

**BETTER ASSISTANCE IN CRISES RESEARCH**



# **Beyond rights-based social protection for forcibly displaced people**

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# Summary

Having a right that is not respected is not the same as having no right at all. At least this should not be the case. Failure to receive something to which you are entitled should lead to formal redress or failing that, protest. The rights-based discourse has a wider importance. If and when it is or should be used is significant. In terms of access to social protection (including social and humanitarian assistance), the rights-based discourse means there is no difference between refugees and others who fail to receive the protection to which they are entitled, such as Internally Displaced People (IDPs). This introduces two key tensions, both of which we explore in this paper. The first concerns the identification of the institution responsible for fulfilling the right, as determined in state-led/formal humanitarian system of social protection. The second concerns the alternatives displaced people may identify when Northern mandated forms of social protection fail, or when the conditions for the enjoyment of that protection are too onerous. These alternatives constitute a second system of social protection. We conclude that although they are unequal, both systems are currently necessary, even as a language of rights is only appropriate in relation to the first tension. Ultimately greater coordination and collaboration between the two systems is necessary.

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# 1. Introduction

We start this paper with the puzzle that social protection for refugees is formally framed as a right, but is almost universally ignored. For refugees hoping to access social protection, a right that is ignored is essentially the same as no right at all. In such situations, does a language of rights serve any purpose? As displaced people strategise to obtain social protection, how does a rights-based approach affect them? This is the central concern of this paper.

In Hannah Arendt's well-known formulation, refugees lack the 'right to have rights' (Arendt 1985: 296). That is, they lack not only rights per se, but also any mechanism by which to introduce the very concept of rights. Arendt was writing when the international refugee system and major organisations, principally UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), were originally being founded. This system and its related institutions are now well established to respond to the gap in international protection that Arendt highlighted. In particular, UNHCR is explicitly framed as a human rights organisation – and yet that protection has limits (Verdirame and Harrell-Bond 2005).

Refugees and displaced people more generally seek protection from a wide variety of sources. These include state and international humanitarian organisations, where provision is based around principles of universality and equality, which are importantly associated with rights. There are, however, well-documented examples of refugees and displaced people explicitly avoiding such systems (Polzer 2008). Even when they are not avoided, such systems form part of a range of options that also include family members, community support, religious organisations, and in some cases paid work.

Analysis of policy approaches to social protection has become detailed and sophisticated, but such analysis does not typically extend beyond the formal rights-based policy provision. In this paper, we investigate how this can be extended to contextualise provision within the wider social and economic context in which displaced people make choices. Rights are typically not part of these other forms of provision, which are also not universal, but rather often exclusionary and can be time limited. Yet in some cases, these other forms of provision appear to be preferred and, in most cases, they offer an important supplement to state and international humanitarian provision. How these protection options are evaluated and how refugees strategise to maximise their access to social protection are questions that deserve further attention.

Refugees are frequently forced to depend on these alternative forms of protection, given their widespread exclusion from state provision, but their situation often overlaps that of other displaced people. International forced migrants who are not categorised as refugees are typically in a similar situation, as are many IDPs. Although IDPs are more likely to have rights to some form of state protection, this is widely overlooked. Both refugees and IDPs include groups of people with sufficient resources to support themselves. In some contexts, such as Somali refugees in the Somali region of Ethiopia, refugees gain specific benefits from operating in a cultural and linguistic context that is familiar. In other contexts, this may not be the case, such as Sri Lankan Tamil IDPs in the Sinhala majority in southern Sri Lanka.

In this paper, we therefore do not restrict our focus to refugees alone, but also include other groups of displaced people. Our overall concern is with people who have limited or problematic access to social protection. Thus, where IDP access is unproblematic, they do not fall into this frame of reference. Where IDPs fail to receive social protection, however, their situation is closely aligned to that of refugees. For the purpose of this analysis, we consider all these groups collectively under the label 'forcibly displaced people'.

The international institutions mandated to respond to forced displacement define themselves in humanitarian terms. Recent analysis reveals a tension between what Didier Fassin (2012) terms 'humanitarian reason' and the language of rights. Fassin (2012: 3) describes the shame felt by recipients of aid – 'these gifts that call for no counter gift' – and it is in this context that a language of rights becomes more important. The enjoyment of a right cannot be interpreted as a gift. Instead, it is an entitlement which supports the dignity of the recipient in a way that humanitarian aid is arguably unable to do. The self-definition of UNHCR and other major international institutions as human rights organisations also underlines the fact that everyone is entitled to protection by right, and where the state fails in its duty to guarantee that protection, the system of international protection must be made available.

We take a deliberately broad definition of social protection in this paper, drawing on Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler's (2004) work on transformative social protection. This approach situates social protection as a much more progressive form of social intervention than as a simple attempt to preserve life, which is characteristic of earlier work on social safety nets:

Social protection is the set of all initiatives, both formal and informal, that provide: social assistance to extremely poor individuals and households; social services to groups who need special care or would otherwise be denied access to basic services; social insurance to protect people against the risks and consequences of livelihood shocks; and social equity to protect people against social risks such as discrimination or abuse.

(Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler 2004: 9)

This is a challenging definition to apply to situations of forced displacement. It also goes well beyond the current humanitarian imperative, which is typically limited to social assistance and social service provision. Nonetheless, it is important to apply this broader approach, as by this standard, social protection has the potential to transform rather than perpetuate situations of protracted displacement.<sup>1</sup>

In terms of social protection, this broader definition introduces two key tensions that we explore in this paper. The first concerns the identification of the institution responsible for fulfilling the right. This is an established critique of rights-based discourse which highlights the distinction between rights that only exist in theory (or what is termed 'paper rights') and those that are actually enforceable. This is especially significant for international migrants. The provision of social protection as part of the rights that can be universally enjoyed relates most obviously to state provision. Where systems of national and international protection work effectively, all displaced people should receive the social protection, to which they have a right. Where responsibility for this right falls between states and the international system, though, how should responsibility be divided? Writing on the need for humanitarian response to be rights based, Harrell-Bond (2002: 77–8) argues that states routinely fail to shoulder responsibility for upholding rights and ensuring accountability for humanitarian assistance as that role has been assumed by UNHCR, which also acts as the main conduit for funds to assist refugees. The first section of this paper considers the framework of rights and its alternatives in the context of social protection.

Rights-based frameworks are particularly associated with state-led/formal humanitarian systems of social protection. While poverty alleviation programmes such as the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) in Ethiopia and Ehsaas in Pakistan are clearly nationally owned, global North donors retain significant influence through funding. In the case of Ethiopia, donor financing accounted for 60 per cent of the total expenditure on social protection in 2015/16 (Endale, Pick and Woldehanna 2019). For the rural component of the PSNP, donor contributions reached ETB8.7bn – 82 per cent of financing in 2017/18 (see UNICEF 2019). By comparison, the Ethiopian state contribution to both the urban and rural components of the PSNP rose from ETB220m in 2015/16 to ETB1.9bn in 2017/18 (Endale et al. 2019).

We use the term state-led/formal humanitarian provision of social assistance to acknowledge that social provisioning and humanitarian support from non-state actors and donors in the global South often goes unrecognised. The literature on social and humanitarian assistance often elides the term 'international' with the term 'Northern'. This makes less visible the role of donors that locate their interventions outside of United Nations (UN) structures, bypassing international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) in the global North. A closer look at UNHCR global spending reveals that around 80 per cent of all funding contributions come from the United States, Canada, European states, the European Union, and Australia. This has ramifications for where UNHCR funding is directed and the nature of its activities. Of the US\$3.814 billion

<sup>1</sup> Social protection does not include all health and education provision. These are encompassed under social policy approaches, but they are not social protection *per se*. On the one hand, for example, if a cash or food transfer is made conditional on education or health uptake, then programming and delivery of social protection will require coordination with the health and education sectors. This does not, however, mean health and education are social assistance. On the other hand, school feeding is a form of social assistance as it is a targeted programme related to basic needs of the poorest and most vulnerable people. An education subsidy for the poorest is also a form of social assistance. Social health insurance is likewise social assistance as it is a non-contributory targeted intervention for the poorest and most vulnerable people.

contributed by the aforementioned actors, 85 per cent is earmarked for countries specified by the donors and 21 per cent is directed to a country for a specific sector or project (UNHCR 2020a).

Where state-led/formal humanitarian provision of social protection fails, or where the conditions for the enjoyment of that protection are too onerous, displaced people may identify alternatives. These alternatives include sending and receiving financial remittances, protection afforded through faith-based networks, and other efforts at creating solidarity with and for displaced people. Even in countries such as Ethiopia, which is among the 15 highest beneficiary countries in terms of Official Development Assistance (ODA) for social protection as a proportion of Gross Domestic Product (Ortiz et al. 2019), coverage of state-led social protection programmes continues to fall short of universal. In 2015, for example, 24.48 per cent of the rural population participated in social protection and labour programmes, while participation of urban residents stood at 18.41 per cent (Berhane 2020). Regional disparities in the provision of social protection through the PSNP also mean that coverage does not extend to the wider Gambella region, where 44 per cent of all refugees in Ethiopia are located (ibid.).

Where does non-state led provision of social protection fit into the wider social and economic context that underpins the decision-making of displaced people? This is the second tension that we explore in the paper. Section three considers the state-led/formal humanitarian provision of social protection, comprising major donors and United Nations organisations, as well as state governments and civil society working in partnership with them. Section four goes on to examine the alternatives to this system to which displaced people may turn if state-led/formal humanitarian provision fails or they choose to reject it. These alternatives, which can be seen to constitute a second system of social protection, include other sources of social protection, beyond the state-led/formal humanitarian system, along with more unauthorised uses of the state-led/formal humanitarian system. We conclude that although they are unequal, both systems are currently necessary, with a language of rights only appropriate to the state-led/formal humanitarian system. Ultimately, greater coordination and collaboration between these two systems is necessary.

