Check for updates

Article

Society and Space

EPD: Society and Space
2022, Vol. 40(3) 486–507
© The Author(s) 2022
Article reuse guidelines:
sagepub.com/journals-permissions
DOI: 10.1177/02637758211070565
journals.sagepub.com/home/epd
SAGE

Unplanned links, unanticipated outcomes: Urban refugees in Halba (Lebanon)

Mona Fawaz, Carla Al-Hage and Mona Harb
American University of Beirut, Lebanon

Abstract
Much of the literature covering forced population displacement has neglected spatial implications, dealing with place as mere context. Building on a case study of the city of Halba (Lebanon) where it maps a process of contingent encounters through which disparate resources, individuals, and groups are stitched together to generate large-scale housing projects that shelter refugees, this paper demonstrates the importance of studying displacement through a grounded reading of the spatial transformations it implicates. The paper maps multiple private and public actors who exploit cracks and connect seemingly disparate material flows (e.g., humanitarian aid, public housing subsidies) and institutional systems (e.g., humanitarian, public, private, religious) in ways that catalyze and accelerate the production of housing in order to derive profit from the opportunities afforded by the refugee crisis. Thus, developers, buyers, residents, brokers, public agents, and other actors all support a flow of informal profitable exchanges that are far from seamless economic transactions, mixing instead capitalist profiteering with human solidarity, religious morality, or kinship obligations that all buttress the possibility of these encounters and their materialization into new configurations of urban quarters. The arrangements formed through these processes, the paper shows, are strongly reflective of existing social hierarchies and inequalities.

Keywords
Housing urban refugees, forced displacement, space, informality, Middle-East

Corresponding author:
Mona Fawaz, Maroun Semaan Faculty of Engineering and Architecture, American University of Beirut, 1 Bliss Street, Beirut 1107 2020, Lebanon.
Email: mf05@aub.edu.lb

Introduction

Like many young men in the city of Halba, Raed enrolled in the Lebanese army in his early twenties, happy to secure a viable career trajectory in a region of the country notorious for the scarcity of opportunities. Over a decade later, married and the father of two, he applied for the subsidized public loan earmarked for those in his profession. The money secured, he placed the down payment and began to pay his monthly installments for the three-bedroom apartment he purchased with his wife on Halba's main artery. The apartment was located in a large, three-floor building compound built by the main developer operating in the region, a man with a somewhat shady reputation. Raed nonetheless felt safe to purchase the apartment given that he had visited the building and was relatively satisfied with the quality of its construction.

A few years later, however, Raed's family's living environment began to deteriorate. Large building developments similar in typology to the development where Raed now lived started to emerge around him and elsewhere in Halba. They responded to the increase in demand for housing which was heavily fueled by the refugee influx that followed the outbreak of the war in Syria in 2011. Given its historical connections with the neighboring country, the town and its region had received the largest influx of refugees in the nation. By 2017, Halba housed an estimated 17,000 refugees alone.[1] The spike in housing demand triggered development activity undocumented in the country outside the north, with developers encouraged to respond to this demand through the subdivision of existing buildings and/or the construction of new ones. Densification was further intensified by a change in zoning regulations that allowed higher building ratios and more floors.

Without consulting the residents, the developer who had built Raed's building came back to add an additional floor to the structure where the family resided. He also launched several construction sites nearby, one on the same lot where the current building already existed. Not only were the buildings being erected at unreasonable speed, they were also built in very poor quality, often with an unfinished appearance. Raed heard allegations circulating in Halba of collusion between the developer and public actors who had granted the building permits. This collaboration hinted to additional illegal permissions or shady deals that might have facilitated the developer's activities. Despite his connections in the Army, Raed was unable to find sufficient evidence to prevent the addition of apartments in his compound and/or hold the developer and his partners accountable.

Meanwhile, the developer's business was thriving, as numerous Lebanese individuals from Halba and the nearby villages bought the cheap apartments and rented them out to Syrian refugees. They used the rent paid by Syrian refugees to cover their regular installments, hence realizing a long-time dream of homeownership in the city. Over a period of five years, Raed's neighborhood became crowded with large compounds of about 12–16 buildings, each four to five floors high with six to eight apartments per floor, almost all inhabited by Syrian refugees. In Halba, people began to refer to Raed's neighborhood as the "Syrian compound". At first, Raed was keen on staying in his new home. He was disheartened to see his fellow army men move out of their apartments and rent them out to Syrian refugees too. This was forbidden in the terms of the subsidized loan they had received and he was reluctant to break the law. It was only matter of time, however, until Raed decided to follow suit. Living conditions in the "Syrian compounds" had become intolerable, so Raed moved back to his original hometown nearby and rented out the apartment for which he was still paying regular monthly installments to a Syrian refugee household. As inflation in Lebanon was increasing, the rent reaped from the refugee family eased the pressure he was also facing to pay his monthly installments.

When we interviewed them in 2017, the Syrian household renting out Raed's apartment reported scrambling to pay the rent, patching the meager support they received from UNHRC and whatever daily work any of the family members could conduct to accumulate their regular rent. They complained about the deteriorating quality of the home and recounted numerous instances where they had to fix and patch in order to maintain a minimum level of livability. They had repainted the house, mobilized neighbors to fix the building pipes several times, and joined several WhatsApp groups in which groups of neighbors discussed ways of collectively managing noise, dirt, and other challenges they collectively faced, either through self-help or by appealing to the municipality or UNHCR. They were grateful to Raed who showed patience, sometimes waiting for weeks before he would receive the rent payment. They had also resorted to reducing their consumption of electricity in order to save on their payments. Still, they were unsure about the long-term sustainability of their situation, particularly as aid was dwindling and work becoming scarcer. They dreamt of going back to Syria but reported that their fear of being arrested at the border prevented them from realizing their wish.

Large-scale compounds in Halba

The development of large-scale compounds in Halba has been one of the most imposing urbanization patterns of the Syrian refugee crisis in Lebanon (Figure 1). Spreading along the city's main road, these compounds reflect visibly the presence of a large refugee population that has contributed to the sprawling urbanization of the region (Figure 2). Indeed, the typical imagined landscape of faraway tents associated with refugee housing, while present in this and other localities of rural Lebanon, is widely surpassed by the active production of housing projects locally referred to as the "Syrian compounds[2]" and the rental of hundreds of units to Syrian households who now live in the region (Figure 3). While apparently legal in their permitting processes, these compounds often exploit the blurred boundaries of state law and weak inspections to intensify development. Their financing relies on a convergence of sources that are not typically studied together, such as subsidized public loans and humanitarian aid in the form of capital distributed to Syrian refugees who rent out units in the compounds. The flows of capital and people that sustain this spatial production are

Figure 1. Halba, map of Lebanon.

Figure 2. Halba, large-scale complexes.

Figure 3. View over the main road, large-scale complexes in Halba.

distinguished by the historically highly informal governance practices as well as laissez-faire characterizing this border city, ultimately producing patterns of building development that reflect the amalgamation of actors and improvisatory practices, and the formal and informal institutions that sustain their production.

