into exceptional cultural fragmentation... [The] depth of cleavages between ethnic groups in Papua New Guinea is often striking, and can be partly explained by geographic factors. Papua New Guinea has some of the world’s most dramatic terrain, with a vast range of mountains and valleys running through the middle of the mainland (‘the Highlands’) and an extensive arc of populated volcanic islands off the coast – all of which create severe difficulties in terms of isolation, access and transport” (p. 12-13).

This exceptional cultural and geographic fragmentation has proven to be a divisive impediment in the attempts made by Papua New Guineans to establish autonomy in their colonially constructed state which is considered to be “in search of a nation” (*ibid*, p. 13). Consociation is difficult to achieve in PNG as political parties have been established along ethno-linguistic lines, essentially turning the thousands of different tribal clans into political interest groups. Again, Reilly (2008) notes that both

“traditional social relations and modern political entrepreneurship in Papua New Guinea involve the mobilisation and manipulation of such ethnic identities – a process which... is itself conflict-creating in the absence of structures able to regulate competition for power, wealth and status... [In] the Highlands, where almost half the Papua New Guinea population lives, modernisation, land pressure and competition for resources have encouraged a ‘retribalisation’ of society in recent decades as group affiliation is increasingly used to determine the distribution of public goods. As such, tribal groups are increasingly being mobilized... in response to the demands of state building” (p. 14).

As various ethno-linguistic groups vie and compete for goods, services and public office, public investment and capital is regularly directed towards certain tribal interest groups represented by elected officials, particularly the Enga peoples who are the country’s largest ethnic group from the central highlands (Jell-Bahlsen & Jell 2012). So despite the fact that PNG

is lush with highly profitable natural resources – over a fifth of PNG’s territory has been deemed ‘potentially open to some form of exploitation’ (*ibid*, p. 319), the country “nets an annual 500 million kina (US\$220 million) from log exports” (Anere 2012, p. 230), open-pit gold mining has dominated its economy since the 1970s accounting for 12% of PNG’s total exports (Jell-Bahlsen & Jell 2012), and it is one of the world’s fastest growing economies (Anere 2012) – these natural assets have turned out to be a curse for the majority of Papua New Guineans as tribal interests, corruption and tax loopholes deny people “a much bigger slice of the wealth from their resources” (*ibid*, p. 230). This uneven and favored distribution of wealth was largely responsible for a lack of services and state-sponsored infrastructural development (roads, running water, electricity, health-care, etc.), gender inequality, and high rates of malnutrition and poverty in many marginalized areas of the country, specifically its smaller islands (Lipset 2011; Anere 2012; Reilly 2008; Jell-Bahlsen & Jell 2012).

These socio-economic and ethno-political structural disadvantages that have arisen due to the inherent difficulties (especially in PNG) associated with multi-national statecrafting and the volatile attempts to position the state within a competitive global market, have rendered a number of Papua New Guinean communities highly vulnerable to displacements triggered by rising sea levels. Inhabitants of atolls such as Duke of York, Carteret, Mortlock, Tasman, the Nugeria Island, as well as inhabitants of coastal eastern New Guinea, are at the highest risk of rising sea level induced migration (Lispet 2011; Displacement Solutions 2009). Some of the smaller islands are at risk of being completely submerged and, as of 2012, 6,000 islanders had already been relocated to the larger island of Bougainville because encroaching salt water had either destroyed their homes or made livelihoods unattainable (Leckie *et al.* 2012). Similar to the case of Bangladesh, most of the displacements are less the result of ‘sinking’ islands and more

the result of a lack of investment by the Papua New Guinean state in anti-inundation infrastructure on marginalized islands.

As thousands of more of PNG's inhabitants are expected to be displaced with a continued rise in sea-level, another interesting question arises in terms of the geopolitical genesis of CIM which is also applicable to the situation in Bangladesh. Attempts by the state to establish itself within the state-centric 'global economy', which frequently come in conjunction with the marginalization and disempowerment of certain sectors of the population, have their links to CIM. But furthermore, the question of 'who is responsible and/or should be held accountable for our changing climate?' is an interesting one to pose in this context. Lipset (2011) points out that in

“the literature about climate change, it has become a truism to rue the inequality of it all. Rather than the culpable, wealthy economies of the global North, populations who had nothing to do with producing it – people living in politically marginal, small island states and along coasts in the global South – are paying and will pay its price” (Lipset 2011, p. 20).

The highly consumptive habits of the global North are primarily fueled by this aforementioned state-centric 'global economy' that countries like Bangladesh and Papua New Guinea have attempted to integrate themselves into as part of their state building endeavors. Thus, not only do marginalized populations see limited benefits from their state's macroeconomic successes generated by the exportation of goods to highly receptive foreign markets, but those macroeconomic successes are also contributing to the forces driving climate change such as greenhouse gas emissions, pollution and high energy usage.

### *United States*

Moving to a discussion of the United States of America presents a deviation from earlier cases examined both in this chapter and the preceding ones. In terms of CIM, the previous two

cases of Bangladesh and PNG largely focused on gradual climatic changes linked to large scale global climate change. By considering Hurricane Katrina, a category five storm which struck the US Gulf Coast in 2005, the focus is shifted to a sudden-onset disaster which is not necessarily linked to a changing climate, though an increased incidence of tropical storms the size of Katrina may begin to become the norm as climate changes (Rauber 2005). Another shift that comes with discussing the US is that it represents the first engagement with a state from ‘the developed world’ or Global North. As this thesis has demonstrated, the majority of exegetic examples of forced migration come from developing states in the Global South. However, by recognizing that displacement rooted in geopolitics is a global phenomenon, a consideration of forced migration within the hegemon is important and useful as it allows for an understanding of the issue that does not place it solely in a far-away locale. Finally, US colonial history varies greatly from the previous cases discussed as it declared independence far earlier than those considered thus far (1776, as opposed to primarily the 20<sup>th</sup> century) and interaction with the indigenous populations resulted in their near eradication, creating a population made-up primarily of in-migrants.

As with previous examples, though particularly in the case of the US due to the expansive body of knowledge and documentation of its history, a somewhat cursory analysis of the country’s state-building process is in order so as to understand the geopolitics of Hurricane Katrina’s displacements. European colonizers primarily from Spain, Great Britain, France and the Netherlands began to establish permanent settlements in “The New World” in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. As these settlements grew, two crucial and well-documented large-scale demographic shifts transpired: the devastating mortality of the indigenous populations caused by disease and genocide (Stannard 1993) and the Transatlantic Slave Trade from 1644-1867 that forcibly relocated an estimated 600,000 enslaved Africans to the United States (Eltis 2008). These dark

blemishes in US history engrained a pervasive and sustained ideology of European supremacy in the US (which is largely at the root of race relations in the country today). Through a number of wars (French and Indian War; American Revolutionary War), secessions (British Cession of 1818; Spanish Cession of 1819; Mexican Cession 1848), territorial purchases (Louisiana Purchase from France 1803; Alaska Purchase from Russia 1867), annexations (Texas Annexation of 1845; Hawaii Annexation of 1898), treaties (Oregon Treaty with Great Britain in 1846; Treaty of Paris) and a declaration of independence from Great Britain in 1776, by the 19<sup>th</sup> century the US had firmly established its sovereignty as a constitutional republic and had demarcated its transcontinental territorial borders (National Atlas 2006).

