War and Migration

Social Networks and Economic
Strategies of the Hazaras of Afghanistan

Alessandro Monsutti

MIDDLE EAST STUDIES
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Edited by

Shahrough Akhavi
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SHAHROUGH AKHAVI, *General Editor*

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To my mother,
To my father,
who have never left me

Be in the world below as a stranger, or a passer-by

Hadith

After a few steps the dervish stopped and said: "Travel the World!"
He squatted beside the steam and plunged his hand in the water.
"When water stagnates it become unhealthy. It turns earth into mud.
Be as the water that slips through your hand!"

Atiq Rahimi

Foreword

War and Migration breaks with established ethnographic conventions. Until recently, ethnographers focused on a single village or region and then traced the complex social ties with the rest of the world. Alessandro Monsutti is distinguished from most of his predecessors. He forms part of a new generation of ethnographers that no longer considers a specific geographic place as the focus of study, but instead the extended and reliable networks of trust and mutual obligation. This book offers a solid multi-sited ethnography that takes the study of networks as its central theme instead of a single place. The networks of solidarity in question are those developed by the Hazaras—and by neighboring groups—for mutual support and communication. The regional wars and internal struggles that Afghanistan has sustained over the course of the past thirty years have been especially destructive, but they are not unprecedented. Monsutti describes a "network society" that existed long before Manuel Castells in the early 1990s made the term a sociological standard.

       War and Migration depicts Hazara economic and social ties as total social facts in Marcel Mauss's sense of the term. Monsutti explains the extent to which social and economic ties overlap and how their imbrication allows individuals to anticipate the actions of others. This mutual anticipation is essential for a society for which migration is neither temporary nor permanent and which neighbors perceive the Hazaras as politically marginal and religiously heterodox. In such circumstances, the economic worth accorded to goods and money is highly relative. It is challenging to place a reliable exchange value on the banknotes of Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and other countries. Equally daunting is the challenge of reliably sending goods, funds, and messages over long distances, especially when they are subject to long delays and political insecurity. Nonetheless, the concurrent and overlapping use of letters of credit, secret codes, telephone calls, and messages passed along a chain of intermediaries facilitates economic exchange and sustains

ties of family and community. Monsutti convincingly shows that these overlapping ties cannot be depicted as a series of concentric circles that spread out from family and household to encompass progressively kin, village or community, and ethnic or religious group. These various forms of identity overlap and imply one another. They form the background understandings that allow the Hazaras to adapt to changing social, political, and economic circumstances. As the author emphasizes, the trust and reliability placed on social ties flows from the density of ties maintained with particular persons or groups rather than from kinship or tribal identity alone.

This study is based on the ties of belonging and trust that the Hazaras have elaborated in spite of their geographical dispersion and not on any single point of common origin or locale. The study of Hazara networks entails three basic questions: How do Hazara migrants cross state frontiers, often in the absence of formal documents or permits? How do emigrants send funds to their family or households in the absence of reliable banking or state institutions? Finally, how do the Hazaras send reliable messages through multiple intermediaries, and often not in written form? Of course, prior knowledge of the character of close relatives and neighbors allows the Hazaras to anticipate their future reactions. Yet Hazaras cannot often rely on close relatives alone or on members of their community of origin. Their dispersion constrains them to take risks and to rely on others to obtain visas and cross borders.

This book offers ethnographic insight into how the Hazaras assess and overcome these risks, although not always successfully. Their strategies for migration form an integral part of their social life. It would be inappropriate for them to be seen as traumatized by migration, contrary to common conventional ethnographic understandings. Monsutti makes use of quantitative data whenever it is available, but the main strength of this book is in tracing in compelling detail the migratory itineraries and choices of a dozen Hazaras who chose to emigrate at different periods in their lives from Afghanistan to Iran or Pakistan.

The network society created by these migrant workers and merchants has been stretched to the limit by Afghanistan's tumultuous recent history. Yet the intertwined and durable ties of this network society, formed by reciprocal economic and social obligations, show a strong capacity to endure and adapt. Multilateral Hazara networks encompass Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran and in recent years have extended to the Arabian Peninsula, Europe, Southeast Asia, and North America, creating channels for moving goods, people, and information more reliable than those provided by state authorities or formal banking channels.

The author's description of the *hawâla* system for the transfer of funds is especially incisive. Few readers will henceforth consider *hawâla* networks an anachronism, nor consider them merely as a means to transfer funds illegally to sustain rogue states or criminal and terrorist groups. Just as is the case with modern banking, the *hawâla* system can be abused. Nonetheless, in regions where banks are absent, inefficient, or insecure, *hawâla* offers an excellent means to overcome the obstacles of geographical distance and insecurity. Finally, the ease with which *hawâla* traders adapt to modern forms of communications and banking technologies—using them whenever they are more efficacious than conventional means—provides a rich exemplar for those interested in facilitating economic and social development.

War and Migration has a clarity that evokes the classic work of Henri Pirenne on the movement of goods and commerce in the insecure context of medieval Europe. It describes in convincing detail the workings of informal institutions—including that of the *hawâla*—that are often unknown or viewed with suspicion by administrators, politicians, and officials in international humanitarian and relief organizations. Knowledge of how such "informal" institutions work can make a significant contribution to building a better future for Afghanistan. This book will suggest to readers ways of encouraging sustainable economic and social development in Afghanistan's more remote regions. *War and Migration* is essential reading for scholars, officials, and all those interested in Afghanistan and neighboring countries.