Refugees as urban subjects in specific geographies. However, these patterns of building and the plurality of flows and actors that come together in its production are not often studied using the frames typically used to understand the production of space and the political economy of places, mapping and analyzing actors, laws and informal regulations, financial flows, or material exchanges. Instead, the urbanization of forced displacement has been studied mostly from the perspective of "refugee studies," which attempt to explain the choices made by individual refugees, their agency, and the conditions in which they settle in cities across the world. This perspective approaches refugees as a cluster of individuals, gaging the poverty and violence they endure, opportunities they find in cities, their lived experiences, or agency. Some studies have looked to explain the reasons behind the decision of refugees to leave camps and move into cities (Fábos and Kibreab, 2007; Jacobsen, 2006; Landau, 2014; Landau and Jacobsen, 2004; Swerts, 2017). Another strand of research, coming from

anthropology, has looked at the ways in which the urbanization of displacement is *lived* (Brun, 2016), bringing to the debates questions of place-making, identity, and how spaces such as urban camps embody the history and transforming identity narratives of particular communities (Agier, 2011; Doraï, 2010; Hyndman and Giles, 2011; Peteet, 2009). Looking at refugees in urban contexts has also allowed researchers to recognize their agency, contesting hence the typical lens of the aid recipient (Chatty, 2016; Fawaz et al., 2018).[3]

These studies have provided important corrections to our understanding of forced population displacement by recognizing urbanization as a definitive aspect of refugee settlement (and not an anomaly, see Marfleet, 2007) and by providing important insights into the experiences of refugees and their settlement. However, while valuable, these approaches continue to suffer from several shortcomings. First, they take "refugees" as a cluster to be studied separately; a pre-supposed category. They hence reify distinctions between host and refugee societies and nationalities. However, boundaries between nationals and refugees are blurred (Darling, 2016). Refugees daily occupy "grey spaces" between legality and illegality in urban environments (Yiftachel, 2009), and their struggles are shared with many of the vulnerable host populations (Darling, 2016). Moreover, the status and position of individuals tagged as refugees is dynamic and boundaries between categories (e.g., legality/illegality, humanitarian migrant/refugee/undocumented migrant/national) are blurred, as refugees fluidly move in and out of them to adjust to policy shifts (Ehrkamp, 2017).[4] Furthermore, approaching refugees as a separate category contributes to a segmentation of migration debates, downplaying the relevance of earlier frames of research—particularly those that explore migrants' contributions to cities (Weber, 2014). An alternative way then to study urban settlement is to reposition the refugee and the citizen as urban subjects rather than "different" subjects studied separately (Darling, 2016; Sassen, 2013).

Second, these frameworks miss the importance of an integrated reading of place, dealing instead with geography as "background context". They therefore fall within a compartmentalized academic debate whereby very few of the frames typically used to understand the production of space and its connection to the political economy of places are deployed towards the understanding of forced population displacements and its implications for cities. Given that most large cities around the world today house substantial groups of dispossessed populations, some of whom are not citizens, and neoliberal austerity measures deprive nationals from substantive rights as well, it is important to understand how this displacement materializes in place. This approach resonates with Schiller and Caglar's (2011) call to study migration in place, rather than reducing space to context. It also follows Tsing's insistence that processes including globalization need to be located to be studied (2011) so that the study of flows and processes is embedded in specific geographies and accounts for social interactions and networks. Similarly, Merrifield's (2013) emphasis on urban society, which he builds on Lefebvre's *La Révolution Urbaine* is particularly apt in explaining the urban as more than "a passive surface over which people encounter other people." Instead, it is critical to approach the urban fabric as an integral element of the emerging, compound, possibly fluid yet powerfully structured set of processes in which displacement is studied. We do this by locating displacement in a specific geography where it is studied in relation to a multitude of other flows, actors, trajectories, materials, and aspirations that overlap with more or less coherence to form dynamic intersections of flows and trajectories. In turn, these intersections converge into the production of living spaces and urban life. In sum, we argue that frames typically used to study "refugees" do not empower a proper understanding of cities for planners, refugee studies, and urban studies, and that the debate should be relocated to the larger understanding of urbanization.

Therefore, we ask: How does the circulation of "humanitarian" flows (e.g., capital, policies, actors) that respond to the refugee crisis intersect or merge with other material and immaterial flows to transform urbanization processes and trends in host cities? More specifically, and looking at the production and exchange of housing, what patterns, actors, institutions, and processes are set in place in these localities? How do these flows intersect with classed divisions within the existing society and what room do various actors have to negotiate them? And, most importantly, what can we learn as planners and students of refugees and urban geography from these processes about approaching the organization and production of urban spaces, particularly in contexts where resources are severely limited and state agencies hollowed out of their welfare role?

Methodologically, we study displacement within specific, historically contingent developments in the urban locality in which it materializes. Taking housing as our entry point, we map the processes of housing production and acquisition, rather than the "shelter provision programs" deployed by humanitarian agencies, where refugee housing is typically studied. We specifically look at the production, reorganization, acquisition, consolidation, and exchange of shelter as a frame through which to unravel the array of networks, the flows of resources, and the agglomeration of actors and institutions entangled in the urbanization of refugee settlement. We build hence on a long tradition in urban research that has viewed since the 1970s housing *as a verb* (Turner, 1976), a shelter in the making with multiple meanings and roles. This literature is recovered in some of the recent debates about *dwelling* and "assemblage" where McFarlane (2011) unravels the incremental building of informal settlements in Mumbai, showing the ways in which a number of undocumented migrants have gradually transformed their temporary makeshift shelters into more permanent structures that they inhabit and exploit by renting them out to other migrant families.

By following the flows and encounters through which urbanization unravels with the arrival of refugees in the city of Halba, Lebanon, we map a process of contingent encounters through which disparate resources, individuals, and groups are stitched together. This stitching connects multi-scalar flows of people and resources that would otherwise never be imagined to operate together, and typically occurs through the framework of informal markets that mediate transactions, but also through the exchange of favors, the disbursement of aid, charity, and religious solidarity. It results in unanticipated outcomes, testifying to the importance of approaching the production of shelter for refugees from an urban studies perspective and not the top-down approach (e.g., statistics, plans, maps-based) used by most large bodies such as the United Nations agencies.

By inscribing the patterns of forced population movements within existing frameworks of urban production, we show that in line with earlier findings (Fawaz, 2017; Fawaz et al., 2021), the production of refugee housing in Lebanon is tightly intertwined with the highly informalized processes through which Lebanese cities have historically accommodated vulnerable population groups (Fawaz, 2009a), be they migrant workers, impoverished Lebanese households, or refugees. The insertion of refugees in Lebanon's cities doesn't amount to a separate, parallel process of settlement. Instead, this insertion corresponds with a set of ad-hoc additions, adaptations and extensions of the pre-existing urban fabric where multiple private individuals and groups, private and public actors, exploit cracks and connect seemingly disparate material flows and institutional systems. They do so in ways that catalyze and accelerate the production of housing in order to derive profit from the opportunities afforded by the refugee crisis. Thus, developers, buyers, residents, brokers, public agents, and other actors all support a flow of informal profitable exchanges that are far from seamless economic transactions. Rather, these transactions mix capitalist profiteering with human solidarity, religious morality, or kinship obligations to buttress the

possibility of new configurations of urban quarters. The arrangements formed through these processes, we show, are strongly reflective of existing social hierarchies and inequalities, such as the refugee/host status now inscribed in social relations or other important class distinctions (e.g., landlord/tenant).

This paper will proceed as follows. Before turning to the case study, we expand and explain our methodology of studying "place" and the notion of "stitching together" flows, people, and resources. Next, we discuss our case study, providing a broad background of the context and specifying our findings. Then, we discuss our findings in the context of our framework, describing the disjointed arrangements and paying attention to their class dimensions and the dynamics of protracted displacement. Finally, we conclude by reflecting on the implications of our findings for planning and refugee and urban studies.