Since the colonial era, in-migration to the US has been a consistent theme as people from all over the world have come or been brought to the US. Thus in contradistinction to most of the previous examples discussed in the thesis (Sudan, Syria, Sri Lanka, India, Botswana, Bangladesh, PNG) in which pre-colonial inhabitants largely remained the majority population post-colonization, in the US the indigenous populations were almost completely exterminated and what replaced them was an amalgamation of a number of foreign nationals who eventually became citizens. As alluded to previously, the US has a lingering history of European (white) supremacy. Despite an apparently 'color-blind' constitution and legal system, non-white ethnic and racial minorities have been consistently discriminated against, disenfranchised, marginalized and disempowered in everything from healthcare to housing to employment to politics to transportation (Rothenberg 2010). Thus, despite the fact that it came about through exceptional and unprecedented circumstances, the problematic of a multi-national state presents itself in the case of the US as well. The city of New Orleans and its drastic interaction with Hurricane

Katrina in 2005 serves as telling example of the persistent racial marginalization and uneven distribution of capital that characterizes the US and its impacts on CIM.

New Orleans is a city built entirely on a floodplain with little topographic relief and it is surrounded by human-made levees. Similar to Bangladesh and PNG, it is easy to assume that displacements and damages caused by a hurricane can be entirely explained by the city's precarious geographic location. However, biophysical factors work in tandem with societal and economic factors for increasing vulnerability to dramatic weather events (Elliot & Pais 2006).

The city "has a history of *de facto* racial segregation" (Johnson 2008, p. 46) with its present-day spatial demography largely rooted in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as

"public works projects began to transform sizable wetlands within the city limits into early suburban tracts...[These] lakefront neighborhoods became the suburban sprawl of the 1920s...In the post-World War II era, white residents exited Orleans Parish as part of a national urban adjustment that saw older urban districts abandoned in favor of suburban communities. Jefferson Parish, immediately adjacent to New Orleans, served as the focus for this adjustment. White flight from Orleans Parish to Jefferson Parish shifted the city's demographics from about 70 percent white in 1900 to nearly 70 percent black by 2000. Within the city, segregation became much more pronounced during that time span and with it increased vulnerability among the poor black citizens. What had been poor white neighborhoods became poor black neighborhoods, and many were in low areas...By the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century...all but two of the city's public housing projects were in areas below sea level" (Colten 2006, p. 732).

Sixty-two percent of New Orleans' metropolitan pre-Katrina population of approximately 1.3 million was black and of that 62%, 35% fell below the poverty line (Fussel *et al.* 2010). In fact, since the 1970s

"the number of concentrated poverty neighborhoods in New Orleans grew by two-thirds...By the time Katrina struck, almost all of the extreme-poverty neighborhoods in New Orleans were predominantly black and these racially and economically segregated areas bore the brunt of the disaster. A block-by-block analysis of census data and flood maps reveals that about half of the city's white residents experienced serious flooding, compared with three-quarters of black residents (*ibid*, p. 22).

When the storm hit several levees were breached, floodwaters submerged 80% of the city and an estimated 500,000 people were displaced or evacuated (Elliot & Pais 2006; Fussel *et al.* 2010). However, this figure of 500,000 displacees eschews the fact that “Hurricane Katrina's evacuation plan was acceptable for motorists but failed miserably for the vulnerable population...in New Orleans who depended on public transportation” (Johnson 2008, p. 46). Technological advancements in climate and weather monitoring allowed the city to anticipate the storm, yet its plan for safe evacuation was predicated on car ownership which kept the majority of the city's impoverished, elderly and disabled at risk. Furthermore, despite being a part of a country that has the world's largest national economy (estimated 2012 GDP of \$15.6 trillion) (IMF 2012) and a state (Louisiana) whose 2005 gross state product was \$196.9 billion (Chantrill 2013), the fact that (a) so many people are impoverished and marginalized and (b) so many levees were substandard and failed during the storm, points towards the poor distribution of wealth and uneven investment in public infrastructure characterized by a state (US) that can hide extreme poverty and poor social investment behind its immense geographic territory and massive economy. In this sense, as Rowan Jacobsen puts it, certain areas of a place like Louisiana can be quite “reminiscent of Third World places...” (Jacobsen 2010, p. 9).

### ***The Geopolitics of Humanitarian Aid and Intervention in Environmental Change***

Unlike development-induced displacement, the UNHCR is, at times, an active player in the deployment of humanitarian aid for people displaced by environmental changes. In 1993, in its ‘State of the World's Refugees’, the UNHCR identified environmental degradation as one potential root cause of forced migratory flows and has since labeled environmental displacees ‘persons of concern’ (UNHCR 2013). However, when the UNHCR does respond to these types of humanitarian crises, action is surprisingly similar to conflict-induced displacements. For

instance, after the earthquakes that struck Pakistan in 2005 and Haiti in 2010, the UNHCR poured hundreds of millions of dollars in total to provide assistance to displaced populations. While some assistance materialized in the form of non-perishable foods, the majority of the funding was utilized to set up camps for displacees – camps that bear a striking resemblance to the refugee camps discussed in Chapter 3 and which housed an estimated 200,000 displaced Pakistanis and over 1.5 million displaced Haitians (UNHCR 2013). The camps are highly reminiscent of the “containers of bare life” that Gerhardt (2009, p. 499) noted when describing the refugee camps in Darfur, as sanitation issues and rape and other gender-related violence were rampant, particularly in the Haitian camps (Schuller 2011; Irshad *et al.* 2012).

The responses by the UNHCR to the Pakistani and Haitian crises are telling of the geopolitics of humanitarianism and the Global Refugee Regime. Unlike conflict-induced displacement, there exists no normative framework for the UNHCR to structure the terms of its humanitarian aid for environmentally displaced people and thus it often intervenes on an *ad hoc* basis and almost exclusively in catastrophic, sudden-onset scenarios such as Haiti and Pakistan. Though they may be ‘persons of concern’, environmental refugees are not explicitly covered by the UNHCR’s ‘Convention’ as they fail to meet the causal and positional criteria of its refugee definition – they do not migrate based on a ‘well-founded fear of being persecuted’ and, typically, they do not cross an international border (Kolmannskog 2009). Thus, in the cases of Bangladesh, Papua New Guinea and the United States, states and governmental bodies themselves, rather than an international human rights monitoring body like the UNHCR, have been the ones responding to these crises.

In the case of Hurricane Katrina in the United States the task of providing aid to those displaced by the storm came to the US Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). With millions displaced by the August 29, 2005 storm, Verderber (2008) notes that a widespread

“consensus exists that Katrina and its aftermath overwhelmed the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). By May of 2006 more than 98,000 FEMA trailers had been deployed to the U.S. Gulf Coast region... These housing units, however, were designed and manufactured to withstand winds of only 40 miles per hour... Ironically, the federal government, in seeking to quickly provide aid and assistance, provided housing that has been linked to adverse health outcomes including stress disorders and psychological maladjustments, including severe chronic depression... Anecdotal and empirical evidence suggests that consequences of the FEMA travel trailer housing program may include an increase in domestic violence, increased divorce rate, higher incidence of depression, anxiety and overall uncertainty, sleep disorders, hyper-vigilance, flashback, and increased suicide rates... Some of these aforementioned disorders have been attributed to indoor toxicity of the units, their materials of construction, and overall unsafe conditions” (p. 368-369).