## 2. Individual rights and collective responses

The right of a migrant to social protection is often contingent on legal status. This observation brings the discussion of the rights of displaced people to a shuddering halt at Arendt's (1985: 296–7) assertion that human rights are only meaningful in the sense that they are citizenship rights first and foremost. For Arendt, the stateless are synonymous with the right-less – or those who can no longer draw a benefit from rights attached to their citizenship. From this standpoint, the effective and stable guarantee of human rights is dependent on rights being politically enacted, recognised, and affirmed in the particular institutions and orders that arise through membership in an organised political community – the nation state.

This perspective on human rights precludes the possibility that rights can be located outside the nation state. The global proliferation of a rights-based discourse in the decades since Arendt's intervention – to the point of it becoming the 'lingua franca of global moral thought' (Ignatieff 2001: 53) – provides displaced people with a universal grammar and vocabulary that can be invoked to contest privileges commonly attached to citizenship. Rights once exclusively associated with membership in the nation state through citizenship (including civil, social, economic, and cultural rights) can now be claimed by displaced people through a reconfiguration of sovereignty to produce what Soysal (1994) describes as 'postnational membership' allowing for citizen rights to evolve outside of the state (Sassen 2002). Put differently, the multidimensional character of citizenship itself affords strategies for legitimising informal forms of membership that exceed the boundaries of the nation state (Soysal 1994; Coutin 2000). While displaced people may find themselves outside of state-sanctioned citizenship, their identities as members of a community of residence assume some of the features identified with citizenship. The participation of refugees from El Salvador in cross-border community, family, and political networks during and following the 1981–92 civil war in that country provides one such example. Here, the sending of remittances contributed to a recognition of their legal and political rights as Salvadoran citizens (Coutin 2000; Mahler 1995; Sassen 2002). The incongruity of a *lack of meaningful access to rights* for displaced people in an age of rights (Gündoğdu 2014) suggests, however, that an Arendtian perspective continues to have purchase.

In this section, we set out a framework for accessing social protection through a rights-based framework for people affected by displacement. The dissonance between rights afforded through international law and the lived realities of displaced people is most apparent in the case of refugees. We begin with Andrew Shacknove's (1985) critical reading of refugeehood to draw attention to the fact that states seldom hold a monopoly on the provision of social assistance. Rather, it is access to the possibility of protection afforded through the international community that is desired by those seeking refuge to mitigate against the vicissitude of vulnerabilities to which they have been exposed. Next, we consider the range of legal instruments and conventions (and the limits of their use) that the international community has at its disposal for the disbursement of social protection in cases where the country of origin and/or the country of first refuge is unable or unwilling to provide it to those who have been displaced. Third, drawing on postcolonial literature, we consider why the modalities of social and humanitarian assistance offered through a rights-based approach represent only a partial mapping of the social protection of which displaced people avail themselves. In doing so, we signal a move beyond the narrow and restrictive binary of formal/informal, and attempt to consider the range of social assistance opportunities from the perspective of displaced people – a point we explore further in section 4.

## 2.1 The rights-based framework for responding to displacement

In his discussion of what constitutes refugeehood, Shacknove (1985) draws attention to points of divergence between definitions of the term 'refugee' outlined under the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (anchored in the European historical experience of the two world wars) and definitions put forward under regional instruments; namely, the 1969 Organisation of African Unity Convention and the 1984 Cartagena Declaration. Shacknove identifies that the key distinction between the 1951 Convention and the two regional instruments is as follows: in the former, persecution is a necessary condition for refugeehood, while in the regional instruments it is simply a particular manifestation of broader phenomena. For Shacknove (*ibid.*: 277), persecution is one instance of 'the absence of state protection of the citizen's basic needs'.

Furthermore, Shacknove (*ibid.*) identifies alienage, or the crossing of an international border, to be but one expression of the 'physical access of the international community to the unprotected person'. Displaced people do not necessarily have to cross an international border to gain such access. The common framework provisioned under the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (1998), along with the global commitment to the principle of the responsibility to protect (R2P), has expanded the access of the international community to those without adequate state protection. This reinforces the notion that states are obligated to protect and assist displaced citizens, and where they are unable or unwilling to do so, the international community has a duty to intervene (Cohen 2004). Shacknove's (*ibid.*) argument thus follows that refugees – and by extension IDPs – are 'persons whose basic needs are unprotected by their country of origin, who have no remaining recourse other than to seek international restitution of their needs, and who are so situated that international assistance is possible'.

On 28 July 2021, it was 70 years since the establishment of the 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, which sets out the rights of individuals granted refuge and the concomitant responsibilities of states that grant refugee status. The basic premise of the international refugee regime is that all persons who meet the definition of refugee are 'entitled to benefit from internationally established rights' (Hathaway and Cusick 2000: 484). With 147 state parties acceding to either the 1951 Convention or its 1967 protocol, this represents the cornerstone of a rights-based framework of which refugees can avail themselves so as to access social protection. Rights related to social protection include: access to the labour market (Article 17); rights to self-employment (Article 18); inclusion in any rationing scheme (Article 20); access to housing (Article 21); right to public elementary education (Article 22); right to public relief (Article 23); and social security and employment legislation (Article 24). In some cases, rights are deemed equivalent to those of nationals; in most other cases, refugees are to be provided with 'the most favourable treatment as possible', or at the very least 'not less favourable than any other migrant' (Goodwin-Gill 2014; Long and Sabates-Wheeler 2017).