Starting from place: A methodological approach to the study of forced displacement

Little in the investigated urban quarters where we conducted our research responded to the assumption of a coherent, integrated strategy that may be suggested by the numerous reports published by humanitarian agencies and/or the declarations of order issued by Lebanese public actors.[5] In contrast to the illusion of centralized planning that accompanies the innumerable maps and statistical evaluations, we found that refugees access housing through tactical, provisional, and messy interventions. Such interventions are initiated through a series of contingent encounters with various actors, institutions, and agencies, and they often operate in disjointed, uncoordinated form and work towards divergent, sometimes conflicting goals. In addition, the "humanitarian" flow of capital, which is understood as operating outside the circuits of capitalism, was integrated here in the second circuit of capital or the built environment as an integral element of the production of housing, contributing to the making of capitalist value in real estate (Tsing, 2011). It materialized in a fragmented urban landscape, visibly disjointed, and with a strong disregard for environmental or livability criteria.

As mentioned above, we take on Schiller and Caglar's challenge (2011) to locate displacement in place by putting the shared urban space at the center of our analysis. In their edited collection of essays, Schiller and Caglar (2011) applied such a lens to the study of migration, comparing migration in cities in Europe and the US. Migration is approached by identifying the multi-scalar spatial hierarchies through which migrants inscribe themselves in cities and transform them. The work provides powerful insights by recognizing the classed, gendered, and racialized relations that affect migrants as much as the position of the cities within global hierarchies and how they influence this inscription. In this paper, we explore these processes of urbanization beyond the "scalar" lens proposed by Schillar and Caglar, which cannot account for the complexity of informal, unplanned, tactical, and potentially pirated practices through which city dwellers otherwise excluded from urban opportunities manage to inscribe themselves in today's cities. Instead, we turn to the work of Simone (2006, 2011, 2016, 2018), whose vocabulary of improvisations, adaptations, unanticipated implications, tentative initiatives, discordance, and spatial re-orderings comes closest to supporting an investigation of how cities work in a context of protracted crisis. His describes specific "practices of inhabitation, livelihood formation, spatial diversification, and social contestation" that are particularly important in Southern contexts (Simone, 2010: 15). Outside a stable regulatory framework, nothing works out as planned (Simone, 2010: 98) and residents come up with "all kinds of tactics, practices, emotions, risks, and

commitments in order to survive." As a result, "relationships, economies, and ways of doing things become so densely entangled that it is difficult to talk about a formal versus informal economy, adult versus youth, citizen versus stranger" (Simone, 2010: 114).

Simone builds on a Lefebvrian approach to urban space, in which urbanization is a complex adaptive system, formed through somewhat chaotic yet determined processes. Rather than taking *the city* as a fixed object of documentation, Lefebvre argued for understanding the urban as a process of becoming, one produced through multi-scalar and continuously re-adapted social relations organized around actual economic practices, individuals, and institutions (Lefebvre, 1992). In the last decade, Lefebvre's approach has been reinvigorated, particularly through the work of Marxist geographers who have coined the terminology of planetary urbanization to expand the study of urbanization as an adaptive, relational, and multi-scalar system that forms a web of networks and relations typically based around money, capital, and culture (Brenner, 2014). Simone takes these approaches further to investigate the surfacing of urban life: the improvised, often uncoordinated actions that stitch together networks, connections (Simone, 2011, 2018) engaged within the parameters of their respective entitlements and existing social hierarchies, in the collaborative process of urban production in which they channeled various forms of resources. However, Simone's work focuses on the agency of actors, *people as infrastructure,* and does not speak about refugees. We extend his perspective to the study of refugees and refugee responses, repositioning the refugee and the citizen as urban subjects, seeing the urban as more than just context, and employing Simone's perspective to account for the unplanned and unanticipated outcomes of urbanization.

In order to research these processes in practice, we focused on situated actors (e.g., land developers, refugee families, landlords), the types of information and the flows of capital that they could reach (e.g., religious relief money, UNHCR relief money, public-sector subsidies), the materials that are leveraged (e.g., pipes, doors, metal grids), and the techniques that can be deployed in recomposing the city's life, the production and reproduction of some of its quarters, and their governance (Collier and Ong, 2005; Li, 2007; McGuirk, 2012). Thus, we draw attention to the continually emergent, discursive, and material practices (Simone, 2011, 2018) that multiple agents deploy in order to link local institutions such as households, local material suppliers, service agencies, police forces, and developers with national institutions (e.g., public housing agency, planning agency) and extra-local institutions (e.g., international organizations, UNHCR). These agents eventually incrementally produce the built environments that refugees occupy for the duration of their settlement in Lebanon.

Case study: Halba, North Lebanon

Despite the massive flow of refugees in Lebanon that followed the outbreak of the revolution in Syria in 2011 and the ensuing violence, Lebanon failed to set up a refugee response strategy. The national position rested on firm opposition to setting up official camps to accommodate the population flows (Fakhoury, 2017; Fawaz, 2017). Most central government decisions deployed to respond to the refugee crisis were taken outside the official judicial framework. Legal analysts have thus spoken of a deliberate attempt to avoid fixed legal measures and/or a recognition of rights. Instead, the government managed the refugee presence through ad-hoc, informal decisions that secured the needed flexibility for the central state in its negotiations with international donors in the global arena while retaining the ability to resist refugee settlement and/or use refugees as pawns in local political speculations. This strategy, which Chatterjee (2004) and Roy (2009) described in

relation to the government of "the poor," or populations deemed undesirable in cities, rests on the principle of extending temporary "tolerance" but no legal entitlements in order to secure the long-term possibility of evictions and/or displacement when needed by the forces of capital. Applied to the management of refugee presence in Lebanon, the strategy materialized first through tolerance of the refugee influx and later through the criminalization of the refugee presence, refugee labor, or refugee mobility.

Meanwhile, in January 2015, the number of registered refugees exceeded one million, without a coherent orchestrated response to organize their settlement and/or respond to their needs. By then, this country of four million had set the planet's record of a 1:4 refugee/host population ratio (UNHCR, 2018), and refugees were finding shelter like all other vulnerable populations in the country: renting apartments (81%), make-shift spaces, or land lots on which they built tents. A small minority relied, often temporarily, on free access as either relatives or employers accommodated them.

As things settled and without any official planning, the urbanization of forced population displacement began to show its marks on various cities. Earlier research in the peripheries of Beirut showed that informal settlements absorbed a large percentage of this refugee influx into the Lebanese capital city through ad-hoc interventions (Fawaz, 2017). It indicated that existing apartments were being subdivided and floors and rooms were being added, while shops and garages were turned into make-shift homes.

Extending this research beyond the boundaries of the Lebanese capital city, we explored an urban setting in which the physical materialization of displacement took a different form. The focus of this paper is the city of Halba (North Lebanon) and its immediately contiguous territory, where in-depth fieldwork was conducted in several rounds, the first in Summer 2018, the second in Fall 2019, and finally in Spring 2019. Data collection included mapping new building developments, conversations and interviews with residents, landlords, developers, municipal officials,[6] service providers, public employees, professionals in the construction and planning field, as well as Syrian and Lebanese households. A total of 62 interviews were conducted. In addition, several documents were consulted, including the list of building permits procured from the municipality and the OEA in Tripoli.

This fieldwork was conducted as part of a larger study investigating local governance and forced population displacement in four localities in Lebanon conducted by the Lebanese Center for Policy Studies (LCPS) and the Beirut Urban Lab at the American University of Beirut. A component of that study included a large-scale survey of living condition of refugees and host communities, undertaken by the LCPS in partnership with the Syrian Center for Policy Research (SCPR), in 2018, which covered 1566 Syrian and Lebanese households (7208 individuals), and inquired about social networks, refugees' profile, legal status, economic and financial status, relationship with local authorities and aid agencies, access to urban services, and shelter conditions.