Though a body like the UNHCR was not involved in the distribution of aid for displaced, FEMA's response to Katrina, especially responses like 'Renaissance Village' which placed hundreds of these housing units in an open field, again highlights the problems with establishing camp-like havens for the displaced. FEMA and then-director Michael Brown were highly criticized for the inadequate response to the disaster by the US House of Representatives and its 'Select Bipartisan Committee to Investigate the Preparation for and Response to Hurricane Katrina'. Among other things, the committee's final report determined that FEMA lacked appropriately trained staff, that, despite being aware of the potential threat of the storm for several days before it struck, its emergency response teams were poorly prepared and largely ineffective, and logistically, aid deployment was managed incredibly poorly (US House of Representatives 2006). In addition, Zeller (2013) notes that a large portion of the approximately \$7.8 billion disbursed by FEMA after Katrina was incompetently spent and wasted on ineffective relief programs. It makes one wonder how the response could have been different if a well-

trained body with experience in dealing with similar issues had similar monetary resources at its disposal with the authority to act.

As mentioned in the previous section of this chapter, in Papua New Guinea (PNG) approximately 6,000 residents of the archipelago's small island atolls (including the Carteret, Mortlock, Tasman and Nuguria islands) have been resettled to the larger island of Bougainville as a response to rising sea levels which have resulted in increasing land loss, salt water inundation and growing food insecurity. This 'Bougainville Resettlement Initiative' was introduced by the national government of PNG and is "one of the first organized [permanent] resettlement movements of forced climate change migrants anywhere in the world" (Bougainville Resettlement Initiative: Meeting Report 2008, p. 1). However, resettlement is a costly endeavor that will require an estimated \$6 million over the next decade, a tall task for a PNG government who has received very little financial support from the international community with regards to CIM and whose annual spending budget is totaled at \$2.7 billion – a far cry from the trillions of dollars spent by governments of the Western hegemony (*ibid.*).

The fiscal restraints of PNG and other Small Island Developing States (SIDS) located in the Australasia South Pacific (such as Tuvalu, Nauru, Fiji, Samoa, Tonga and Kiribati) has caused these states to elicit monetary and territorial resettlement support from Australia due to its massive economy (2012 GDP of \$1.542 trillion) (CIA 2013), expansive territory (which SIDS often lack) that could be resettled by climate refugees, and the fact that it is one of the global leaders in greenhouse gas emissions which are largely responsible for the rising trend in sea levels. But the Australian government has been highly unreceptive of these appeals for support. In 2006, Immigration Minister Amanda Vanstone "stated that the Department had not made any plans to deal with people displaced by environmental or climate change, arguing, 'There's no

such thing as a climate refugee” (Maclellan 2009, p. 131). Yet despite this sentiment, the Department of Australian National Security *has* recognized the issue of CIM. Debates abound amongst Australian

“security analysts and strategic think tanks, which have focused on border protection and the potential for conflict over land and resources...Federal Police Commissioner Mick Keelty sparked a political debate when he argued that climate change will turn border security into Australia’s biggest policing issue this century. He stated that...‘in their millions, people could begin to look for new land and they will cross oceans and borders to do it. Existing cultural tension may be exacerbated as large numbers of people undertake forced migration. The potential security issues are enormous and should not be understated” (*ibid.*, p. 131).

This perspective that frames environmental refugees as inimical security threats ‘encroaching on our borders’ and creating tensions over waning space and resources rather than articulating a humanitarian perspective has been a consistent trope of hegemonic states regarding CIM. As White (2011) notes that the

“securitization of migration – the complicated effort to control the mixed flows of migrants seeking to enter North Atlantic countries – has deepened in recent decades. Climate change and security concerns have now fully emerged in an increased elaboration of anxieties concerning CIM...[This] has not only change the discourse of advanced industrialized countries vis-à-vis mixed migration flows but has also involved actual efforts to build fences, patrols, and detention centers to thwart migrants” (p. 90).

But these border securitization anxieties that have cropped up in response to CIM now reach beyond what White called ‘North Atlantic countries’. India’s response to climate related displacements in Bangladesh exemplifies this. Although internal migration to Bangladesh’s urban areas such as Dhaka by Bangladeshis fleeing the inundation of coastal and riverine spaces (as well as the desertification in its more northern areas) is well underway, Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated states in the world so it cannot accommodate internal migratory flows at the present (and projected) scale (Vaid & Maini 2013). As environmental changes and catastrophes displace millions of socio-economically subjugated and vulnerable Bangladeshis,

India has and “will be the natural choice for many climate migrants because it has already absorbed millions of Bangladeshi migrants – both legal and illegal – since...1971” (*ibid.*, p. 1). But as climate refugees from Bangladesh are ever-increasing in numbers and as an anti-immigration and anti-terrorist government policies and rhetoric come out of India, the Indian government has been in the process of spending over \$1.2 billion on the construction of a barbed wire and heavily militarized fence along its 2,400 mile- long eastern border with Bangladesh to curb Bangladeshi in-migration (Carney *et al.* 2011). White (2011) states that in 2003,

“India began construction of a 2,100-mile high-tech separation barrier. The official stated...fear was of infiltration by Bangladeshi Islamists. Completed in early 2010, the fence has been fraught with tragic politics on the ground: border communities divided, property claims fenced, homes lost, homes lost, and informal trade disrupted...[As] Bangladesh’s vulnerability to climate change and its prospects for greater flooding have become more worrisome, being surrounded by razor wire has reified and hardened a precarious border – with Indian officials increasingly inclined to cite climate refugees...as a concern” (p. 71).

Even at the level of the Indian populace, the border fence has been heralded as

“a panacea for a whole range of national neuroses: Islamist terrorism, illegal immigrants stealing jobs, the refugee crises that could ensue should a climate catastrophe ravage South Asia. But for Bangladeshis, the fence has come to embody the irrational fears of a neighbor that is jealously guarding its newfound wealth even as their own country remains mired in poverty” (Carney *et al.* p. 1).

Thus we see how the entrenched notions of the state and its ‘security’ take precedence over humanitarian action. What if, rather than constructing a fence on its border, India had spent a part of that \$1.2 billion towards projects aimed at rectifying the socio-economic, political and infrastructural deficiencies responsible for the mobilization towards India of Bangladeshi climate refugees? As was mentioned earlier in this thesis, when displacees are framed as ‘threats to national security’, they are no longer understood as people whose human rights have been violated but rather as ‘enemies of the state’, and thus the impetus to provide humanitarian aid is negated.