> Dale F. Eickelman,
> Ralph and Richard Lazarus
> Professor of Anthropology and
> Human Relations, Dartmouth College (USA)

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Introduction

In its scale and duration, the conflict that has been tearing Afghanistan apart is one of the gravest humanitarian disasters of the second half of the twentieth century. Between the Communist coup of 1978 and the Soviet withdrawal of 1989, a third of the population fled abroad, eleven percent became refugees inside the country, and nine percent were killed (Sliwinski 1989: 51–52). At the beginning of the 1990s Afghans formed the largest group of displaced persons on earth, accounting for nearly half the total under the responsibility of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (Colville 1998: 6). In 1990 there were 6.22 million Afghan refugees in the world (HCR 1997). Large numbers returned after the Soviet withdrawal (1989) and the capture of Kabul by resistance forces (1992), but over the following years this trend was reversed as more outward flows accompanied the new outbreaks of fighting, especially in the Mazar-e Sharif and Kabul regions. The fall of the Taliban regime, the establishment of a government in Kabul backed by the international community between autumn 2001 and summer 2002 and the prospect of a restoration of normality have caused an unprecedented wave of returns. In the summer of 2002 the UNHCR estimated that more than a million and a half refugees had made their way back to the country, and that 230,000 internally displaced persons had regained their villages in the space of a few months.[1] Nevertheless, the number of Afghans living abroad is still considerable.

Afghanistan and Afghans have experienced some curious changes of fortune in the West. Whereas, in the 1980s, the media praised the heroism of a people resisting Soviet occupation at the highest possible cost to themselves, the image gradually worsened in the 1990s as the talk turned to a revival of tribalism, smuggling and drug-trafficking, or "Kalashnikov culture" and international terrorism. Yet neither of these opposing views can possibly do justice to the complexity of the Afghan situation.

In my own first encounters with Afghans, I was struck by how frequently they made two statements: *mosâfer astim* and *e'tebâr nist. Mosâfer astim:* "we are travellers," in the sense of "we are only travellers" or "we are not at home," but also and perhaps especially "we are only passing through this world." *E'tebâr nist:* "there is no trust" or "who can be trusted?" *Amnyat nist:* "there is no security." These expressions are mainly intended in a general or existential sense, as we can see from the fact that they were in use before the Communist coup of 1978. They tersely remind us of two major phenomena that have constrained the lives of Afghans throughout their troubled history: war and migration.

Nevertheless, Afghans are not passive victims of a fate totally external to them. Faced with endemic insecurity, scattered among a large number of countries, they have developed social and economic strategies based upon spatial mobility and group solidarity. Life has gone on in spite of the fighting, the bombing and the massacres; people and goods cross the fighting zones, as Afghans have grown used to the difficulties of the situation. In this context, I soon realized the centrality of trust in Afghan society. The cleavages and conflicts do not exclude close social ties, as I saw for myself while talking, living and travelling with Afghans, taking risks alongside them and developing over time a number of strong personal relations.

Two of my principal conclusions are that migration is a way of life rather than merely an external constraint, and that, although war and exile certainly bring great insecurity, they do not prevent the reproduction of relations of solidarity and trust. The idea of the voyage, so dear to my Afghan friends, has a spatial but also a metaphysical and moral dimension, for it expresses the uncertainty dominating our lives. We are all travellers and are united by this common fate.

My first real contact with Afghans goes back to 1993, when I and a group of students from the Institute of Ethnology of the University of Neuchâtel spent the months from July to October in Quetta, the capital of Pakistani Baluchistan, working under the guidance of Pierre Centlivres and Micheline Centlivres-Demont. The object of our research was the migration and integration of Afghans who had left the refugee camps to settle in an urban environment. Our preparation for the trip began in 1991, with the learning of Dari (the form of Persian spoken in Afghanistan) and the study of such issues as relations between refugees and host countries, new occupational and civil identities, the position of women and educational problems.

Contacts made during this first trip led me to take up the study of the Hazaras, an oppressed minority originating in the center of Afghanistan. During subsequent stays in 1995–96 and, more briefly, in 1998 and 2001, I

extended my investigations to Afghanistan and Iran. Most of my field research took place in the period between two landmarks in recent Afghan history: the defeat of the Hazara forces of Hezb-e wahdat, in Kabul in March 1995, when they were caught in a pincers between the troops of Massoud/Sayyaf and the Taliban, suffered heavy losses (including that of their leader, Abdul Ali Mazari) and had to withdraw to the Hazarajat; and the Taliban capture of the capital in September 1996. But the work and its conclusions cover a longer time span.

Despite these events, in 1995 and 1996 the Hazaras were still able to cross fairly easily the Pashtun Belt in the south and east of the country, where the Taliban movement (which first appeared in late 1994) had won some popularity by ending the terrible anarchy due to merciless Pashtun commanders and the systematic racketeering in migrants and refugees. Subsequently, however, the situation became much worse. In May 1997 the Taliban briefly occupied the town of Mazar-e Sharif, but in the ensuing rout two thousand of their fighters were summarily executed and the remainder driven out. In the summer, the Taliban imposed a blockade of Hazarajat to undermine the military positions of the Wahdat. But it was only in the months after August 8, 1998, when they captured Mazar and reportedly massacred 2,000 people (although the figure was probably as high as 3–6,000, most of them Hazara), that the Taliban extended their control, however imperfectly, over the region.[2]

In this escalation of the conflict, the Hazaras were the main target of the Taliban on account of their Shiite beliefs and their stubborn resistance; the mistrust and fear reported by my informants thus proved largely justified. Yet the truly Hobbesian situation of latent warfare, together with the general lack of trust, did not prevent the establishment of huge networks specializing in migration and trade.

