Are IDPs satisfied with the quality of public health and education services they receive?

A long-term perspective from urban areas in the post-socialist countries

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The livelihoods and well-being of IDPs depend on the provision of public services, the access and quality of which tend to be better in urban areas. This study analyses IDPs’ direct experiences of using key public services – health and education – in urban areas of post-socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe that experienced conflict in 1990s and 2000s. The findings suggest IDPs are more dissatisfied with the quality of health services than people not affected by conflict, pointing to the long lasting vulnerability and disadvantage of IDPs in the health domain. At the same time, no disadvantage is observed for education, reflecting the willingness of the forcibly displaced to invest in education to compensate for the loss of material possessions.

Cities as a refuge, cities as a home

The relationship between place and perceptions of integration among urban displaced populations in Iraq

Roger Guiu, Nadia Siddiqui, Social Inquiry

How does the socio-ecological context and urban morphology of the cities where IDPs reside influence their feelings of integration? Incorporating a two-fold definition of integration (belonging and influence in displacement), we use existing large-scale datasets covering locations across 4 governorates in Iraq to test whether place factors (development, governance and security, social capital, and demography), in addition to household characteristics, determines the likelihood of IDPs feeling integrated. We find that place factors matter, and that it is harder for IDPs to fit into more stable and better functioning host environments. We argue for the importance not only in improving conditions for all in fragile urban areas where IDPs reside, but in making more stable environments more inclusive as well.

Comparing Population Displacement Estimates from Mobile Network Data and Other Sources


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Accurate and timely measurement of population displacement due to natural hazards and other drivers of displacement has proven to be complicated. This research paper explores anonymous mobile network data as a source of insights on displacement and compares the findings to the current good practice for displacement tracking, namely IOM’s displacement tracking matrix. We also compare the insights against information on the targeting of humanitarian resources, finding that the targeting of surveys and the allocation of humanitarian assistance are respectably efficient. The findings offer new perspectives on the quantification of displacement and underline the potential of mobile network data to offer highly valuable information during what are often chaotic days and weeks following a natural disaster.

Rochelle Davis, Salma Al-Shami, Grace Benton, Jake Moran, Caila McHugh, Nicole Ruggiero, Moez Hayat, IOM Iraq and Georgetown University

Millions of Iraqis were displaced by ISIS between 2014-2017. This longitudinal study tracks the needs, challenges, and self-engineered solutions of IDPs not living in camps. The vast majority of IDPs report feelings of safety where they now live. But in terms of livelihoods and standard of living, they have only found temporary, rather than permanent solutions. Urban IDPs who worked in the agriculture sector cannot rebuild their farming and animal husbandry businesses without considerable assistance to make the land safe again. Supporting public and private agricultural initiatives, housing projects, and micro loans programs will allow refugees to return and rebuild their homes or successfully integrate in their new communities.

Demolition, forced evictions and wellbeing in the city

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Forced evictions and home demolitions have been described as creating another sort of refugee crisis in the developing world. In India, we find that people who have experienced demolition have a lower sense of achievement on the life goals they value; that this pattern is evident for both women and men; that a person’s outlook on life is lower than other members of the same household who have not experienced demolition, even when they are of a similar age, have similar levels of education, have similar occupation profiles, and live under the same roof. However, we also find that this impact dissipates over time, and importantly, is mitigated when the process of relocation is facilitated through local participatory action.

Displacement Profiling in Urban Areas

Methodological approaches for collecting and analysing data on internal displacement in cities

Melissa Weihmayer, Margharita Lundkvist-Houndoumadi, Laura Kivelä, Joint IDP Profiling Service

While there is general agreement of displacement’s impact on urban environments, evidence on the experience of internally displaced populations in cities remains sparse. However, certain evidence-gathering techniques and processes are gradually filling this gap. This article presents three case studies of displacement profiling in urban areas that tailored data collection and analysis to these contexts in different ways. The approaches taken enabled a robust evidence-base to inform responses to internal displacement in those cities. The case studies from Mogadishu, Somalia (2015 - 2016); Erbil, Iraq (2015 - 2016); and various cities in Syria (2018 - 2019), implemented by humanitarian, development and government partners with support and technical advice from the interagency Joint IDP Profiling Service (JIPS), demonstrate continued learning for improved evidence.
How Urban are IDPs and What Does that Mean for Their Economic Integration?