## **VI. Analysis: ‘The Broader Tapestry at Work’**

Despite an examination of nine different cases of forced displacement occurring across the world, as well as a discussion of the way that those and other displacements have, by-and-large, been poorly handled and responded to, the questions of why the three types of forced migration considered are differentiated based on causality and/or positionality and, by extension, why responses to them vary so greatly still requires further scrutiny. As noted previously, there is a quality to conflict-induced displacement that makes humanitarian responses that aim to quell and fix it almost universally morally requisite, whereas development-induced displacement does not incite the same levels of objection (though social justice activism is very vocal in its criticism of DID). On the surface, this logic seems understandable enough. In conflict scenarios serious injury, death or loss can be constant threats, whereas in development scenarios, most threats to personal health and well-being are generally more slow-onset, at least relative to conflict. Even the debates about climate refugees, discussed in the introduction to Chapter 5, seem to put the moral impetus for supplying aid a step below conflict refugees – they are not quite ‘traditional refugees’. Just the fact that the UNHCR views it as permissible to make a statement that essentially vilifies suggestions to rework its conventional refugee definition and expand its mandate’s provisions to climate refugees (because such an expansion would ‘not be justified by actual needs’) goes to show that, conceptually, there seems to be something inherently less critical in the understandings of the plight of climate refugees than of conflict refugees. It is, if not acceptable, then perhaps generally forgivable for the UNHCR to claim climate refugees do not need as much aid. It would be unprecedented, however, for the UNHCR to make a statement suggesting that the ‘needs’ of people fleeing conflict were in some way less important, and would not be in-line with popular conceptions of refugeehood. The ‘imminent threat’ argument,

again, may explain the discord between climate and conflict refugees. The UNHCR, as mentioned in the previous chapter, has supplied aid to various places stricken by sudden-onset, natural disaster in Pakistan and Haiti. However, on the issue of slow-on set climatological changes, it has invested significantly less attention and money into those displacements. Perhaps media exposure may also play a role in establishing and sustaining this moral construct of a ‘need based hierarchy’. While we increasingly see more images and storylines depicting regions eviscerated by war or unexpected environmental catastrophe; rising sea-levels, dam construction, mining, or forest conservation are not things one is typically shown on the news, not to mention the displacements that occur because of them. In maintaining a critical geopolitics perspective, this chapter will provide an analysis of the role borders, (multi-)nationalism, and political economy play both in generating the previously discussed forced migratory flows and the ways in which they are responded to. As such, this analysis questions the espousal that posits ‘conventionality’ and ‘more need’ of certain ‘types’ of forced migrants based on causality and positionality, and ultimately argues that taxonomies of ‘types’ of forced migration are misleading and hinder humanitarian action.

## ***Critical Geopolitics and the Genesis of Displacement***

### *Borders & Multi-Nationalism*

My analysis begins with an examination of how border crafting and the multi-national and national identities it fosters generates forced displacements. Borders and (multi-)nationalism are analyzed in the same section as the two concepts are intimately linked. If we consider the examples of conflict induced displacement in Sudan, Syria and Sri Lanka discussed in Chapter 3, a pattern emerges in the genesis of those conflicts and their subsequent displacements. It begins with an emphasis on statecraft and nation building – an ideology that is Eurocentric in origin and

which is diffused through colonization and border drawing. Sudan, Syria and Sri Lanka are each colonial constructs. In Darfur, the Sudanese state is the product of the Berlin Conference which created a situation where logic-defying borders were drawn around ethnically and culturally diverse groups creating a fragmented and unstable multi-national state. The Syrian state was crafted by European diplomats eager to disembowel Ottoman influence. As a result, the territorialized ideology of Syria ultimately became pervasive in its acceptance thus creating a heterogeneous political entity characterized by an array of conflicting ethno-religious interests and identities. Finally, the proliferation of Westphalian geopolitical knowledge demonstrated its dynamism as the concept of a united Sri Lankan state was thrust upon an island without the need of border delineation. This resulted in competing visions for nation building along ethno-political lines. The understanding of the world that seems to require it to be compartmentalized in spatially distinct, sovereign, self-determining entities required disparate (and often unfriendly) nationalities to coexist and cohesively share a collective identity that was ill-equipped to facilitate differing views for the future direction of the colonially constructed state. The result has been conflict between the disparate nationalities living in the state and the displacement of disempowered sectors of society.

By examining the concepts of borders and multi-nationalism in the cases laid out in Chapters 4 concerning development-induced displacement, similar displacement-inducing mechanisms are at play. In India, Botswana and Peru colonial legacies again prove to be dominant factors in the creation of autonomous states. The establishment of the British Indian Empire and the subsequent Partition of India resulted in the generation of a territorially distinct, hyper-diverse sovereign Indian state which had not existed previously. The Berlin Conference is, again, at play in the establishment of the Botswana state as it inscribed and bounded a

heterogeneous population that had a dominant ethno-tribal majority. In Peru, Spanish colonizers traced a state boundary that fluctuated until stabilizing in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and that housed an amalgam of ethnic and racial groups including colonial descendants (creoles), indigenous peoples, mixed races and Afro-Peruvians. Not surprisingly, the establishment of the state in these cases closely mirrors the state formation discussed in Sudan, Syria and Sri Lanka – sovereign entities are formulated through European ideologies of political territoriality and they are home to hybrid cultures characterized by a diversity of ethnicities, linguistic groups, political and religious orders, and races. Thus economic development projects (the Narmada Valley Dams, the Central Kalahari Game Reserve, and Andean Mega-Mines) that were promoted and justified through the rhetoric of the ‘progress’ of the state were espoused, resulting in the displacement of socio-economically and politically marginalized groups within the state.

Evaluating the cases of environmentally-induced displacement in Bangladesh, Papua New Guinea, and the United States presents a similar story. The Bangladeshi state is the creation of the Westphalian ideals promoted by British colonial endeavors as the Partition of India and then the violent secessionist movement from Pakistan explain Bangladesh’s current territorial extent. But unlike all the other cases examined, Bangladesh is, by-and-large, ethnically and linguistically homogeneous with a socio-economic caste structuring that was in-place well before British occupation. However, statist ideologies of the British were responsible for legally entrenching and codifying a land system that marginalizes the generally impoverished rural-dwelling sectors of society and hinders upward social mobility. These lower castes have been widely ignored in regard to infrastructural development, leaving them highly vulnerable to drastic environmental and climatological forces – particularly coastal inundation and riverine flooding. In this sense, the ‘others’ within Bangladeshi society are typically the subordinated,

rural dwellers while urbanized elites become the dominant group within the centralized state. As millions of Bangladeshis who gain their livelihoods from agricultural practices are crowded into poorly-developed regions that are vulnerable to environmental changes, they are, and will continue to be displaced. In Papua New Guinea the creation of an archipelago state in response to European colonization has created a highly diverse state ethno-linguistically and a highly fragmented state spatially as the PNG government is expected to administer 600 disparate islands. Consociation between the 850 linguistic groups has proven to be nigh impossible as political parties are arranged along ethno-linguistic lines, with the Enga majority of the main island New Guinea gaining political dominance. As political action is primarily directed towards the tribal groups that elected officials represent, ethno-linguistic and tribal marginalization, as well as political corruption abound. Thus, since the PNG state is supposed to govern an array of islands, the more sparsely populated atolls are regularly ignored in terms of social-welfare policies and infrastructural development. With rising sea-levels, these low-lying, under-developed and disempowered atolls become increasingly uninhabitable which has resulted in the displacement of a number of small island dwellers. The multi-national PNG state is a highly problematic colonial construct in this regard as the affairs of the majority and politically enfranchised groups on the main island take precedence over marginal islands of the archipelago. Finally, the case of the United States and Hurricane Katrina is quite comparable to the other cases thus far discussed despite its dissimilar colonial legacy. While European colonizers did establish a multi-national state entrenched in Westphalian ideologies of border-crafting and sovereignty, they did not force it upon the indigenous populations already living there and then leave. Rather, they mostly eradicated the indigenous people and ultimately established themselves as the 'local' population. Through a transatlantic slave trade that brought hundreds of

thousands of enslaved Africans to its shores and through a number of massive and recurring immigrations from all over the globe, the U.S. boasts a highly diverse population along racial, ethnic, political, and theological lines within its immense territory. However, its history of African slavery has entrenched the state in cultural structures of ethnic European (White) supremacy that have, to this day, consistently marginalized the majority of Black Americans. This is particularly apparent in the Gulf Coast city of New Orleans as the 35% of the city's black population is impoverished, neighborhoods are generally segregated by race and nearly all the neighborhoods of concentrated poverty are predominantly black and under-developed. Thus when Hurricane Katrina hit it 2005 the historically marginalized black population took the brunt of the damage as their neighborhoods were inundated due to poor infrastructure and failing levees. In this case, the construction of an American state that went on to preferentially disempower people of color politically, socially, culturally, environmentally and economically can, in part, explain the precarious situation of New Orleans' black communities.