The American intervention following the attacks of September 11, 2001 in New York and Washington led to the victory of forces opposed to the Taliban. The future of Afghanistan is still uncertain. Migratory flows from Hazarajat, one of the country's poorest regions, began long before the war and have become a cultural model largely independent of external circumstances. It is unlikely that they will come to an end, even in the most optimistic scenario of a return to normality.

The study of Hazara migratory strategies has several dimensions: it forms part of the theoretical debate on migration and transnationalism, and addresses the methodological doubts that have been shaking the world of anthropology since the mid-1980s; it calls into question the cut-and-dried distinction between economic migrants and refugees; it reveals the effectiveness

of money-transfer networks and their role in the reproduction of social relations; and it helps to correct the relative lack of attention to the Hazaras in Western ethnography.

The work consists of two sets of three chapters presenting field material, framed by a number of theoretical considerations. Chapter 1 assesses the contribution of the literature on migration and transnationalism to debates in anthropology, and identifies aspects that may be useful for an understanding of the Afghan case. Chapter 2 considers a number of works that have a bearing on Afghan refugees, the methods used in the present research and the population that forms its object. A number of individuals are introduced here who will reappear from time to time later in the text. In the ethnographic section, chapters 3, 4 and 5 look at the main foci of the Hazara migration: that is, Hazarajat (Afghanistan), Quetta (Pakistan) and a number of urban centers in Iran. My intention here is not to offer a detailed monograph on each locality, but to highlight the social organization and modes of cooperation specific to the different contexts. Chapters 6, 7 and 8 explore the flows linking Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran, in particular the ways in which people move among the three countries, the transfers of money and goods, and the modes of communication within the transnational community under investigation. For the sake of clarity, the presentation will look first at the various localities and then at the migration flows, but this is not meant to imply any logical precedence or to reflect the actual chronology of the fieldwork. Chapter 9 discusses the notion of trust and the forms of cooperation specific to the insecure migratory situation of the Hazaras, and presents some ideas on the importance and limits of kinship ties. In the light of the social-economic and political strategies developed by the Hazaras, the conclusion and epilogue consider possible solutions to the Afghan conflict and the future reconstruction of the country, and outline what has become of my principal interlocutors.

It is customary to acknowledge one's intellectual debts in a preface, and this is a custom with which I am happy to comply. Pierre Centlivres accompanied me in my discovery of Afghanistan. He played an important role in my intellectual formation, and in the development of a conceptual and methodological framework for my research. Richard Tapper made me feel welcome during my research stay at SOAS in 1999–2000 and kindly shared with me various insights. Christian Ghasarian was always unstinting in his encouragement. Micheline Centlivres-Demont guided my first steps in Persian. Gilbert Rist attentively read a first draft of the text, and his rigour greatly helped to improve it.

My work would have been impossible without the friendship of Haji Barkat Ali, Ghulam Sakhi Khatibi and Chaman Ali, as well as of their

the Academic Society of Neuchâtel, Christian Nef, the Department of Arts and Human Sciences of the University of Neuchâtel, and the Association suisse des amis de l'Afghanistan.

My gratitude goes out to all who welcomed me and were kind enough to answer my questions in the field; they enabled me to understand much that went beyond the framework of academic research. Faced with the most trying conditions of life, the people of Afghanistan have shown an exemplary dignity and dynamism. Let my work be homage to their courage. Last but not least, this work would never have seen the light of day without Alice's support. In agreeing to let me leave so often, sometimes without receiving news from me for months on end, she gave proof of a truly Afghan patience.
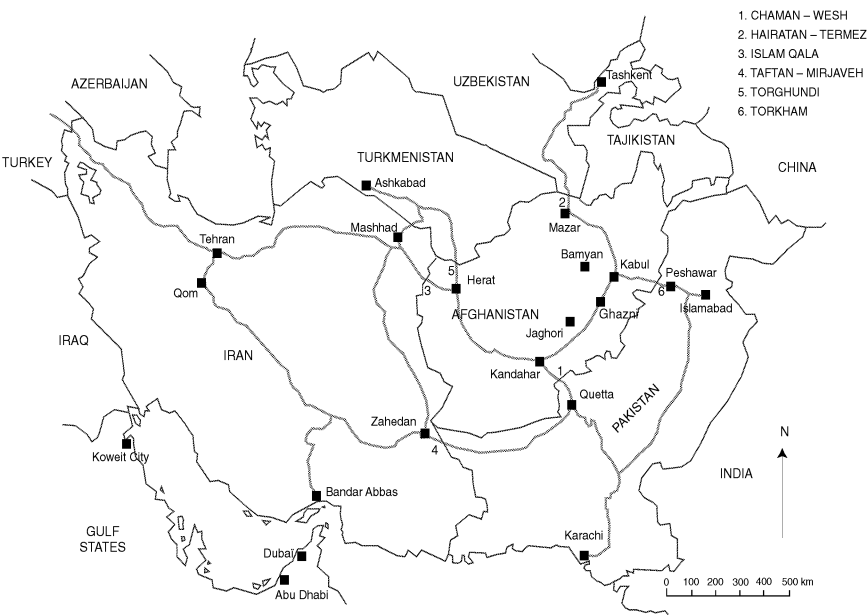
Figure 1. Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran

PART ONE

ISSUES AND METHOD

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Chapter One

Migration and Transnationalism in the Anthropological Debate

TOWARDS A NEW PARADIGM IN ANTHROPOLOGY

At the junction between two millennia, many anthropologists feel deeply uneasy about the object and method of their discipline. Although there are scarcely any more grand systems of explanation, the theoretical debate remains intense and many authors are hoping that a new paradigm will take shape. In this rich if disorganized intellectual climate, there have been important advances in the study of migration and refugee flows, in connection with the theme of transnationalism and globalization, and this has had a wider impact on anthropology and the human and social sciences in general.