Despite what *prima facie* seemingly appears to be a generous provision of social protection under the 1951 Convention, the realisation of actual access for refugees is a much more distant prospect. The challenges of accessing socioeconomic rights in protracted refugee situations points to international law operating at a more abstracted level, detached from the lived experiences of refugees. Many states have been permitted to

derogate from obligations laid out in the 1951 Convention in the interests of national security (Article 9). This has been interpreted by states to include being potentially exposed to social and economic instability prompted by the scale of mass displacement (Edwards 2012: 622). As such, refugees are often restricted in their ability to pursue livelihoods. Their access to local labour markets is also typically segmented and informal in character. Exclusion and marginalisation from participation in local economies is particularly pronounced in situations where refugees are required to live in designated camps. In such situations, responsibility for the provision of basic social protection is often 'shifted', as Kagan (2011) puts it, onto humanitarian agencies and actors.

The lack of access to social protection is usually compounded where states are not signatories to the 1951 Convention. In the case of Syrian displacement in Lebanon, refusal of the Lebanese state to legally recognise the arrival of Syrians displaced by the conflict as refugees can be seen as a means to circumvent the entitlements and rights they are due under international law (Janmyr 2017). Here, UNHCR, in partnership with other national and international humanitarian actors, is charged with instituting a parallel system of social protection in the absence of state willingness to take on economic or political responsibility for refugees. Yet, a shortfall in global humanitarian spending ultimately produces a deficit between what refugees expect of a UN mandate to protect and assist them, and the actual provision of social assistance (Trad and Kagan 2008).

Not being signatory to the 1951 Convention does not mean that states are absolved of meeting their obligations towards refugees. Other human rights treaties ratified by the state can also be a source of protection for refugees. The 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) makes provision for accessing health (Article 12) and education (Article 13) as universal rights. Legal commentators note that despite the state incurring an economic cost in the provision of health and education they should be established as social and cultural rights rather than exclusively economic rights (Hathaway 2005: 511–14). Similarly, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, signed in 1989, guarantees the right to health and education. The right to work and labour rights are prescribed in Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and ILO Recommendation 205 (2017). Moreover, Article 6 of the ICESCR contains a provision that legally binds states to safeguard a universal right to gain a living through work.

Crucially, there remains leeway for signatories to ICESCR to derogate from economic rights. Article 2(3) provides that developing states 'with due regard to human rights and their national economy, may determine to what extent they would guarantee the economic rights recognised in the present Covenant to non-nationals'. The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, adopted in 1965, follows in the same vein by allowing states to make 'distinctions, exclusions, restrictions, or preferences ... between citizens and non-citizens'. The absence of other related enabling rights such as freedom of movement, justice and property rights, or lack of access to relevant services such as financial services, certification, and business registration can effectively hinder refugees from fully enjoying the right to work.

## **2.2 Failure to ensure the rights of the displaced**

The reticence of host states in incorporating refugees into social provisioning programmes can be attributed to a fear of local integration as a durable solution being foisted upon them. Combined with little appetite for third-country resettlement on the part of more affluent states in the global North and little possibility of return to the country of origin, displacement takes on a decidedly protracted character in countries of first refuge. Among displaced people across the world, 80 per cent are in countries affected by acute food insecurity and malnutrition (UNHCR 2020b). In such contexts, state infrastructure for the provision of social assistance is often rudimentary. This has meant that social assistance provided through both formal and informal humanitarian actors and agencies has increasingly taken on greater significance for refugees in urban or non-camp settings. In some places the reverse is true, such that humanitarian assistance for refugees becomes an important source of aid for citizens, too. A study by Hagen-Zanker et al. (2017) on the impacts of a cash transfer for Syrian refugees in Jordan shows that the Jordanian government has a policy that requires equitable provision of support to both refugees and host populations. This is not a policy that relates to government responsibility, but to extra-State provision which ensures that any provision incorporates Jordanian citizens as beneficiaries. This is one way of helping to resolve local tensions between refugee and local populations.



IDPs account for more than 57 per cent of all people displaced for reasons of persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations, or events seriously disturbing public order (UNHCR 2020b). Unlike refugees, IDPs have been unable or unwilling to cross a territorial border and are either citizens or habitual residents of the country in which they are displaced. As such, their rights to social protection should be recognised as equivalent to those of other non-displaced citizens or habitual residents. Following Shacknove (1985), IDPs in conflict-induced settings are often unable to avail themselves of the protection of the state. IDPs face specific challenges in realising their rights, especially if a state is actively hostile to the IDP group (e.g. ethnic discrimination) or where conflict or natural disaster has destroyed infrastructure and weakened state capacity. Again, as is the case with refugees, access to the international community for the provision of basic social protection is paramount. In such cases, the ability of IDPs to secure social assistance provisioning (including food, housing, healthcare, and education) often depends on interventions that are parallel to or aligned with state-led social assistance.