### *Political Economy*

Political economy, in addition to borders and multi-nationalism, plays a critical role in the genesis of forced migration. I will, again, start by examining the cases of Sudan, Syria and Sri Lanka vis-à-vis political economy. Before European statecrafting, the various ethnic, cultural, religious and political groups in these regions did intermingle and coexist to varying degrees. However, when forced (through the proliferation of geopolitical knowledge) to strive for the maintenance and growth of an abstract and *ad hoc* territorial entity (the state) rather than a self-determined nation, one particular group or likeminded groups were able to gain macro-level socioeconomic hegemony. In Sudan all effective political and economic power is vested in the Islamic National Front and President Omer al-Bashir; in Syria the ethnic Alawite al-Assad

regime and its Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party has held economic and political control since 1970; and in Sri Lanka the island's Sinhalese majority has dominated the political, economic and ethno-religious circumstances and has made no consociational attempts since independence which saw the island shift to a centralized governance. As the socioeconomic and political elites of each of these countries amassed wealth largely through natural resource exportation (oil, agriculture, some industry), they used both their economic solvency and their political prowess (Sharia law in Sudan, 'state-of emergency' and 'Social Market' economic reform in Syria, and special status of Sinhala language and Buddhism in Sri Lanka) to marginalize, disempower and disenfranchise socioeconomic lower classes and/or ethnic minorities (black African Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa tribes in Darfur, socioeconomically marginalized agricultural laborers who were unable to benefit from Syrian macroeconomic gains brought on by market reforms, and the Tamil and Moor minorities in Sri Lanka). Thus, as stated, when conflict broke, it was predominantly these groups that were displaced as they had few economic, social and political resources at their disposal to react otherwise due to their systemic subordination by elites. Here we can see the issues the highly uneven penetration and preferential dissemination of capital globally and domestically that is inherent in a global capitalist economy.

The forces of the global political economy are a crucial aspect of development's displacements. The global economy is rooted in state-centric interests predicated, in theory, on striving for a growing domestic economy. Amassed state wealth is converted into modernization projects that are supposed to represent investments (social or infrastructural) and which are ultimately re-circulated into domestic economies creating more wealth. At least that is the

simplistic ideal<sup>1</sup>. In the states of India, Botswana, and Peru capital is often poorly dissipated throughout the entire citizenry creating, as seen in the examples of states engaged in violent conflict, socioeconomic stratification and ostracism. In India, the country's lower classes within its caste system, especially its subaltern classes like its indigenous populations, have little to no political representation, their constitutional rights are regularly ignored, and systemic racial and ethnic discrimination sustains increased levels of poverty through a denial of capital. As a result of idyllic conceptualizations of modernization by the state, these lower classes are covertly or overtly discouraged and detracted from reaping any gains from state finances. In Botswana, political and socioeconomic power has been monopolized by Tswana speaking ethnic majority since gaining independence. This has created an atmosphere of socio-political and financial discrimination towards non-Tswana speaking minorities. Peru demonstrates poor wealth distribution as well; the stark inequality between the majority of poor and politically neglected Andean highland *campesino* residents and capitalism's successful urban dwelling elites is quite noticeable. I argue that the economic development projects these countries have invested in and the displacements they trigger are a result of these above described circumstances. The reification of an Indian state set the precedence for state motivated modernization. Dams were considered modern temples and the Narmada Valley Dam Project was expected to bring water and economic solvency to drought stricken areas. The displacement of nearly one million people, primarily of subaltern classes, is largely generated by Indian geopolitics. Utilitarian tropes that placed the abstract state's interests above a large sector of its marginalized citizens were utilized to justify construction; and the idealized modernization that is espoused when developing a

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<sup>1</sup> Increasingly the rise in Transnational Corporations (TNCs) has altered capitalism's playing-field as non-territorialized firms become major players in the global economy. As astateal bodies, TNCs represent a turn away from state-centricity and a number of their capital endeavors encroach upon sovereignty.

project like the NVDP is a by-product of centralized power in a political elite that promotes capitalism's vision for state 'progress'. In Botswana the removal of thousands of San from the Central Kalahari Game Reserve problematizes the arbitrary formation of a state that requires people who had never lived under that type of political ordering to ultimately be governed by a centralized political power that primarily represents the ideologies of the territory's ethnic majority. Not only do the Tswana dominate politics in Botswana, but the conceptualization of the San as exotic and primitive 'Bushmen' resulted in the initial deprivation and denial of political, social and economic capital for the San because their hunter-gatherer livelihoods would be used as justification for their discrimination (they did not need those things, they were 'living symbiotically with the land'). But then, this conceptualization as 'primitive' was also used as a means for the justification of their removal from the reserve. Hyperbolic ideals of 'development' and 'modernization' were espoused by the Botswana government – the 'stone age' San should not be left behind as 'we' march forward into the 'age of computers' – as if they were never systematically marginalized and ignored. The actual motivations of the government are somewhat debated but the discussion seems to fall into one of two categories – political economy or cultural homogeneity – both of which are state-centric and geopolitical. The political economy argument is that the state wanted to expand its diamond mining capacities, and/or conserve its tourist revenue generating flora and fauna in the CKGR that the San were allegedly over-using and over-hunting. Thus in this sense the state's economic well-being unsurprisingly takes precedence over the well-being of its marginalized tribal minority as it attempts to establish a presence in the global diamond and tourist industries; industries whose capital gains for Botswana rarely are invested in 'developing' and 'modernizing' the San. The cultural homogeneity argument is that the Tswana majority in positions of power have an approach to state-building

that relies on perpetuating a myth of ethnic uniformity through the subordination of minority tribal groups and languages. The decision to remove the San from the CKGR and ‘modernize’ them is viewed as another attempt at practicing cultural hegemony in the interest of creating a socio-politically harmonious and non-fractionalized state. Either way (perhaps it is both reasons), the state’s economic interests are what dominates developmental discussions rather than the interests of individuals. Finally, in Peru, neoliberal market reforms implemented in the early 1990s were hugely beneficial financially for the state while they proved to be disastrous for a number of its highland, mostly indigenous, communities. The displacements of the systemically impoverished Andean *campesinos* due to the state deciding to open its borders to foreign investment in its mineral wealth so as to establish its economy in the world political economy, is yet another example of state-centric econometrics disregarding those people it has done little to support to begin with – the state as a venture capitalist. The state justified its behavior by framing mineral extraction as a ‘national priority’. In this sense, power and agency are vested in what increasingly becomes an over-arching abstraction of ‘the state’, rather than simply a territorial entity. As the state and transnational mining companies representing the hegemonic powers gross billions of dollars annually, little, if anything, is done to prevent displacements or adequately and fairly compensate displacees. In all three of these cases, the abstraction of the colonially defined state becomes a monolithic power that discriminates and displaces certain peoples living within its territorial margins as it sees fit.