A lot of research remains caught up in a conceptual framework that may appear out of date. Since the 1980s, however, a new epistemological thinking (originating mostly among North American authors who adopt the perspective of postmodern anthropology) has broken with the previously dominant model that conceived of communities as discrete units, each woven together and rooted in a particular territory. Although numerous voices have been raised against the excesses of this new current, and against its oversimplification of the history of the discipline, it is no longer possible to keep doing anthropology as it was done in the 1950s, 1960s or even 1970s. The study of migration has played a major role in this turn (Kearney 1986: 332).[1]

Migration is often explained in terms of violent conflicts or the attraction of labor markets in rich countries or urban centers. Although other factors may be in play, such as natural disasters (earthquakes, floods, prolonged drought, etc.) or certain kinds of development project (dam construction, landholding reforms, programs to settle nomadic populations,

etc.), it is political or economic causes which are ordinarily used to distin-
guish between involuntary or forced migration and voluntary migration; the
media and public opinion in the West echo this by readily contrasting polit-
ical refugees with economic migrants, seeing the latter as bogus refugees
who use asylum procedures to come and work in Western Europe or North
America.

It is becoming increasingly clear that this mainly causal framework
cannot do justice to the complexity of today's global migration flows. We
have to go beyond anthropological conceptions in which cultures and com-
munities appear as spatially located phenomena; we should no longer think
of migration as movement from one place to another, but rather as:

> multidirectional (sometimes circular) relocation which changes place of
> residence but not always the places where time is actually spent, the in-
> tensity of social relations but not systematically their structure. It is
> therefore a complex social phenomenon involving much more than
> flight or attraction towards prosperous lands. The conception of a de-
> finitive resettlement or irreversible move does not take account of the
> social reality, for the migratory phenomena observable today are mostly
> bidirectional or circular (Droz and Sottas 1997: 70).

In many cases, spatial dispersion is a survival strategy that makes it possible
to use a variety of ecological and socio-economic niches. Migration flows,
then, should no longer be seen in terms of "flight by individuals in search of a
better life"; for, although migrants do leave, "at the same time—through fam-
ily circulation strategies—they remain at home" (Dros & Sottas 1997: 86).

Group mobility by no means signals a recent change from a world of ho-
mogeneous and mutually separated social-cultural entities. From the very be-
ginnings, migration has been a major constituent of human history. In the
eighteenth century, for example, Iran experienced huge and compulsory reset-
tlement, which lastingly altered the geographical distribution of its population
(Perry 1975), and in the following century Afghanistan was the scene of inter-
mingling whose effects are still visible today (Centlivres and Centlivres-
Demont 1983, 1988a; Mousavi 1998). The Middle East and Central Asia
have always had large nomadic populations, with migration not limited sim-
ply to seasonal relocation by shepherds. To be sure, population movements
have been particularly intense in the last part of the twentieth century, but this
is not enough to explain the current theoretical infatuation with the problems
of migration and refugees. We need also to bear in mind other factors, such as
the rise of postmodern theories in philosophy and social science, the accompa-
nying crisis of grand systems of explanation in anthropology, and the gradual

institutionalization of development aid and humanitarian action in two distinct stages (after the Second World War and then after the end of the Cold War).

The aim of this introductory chapter will be to assess the scope and limits of the existing literature on migration. Thought needs to be given to an open conception of the relationship between social-cultural groups and territories, in a way that goes beyond the assumption of sedentariness and the opposition between voluntary economic migrants and involuntary political refugees. Finally, we must take a critical look at the idea that migration shatters social ties and inevitably induces psychological traumas.

THE FIGURE OF THE REFUGEE IN OFFICIAL INTERNATIONAL TEXTS

The office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was created in the years following the Second World War. The international definition of a refugee may be found in the first article of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, which was adopted on July 28, 1951 and came into force on April 22, 1954, but with application only to events in Europe prior to January 1, 1951. In 1967 a Protocol extended both the time frame and the geographical field of validity:

> The term 'refugee' shall apply to any person who, owing to a 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 his country of former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it (HCR 1996a).

At the time of writing, 133 countries have ratified this Protocol.[2] The purpose of the two documents is to protect fundamental rights (first of all, the right to life and physical safety) of people who are forced to flee their homes. When individuals are no longer protected by their own government, it falls to the international community (in the shape of the signatories) to intervene on their behalf. The UNHCR is supposed to complement governments by encouraging the signature of international conventions, by ensuring that refugees are treated accordingly and not forced to return to the country from which they have fled, and by seeking permanent solutions to refugee problems (HCR 1996a, 1996b).

This definition calls for a few remarks. First, international legal usage does not accord refugee status to "internally displaced persons" (IDPs), that

is to persons who have not left the national territory in question (Hein 1993: 44; Marx 1990: 190; Zetter 1991: 40). Second, a person who, in the country of asylum, continues military activities against his or her country of origin is not considered a refugee.[3] And, lastly, these texts imply a distinction between refugees and economic migrants: whereas the former are persecuted, or fear persecution, and have no other choice than to flee, the latter continue to enjoy the protection of their government and are supposed to have left their country voluntarily in search of a better life.