Halba: Studying the urbanization of forced displacement in place

The city of Halba, capital of the Akkar Governorate in North Lebanon, underwent a significant expansion in the 1990s and 2000s, in line with the rest of the country, where urbanization had been accelerated by a national financial strategy that encouraged investments in the built environment (see Figure 1). Located only 14 km away from the Syrian-Lebanese border and historically tied to nearby Syrian cities through numerous family and tribal relations (Gilsenan, 1996), Halba was one of the first refugee destinations when the Syrian war broke out (Carpi, 2017). The refugee influx accelerated the urbanization trend, which is mostly linear, well in line with sprawling patterns elsewhere in the country, and

expands along the main roads (Verdeil et al., 2007). Aerial photographs taken between 2010 and 2018 indicate that particularly after 2012, the date when a new zoning plan was approved for the region, urbanization began to take the form of compounds, consisting of several three-story apartment buildings (such as the one where Raed had purchased an apartment) developed along the city's main artery. These were located relatively far away from the residential neighborhoods of the city, but in direct proximity to the main circulation arteries (Figure 2). This building typology maximizes land exploitation, with each building including six to eight apartments per floor, connected externally through long balconies painted in drab colors like orange and beige (Figure 4). Furthermore, many of the buildings developed before 2012 have expanded since the approval of the revised zoning law in that year, adding floors or entire buildings to existing structures in order to take advantage of the exploitation ratios, as we saw in the opening story. We counted in total at least 27 new compounds built between 2012 and 2017.

In line with much of the building industry in Lebanon, developers first built compounds to sell individual apartments as owner-occupied units. As is typically the case in the Lebanese industry, they sell apartments in forward payments covered through buyers' installments. As of 2008, soldiers in the Lebanese Army became prime buyers as the subsidized housing loan targeting this group rolled out. The army provides highly coveted employment in this very poor region because of the benefit packages attached to employment, especially subsidized housing loans.[7] This can be seen in the story with which we opened the paper: Lebanese households, encouraged by public incentives, purchased apartments and encouraged the development of more complexes. These housing loans undoubtedly contributed to the capital needed to encourage building development, although they cannot be credited with fully funding it. Other buyers included members of the Lebanese diaspora looking for safe long-term investments (an apartment for a future marriage or retirement). They purchased apartments in their native area, closer to urban centers where they had better access to schools and medical care. Buyers also included locally employed lower-middle-class Lebanese from nearby towns.

With the outbreak of the war in Syria in 2011, a combination of factors encouraged many of those purchasing on installment to rent out the units they could have resided in to refugees. These factors included (i) the poor building quality of the compounds, (ii) the economic downturn, which was exacerbated by the refugee crisis and had some buyers struggle to cover their monthly installments, and (iii) the demand for rental homes that was generated by the refugee crisis, creating possibly lucrative opportunities. This was indeed the case for many of Raed's neighbors who, when questioned about the reasons why they left the compound, consistently pointed to these factors.

Figure 4. Large-scale housing compound, view of façade in 2019.

Eventually, the temptation to purchase a housing unit through subsidized loans and installments collected from rent intensified the demand for these apartments, turning what was at first a "coping strategy" of families in need into an actual accumulation strategy integrating these flows of capital. As a result, more and more Syrians moved into the compounds as tenants, finding better-quality shelters than tents and other make-shift arrangements.[8] The shift in the mode of tenure from owners to tenants also led to the entry of a handful of brokers who collect rent and manage the compounds on behalf of the property holders. Conversely, developers who recognized the shelters as now appealing to a lower-end market reduced building quality further and sought to maximize gain in shorter periods. Several accounts go as far as accusing developers of reducing the quantities of structural steel below safety requirements to save on costs. Furthermore, a number of developers, alerted to the possibility that Lebanese landlords can rely on international aid programs to finish a housing unit dedicated to the use of refugees,[9] agreed with clients on price reductions in exchange for the delivery of unfinished units (e.g., no windows, no paint). Infrastructure hook-ups and service provision also lagged, as buildings with increasingly bolder violations of building regulations were unable to secure legal hook-ups, leading employees at the Public Electricity Company to sometimes direct residents towards illegal hook-ups and informal providers (El Merhebi, 2018). These trends eventually led to the departure of many of the better-off Lebanese households, leaving many of these compounds inhabited almost exclusively by Syrians, so much so that locals now label them "mujama'āt el Sūriyīn" (or the compounds for Syrians).

The shift in population may be one of the best explanations for the deteriorating construction quality and decaying conditions of the compounds, which is striking even in comparison to the rest of the architecture in this relatively poor area. A few buildings are visibly unfinished, although they are inhabited: façades are unpainted, metal bars rise from the columns on the last roofs, and sometimes windows are missing. Almost all buildings are dilapidated: there are clear signs of water infiltration, paint is peeling and structural steel exposed, and sewage and water network pipes on the outside are heavily underdeveloped. The terrain is difficult, with numerous access roads unpaved. Infrastructure connections, particularly electric wires, are in full view, while broken pipes and in one instance a massive open sewer pit provide eloquent evidence of the poor quality of service in these areas.

Visiting housing units in the compounds, one notices how the rigid grid of the projects has been adapted to users' needs in the form of new entrances, closed entryways turned into small grocery stores or repair stores (Figure 5), and additional modifications that improve privacy or increase possible occupancy (e.g., mirrors in lieu of glass for openings). Some apartments have been subdivided so they can be inhabited by more than one family, and

Figure 5. Adaptations to the building, close-up to façade.

doors have been opened or sealed. Additions and improvements made by residents are also particularly visible: external pipes and cables of multiple colors and thicknesses can be seen everywhere, connecting, bypassing, or stitching, and securing drainage or access. Metal bars also improve security for ground floor units and main entrance doors, when residents can afford them. Given that Syrians have formed the main labor force that supported the Lebanese construction sector for decades (Dahdah, 2016), it comes as no surprise that many of the men residing in the compound have put their skills to use and upgraded the interiors of their apartment, as materials became gradually available.[10] In addition, there are several stories of collective mobilization, particularly in relation to services, with residents having been forced to take charge of drainage pipes to fix the stench. In these cases, Syrian residents reported collecting funds from the complex residents to clean a drain, redo the pipework, or repair a major leak after reaching out to public authorities in vain.