Likewise, the links between political economy and environmentally-induced displacement intimately interact. In Bangladesh the politically and socially marginalized rural dwelling populations who are most at-risk of being displaced for environmental reasons are economically marginalized as well. While the state has increasingly attempted to be a vital

player in the global economy and has seen success in that endeavor as Bangladesh has a rapidly growing economy due to increased textile and manufacturing exports, wealth is poorly distributed within the country and is mostly concentrated in urban centers. Little capital is invested in the chronically impoverished regions of the country which are the areas that need it most. As will be seen in the other examples as well, the precarious geographic positioning in low-lying coastal and flood-heavy riverine areas has essentially rendered CIM an inevitability for the millions of people living there because preventative and mitigating infrastructure has been drastically under-developed, leaving people's homes and livelihoods extremely vulnerable to flooding. There are noticeable similarities in the political economy of Papua New Guinea. PNG is active in the global economy primarily by-way of gold and timber exports which have delivered macroeconomic salience since the 1970s. Yet this has done little to change the economic conditions of marginalized populations on the state's island atolls. Tribal interests, political corruption, tax loopholes and difficulties in terms of isolation, access and transportation vis-à-vis the state's smaller islands have prevented the state's wealth from reaching subordinated sectors of the PNG society who inhabit marginal areas. Thus, investment in highly needed infrastructural developments that could help people cope with or mitigate encroaching sea-levels are missing, forcing people to abandon their homes and their livelihoods.

The highly uneven distribution of capital globally, in addition to within each state, partially explains environmentally-induced displacement in Bangladesh and PNG as well and is very much a product of the Westphalian, statist ordering of the world. Economic competition between states and from Transnational Corporations (which typically sprout from the hegemony), which are central tenets of global capitalism, have created a situation in which the hegemony maintains economic dominance of access to various global markets. Not only do

hegemonic states have the fiscal solvency to invest in infrastructure that mitigates various environmental disturbances, but their economic salience results in extremely high per capita greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption that contribute to climate change. As a result, states like Bangladesh and PNG feel the fiscal restraints of being underdogs in the global capitalist economy while simultaneously having to cope with environmental catastrophes that are largely created by that very same global economy they are striving to gain strong footing within as a state.

The United States embodies the previously mentioned skewed distribution of capital globally as it has the largest economy in the world, which makes displacements such as the one caused by Hurricane Katrina seem unprecedented as one might expect a state with a \$15.6 trillion GDP to be able to avoid destruction on the scale of Katrina. Yet wealth in the U.S. is incredibly unevenly distributed; in fact, it is the worse than all the states previously discussed in this thesis and one of the most uneven in the world. Thus, poverty stricken neighborhoods in places like New Orleans see almost no benefits from being located in the richest country in the world and, in the case of Katrina, were left highly vulnerable to storm surge inundation and extremely high winds. Though the racial dynamics of displacement by Katrina were highlighted previously, the socio-economic disparities between those who were displaced long-term or permanently versus those who were not demonstrate how the uneven penetration of capitalism within the U.S. has far more of an influence on displacement than geography. The U.S. dominates and by-and-large dictates access to and of various markets in the global capitalist political economy, yet this prime access to and dominion over capital results in a further enrichment of the upper-classes and political elite, white subordinate classes and marginalized populations continually struggle.

### *Geopolitically-Induced Displacement*

The combination of the three forces of border drawing, hybrid national identities and the uneven diffusion of capital through the global political economy both between and within states, guided through the dominating reproduction of Westphalian, European constructed, state-centric articulation has intimately and similarly shaped the generation of each of the three forms of forced migration. In comparing the genesis of conflict-induced displacement, development-induced displacement and environmentally-induced displacement, the structural similarities that initiate these contemporary displacements are quite apparent. Borders are drawn to create certain spatialized political entities with little or no regard for human and cultural history of the area. Ultimately, the Westphalian ideal of statist ordering becomes entrenched and, typically, a state with a multitude of nationalities is born after gaining independence from its colonial power. As the state becomes the dominant frame of reference for those living within it, it is used (by way of politics, social ordering and economics) to perpetuate the grabs for power articulated through visions of state-progress and generally made by a dominant ethnic, socio-economic and/or political elite. 'Progress', usually in the form of economic, political and/or social development and 'modernization', is viewed as the ultimate means for the state and results in the systematic subordination of one or more groups. This may lead to conflict as marginalized groups react to an oppressive state and have their own ideals of statehood, or it may lead to continued subordination which can result in either the construction of economic development projects or the failure to construct highly needed infrastructural development in historically marginalized communities. This seems to be where the paths diverge, but most of the causal mechanisms behind these three forms of displacement at play are quite similar.

The results are quite similar as well in that a number of codified human rights are violated. Whether or not forced migrants are able to cross an international boundary and potentially achieve 'official refugee status' is just as much a bi-product of the statist rendering of the globe as the genesis of the displacement in the first place. If a displacee can be granted political asylum, or be housed in a 'safe' area (i.e. camp), by crossing a border, he or she will seek out a border if that is a viable and/or desirable option. If a displacee does not wish to cross a border and/or recognizes that crossing a border is not an option (perhaps because it is securitized or just unreachable due to political, economic or geographic deterrents) then he or she will be an IDP. Regardless of how they move across the landscape, the borders are arbitrarily determined and whether or not one is crossed does not change the historical circumstances that initially gave rise to the coerced movement and it does not change the fact that a number of human rights have been abused and violated.

If these three instances of displacement are structurally similar in that geopolitics drive them, and if they each result in similar human rights infractions, is differentiating between them and calling one 'worse' than the other necessary? Are they not all, in their most essential form, movements of people through space coerced by geopolitics? If this is the case, as I think it is, then the causal taxonomy that is so often employed to hierarchically determine the urgency of need between the various forms of forced migration is not only a contradictorily subjective understanding of forced migration, it is unfounded. If it is understood more broadly as geopolitically-induced displacement then perhaps the irregularities and inequalities in the deployment of humanitarian action could be ameliorated.

## *Critical Geopolitics and Humanitarian Responses to Displacement*

Normalizing all forms of forced migratory flows as geopolitically-induced displacement could potentially ameliorate the hierarchic conceptualizations regularly made between conflict, development and environment, yet, as demonstrated in the preceding three chapters, responses to forced migration are inherently geopolitical and are initiated by a number of different agencies and organizations. Whether it is the UNHCR, the World Bank, a governmental body such as FEMA, NGOs, or state governments, an essential problem regarding humanitarian responses to forced migration is that there does not exist a consistent framework designed to aid displaced populations. Understanding the intrinsic similarities between forms of forced migration that are typically differentiated is one step, but normalizing the way in which forced migration is responded to is essential for razing the geopoliticization of humanitarian responses to forced migration. In analyzing the examples discussed in the previous three chapters of this thesis, this section will demonstrate how all of the above-mentioned actors are bound by the state-centric concepts of borders, (multi-)nationalism, and political economy in the ways they respond to humanitarian crises of displacement.