International organizations concerned with refugee aid allow for three long-term solutions: repatriation to the country of origin, integration into the first country to provide asylum, and resettlement in a third country (Hein 1993: 48; Malkki 1995a: 505; Stein 1986: 265, 268).

The last scenario remains a rarity, for Third World countries are both originators and hosts of the great majority of refugees (Stein 1986: 265). On January 1, 2001, nearly 22 million persons came under the mandate of the UNHCR. (This figure included 3,580,400 Afghans—before, that is, the return of several hundreds of thousands in the months following the overthrown of the Taliban regime in autumn 2001.) On the same date, a total of 6,694,800 refugees were distributed among Europe, North America and Australasia.[4] Thus, while the issue of asylum-seekers and refugees fills the headlines in the West, the reality is that nearly 70 percent of the world's refugees are living in Third World countries. This is not least of the paradoxes of globalization: the industrial countries, whose immigration policy is shaped by the dichotomy between political refugees and economic migrants, have accompanied their advocacy of the free circulation of capital with a complex legal and police apparatus to control immigration from the poorest regions of the world. This situation often forces would-be immigrants to apply for political asylum, which they have little chance of obtaining.

Repatriation to the country of origin, which is considered the optimum solution, is a rather infrequent occurrence (Zetter 1988b: 101; Stein 1986: 269, 272). In Europe, after the huge movement of population resulting from the Second World War, most later refugees (between the 1950s and 1970s) came from countries fighting a colonial regime; the eventual success of this struggle and the achievement of independence then made it possible for them to return. Since the mid-seventies, however, most of the world's refugees have come from independent countries—from Afghanistan, of course, but also from various other countries in Asia and Africa, where a long-drawn-out conflict makes repatriation more and more of a hypothetical solution (Stein 1986: 265–66).

Thus Western barriers to immigration, combined with the political difficulties of repatriation to the country of origin, mean that humanitarian

agencies consider integration in the first country of asylum to be the most feasible, if not the best, solution. In this optic, although the paid activity of migrants is usually in the informal sector and not in the official labor market (Kearney 1986: 349), integration is the only real solution in the long term (Stein 1986: 277).

The definition of a refugee in the international texts is supposed to be binding on states that have signed up to them, and therefore to provide millions of people with a legal status that protects them from arbitrary treatment. Yet, as Richmond stresses (1988: 23), it is not a fruitful analytic or descriptive starting-point for researchers in the social sciences. The Hazaras, for instance, are constantly on the move among Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and the countries of the Arabian Peninsula. War and poverty have compelled them to leave their native regions, but they have developed (with scarcely any international aid) a number of social-economic strategies based on high levels of circulation. Whereas the international texts, with their stress on the legal and normative dimension, conceive of the refugee as a resourceless individual removed from any cultural context, social relationships remain very strong among Afghans.

The wish has often been expressed that academic research and refugee aid should be closer to each other. In an attempt to enrich the definition in the international texts Harrell-Bond and Vourtira, for example, write that:

> anthropologically, refugees are people who have undergone a violent 'rite' of separation and, unless or until they are incorporated as citizens into their host state (or returned to their state of origin), find themselves in transition, in a state of liminality. This betwixt-and-between status may contain social and economic dimensions as well as legal and psychological ones. Moreover, encoded in the refugee label are images of dependency, helplessness, and misery (Harrell-Bond & Vourtira 1996: 1077).

Beyond the vocabulary of anthropology, however, we find in this definition all the elements of a refugee as conceived in international law: separation followed by assimilation or return; violence, dependence, and so on. Although the authors in question seek to distance themselves from this overly juridical definition, they do not manage to shake off the all too common metaphor of rootlessness, nor to abandon a highly sombre vision of the refugee experience. It is true, of course, that refugees face a dramatic situation, yet they have resources which they know how to mobilize effectively.

Thus, although we can be happy at the rise of an applied anthropology that has much to contribute to humanitarian and development aid, and although it is desirable that anthropologists should serve as intermediaries

between humanitarian agencies and local communities (Howell 1982), it is regrettable that most of the relevant texts abandon any critical perspective. The closing of the gap between reflection and action most often seems to concern only particular assignments for which anthropologists adopt the vocabulary of international documents. Sometimes, it is even hard to distinguish academic research from the humanitarian reports whose terminology has invaded the whole field of refugee studies.

Malkki (1995a) has shown that refugee studies took shape, first, in relation to displaced persons in Europe after the Second World War, and then through a whole series of discursive and institutional developments in international law, development studies, refugee studies, UN activity, the work of special refugee agencies, and so on. The figure of the refugee thus made its cognitive and legal appearance in a period marked by the creation of special camps and the spatial concentration of refugees under initially military administration (Malkki 1995a: 498). After the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol, the international institutions began to relate to the question of refugees—not, however, as a political problem requiring a political solution, but as a matter of directing charity towards people who were seen as the mere victims of events outside their control. The two main characteristics of the resulting "international refugee system" (Malkki 1995a: 504) were therefore depoliticization and bureaucratization, and it is from this system that academic research has uncritically imported most of its ideas. The term "refugee" is here not so much an analytic category enabling us to identify a certain kind of person or situation, but rather a legal category that allows very different cases to be grouped within one or other element of a debatable dichotomy: either as economic migrants or as refugees. As Malkki puts it:

> The 'international refugee regime' [. . .] has been instrumental in the recent emergence of 'refugee studies' as an academic or 'applied academic' specialization. Much social scientific research—whether resulting in policy recommendations, development reports, or academic articles—has been conducted in more or less formal connection with (and often funded by) these international organizations. It can hardly be surprising that these institutional, organizational settings have had subtle (and sometimes not-so-subtle) effects in shaping the questions that scholars have formulated about displacement and refugee settlement (1995a: 506).