Unplanned links and unanticipated outcomes

The processes that sustain the production and inhabitation of the housing compounds betray the disjointed institutional frameworks that manage these localities. The lack of coordination among various (e.g., local/international, religious/secular) relief agencies, among Lebanese public sector agencies, and across the two types of organization makes it possible for entrepreneurial initiatives to benefit from unplanned "links" in order to reap profits in ways that none of these agencies planned or foresaw. Thus, the possibility of rechanneling the capital flows brought to this area by population displacements—either through housing programs such as Occupation Free of Charge[11] or direct subsidies—into "rent" that supports the monthly installments of homebuyers who, in turn, sustain the construction of new compounds provides a great illustration of the type of "unplanned" links that have materialized in the area. Among these subsidies, we count in-kind aid sold by refugees eager to pay the rent. Also included are the various forms of financial support, including religious money that flows to Muslim Sunni communities through locally appointed religious authorities who direct aid from Gulf countries.[12] The fact that some of these buyers are relying on subsidized public loans (mostly targeting the military) links then state funding to (religious and secular) humanitarian aid, entangling disparate flows further together. Indeed, it was the subsidized public loans that accelerated the production of housing compounds, and, with the freezing of housing loans over the past few years, the dwindling of purchasing demand that encouraged developers to rent out unsold apartments to Syrian refugees. In turn, the refugees were forced to survive by tapping into multiple networks and flows, some religious and some not, to secure aid, obtain information about daily labor opportunities, or gain access to elusive possibilities of employment. They are members of multiple social media groups (on WhatsApp and Facebook), through which they chase fizzling opportunities.[13] They also often pool multiple families into a single unit that they have readapted to their basic privacy needs, in efforts to reduce costs and mitigate the threat of eviction, given the frequency of months of unemployment.[14]

These connections, it is worth noting, are not masterminded by central agencies and/or visionary profiteers. Rather, they are ad-hoc, contingent, incremental corrections made by individuals operating in relatively volatile political and economic conditions. These individuals, mirroring the incoherence of the urban and national institutions that manage the localities where they work, exert efforts to set in place temporary arrangements that make them profit from connecting disparate institutions or mechanisms (in the case of developers, for example) or at least survive in these dire circumstances. Opportunities for articulating such productive links or survival mechanisms were enhanced by in-fighting in

the local municipal council in Halba. This eventually led to the Council's dissolution in June 2018, thus conferring local territorial management to the appointed regional governor, whose remote rule allows for more flexible interpretations at the local level.

To be sure, none of these arrangements occur through fluid or transparent processes. Some of the aid is channeled through formal and coordinated bodies that are sometimes linked to established UN bodies (Schmelter, 2019). Other channels include looser and more informal networks of service providers and philanthropists such as individuals described by compound residents as "self-proclaimed sheikhs", young men with a growing clout, hailing religious networks with the Gulf countries from which they were able to secure aid funds for redistribution. Respondents pointed to the lack of transparency in the selection criteria of these aid providers and the difficulty of contesting their choices of beneficiaries. A few of the respondents went as far as accusing these aid providers of selecting women based on their looks and dress codes, although we have no way of substantiating these affirmations. Thus, channels and profits are largely controlled by local strongmen in the area and a fragmented set of actors who compete over the distribution of refugee resources, including agents working in the NGOs and INGOs who have created numerous and highly coveted employment opportunities in the area. They also include public agents (e.g., EDL, Municipality) who facilitate transactions for profit.[15]

Furthermore, many of these arrangements typically transgress the boundaries of legality to accelerate, facilitate, or simply make possible access to needed ingredients, including paperwork, financing, or building materials. Thus, by looking at the permitting records, we were able to identify several suspicious transactions in the permitting process of these compounds, an uncomfortable proximity between public agents and developers, and frequent disregard of multiple transgressions in the building process. These indirect modes of profit suggest that "legality" here is more a commodity secured through mutually benefiting transactions than the measure of abidance by the law and public protection (Fawaz, 2009b; Heyman and Smart, 1999). This transgressive nature conversely points to relatively high entry barriers for developers in this market, making one's access to an "internal" circle of "arrangements" a pre-requisite for securing permits. Consequently, the number of developers initiating these construction projects remained limited. Still, the high risks these developers take mean that many will not come out of these initiatives unscathed, as was the case of the main developer in Halba who was on the run at the time the fieldwork was conducted, having defaulted on the provision of the promised housing units. This leaves property claimants in the compounds in limbo, as many paid multiple forward installments and have no hope of recovering their investments. As for residents, most of whom are refugees, they are unaware of the developer's story or the legal context in which he has operated, focusing instead on finding ways to connect their unfinished buildings to infrastructure systems, protect their livelihoods from major service breakdowns, or mend the poor quality of the apartment finishes that leads to leaking windows and damp rooms. Furthermore, since Syrian men overwhelmingly work as laborers in the construction sector, they invest energy in finishing their homes and improving their conditions whenever possible.

Discussion

Disjointed arrangements and unplanned contingencies

In lieu of the orchestrated planning through which a general vision and/or coordinated effort would be deployed (in a humanitarian *imaginaire*), be it at a local or national level,

the production of shelter in Halba is conducted through disjointed arrangements stitched together by refugees and host populations alike—incrementally and without ever having access to a clear overview of the entire process. These arrangements involve, on the one hand, the appropriation and adaptive reuse of existing spaces and, on the other, the intensification of previous uses and processes, including those of building development. It includes the conversion of refugee labor and humanitarian aid into real-estate capital as individual aid recipients deploy their labor to upgrade an apartment or channel donations into rent.

This production, we have seen, is sustained through the daily efforts deployed by both refugees and members of the "host" communities. The latter mostly seek to benefit from the presence of refugees and/or the humanitarian apparatus that supports them, but many are also moved by obligation or solidarity (Carpi, 2017). They channel allocated funds to sometimes disparate communities and goals, engaging multiple public agencies, international or local humanitarian organizations, local and central authorities, and religious and secular institutions in the process. Yet these connections are consistently made at the scale of individuals and small communities, who typically react to local opportunities opened by cracks in the existing structures of the built environment: unproductive agricultural land turned into land for building development, unsold building stock now used for rent, or unsuspected flows of capital in areas where land is relatively cheap allow for a more or less permanent organization of shelter production, consistently within the limits imposed by the local perception of refugees and their position within the existing social hierarchies of each of the cities. Conversely, refugees stitch together different means of survival by working multiple jobs and securing several unconnected sources of aid, whenever possible. Interviewed women recounted numerous subterfuges (e.g., adopting a specific dress code that would appeal to a religiously conservative NGO, devising a personal introduction to tell one's story) through which they managed to be added to the list of eligible aid recipients. They also recounted many instances in which they supported each other through building and exchanging knowledge about the biases of aid providers, particularly religious ones. Refugee households may also rent unfinished apartments that they secure at lower pay and carry out the work to make them inhabitable themselves, as mentioned.

Ultimately, the array of non-profit, public, and private actors who are engaged in the production, support, and sustenance of these livelihoods in more or less temporary arrangements indicates a convergence of flows at the local scale that was never envisioned, particularly as the institutions that disburse these flows were designed to respond to populations managed by different classification systems (e.g., Muslims, refugees, soldiers). Each of these institutions follows a logic that may bridge geopolitical conflicts, local identities, and the national breakdown. For example, as noted above, field observations showed that several of the religious organizations that emerged in Halba to support Syrian refugees in 2016–2017 were led by sheikhs, who managed fundraising campaigns in Saudi Arabia where they argued for support to protect Sunni Syrians persecuted by their government. Conversely, soldiers received subsidies, including subsidized housing loans, as part of the benefit packages that attracted them to work in the army. Their enrollment in the Lebanese Armed Forces is well-known to operate as part of the clientelist distribution of public posts in Lebanon, across all echelons of public employment (Berthier and Haddad, 2018; Cammett and Issar, 2010). These are capital flows that transcend the organizing concept of refugee relief, which bases population management on national belonging and measures eligibility by levels of destitution. Indeed, as we saw above, funds dedicated to support army personnel's quest for housing for instance are invested in the production of refugee shelter.

It is also the labor of refugees that complements "humanitarian" flows to make shelter in these compounds possible.