### *Borders, (Multi-)Nationalism & Political Economy*

As mentioned in Chapter 3 of this thesis, the UNHCR has shifted its views somewhat in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, emphasizing repatriation and ‘the right to remain’ in one’s country of origin. The state-centric logic that drives these decisions and which are steeped in the concepts of borders, nationalism and political economy demonstrate how the leading humanitarian body in dealing with forced migration is mired in geopolitics and Westphalianism. Both repatriation and the right to remain are geopolitical tropes derived from the rhetoric of national security and the economic interests of the hegemon – nationalist identities that ‘otherize’ those who reside on the

opposite side of an international border allow for the forced migrants to be easily conceptualized as security threats, particularly when neoliberal econometrics indicate that hosting refugees is cost-ineffective. This can be seen to varying degrees in the cases of the conflict in Darfur, Syria, Sri Lanka, Rwanda-Zaire, Somalia and the environmental displacements in Haiti and Pakistan. Camps reify this security-economic nexus vis-à-vis repatriation while simultaneously appearing to be humanitarian. This was highlighted in the disastrous cases of *refouling* repatriation in the Sri Lankan conflict and the Rwanda-Zairian conflict and genocide. In the case of Syria the refugees that are housed in camps in neighboring countries are largely expected to stay put until the civil war is over at which point they can be ‘safely’ repatriated. The refugee hosting countries and the international donor community perform humanitarianism but refuse to extend more effective and more expensive aid nor allow many asylum seekers to leave the camps. The camps for Syrian refugees are located in close proximity to the Syrian border which in some areas has been susceptible to spill-over violence from Syria and the majority of refugees are not integrated within their host countries whatsoever which will make repatriation more cost effective. In the camps in Turkey for example, the situation is infused with geopolitics as Turkey has extended aid to Syrian refugees (in the form of substandard camps) due in large part to its “role as a burgeoning regional power, as a potential member of the EU, and as a model for the transforming governments of the Arab Spring” (Krajeski 2012, p. 63). However, Turkey has serious reservations about integrating Syrian refugees due to the potential fact that many may be ethnic Kurds, a minority ethnic group that is also represented in Turkey but which the Turkish government has in the past accused of having terrorist ties. Relatedly, Mills (2005) notes that the

“most powerful states in the world, which frequently feel pressure to ‘do something’ and intervene in instances of genocide and other humanitarian crises, attempt to use humanitarian actors to show that they are responding to a crisis while not actually doing

much at all, and certainly not putting their soldiers in harm's way. Thus humanitarian aid becomes a strategy for political containment rather than problem solving" (p. 164).

The camp model of humanitarian response is, first and foremost, a way to pacify human rights activism and appear to be upholding a universal humanitarian ethic, and the UNHCR is typically elicited to carry it out.

Another important component of the UNHCR which has been discussed and mentioned elsewhere in this thesis is that the UNHCR's 'Convention' is beholden to a spatial conditionality that limits the granting of refugee status and the legal protections that come with that status to displacees who cross an international border. Thus we immediately see that state-sovereignty and self-determination trump humanitarianism. But the inconsistency of the UNHCR in the application of its mandate is interesting. It has been involved in aiding a number of IDPs through the establishment of camps in Sudan and Sri Lanka and has even by-passed sovereignty by establishing camps in Somalia, yet in Colombia, where the humanitarian crisis is identified by the UN as being the worst in the Western hemisphere, the UNHCR has used rhetoric of non-interference to explain why it has been significantly less involved in deploying aid.

The UNHCR has, by-far, the most experience in dealing with refugee-related scenarios and yet its involvement in displacements associated with development and environmental changes is, for the most part, non-existent. Despite a growing literature that expresses the need for the UNHCR to expand its mandate, particularly with respects to environmental refugees, it has been unwilling to do so. It states that part of the reason for this unwillingness to expand the mandate so as to accommodate more 'forms' of forced migration and IDPs is that "any initiative to modify [the refugee] definition would risk a renegotiation of the 1951 Refugee Convention" (UNHCR 2009, p. 9) and that it "would be too risky to try to formulate a binding UN Convention [for IDPs]" (Koser 2011, p. 302). Yet the use of the word 'risk(y)' is interesting as it makes one

wonder what this ‘risk’ is. It would be risky economically? The normative gap in the UNHCR’s ‘Convention’ that puts causal and positional constraints on the definition of a refugee seems to be far riskier than attempting to extend humanitarian aid to more displacees. In fact, it is because of this normative gap that we see an array of different actors attempting to provide aid to the displaced rather than one governing body.

The World Bank’s ‘Operational Directive’ was codified with an articulated desire to promote social ‘acceptability and responsibility’ with regard to displacements associated with development and, quite unlike the UNHCR, to operate on a scale above sovereign laws. While the concept of meta-sovereign law is intriguing in that it, in theory, is not enshrined in state-centric understandings of global space, in reality that may just represent inflated delusions of grandeur on the part of the World Bank and the ‘Operational Directive’ is far from humanitarian in nature and far more economically motivated. It’s essentially failed enactment in the case of Peruvian mine development demonstrates the ‘otherizing’ that occurs by development companies so as to justifying forcing people to move their homes and livelihoods because they are ‘in the way’ and could inhibit the circulation of capital in the global economy.

NGOs are likewise active players in responding to forced migration. In the case of the Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR) in Botswana the London-based NGO Survival International (SI) played a crucial role in mobilizing international support for the San in their attempt to be reinstated in the CKGR. SI even became so involved that it began an international smear campaign against the Botswana government for removing the San from their ‘homeland’. Yet however altruistic SI’s intentions were, their romanticized narrative of the ‘primitive Bushman’ in regards to the San ultimately cast them as an ‘other’; a people who should remain ‘primitive and pure’ in the CKGR, without arguing for greater social and infrastructural

development from the government. Thus we see the problem of what Wilmsen (2009) called a ‘hegemonic meta-narrative’ that is cultivated by groups like SI so as to make the San and their plight appealing to international audiences who enjoy cultural exoticism, but which paradoxically commodifies them as generic noble savages, and does little to help them.

India’s response to Bangladeshi climate refugees, and the security rhetoric expressed by hegemonic and ‘emerging’ states about future climate refugees more generally, is a hermeneutic example of the influence of borders, nationalism and political economy on responses to forced migratory flows, and one that is in no way couched behind a veil of humanitarianism. Borders are hyper-securitized and militarized, national identities are reinforced and rearticulated, the ‘otherizing’ of refugees as potential terrorist threats or even ‘job stealers’ quells most human decency, large sums of money are ushered into projects like border-fencing construction as a form of ‘border theatre’ that makes people inside the state feel safe, and economic calculations about the ‘strain’ of hosting refugees ensure that potential climate refugees will not be able to cross ‘our border’ and threaten ‘our’ economy or personal well-being.

FEMA’s response to Hurricane Katrina is interesting geopolitically for a number of reasons. Firstly is that it seemed to exemplify the fact that utility calculi vis-à-vis humanitarian responses should not be predicated on the amount of money spent on rectifying the issue. FEMA had nearly \$8 billion to work with and yet it managed to squander a lot of the money and thus people were still in need of humanitarian aid. As mentioned in Chapter 3, oftentimes countries like the U.S., when providing humanitarian assistance to places outside its borders, believe they have done a sufficient job of aiding ‘those in need’ based on the amount of money spent which is always far less than \$8 billion, and yet \$8 billion still resulted in miserable conditions in New

Orleans and the mobile home parks provided by FEMA. Also of interest is that in some areas FEMA's response seemed like a 'First-World' refugee camp with houses instead of tents.