This can be complicated. Both the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention) recognise that IDPs are not fully covered by national human rights provisions. Yet neither convention is legally binding. Scholars have long argued that the appropriation, misallocation, and diversion of humanitarian assistance can contribute to the prolongation of conflict and strengthening the position of warring parties (De Waal 1997; Anderson 1999; Lischer 2003; Narang 2015). Moreover, the principle of state sovereignty means that humanitarian actors and agencies rely on the acquiescence and cooperation of the state to operate on its territory. The supposed neutrality of social protection provision through humanitarian assistance can be quickly compromised to the benefit of state actors embroiled in a conflict (Martínez and Eng 2016). In complex conflict situations such as these, a failure to provide adequate social protection may compel IDPs to undertake further migration opportunities both within the territorial borders of their country of origin and across them. Further research is needed to confirm the correlation between the absence of adequate social protection and the onward mobility of displaced people.

As mentioned above, the majority of people displaced for reasons of persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations, or events seriously disturbing public order both come from and are hosted in low or lower-middle income countries where formal state-based social protection is weak. A clear movement towards providing social protection for all, as laid out in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and in establishing social protection floors as outlined under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development suggests there is hope that social assistance for refugees will become more accessible. This has been bolstered by the eventual inclusion of a refugee indicator under SDG 10.7. The specific inclusion of an indicator relating to refugees puts displacement and responses to it front and centre in the discourse on sustainable development.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, the concrete reality of social assistance provisioning currently on offer for all displaced people (refugees and IDPs alike) means there is substantial ground to make up.

### **2.3 Critique of the rights-based framework based on recognising collective responses**

Up to this point, our discussion makes evident that there is a clear disconnect between the aspirations of international human rights law and the grounded realities of mass displacement faced by forced migrants. For the latter, the seeking of social protection and assistance is not necessarily mediated through agents embedded within state and supra-state systems. For postcolonial scholars, this is perhaps an unsurprising revelation. From a postcolonial perspective, the culture of human rights is found already moored in a way of seeing, knowing, being, and doing in the world itself born out of the ruins of Western imperial formations (Spivak 2011: 85). This in turn prompts 'a real epistemic discontinuity between the Southern human rights advocates and those whom they protect' (*ibid.*: 83). In other words, the language of human rights, particularly

<sup>2</sup> SGG 10.7 to facilitate orderly, safe, regular, and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies, has now been amended to include measurement indicator 10.7.4 'Proportion of the population who are refugees, by country of origin.' See: global indicator framework adopted by the General Assembly in A/RES/71/313 (Annex), annual refinements contained in E/CN.3/2018/2 (Annex II), E/CN.3/2019/2 (Annex II), 2020 Comprehensive Review changes (Annex II) and annual refinements (Annex III) contained in E/CN.3/2020/2 and annual refinements (Annex) contained in E/CN.3/2021/2. Available online: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/indicators-list/>.

its intransigent insistence on the individual, does not speak directly to the needs and lived experiences of displaced people in the global South.

This epistemic break reveals itself in an understanding that the statist articulation of a rights-based framework in responses to displacement is also mirrored by responsibilities that are grounded in an ethic of care in concrete circumstances rather than rights (*ibid.*: 87; Tronto 1993; Popke 2006; Lawson 2007). The lack of recourse to the language of human rights by displaced people arguably shows that they are cognisant of rights (that enabled them before being displaced and dislocated) being no longer available post-displacement. As Wendy Brown (1995: 98) points out, 'Rights converge with powers of social stratification and lines of social demarcation in ways that extend as often as attenuate these powers and lines.'

For advocates of a rights-based approach, the language of human rights is one of 'individual empowerment' (Ignatieff 2001: 57) or an enabler of agency: 'When individuals have agency, they can protect themselves against injustice. Equally, when individuals have agency, they can define for themselves what they wish to live and die for' (*ibid.*). This particular view on agency and rights equates to a liberal individualism that serves to 'simply expand autonomy and choice' (Brown 1995: 145).

An alternative point of departure opens avenues in thinking through how responsibilities or duties to care necessitate encounters with human and non-human others – recognising individuals not as autonomous and sovereign, but as inherently vulnerable, fragile, and dependent on others, especially in situations of constraint. Developments in social theory propose that understandings of agency should be more expansive (Mahmood 2005; Burke 2012; Pham 2013; Burkitt 2015). Consideration must be given to how agency 'produces an effect on the world and on others' and thus is always relational (Burkitt 2015: 332). In her discussion of the communal agency of women in the Middle East, Quynh Pham (2013) questions Eurocentric readings of autonomy as freedom, directing us instead to contexts where women are recognised as having to endure while being embedded in both relations of power and thick webs of sociality from which they meaningfully negotiate the common terms of their day-to-day lives. Pham argues for a relational ontology of agency that is necessarily dialogical. As Pham (*ibid.*: 37) incisively observes: 'One's action is rarely one's own and rarely for one's own sake only, for it is pulled, pushed, harmonised, agitated, coaxed, pleaded ... by multiple bonds. In this sense, one could say it is always already co-authored.' As such, purposive and reflexive actions must be understood as being constituted within relationships.