Access to the produced spaces for refugees, in turn, occurs through informal markets where exchanges are managed through oral agreements that are renegotiated frequently, operating in environments where information is scarce and recourse impossible (Fawaz, 2009a; Simone, 2018). These market transactions rest heavily on social institutions such as kinship, religious belonging, shared histories, or common memories that facilitate such transactions in a region where the borders between the two countries were never sealed before the last war. They nonetheless leave both parties vulnerable to default and tenants particularly powerless when asked for higher rent or additional fees (unless religious belief or family ties encourage a sense of responsibility). Furthermore, we note unequivocally that this informal market expands what Simone (2011) has described as an "economy of repair," one which reflects the dwindling resources and yet sustains the possibility of livelihood, particularly for the poorest. Hence, punctured pipes, ad-hoc electricity lines, leaks, broken windows, and unfinished buildings are incrementally retouched, sustaining a small-scale circulation of petty capital which, in turn, allows for the survival of the poorest, whether they are Lebanese or Syrian.

This is particularly the case because public agencies deliberately neglect and/or are unwilling to step in when/if they can to provide services in these areas. Thus, the mayor of Sheikh Mohammad—the majoritarian Christian neighboring locality of Halba—stated openly in an interview that the presence of refugees was forbidden in "his" town, pointing to the compounds as "exceptions."[16] The mayor declined to recognize any responsibility vis-à-vis the "Syrian Compounds," including the provision of basic municipal services such as garbage collection. As a result, we witness on the one hand the intensification of this make-shift form of service provision and, on the other, a visibly deteriorated living context. A poignant example is solid waste collection in the "Syrian Compounds," which both municipalities consider to fall outside their purview, and they thus fail to collect their waste. Bins overflow, garbage bags accumulate, covering most of the streets that lead up the compounds. The horrid smell accompanies the repugnant sewage odors that flood the streets and ground floors of the buildings every once in a while.

Class and inequality

To speak of informal arrangements, ad-hoc connections, and the implication of multiple actors renting space, selling legality, bartering for building materials, service connections, or repair, or simply "turning a blind eye" is not to imply a fluidity or equality among the actors engaged in these transactions. In Lebanon, particularly in the context of forced population displacements, hierarchies imposed by different national belonging, legal status, income, access to property, and/or social capital derived from one's position in a tribe or a political party are particularly powerful in influencing the possibilities open to each of the individuals engaged in processes of housing production, exchange, acquisition, or consolidation.

To begin with, there is no doubt that Syrian refugees are severely impoverished in comparison to Lebanese populations across all localities. Thus, the LCPS/SCPR surveys cited above unequivocally confirmed UNHCR figures, showing acutely higher monetized poverty rates for Syrian refugees than Lebanese households. Syrians spent less money, earned less money, and in general had higher rates of illiteracy, child labor, and poor living conditions across all three surveyed cities (including Halba).

In addition, members of the host communities are far from equal in facing the refugee influx. Indeed, the division of Lebanese communities between those who can rent out

housing (landlords) and those who cannot (not landlords) has exacerbated social distinctions, generating sharp hierarchies between those who benefit from the presence of refugees economically and those who do not. To measure this distinction, we looked further at data on income, expenditure, and residency status collected by the LCPS/SRC survey. Figures show a distinction in poverty rates between landlords, on the one hand, and (Lebanese) tenants/homeowners on the other, reflecting a potentially widening poverty gap within the so-called "host" community. Thus, 23% of Lebanese landlords in Halba reported high levels of poverty rates, compared to 50% of tenants.[17] Landlords furthermore held consistently higher median incomes than Lebanese tenants and reported either fewer or no severe consequences of the influx of refugees for their livelihoods. In contrast, Lebanese tenants almost unanimously reported being worse off since 2011. As a result, it is important to recognize distinctions within Lebanese society, with a group of "developers," "landlords," and service providers who sell connections to electricity or deliver water benefiting from the displacement crisis. Some of these (and not all) have been enriched by the refugee crisis, while others may have simply compensated for lost employment through rent. On the other end, there are a few Lebanese tenants whose residences are as poor as those of Syrian refugees, without necessarily equating their vulnerability levels.

Thus, we argue that a "classed" reading of the relation between refugee and host populations is necessary to complement analysis along the national divide and better understand urbanization beyond the host/refugee divide. By class, we do not necessarily imply the formation of a collective group conscience with shared characteristics and collective action. Rather, a relational reading of social groups engaged in the reorganization of assets, as put forward by Massey (2005) and Bogaert (2018), allows us to analyze the transforming networks of power through which various individuals relate to each other and secure their respective livelihoods within this locality. This translates into an argument: the arrival of refugees may have benefited a certain class, those who already held enough assets they can rent or sell to refugees, or those capable of engaging refugees in economic transactions (e.g., rent/sell spaces, services). Conversely, the more vulnerable members of the "host" community are impoverished by the refugees' arrival because they face new competition over meager resources and dilapidated spaces. Interviews with Lebanese families living in the "Syrian Compounds" reflected this distinction eloquently: "Stuck" in what they described as an "increasingly demeaning situation," their living conditions having deteriorated and their life savings evaporated, these families are competing for jobs with the most vulnerable refugee populations.

The dynamism of protracted displacement

This classed reading and the position of various national and refugee groups within it is also dynamic, transforming as the crisis extends. Thus, the gradual transformation of the compounds into "Syrian Compounds" where the wages earned through labor and the subsidies received as refugees are rechanneled as rent collected by (Lebanese) landlords and, indirectly, (Lebanese) developers, is reflective of the transforming status and position of refugees in this area of the country and, consequently, the processes through which they have accessed housing. While many refugees in Halba had first lived with relatives or been accommodated by former employers, in a position of "hosts," the duration of the crisis created a phenomenon of "fatigue" (Carpi, 2017) that pushed them towards alternative modalities of sheltering.[18] This occurred, furthermore, at a time when international aid sharply dwindled, pushing Syrians towards self-reliance while a nationalist rhetoric followed by a set of ad-hoc national government decisions gradually criminalized the presence of refugees.

From "temporary guests," Syrians whose refugee status was never officially recognized in Lebanon fell gradually into the status of "tenants" and "workers" and increased their integration into the lower echelons of the local economies' hierarchies. Carpi (2017) has further argued that this transforming status, particularly the perception of refugees as "clients," should be tied to interventions of agencies who offered monetary assets for Lebanese families in exchange for their hospitality. This transacting attitude intensified as the crisis became protracted, the rental market prospered, and a whole economy surrounding the settlement developed.

To conclude this discussion, the convergence of refugees on large-scale compounds and other arrangements across the Lebanese territory produces a new condition and spatiality where "being Syrian" is as much a national/legal status, in the sense of either an official "refugee" status, as it is a classed position in which Syrians are confined to a structurally subordinate position of "client" to benefit a particular group of "host" members who are not representative of the entire Lebanese society. It is also to point to the everyday efforts deployed by individuals to maintain the "human" dimension of the relation. Thus, despite rising tensions and a growing marketization that encourages landlords to rely on brokers for the management of their rentals, numerous interviewed refugee households reported that they invested in keeping "human" relations with their landlords, and many Syrian tenants said that they would rather travel monthly to a landlord's house, although s/he likely lives outside Halba, to pay the rent in person, than be assigned a broker.

Conclusion: Implications for planning and refugee and urban studies

What happens when settlement extends, aid dwindles, and the explorations of memory, dwelling and transience, no matter how relevant, are incomplete to describe the inscription of refugees or their ability to settle in place? This case study has shown that the answer to this question lies in the de-compartmentalization of social sciences and the localization of the study of forced displacement within historical and geographical contingencies.