Cindy Huang, Jimmy Graham, Center for Global Development

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) face severe economic challenges. Because economic opportunities cluster around urban areas, understanding where IDPs are located is crucial to understanding their potential for achieving self-reliance. By analyzing the existing known locations of IDPs in developing countries and visualizing them in an interactive map, we show that millions of IDPs are located in urban areas. Thus, stakeholders can and should pursue solutions to help IDPs achieve self-reliance, as greater self-reliance should create benefits for IDPs and hosts alike. Our analysis also underscores the lack of data on IDP locations, implying that the urban rates we present are a minimum rather than an estimate. Better data would allow policymakers to better target self-reliance programming and policies.

Learning from Survivors of Development-Induced Displacement

Operationalizing Vanuatu’s New Displacement Policy toward an Inclusive Capital City

Jennifer Day, Margaretha Wewerinke-Singh, The University of Melbourne, Leiden University and the University of the South Pacific

This paper documents some impacts of development-induced displacement inside the capital city of Vanuatu, South Pacific against the backdrop of a brand-new policy: Vanuatu’s National Policy on Climate Change and Disaster-Induced Displacement. Vanuatu’s is the first such policy in the Pacific and could be a model for peer countries. However, further work is necessary to make Vanuatu’s policy inclusive for survivors of urban displacement, particularly for people living at the fringes of urban areas. Using recent fieldwork, we illustrate the challenges for operationalizing the policy in Port Vila. We also analyse the policy language, pointing out human rights that are left unaddressed by the policy. We provide recommendations that GoV may consider as it operationalizes the policy.

Stuck in the Mud

Urban Displacement and Tenure Security in Kabul’s Informal Settlements

Mohammad Abdoh, Anna Hirsch-Holland, Norwegian Refugee Council

This paper examines three of Kabul’s 55 informal settlements in order to explore the effects of local power dynamics and individual interests on displacement and its disadvantaging effects. In one out of the three settlements featured in the study, residents managed to purchase land with a written document proving ownership. In the other two sites, purported landowners and bureaucrats seem to exploit weaknesses in policy and legal frameworks to perpetuate tenure insecurity for their own gain – such as earning substantial income from rent, speculatively protecting land for potential real estate development, or grabbing land from others who may hold a claim to it. The research finds a stark difference between these sites: in the former, residents have been able to build permanent structures, set up a school, and plan for the future; in the latter, they are prevented from upgrading their shelters, not enrolling children in school, and live day-by-day in fear of eviction and homelessness.
The Urban Displaced:
Fleeing Criminal Violence in Latin American Cities

Jerome Marston, Brown University

Criminal organizations and the violence they produce force individuals and families to flee within and from cities across Latin America. To increase understanding of this little-studied topic, this paper asks: Who flees within and from Latin American cities? What triggers their flight? And, upon fleeing, where do they go and what are their experiences? This paper describes broad trends in criminal violence-induced urban displacement around Latin America while also presenting fine-grained insights from Medellín, Colombia. Finally, concrete policy recommendations are offered for mitigating urban displacement due to criminal violence. Half of the recommendations are from the author’s analyses of survey data; half are qualitative accounts from displaced persons detailing what might have helped them to stay in their homes.

Urbanization as a Result of Displacement
A Case Study of Bentiu, South Sudan

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This report explores urbanization in Bentiu and Rubkona towns in Unity State, South Sudan. Using a host community perception survey and qualitative interviews conducted in August of 2018, this case study examines the impact that the introduction of a Protection of Civilians site has had on urbanization, establishes the perception of the host community, and clarifies what constitutes urbanization in a South Sudanese context. The findings revealed that insecurity in the area had interrupted development in both towns, which had consequently hindered urbanization in the area. The state’s access to oil revenues was seen as a viable funding source for future development and economic stability, however respondents noted that this was contingent on security in both the locality and the country at large.