For many displaced people, access to social provisioning can normally be found in reciprocal arrangements rather than formal structures, with a reliance on kin, clan, religious, and ethnic networks (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2016; Zaman 2016; Trapp 2018). Together, the formal and informal spaces of provision comprise what we might call 'landscapes of care' wherein 'complex embodied and organisational spatialities emerge from and through the relationships of care' (Milligan and Wiles 2010: 740). The economies that emerge from these landscapes of care are less about producing goods and services, but rather are concerned with 'accessing and making claims on the resources of others' (Ferguson 2015: 94). In his discussion on what it means to survive under the precarious conditions of global capitalism, these economies are part and parcel of what James Ferguson (*ibid.*) calls a system of 'distributed livelihoods'. Put simply, this is how 'people who do not have access to wage labour endeavour to capture a piece of the wages earned by those who do' (*ibid.*: 99). This is a moral economy wherein claimants depend on a framing of being entitled to a *rightful* share (Trapp 2018). Here, rights are understood in the vernacular – the demand for rights and entitlements '... is not only always sovereign, individualist, discrete, or indeed privately articulated one. It is predominantly expressed collectively and in religious, gendered, and caste terms' (Madhok 2017: 487).

## 2.4 Beyond (in)formal approaches to social protection

Understanding how displaced people make claims to and negotiate social protection requires a deeper knowledge of the structures that underlie their inclusion and exclusion. Sometimes the exclusion is determined by unequal access to resources and endowments, as well as imperfections in markets for goods, services, and labour that come together to regularly and repeatedly exclude displaced people from both productive opportunities and social provisions. Even in cases where legal entitlements to social protection should be available (on paper), actual application or enforcement may be found wanting for a range of reasons. In other cases, displaced people might be excluded because: they have no information about their rights; they might lack the language and education required to access their rights; they might be physically or geographically isolated and therefore unable to travel to access resources; or they might live in a location

where the supply and quality of services is so poor or damaged that given rights to a resource have no way of being fulfilled.

Appreciation of these possible factors demands a less static understanding of rights to social protection that is not fixated on non-market led systems mandated by and through Northern actors and agencies that dominate the humanitarian field. In shifting our gaze away from state-led/formal humanitarian provision of social assistance, we create space for thinking how and through which actors and domains entitlements can be exchanged. In addition, social provisioning can also be mediated through the market. Entry to national labour markets, however, remains contingent on the legal relation displaced people have to the state – re-affirming an Arendtian view on rights.

More than three-quarters of all adults living in countries experiencing humanitarian crises lack access to the formal financial services sector (Chehade 2017). It is often impossible for displaced people who have crossed a territorial border to open bank accounts without a residency permit or correct registration (Wilson and Krystalli 2017). The lack of a recognised identity document precludes the possibility to access remittances through formal channels. In the case of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, it is found that self-exclusion, partly attributed to a lack of awareness and lack of access to information on financial services, means that take up of formal financial services remains low (de Dinechin *et al.* 2019). Such barriers, combined with the lack of formal status, often push displaced people residing outside their country of origin to operate in labour markets characterised by informality, precarity, and exploitation. For the fortunate few able to leverage their *wasta* (social capital) to open a bank account in Lebanon, there are restrictions on receiving any overseas transfers, accessing credit, and withdrawing long-standing deposits in US\$ – and this was before the current Lebanese financial crisis (Halisso 2019).