This case study has large implications for those interested in refugee studies, urban studies, and city planning because it sheds light on the importance of a methodological approach that localizes displacement. While much of refugee studies has paid little attention to place, focusing on refugees as actors and approaching other social groups in their relation to these actors (e.g., host community, relief agencies), the study has demonstrated the importance of studying refugees in place and the multiple intersections of the humanitarian flows they channel (e.g., aid, material) to the production of an urban which they participate in making. These flows and actors, the paper further showed, do not simply cohabitate in parallel tracks, neither do they merge seamlessly. Rather, they reorganize social hierarchies in ways that disrupt pre-existing social divisions by markedly distinguishing those who can benefit from refugee influx (e.g., landlords, employers) and those who end up competing with refugees over meager resources (e.g., apartment for rent, employment). They also transform urban and rural landscapes in powerful way. It consequently becomes impossible to study urbanization without accounting for displacement, just as much as it is imperative to study displacement in relation to urban studies. We therefore conclude, first, on the need to hybridize refugee studies and urban research in ways that allow for flows of research frames and approaches that defy the compartmentalization of refugee studies.

What about planning? To date, the discipline of planning has paid only scant attention to refugees. As individuals typically hired by public agencies, planners have mirrored the blind spots of refugee studies, delegating the study of displacement to specialized agencies that approach their planning through siting and similar temporary arrangements.

Recognizing contracted displacement as an integral element of contemporary urbanization, one that expands the engagement of the profession with informal frameworks of urbanization, those that do not rely on official master plans nor depend on building permits—at least not exclusively, planners need to account for these widening gray spaces to maintain the effectiveness—if not relevance- of their rules in shaping cities. To be sure, the costs of such urbanization are major. Although the paper didn't extend on the negative social, environmental, and economic externalities of this urbanization, it is evident that planners have a major role in mitigating such costs and channeling production appropriately (Fawaz et al., 2021; Nyers, 2013). Given, however, that the reality of urban production operates in a logic of amalgamation, opportunity, improvisation, and unanticipated and unplanned links that are powerfully swayed and re-appropriated at the local scale, planners need to reconsider traditional approaches and engage instead these new urban realities without the presumption of an all-encompassing master mind planner. Further research is needed in the possibilities of planning in such contexts, but as forced displacement has become an integral element of our global urban realities, it will be imperative to investigate its implication for the profession.

Acknowledgements

Fieldwork was conducted in collaboration with the Lebanese Center for Policy Studies.

Declaration of conflicting interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: Research for this project was conducted with a grant from the International Development Research Center.

Notes

1. On 1 January 2018, the UNHCR portal reported 7785 registered Syrian refugees in Halba. The actual number was however substantially higher, given that the Lebanese government restrictions prevent UNHCR to register refugees since 2015. Carpi (2017) reported around 17,000, based on the municipality's count. They make up almost half the city's population (44,000) according to the Lebanese Center for Policy Studies report on the area (2020). https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/UNHCR_LBN_REF_MAP_2018-01-31_01_A1_AkkarGovernorateSyrianRefugeesRegisteredbyCadastral.pdf
2. In Arabic, *Mujamma'el suriyeen*.
3. The literature on this topic is too large to do justice to the richness of the debates in this short space.
4. For example, numerous Syrian women have married Lebanese men and become national citizens, since Lebanon allows for the passage of nationality to a "wife". Conversely, Lebanese women who marry Syrian men find their children stripped of the right to nationality and listed among "refugees" while their mother is a citizen and their father has no pathway to become one in the existing legal framework.
5. Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon 2018 (VASyR): https://www.unhcr.org/lb/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2018/12/VASyR-2018.pdf; Lebanon Crisis Response Plan, Annual Report 2018 (UNHCR): https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/70914

6. The mapping of building developments was conducted in the twin towns of Halba/Sheikh Mohammad, focusing on the main road where large-scale compounds were built in the last decade. Each of these towns has its own municipal authority and hence permits buildings individually. Both towns report to the same regional planning authority, the Halba branch of the Directorate General of Urbanism.
7. The Lebanese army has made enrollment a privileged channel of long-term employment for working-class impoverished Lebanese—particularly in this area of the country, and consequently political clientelism. Thousands of young men apply to enroll, knowing that their applications will only be accepted if their case is pushed forward by the political "leader". Akkar is particularly known for this channel (see Volk, 2009).
8. It is also said that a handful of Syrian households managed to purchase the units where they live, but we were unable to interview any of these.
9. One such program is the Occupancy Free of Charge program (OFC) through which a property owner is incentivized to allow residence of one or several Syrian families for a year free of charge in exchange of the costs of finishing an apartment under construction (typically a second floor).
10. Those whose apartments are rented through OFC programs sometimes lived in what looked like a construction site with unfinished floors and unsealed windows. They gradually worked to upgrade the unit that they occupied.
11. OFC, see fn. 9.
12. Stories about aid flowing to this region from the Arab Gulf (specifically Qatar, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia) abound among respondents of this study, although the lack of research and the informal channels through which sizable sections of this capital flows make it hard to estimate the size and conditions in which it circulated. For more on this, see Schmelter (2019).
13. Numerous studies have shown the critical role that social networks play in supporting refugees. See, for example, Yassine et al. (2021).
14. The LCPS/SCPR survey showed extremely high rates of unemployment among refugees in Halba. While unemployment rate for refugees in Lebanon averaged 17%, it was 48% in Halba (61% of women/ 47% of men).
15. These narratives echo recent research on refugee settlement in Lebanon that has emphasized power hierarchies and informal mechanisms of governance (Stel, 2021) or outright corruption (Bou Chabke and Haddad, 2021).
16. Interview conducted with the mayor of Sheikh Mohammad, on 27 May 2019 at the Sheikh Mohammad Municipality.
17. LCPS/SCPR survey conducted in three cities (Halba, Zahleh, and Saida) and looking at refugee ad local residents' conditions.
18. Carpi (2017) has brilliantly explored this changing relation, describing a tension that can best be detected in the rising discourse of robberies, competition over labor, or noise emissions that was relatively less recurrent in this area.

References

Agier M (2011) *Managing the Undesirables: Refugee Camps and Humanitarian Government*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Berthier R and Haddad G (2018) The Lebanese Warfare State, published online in Synaps. Available at: www.synaps.network/post/military-budget-lebanon-usa (accessed 28 December 2021).

Bogaert K (2018) *Globalized Authoritarianism: Megaprojects, Slums, and Class Relations in Urban Morocco*. Minnesotta: University of Minnesotta Press.

Bou Chabke S and Haddad G (2021) Ineffectiveness, Poor Coordination, and Corruption in Humanitarian Aid: The Syrian Refugee Crisis in Lebanon. *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations* 32: 894–909.

Brenner N (ed.) (2014) *Implosions/Explosions: Towards a Study of Planetary Urbanization*. Berlin: Jovis.