To avoid this pitfall, it has become urgently necessary for new research to focus on the international system, UN agencies and non-governmental organizations. The opposition between political refugee and economic migrant, already implicit in the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol, has

scarcely any descriptive or analytic relevance, even though it remains part of national immigration policies. Any anthropological approach to migratory phenomena must move beyond this conception, and bring it under appropriate scrutiny.

TYPOLOGIES AS A GENERAL THEORY OF MIGRATION

Many authors consider that a general theory of migration should take the form of a typology, centring mainly upon the rational choice of the people involved. Their approaches, which claim to have predictive power, set out a bipolar opposition between societies that send and receive migrants, and distinguish between "push factors" impelling departure and "pull factors" attracting migration.

Ravenstein (1885 & 1889) and Fairchild (1925) were among the first to present a general theory of migration, the latter's four categories of invasion, conquest, colonization and immigration remaining influential until after the Second World War (Connor 1987b: 153–154). One of the most elaborate typologies has been that of Petersen (1958), who also had the great merit of weakening the opposition between push and pull factors. In his view, the supposedly universal tendency to a settled existence that is implicit in that opposition has no historical or psychological foundation.

Petersen starts from a general distinction between "conservative" and "innovating" migration: people migrate, in the former case, to preserve their living conditions, and in the latter case to improve them. He further subdivides migration into five classes: primitive, forced, impelled, free and mass (1958: 258–259).

Primitive migration is the result of ecological pressure. Its conservative form Petersen describes as either "wandering" (when there is no clear destination) or "ranging" (when it involves hunter-gatherers or nomadic shepherds). Its innovating form he calls "flight from the land," since it is usually a question of people leaving the countryside for the town.

Where political factors are determinant, Petersen distinguishes between "forced" migration (under compulsion from a state or an institution within society) and "impelled" migration (if people have some power over their decision to leave); the two conservative forms of these he calls respectively "displacement" and "flight," and the two innovating forms "slave trade" and "coolie trade."

Free migration corresponds to the wish of the migrants themselves. The difference between pioneering and group movement consists in the mode of departure (individual or communal) and the number of persons involved.

Free migration often paves the way for mass migration—for instance, the settling of peasants from Europe in North America, or the urbanization of a rural population across or within an international frontier.

More recently, Kunz (1973, 1981) and du Toit (1990) have also argued that a typology is integral to any general theory of migration. Kunz starts with the following definition: "With a different past and with motivations at variance with those affecting voluntary migrants, the refugee moves from his homeland to the country of his settlement against his will. He is a distinct social type" (Kunz 1973: 130), whose aim is one day to rediscover community ties by returning to his homeland. Although Kunz's central distinction is between voluntary and involuntary migration (characterized by push and pull factors respectively), he further uses a classical model to identify the diverse combinations of motives and external circumstances that enter into the latter. Thus, he speaks of "anticipatory refugee movement," where refugees move to the host country in anticipation of a worsening situation at home, and "acute refugee movement," where they flee, often in difficult conditions, a context of violence and insecurity (1973: 131). In both cases, it is true, "push factors" are the decisive ones, but the urgency gives them much greater prominence in "acute movement." Pull factors may then often play a role in the choice of an (at least temporary) host country.

Kunz (1973) offers a first set of distinctions regarding the forms of exile and arrival in the initial host country. He uses the term "push-permit" to characterize anticipatory movements; the refugee, faced with impending calamities, tries to leave his homeland and to find official residence elsewhere. If the situation has already become dramatically urgent, however, Kunz speaks of "push-pressure"; the refugee then has neither the time nor the means to consider pull factors, and heads for the first available place of refuge. Further distinctions are possible with regard to the refugee's insertion into the host country: "push-pressure-plunge" when the situation in the first host country forces him to move on to another; "push-pressure-stay" when he receives permission to settle in the country of refuge; and "push-pressure-return" when he is induced to return to his country of origin.

A second typology is based on a distinction between waves of refugees, since the members of a society react differently to the same events and will not all leave at the same moment or for the same reasons. Kunz here uses the term "vintages" to refer to groups who left at the same time, had similar experiences and often share the same ideas.

A third distinction relates to the forms of departure. Among the urgent forms, Kunz lists flight, forced population transfer and relocation through

absence (that is, people who leave their country in normal circumstances and refuse to return because of subsequent events).

Like many others, du Toit counterposes voluntary and forced migration. He distinguishes among seasonal migrants, refugees, planned relocation and voluntary migration (1990: 305–306) and attempts to draw up a model embracing various aspects of migration: spatial flows, push and pull factors, physical movement, the taking of decisions. While advocating measures to prevent flight from the countryside and to promote more harmonious development, he calls for special attention to be paid to migration routes and the multiplicity of factors involved in migration. He recognizes that migration is not an act but a process, yet his definition of it remains rather limited:

> Migration is a relatively permanent moving away of a collectivity, called migrants, from one geographical location to another, preceded by decision making on the part of the migrants on the basis of a hierarchically ordered set of values or valued ends and resulting in changes in the interactional system of the migrants (du Toit 1990: 308).

A number of different stages are often identified in the experience of refugees: perception of a threat; the decision to flee; the period of extreme danger and flight; the arrival in safer areas; life in the camps; repatriation, settlement in the first host country or departure for another country; the various phases of creating a new home; adaptation and acculturation; changes in behaviour as a result of these experiences (Stein 1981: 321).