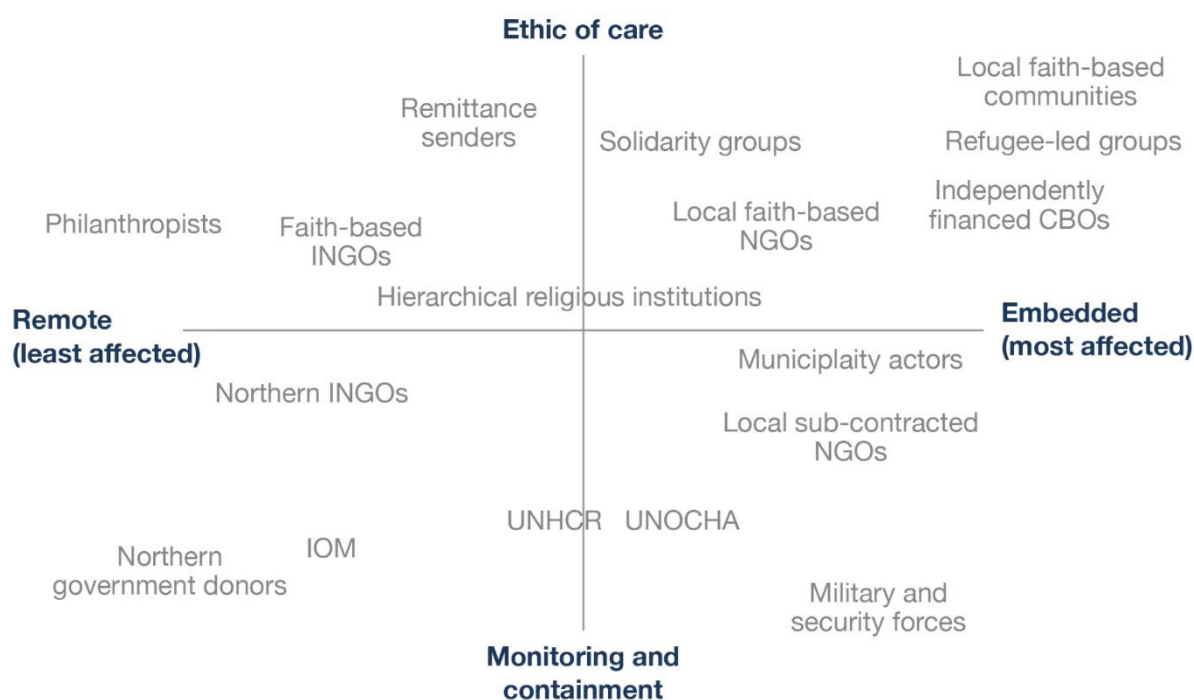
Displaced people may only be partially visible to the functional interventions of public distribution systems while at the same time having to operate within the constraints of an imperfect market that severely restricts access to labour markets, banking, credit, and insurance. It is at this juncture that informal systems of social assistance can be critical in helping displaced people protect, maintain, and perhaps even grow their initial endowment. Through practices of care, mutual aid, and the collective pooling of resources, displaced people can lower household exposure to risk from livelihood crises and the precarity induced by their legal relation to the state (Janmyr and Mourad 2018). It is at the level of the household that displaced people develop understandings, practices, and strategies of self-reliance while drawing on a portfolio of risk management mechanisms that include not only state, market, and locally embedded networks (Carpi 2020), but also migration as a strategy for diversifying risk to household income and to insure against future shocks and stresses (De Haan *et al.* 2000: 30; Stark and Bloom 1985; Taylor 1986; Taylor and Wyatt 1996; Taylor 1999).

In cases where the provision of social assistance (either through the state, the humanitarian system, or through market mechanisms) is unavailable or inaccessible, collective modalities of support outside a rights-based framework take on greater significance. Often these forms of provision are described as being informal as opposed to the formality of provision offered through state actors, supra-state agencies, and the international humanitarian system. This neat binary of formal/informal occludes not only the power relations that serve to privilege European ways of knowing, seeing, being, and doing in the world, but also the embedded character of the informal in the everyday lives of those receiving social assistance. Where the formal insists on 'seeing like a state', as Scott (1998) puts it, with its emphasis on an administrative ordering of society to determine how and for whom available resources are redistributed, the informal provision of social assistance can often be found anchored in a duty and ethics of care.

Figure 2.1 maps the range of actors involved in social and humanitarian assistance provisioning for displaced people. The vertical axis shows a continuum indicating what underpins the presence of actors in the humanitarian field with ethic of care, on the one hand, and the monitoring and containment of displaced populations, on the other. In acknowledging the different motivations behind the presence of actors and agencies in the humanitarian field, we question the assumption that displaced people will automatically seek institutionalised (state or non-state) assistance and acknowledge that displaced people have good reasons not to engage with formal institutions and authorities. While it is possible to map the actors and providers along this continuum, the lived realities of migrants show that the distinction between the state and humanitarian governance is a blurred one. For instance, Clayton Boeyink's (2020) case study of migrant and refugee agricultural labourers and renters in western Tanzania illustrates a complexity in how refugees

manage the boundaries between state and humanitarian governance and provision. Boeyink shows that refugees strive to be sufficiently visible for humanitarian and state authorities to receive assistance, while remaining invisible enough to avoid the gaze of these institutional actors upon their quasi-legal agricultural practices outside the confines of the humanitarian encampment.

**Figure 2.1 Mapping of social and humanitarian assistance provisioning**



Source: Authors' own

A second continuum is shown along the horizontal axis, recognising that some actors in the humanitarian field are in closer proximity to displaced populations than others. In situations of mass displacement, resources for the provisioning of social assistance largely flow from a distance towards those who are embedded. This has important consequences, particularly given that more than 70 per cent of displaced people are in protracted situations. What happens when donor interest begins to wane? Beth Whitaker's (2008) work on Burundian refugees in Tanzania evidences how crisis-affected states can move from progressive policies of inclusion to rapidly declining standards of protection once funding from global North donors dries up. This raises questions as to how well equipped locally embedded actors are to provide social assistance in the absence of support from state-led/formal humanitarian provision of social assistance.

One area that has begun to receive greater attention in scholarship is the salience of financial remittances in displacement contexts. Van Hear (2009) highlights the importance of complex migration trajectories undertaken by displaced people resulting in a greater spread of family members across several locations. This, he argues, influences patterns and practices of remittance sending and receiving. Most displaced people continue to reside in their country of origin as IDPs, while a significant number make it across the border to a neighbouring country to find refuge and others spontaneously embark on journeys to secure a more meaningful asylum than that afforded in the country of refuge, spending several years in transit countries. A much smaller number are resettled in a third host country. Family members could need help in each of those locations. Forcibly displaced people dispersed across these locations also face having to choose among competing needs.

