

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, statelessness etc.), humanitarian and legal 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. I examine a number of contemporary diasporic migrations that have been caused by Conflict, Development and Migration 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 arguing that a global, humanitarian governing body that protects the rights of all forcibly displaced migrants should be enacted as our current system based in the conceptualization of world as distinct, sovereign states deals poorly with human rights protections of the displaced.