These varied attempts at providing (or denying) displaced aid demonstrate a fundamental problem. Due to the fact that geopolitics and Westphalian renderings of global territory structure the Global Refugee Regime and all the other bodies that are primarily in place due to the normative gaps in the UNHCR, there are no consistent humanitarian responses to what are clear and similar violations of international human rights norms. There are no codified and enforceable international normative frameworks that protect against or provide consistent aid for geopolitically-induced displacement as a whole because our statist conceptualization of the world is so entrenched that it has become difficult to think of global space in ways besides spatially distinct political entities. If forced migration is going to be responded to in a way that is consistent with a universal humanitarian ethos, we are going to need to reconceptualize the way we understand global space. As Joseph Campbell once said – “If you want to change the world, change the metaphor”.

## **VII. Concluding Thoughts**

### ***A Potential New Direction for the Global Refugee Regime?***

By questioning the assumption that takes for granted the dominant statist perspective of the globe through the geopolitical production of hegemonic knowledge, this thesis explored the incipient mechanisms that drive contemporary forced migration. While the prevalence of Westphalian notions of global territoriality and the related concepts of borders, (multi-) nationalism, and political economy are largely responsible for generating forced migratory flows, they are also largely responsible for structuring humanitarian responses to forced migration. Despite the pervasive articulation of a supra-statal and universally applicable human rights ethic, humanitarian action is still “fragmented within a mosaic of distinct sovereign realms” (Gerhardt 2009, p. 494). Because of this, though we might be able to begin to understand forced migration more broadly and equilaterally as geopolitically-induced displacement – thus removing any hierarchic distinctions that may arise when differentiating between conflict, development and environment – structuring humanitarian aid responses and developing a normative framework that protects and provides aid for geopolitically-induced displacement will be a much greater challenge. As currently constituted the Global Refugee Regime, as are the majority of other agencies, business, and people worldwide, is mired in the geopolitics of the Westphalian order. In Jones and Sage (2010) human geographer Virginie Mamadouh encouraged scholars of critical geopolitics to not only be critical in their deconstructions of hegemonic discourses and power plays, but to also offer solutions to those critical issues (see page 18 of this thesis). The question remains as to whether it is possible to establish a humanitarian agency that has meta-sovereign authority and which does not differentiate between conflict, development, and environment, and how such an agency would be funded. As currently constituted the UNHCR will always be mired

in geopolitical posturing due to its foundations in Westphalianism. Having said that, the UNHCR does have the most experience and infrastructure in place for dealing with refugee related issues and thus I think by reworking its structure and expanding its protection mandate, the UNHCR could give rise to a new Refugee Regime – one that is global, rather than international.

### ***Problematizing Universalized Humanitarianism***

This thesis deals extensively with the issue of ethics and moral obligation at the universalized scale. Indeed, the main questions investigated were: (1) Can a universal and impartial humanitarian ethos coexist with a highly disjointed, state-partitioned world? (2) Should we distinguish between and respond differently to the various conceptualized forms of forced migration? And (3) If forced migration is a human rights violation, should we allow causality and positionality to affect how a displacees' human rights are protected? With regards to the first question, the 'universal and impartial humanitarian ethos' is never clearly defined in this thesis and is often treated as if it is universally accepted. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is regularly referenced in terms of displacees having their 'human rights' impinged upon – however the UDHR is not universally recognized. In fact, moral obligation is culturally relative, which places the idea of meta-humanitarianism at risk of being a Westernized convention that is potentially an artifact of the aforementioned 'geopolitical production of knowledge'. This first research question begs a further question: Is humanitarianism at the global scale belong to the group of hegemonic meta-narratives that this thesis has extensively critiqued? The moral relativist in me thinks that it may be, but conversely, forced displacement seems like it is fundamentally wrong it would seem that the majority (if not all) of those who have been displaced would argue that they have been wronged in some way. This is why a universalized ethic was upheld to make the argument for this thesis.

The second two research questions mentioned above are also question begging due to the ambiguity of certain terms. Namely: who is the ‘we’ and where is the ‘should’? I would argue that the ‘should’ stems from the inherent concerns of human geography with social (in)justice; that there is an implicit assumption motivating most spatial critiques that is driven by a desire to alleviate or bring to light social injustices in order to make the world a more just place<sup>2</sup>. The ‘we’ reads as being an abstraction of an unclearly defined ‘global community’. This is problematic because, again, it raises concern over whose terms humanitarianism or morality is being defined in a global community. This is difficult to reconcile and presents an intriguing entry for future research – I can only say again that forced migration seems inherently unjust and that an ethic of impartial compassion extended towards the forcibly displaced does not seem like a tall order for anyone.

### ***Future Research Directions***

As can be seen, this thesis generates a number of still unanswered questions. A further exploration of what a globalized governing humanitarian body concerned with forced migration may look like and whether such a body actually has the potential to exist is one direction that could be further examined. Exploring ways to actually develop and codify a normative framework for such a body and what would need to be done to mobilize such an effort could be undertaken. However, stepping away from these large solutions to the Global Refugee Regime, some other, perhaps more pressing questions could still be explored. Much of this thesis seemingly operates under the assumption that forced migration is an inevitability. What research could be pursued that aims to be more proactive in quelling forced migration rather than reactive

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<sup>2</sup> But again, the word ‘justice/just’ is a highly contested one – a contestation that dates back millennia – and so similar problems that were raised in the preceding paragraph again arise; if it assumes a universalist perspective, then who’s understanding of justice is it?

in responding to it. Though I think understanding the latent causalities that go beyond conflict, development, and environment is an important first step in this regard, attempting to diminish the number of forced migrants globally would be an interesting trajectory to explore from a critical geopolitics perspective. A way in which this research itself could be expanded is by an examination of more than just the three forms of forced migration considered in this thesis. For instance, economic migrants are an interesting case because they are traditionally not considered to be forced migrants – that coercive element is not apparent up-front. However, they are quite surely geopolitical migrants and it could be interesting to inspect whether it is geopolitics – borders, (multi-)nationalism, political economy – that induces their migration less so than any choice he or she has made. If economic migrants were conceptualized as geopolitical migrants, would they be in the same ‘category’ as the geopolitically-induced displacees discussed here? Are their migrations attributable to the statist ordering of global space? Should they be offered the same protections as ‘traditional’ forced migrants? Then, finally, this thesis states at the outset that “The Westphalian system in which all geographic territory is divided into spatially distinct, sovereign political units, or states, is pervasive and structures contemporary understandings of and interactions with our modern world” (see page 4). Further research efforts could be explored that aim to deconstruct the hegemonic production of geopolitical knowledge and that attempt to make critical geopolitics perspective and the taken-for-granted statist ideologies of the globe more pervasive going into the future. We live in world fraught with an enormous number of global problems where effecting change often seems like a daunting, if not unrealistic and farfetched prospect. At times in academia optimism is hard to encounter. But pessimistic resignations that label problems too large to fix sell the human capacity for resiliency short. If we understand change as not necessarily needing to occur dramatically and instantaneously,

however discouraging the problem of the world may be, if we can enact small scale change in the short term than perhaps, someday, global change can be achieved.

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