The wish to develop a general theory of refugee movement beyond particular cases, and to achieve greater conceptual clarity and terminological precision, is certainly praiseworthy in itself. But it is regrettable that the suggested definitions are little more than labels, providing rigid frameworks that do not allow the complexity of situations in the real world to be expressed. Thus, the distinction between "push" and "pull" factors is not unimportant, but we may doubt the relevance of the options that are considered to be open to refugees: departure for a third country, return to their country of origin or settlement in the first host country. The framework here remains the nation-state, and fails to do justice to the rich, polysemous experience of refugees and migrants. Its reductionism rules out any open and multiple view of space, as well as the existence of back-and-forth movements and transnational links.

These approaches emphasize the dramatic side of forced migration, with its profoundly traumatic effects. Many authors speak of populations

being completely "uprooted" (e.g. Zetter 1988a: 1) or cast into "limbo" (Stein 1986: 264). But this is to overlook the strategies that refugees develop, as well as their social-cultural resources, with the result that the frequently multidirectional and recurrent character of migratory movements becomes blurred in a generally linear vision.

THEORIES OF MODERNIZATION AND DEPENDENCE

Approaches to the phenomenon of migration are often divided into microtheories and macrotheories. Microtheories focus on individual rational choice in a world where chances are not evenly distributed, so that migration is seen as a population movement from regions poor in capital but rich in labor to economically prosperous regions that need a large workforce. Most of the contributions reviewed in the previous section may be grouped under this category. Macrotheories adopt explanations with a more global reach, laying stress on demographic and economic structures in the context of a capitalism organized on a world scale (Richmond 1988; Zolberg 1981).

   This distinction ties up with the two theoretical approaches to North-South relations: modernization theory and the theory of dependency and world systems. Bocco has this to say about the former:

> The modernization theorists of the 1950s and 1960s thought of national and international migration as a necessary, sometimes even an inevitable, phenomenon—or anyway as a stage in the process of human evolution. Considered as veritable catalysts of social change, migratory flows were supposed to have given traditional societies access to modernity. Within this framework, the large refugee flows from the South triggered by the creation of new postcolonial states were seen as a transitional phenomenon, destined to die out with the emergence and consolidation of a modern 'national' spirit (Bocco 1994: 15–16).

Modernization theory dominated debate until the mid-1960s. Descended from an ancient Western philosophical tradition, it based itself upon the belief in progress and explained the decisions of individuals to migrate in terms of how they assessed the information at their disposal. It was easy for critics to point out that in many cases the effects of urbanization were rather more pernicious than the economic development predicted by modernization theory (e.g. Kearney 1986: 334), and that the whole process had to be seen in the light of the worldwide expansion of capitalism and the accompanying rise of nationalist discourses and practices limiting the mobility of labor (Bocco 1994: 16). Dependency theory thus emerged on the basis of a Marxist critique of modernization theory, its aim being to study the "development of underdevelopment" (Kearney 1986: 338). The industrial

countries and the Third World, like urban and rural areas, did not have separate economies but were linked together in relations of dependence that served the needs of the core at the expense of the periphery. Far from being an instrument of modernization, migration and development were exploitative mechanisms within what Wallerstein (1974, 1980, 1989) called the capitalist "world-system."

Kearney (1986) emphasized some of the limitations of dependency theory: it was too general to provide good directions for research in specific fields; it neglected cultural factors and laid too much stress on economic as opposed to political questions; it did not take into account strategies of resistance and reappropriation in the periphery; and it thought of the world as having a single rather than several centers.

Accepting that the great migratory flows could not be isolated from economic disparities in the contemporary world, Kearney argued that they had to be studied in conjunction with issues of development and underdevelopment. His proposed third way, which he called articulation theory, was meant to look into social practices and their cultural dimension, while still remaining attentive to local initiatives and relations of domination. Kearney was interested more in systems of production and reproduction than in the sphere of circulation; he did not retain the idea of a world-system unified by the capitalist economy, because he thought that the periphery had a dynamism of its own and perhaps also modes of production distinct from those of the core. The domestic unit thus remained the pertinent analytic level for empirical research. At the same time, the "articulatory migrant network" offered a fertile interpretive key enabling us to represent the movement of persons, goods, services and information as a huge vascular system (1986: 353).

In a full review of the social and economic literature on migration, Massey and his colleagues have widened the discussion by identifying four distinct currents:

1) *Studies inspired by neoclassical economics (both macro and micro)* highlight income and employment differences, explaining migratory flows by geographical variations in supply and demand; there is movement of workers "from labour-abundant to labour-scarce countries," with migration the outcome of a wage-gap between countries (Massey et al. 1993: 433f.). Microeconomically, this means that individuals rationally choose to migrate after making a cost-benefit calculation and seeking to maximize their interests.

2) *The new economics of migration* does not consider only the labor market but extends the decision-making process to the whole of

the domestic group. Households seek not only to maximize their interests but also to minimize risks by diversifying their economic resources (Massey et al. 1993: 436). In this view, then, migration is to developing countries what social security is to developed countries.

3) *The dual labor-market theory* does not rest upon an individual or family model of rational choice but explains migration by the permanent need for labor in modern industrial societies—by demand factors rather than by supply. Migrants meet the requirements of employers, since they regard the low-paid work on offer to them as a mere source of income, not as a means of social advancement (Massey et al. 1993: 440–442).

