

# INTERCONNECTED & MULTIPLE CRISIS: Gendered Displacement & Cross-Border Migration Across Afghanistan & Pakistan

Eleonore Kofman & Sobia Kapadia

Middlesex University, UK

IMISCOE SPRING CONFERENCE 2024



# Research Background

- Gender, Justice and Security Hub (2019-2024) funded by UKRI GCRF, including Migration & Displacement across selected Middle Eastern & South Asian countries across three projects: Forced Displacement, Gendered Dynamics and International Labour Migration and Return and Reintegration.
- Afghanistan and Pakistan are contiguous countries where there have been multiple, interconnected and multi directional movements between the two countries.
- Research conducted until 2021, in Afghanistan until Taliban took over.
- However, our work on policy and advocacy continues where we are currently mapping the impact of 'Exclusionary Policies' on the marginalised communities.



## Context

- The history of Afghanistan & Pakistan has shared ongoing socio-political instability, armed conflicts, environmental catastrophes, & economic crises.
- Almost 2m Afghan live in Pakistan (IOM)
- Between 2002 and 2021, over 5 m refugees returned home, while nearly 3.5 m Afghans are presently internally displaced (UNHCR)



- The worst internal displacements and refugee crisis in the world for over 4 decades
- The sporadic waves of returnees settling back in Afghanistan in line with changes of political power in the country.
- 2.1m registered Afghan refugees are still "hosted" in neighbouring countries of Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan. (UNHCR)
- Since the Taliban hostile regime took over in August 2021, over 1.3m Afghans have fled to regional & international countries and only 5,622 refugees have returned to Afghanistan since (UNHCR)



Visual documentation credit: Women Peace and Participation

# Interpretative Paradigm

- Diverse, Repetitive & Constant Displacement
- Cross-border Migrations due to political instability
- Forced Repatriation & Social - Political Ramifications
- Statelessness vs Refugee – The NARA, POR, ARC are various resettlement status that are now being cancelled.
- Infrastructure and Environmental Crisis





# Insights

- Multiple displacement multiply vulnerabilities - families may have been forced to migrate & resettle multiple times whilst coping with precarious statuses.
- Sequential or Protracted displacement & statutory and humanitarian policies often destabilises mobilities.
- Deportation – Presented as ‘Radical’ and ‘Durable’ solution.
  - Whose ‘Durable Solution’ ?
- Politics of the ‘other’



# Mobilities in the Era of Polycrisis

- Crisis has increasingly been used to qualify a series situations falling into this category, especially since the financial collapse of 2007-8 (Roitman Anti-Crisis 2014), including migration that has increasingly been associated with crises (Dines et al. 2018 Sociology)
- Crisis is a moment of rupture & instability; deportation in this refugee context often presented as a crisis, is it one?
- Naming it a crisis, i.e.. as a sudden break from previous situations makes the protracted development of 40 years of interconnected & multiple flows invisible.
- In labelling it as a simple crisis, we ignore the historical background of what has produced the situation and not analysing the societal schism produced by the policy of deportation.
- To What extent might other “simple crises” also demands a more complex analysis









UK Research  
and Innovation





## INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE



## RETURNEES FROM IRAN



Number of displaced people  
How many families to see 100000



## RETURNEES FROM PAKISTAN



Number of displaced people  
 Proportional to the number of displaced people



Data sources: Resumes from Payscale and job ads from Indeed from 1 Jan to 30 December 2013 (BNAUM43). These numbers are subject to change as more information becomes available.

- Data were collected through surveys and interviews conducted in Afghanistan and Pakistan with internally displaced and cross-border migrant men and women, some of whom had fled the previous Taliban regime, and with returnees in Afghanistan from the neighbouring countries (Iran and Pakistan). Hence individuals and families may have been forced to migrate and resettle multiple times whilst coping with precarious statuses.



- The pandemic, the 2021 takeover by the Taliban, the floods of late 2022 in southern Pakistan, and the economic emergency resulting from Russian invasion of Ukraine are more recent crises that will produce new destabilising mobilities in the area, as well as the statutory and humanitarian policies and interventions around them.
- Regional dimension