Brun C (2016) There is no future in humanitarianism: Emergency, temporality and protracted displacement. *History and Anthropology* 27(4): 393–410.
Cammett M and Issar S (2010) Bricks and mortar clientelism: Sectarianism and the logics of welfare allocation in Lebanon. *World Politics* 62(3): 381–421.
Carpi E (2017) Learning and earning in constrained labour markets: The politics of livelihoods in Lebanon's Halba. *Making Lives: Refugee Self-Reliance and Humanitarian Action in Cities* 11–36.
Chatterjee P (2004) *The Politics of the Governed: reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World*. New York: Columbia University Press.
Chatty D (2016) Refugee voices: Exploring the border zones between states and state bureaucracies. *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees 32(1) 3—6*.
Collier SJ and Ong A (2005) Global assemblages, anthropological problems. In: Collier SJ and Ong A (eds) *Global Assemblages: Technology, Politics, and Ethics as Anthropological Problems*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, pp.3–22.
Dahdah A (2016) *Habiter La Ville Sans Droits*, Les Travailleurs Immigrants Dans Les Marges de Beyrouth (Liban). PhD Dissertation in Geography, Universite Aix-Marseille, France.
Darling J (2016) Forced migration and the city: Irregularity, informality, and the politics of presence. *Progress in Human Geography* 41(2): 178–198.
Doraï MK (2010) *From Camp Dwellers to Urban Refugees? Urbanization and Marginalization of Refugee Camps in Lebanon*. In: *Manifestations of Identity. The Lived Reality of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon*, Muhammad Ali Khalidi (Ed.), Beirut: Institute of Palestine Studies and Institut Francais du Proche Orient, pp. 75–92.
Ehrkamp P (2017) Geographies of migration I: Refugees. *Progress in Human Geography* 41(6): 813–822.
El Merhebi S (2018) *Actors, governance and modalities of electricity supply: the case of low-income neighborhoods and refugee compounds in Halba*. Thesis submitted towards a Master in Urban Planning and Policy at the American University of Beirut, Beirut, Lebanon.
Fábos A and Kibreab G (2007) Urban refugees: Introduction. *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees* 24(1): 3–10.
Fakhoury T (2017) Governance strategies and refugee response: Lebanon in the face of Syrian displacement. *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 49(4): 681–700.
Fawaz M, Gharbieh A, Harb M, et al. (eds) (2018) *Refugees as City Makers*. Beirut: Social Justice and the City Program (IFI, AUB).
Fawaz M (2009a) Neo-liberal urbanity: A view from Beirut's periphery. *Development and Change* 40(5): 827–852.
Fawaz M (2009b) The state and the production of illegal housing: Public practices in Hayy el-Sellom. *Comparing Cities: The Middle-East and South Asia*. London: Oxford University Press, pp. 197–220.
Fawaz M (2017) Planning and the refugee crisis: Informality as a framework of analysis and reflection. *Planning Theory* 16(1): 99–115.
Fawaz M, Harb M and Al-Hage C (2021) The urbanization of forced population displacement: Unexpected flows and practices in Lebanon. In: Al-Harithy H (ed.) *Urban Recovery: Intersecting Displacement with Post War Reconstruction*, London: Routledge, pp.65–89.
Gilsenan M (1996) *Lords of the Lebanese Marches: Violence, Power, Narrative in an Arab Society*. London: IB Tauris.
Heyman J and Smart A (1999) States and illegal practices: An overview. *States and Illegal Practices* 1–24.
Hyndman J and Giles W (2011) Waiting for what? The feminization of asylum in protracted situations. *Gender, Place & Culture* 18(3): 361–379.
Jacobsen K (2006) Refugees and asylum seekers in urban areas: A livelihoods perspective. *Journal of Refugee Studies* 19(3): 273–286.
Landau LB and Jacobsen K (2004) Refugees in the New Johannesburg. *Forced Migration Review* 19: 44–46.
Landau LB (2014) Urban refugees and IDPs. *The Oxford Handbook of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies* 1. In: *The Oxford Handbook of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies*, Elena Fiddian-

Qasmiyeh, Gil Loescher, Katy Long, Nando Sigona (Eds.), pp. 139–50. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Lefebvre H (1992) *The Production of Space*. London: Blackwell.
Li T (2007) Practices of assemblage and community forest management. *Economy and Society* 36: 263–293.
McFarlane C (2011) The city as assemblage: dwelling and urban space. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 29(4): 649–671.
McGuirk P (2012) Geographies of urban politics: Pathways, intersections, interventions. *Geographical Research* 50(3): 256–268.
Marfleet P (2007) "Forgotten", "hidden": Predicaments of the urban refugee. *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees* 24(1): 36–45.
Massey D (2005) *For Space*. London: Sage.
Merrifield A (2013) The urban question under planetary urbanization. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 37(3): 909–922.
Nyers P (2013) *Rethinking Refugees: Beyond State of Emergency*. Abingdon: Routledge.
Peteet J (2009) *Landscape of Hope and Despair: Palestinian Refugee Camps*. Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press.
Roy A (2009) Why India cannot plan its cities: Informality, insurgence and the idiom of urbanization. *Planning Theory* 8(1): 76–87.
Schmelter S (2019) Gulf States' Humanitarian Assistance for Syrian Refugees in Lebanon. Civil Society Knowledge Centre, Lebanon Support, 2019-01-01 00:00:00. doi: 10.28943/CSR.003.004.
Sassen S (2013) When the center no longer holds: Cities as frontier zones. *Cities* 34: 67–70.
Save the Children (2019) *Hosting Refugees: The Impact of the Occupancy Free of Charge Shelter Modality in Three Localities in Lebanon*. Report published by the Issam Fares Institute of Public Policy and International Affairs, Beirut, Lebanon.
Schiller N and Caglar A (eds) (2011) *Locating Migration: Rescaling Cities and Migrants*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.
Simone A (2006) South African urbanism: Between the modern and the refugee camp. In: *Cities in Contemporary Africa*. Palgrave Macmillan, New York, pp. 241–246.
Simone A (2010) *City Life from Jakarta to Dakar: Movements at the Crossroads*. London: Routledge.
Simone A (2011) The surfacing of urban life: a response to Colin McFarlane and Neil Brenner, David Madden and David Wachsmuth. *City* 15(3-4): 355–364.
Simone A (2016) It's just the city after all! *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 40 (1): 210–218.
Simone A (2018) *Improvised Lives: Rhythms of Endurance in an Urban South*. London: Wiley.
Stel N (2021) *Hybrid Political Order and the Politics of Uncertainty, Refugee Governance in Lebanon*. London: Routledge.
Swerts T (2017) Creating space for citizenship: The liminal politics of undocumented activism. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 41(3): 379–395.
Tsing A (2011) *Friction, an Ethnography of Global Connection*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Turner JFC (1976) *Housing by People: Towards Autonomy in Building Environments*. London: Marion Boyars Book.
UNHCR (2018) *Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (VASyr)*. Available at: http://ialebanon.unhcr.org/vasyr/files/previous_vasyr_reports/vasyr-2018.pdf (accessed 28 December 2021).
Verdeil É, Faour G and Velut S (2007) *Atlas du Liban. Territoires et Société*. Beirut: Institut Français du Proche-Orient et CNRS, Liban.
Volk L (2009) Martyrs at the margins: The politics of neglect in Lebanon's borderlands. *Middle Eastern Studies* 45(2): 263–282.
Weber D (2014) *Migrant Networks: A Literature Review*. New Zealand: Integration of Immigrants Programme, Massey University.
Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children (2002) *Fending for Themselves: Afghan Refugee Children and Adolescents Working in Urban Pakistan*. Available at: https://www.refworld.org/docid/48aa82dc0.html (accessed 28 December 2021).

Yassine B, Al-Harithy A and Boano C (2021) Refugees hosting other refugees: Endurance and maintenance of care in Ouzaii (Lebanon). *Journal of Refugee Studies* 34 (3): 2871–2890.
Yiftachel O (2009) Critical theory and 'gray space': Mobilization of the colonized. *City* 13(2–3): 246–263.

Mona Fawaz is Professor of Urban Studies and Planning and a Research Lead at the American University of Beirut, Lebanon.

Carla Al-Hage is an architect and urban researcher, she worked at the Beirut Urban Lab at the time of the research for this paper.

Mona Harb is Professor of Urban Studies and Politics and a Research Lead at the American University of Beirut, Lebanon.