4) In *world-systems theory,* international migration results not only from the organization of production and labor in the industrial countries, but more generally from the structures of the world market. Migratory flows are thus brought about by economic globalization—that is, not by wage and employment differences, but by the penetration of the capitalist market into developing countries and the resulting social, cultural and economic upheavals. Persons move in the opposite direction from commodities and capital (Massey et al. 1993: 447–448).

Massey and his colleagues stress that the factors which induce migration are not necessarily the same as those which perpetuate it. They accordingly speak of "cumulative causation" (Massey et al. 1993: 448): migrants weave networks of contacts that make it ever easier to move between different countries. Furthermore, the gap between demand (the number of people wishing to enter an economically developed country) and supply (the number of visas available) creates a lucrative niche. A whole black market of forgers and people-smugglers comes into being to get round controls in the destination country, while NGOs justify their own existence by defending migrants and refugees from state repression and providing them with legal forms of assistance (Massey et al. 1993: 450–451).

In short, the factors triggering and sustaining migratory flows come to form more or less stable systems (Massey et al. 1993: 462). Given the multiplicity of causes—political, economic, social, cultural and psychological—it is hard to imagine a theory that could integrate them all into a coherent whole.

NEW APPROACHES OF MIGRATION

In their critical reflection on the object and methods of anthropology, numerous (mainly North American) authors inspired by *Writing Culture* (Clifford

and Marcus eds 1986) consider the links among social-cultural groups, territorial areas and the phenomenon of migration. For a long time, anthropologists saw their object of investigation as consisting of culturally and linguistically homogeneous territorial groups—until migrants came along to shake that perception. Then it was thought that migrants simply moved from one place or culture to another, in a one-way process that ended with varying degrees of successful integration.

Beginning in the 1980s, an anthropological current sought to shift the focus from clearly defined territorial groups to the trajectories of migrants crossing political and cultural boundaries. There was growing interest in cultural hybridity, creolization, public culture or global economics, in transnationalism and diaspora existence, as aspects of a world undergoing massive change in which the metaphor of rootedness no longer seemed to apply. The success of the term "diaspora"—which reached its peak in 1991 with the founding of an eponymous journal—testifies to the rise of migration studies. It derives from a Greek word meaning "dispersion" and has been used historically to refer to the Jews within the Roman Empire (Tölölyan 1996: 10). In a programmatic text that appeared in the first issue of the journal, Safran defined its referent as follows:

> expatriate communities whose members share several of the following characteristics: 1) they, or their ancestors, have been dispersed from a specific original 'centre' to two or more 'peripheral,' or foreign, regions; 2) they retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland—its physical location, history, and achievements; 3) they believe that they are not—and perhaps cannot be—fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it; 4) they regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and as the place to which they or their descendants would (or should) eventually return—when conditions are appropriate; 5) they believe that they should, collectively, be committed to the maintenance or restoration of their original homeland and to its safety and prosperity; and 6) they continue to relate, personally or vicariously, to that homeland in one way or another, and their ethno-communal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such relationship (Safran 1991: 83–84).

Although this definition still reflects the Jewish origin of the concept and its extension to certain other communities (Armenians and Greeks), the term has been used to denote a large number of dispersed peoples—from the Turks of Germany to the Asians of Britain and the Chinese of South-East Asia, or even the Palestinians (Bruneau 1994; Tedlock 1996; Tölölyan 1996; Schnapper 2001). Nevertheless, it remains too formal and restrictive to provide the basis for a general theory of migration. Clifford, in a critique of Safran's text (1994),

suggested that the concept should be widened as part of an anthropology of travel in the changing global conditions of our time. In his view, it was not useful to define a term such as "disapora" by reference to an "ideal type," so that various groups then became more or less "disaporic" by virtue of various qualities they did or did not have. Instead, he argued for an anthropology that could offer an open, non-normative account of decolonization, migration, global communication, transport, and any other phenomenon linked to multilocality and mobility. In the rapidly changing world of the late twentieth century, social links were becoming diffuse and transnational relations more widespread. Diaspora discourses therefore reflected a general tendency of belonging to transnational networks that included a person's place of origin as one "mooring" among others.

Although diasporas are often brought about by political and economic inequality, Clifford stressed the capacity for resistance of displaced peoples. Diaspora communities such as the Jews contradict the idea of self-sufficient cultures turned in on themselves and tied to a single place. They cannot be reduced to an epiphenomenon of the nation-state or global capitalism, for they have become a constituent feature of the contemporary world. This should impel us to define a new set of conceptual tools.

Clifford's points concerning diasporas are part of his wider attempt to redefine the method of anthropology (1986, 1988, 1992, 1997). He is aware that there have always been dissident tendencies, but he reflects the legacy of Malinowski in stressing that the field was conceived in terms of joint residence rather than a trip or visit. In other words, the dominant concept of the field implied a stay in a given place. This method had its source in a conception of culture as an integrated, homogeneous entity within a clearly defined space. Clifford, by contrast, saw culture in terms of travelling—not only in the literal sense, but as a whole series of more or less allegorical or imaginary relocations. He also thought that anthropology should draw its inspiration from certain techniques in travel writing, to allow greater room for the author's emotions. Fieldwork was therefore no longer the study of distant peoples, of an essentialist Other, but involved a (not only spatial) experience of decentring.

In a text originally published in 1990, Appadurai (1999) also asked how anthropology could apprehend the contemporary world, and attempted to go beyond such dichotomies as global/local or North/South. He proposed five conceptual categories as a way of organizing the anthropology of global culture and economy: *ethnoscapes,* produced by the movement of persons (refugees and migrants, of course, but also seasonal workers and tourists); *technoscapes,* constituted through the circulation of technologies;