There is some limited evidence emerging that indicates remittances are particularly significant in displacement contexts as compared to migration situations dictated by economic necessity. Carling, Binvand and Horst (2012) show that for Pakistani migrants and Somali refugees in Norway there are differences in both the number that remit money to relatives and the frequency with which they do so. Fewer than half of Pakistanis sent remittances compared with three-quarters of the Somali refugees surveyed. Moreover, around two in every five Somali refugees surveyed sent remittances on a monthly basis compared to around one in every 20 Pakistani migrants surveyed. The authors provide three explanations for this pattern. First,

conflict creates an immediate and vital need for access to social assistance. Second, the country of origin or first refuge often is unable or unwilling to provide the requisite level of resources needed to cope with displacement, leaving those living abroad to support family members. Finally, conflict disrupts livelihoods and seriously impacts the capacity of individuals to generate regular means of income.

These findings are consistent with Lindley's (2009) work on Somali refugees in the UK, which also reports that 61 per cent of the Somali refugees surveyed remitted on a monthly basis. Similarly, in their research on Southern Sudanese men living in Canada, Johnson and Stoll (2008) find that around two in every five respondents sent money home at least once a month. Sending remittances is corroborated with studies investigating the receipt of remittances. Betts et al. (2014) report that in both urban and camp locations Somali refugees are regular recipients. Studies indicate that households often channel remittances towards specific uses, resulting in increased expenditures on health, education, and housing. This supports the hypotheses that remittance inflows result in a stronger human capital accumulation and that expenditures are future oriented (Göbel 2013). In countries or areas where credit markets are not well developed, remittances are used to establish micro-enterprises and small businesses (Amuedo-Dorantes and Pozo 2006).

Omata's (2011) work on Liberian refugees in Ghana introduces a class-based analysis to the study of remittances in displacement contexts. He finds that 95 per cent of the income of the better-off households came from remittances, whereas poorer households received no income from remittances. If mobility is taken as a factor of class stratification, then distance to money transfer operators may impede the receipt of remittances (Dean 2015). In situations of conflict, collecting remittances may involve movement in and out of areas outside government control.

Much of the literature focuses on long established refugee populations in the diaspora. Less attention is given to understanding the significance of remittances for IDPs in conflict situations. The paucity of research on the remittance practices and behaviours of IDPs means we know little concerning the determinants and impacts of internal remittances sent from or to displaced populations. IDPs are arguably in a very different remittance context than refugees. The channels through which money can be sent and received – in a conflict setting, where governance is contested – are different for internal transfers. Banking systems and the capacity to exchange currency may be disrupted, along with communication between IDPs and households. This creates a different set of challenges for sending and receiving remittances. A recent study (Brown *et al.* 2021) on the informal economy of Dahuk governorate in the Kurdistan Regional Government of Iraq finds that although remittances and informal cash transfers influence the ability of IDP and refugee workers to maintain incomes, only 1 per cent of the workers surveyed received additional income from cash transfers.

Far less is understood about those actors whose sources of funding lie outside of the state-led/formal humanitarian system of social and humanitarian assistance. In contexts where state authority may be contested by a range of governance actors, a clearer approach is needed on whether and how to engage these various actors in order to reach the most vulnerable host and refugee populations. Persistent state weakness and the predominance of denominational politics have centred faith-based social assistance in Lebanon. The presence of Hezbollah in the Lebanese humanitarian field throws up an interesting example of the dilemma faced by global North donors operating in the same humanitarian field. Since its inception, the Hezbollah social and humanitarian assistance programmes have consistently proven to be far more effective than that offered through the Lebanese state (Cammatt 2006; Flanigan and Abdel-Samad 2009; Haddad 2013). Today, Hezbollah holds elected offices at both local and national levels, placing the group in a position to determine which prospective aid programmes take place. Hezbollah commands a number of roles highlighted in Figure 2.1. It is a hierarchical religious institution. It holds municipal offices and is a military actor. It also has a number of affiliated NGOs registered with the Lebanese government (Flanigan and Abdel-Samad 2009: 124). In short, Hezbollah is a hugely influential actor operating in the field of social and humanitarian assistance in Lebanon today. At the same time, however, it continues to be proscribed as a terrorist organisation by governments funding state-led/formal humanitarian provision of social assistance. As te Lintelo et al. (2020: 54) observe, this proscription acts as a constraint on humanitarian programming and challenges humanitarian principles, making it extremely difficult 'to develop municipal capacities without also unjustifiably punishing people living in these areas, who may or may not be supportive of [Hezbollah]'. Not all faith-based actors providing social and humanitarian assistance are viewed through a securitised lens in the way Hezbollah is perceived. Actors in the formal humanitarian system have, however, largely operated under the logic of functional secularism, which has served to privilege European ways of providing assistance while

reducing religion to the functional capacities of institutional actors (Ager and Ager 2011). Arguably, this has rendered invisible the ways in which faith-based actors undertake assistance in displacement situations (Zaman 2016).

In what follows, we set out a critical review of the literature on the access and provision of social and humanitarian assistance in displacement contexts. In section 3, we begin by looking at developments in state-led/formal humanitarian modalities of social provision. This is followed by a critical examination of access to these formal provisions. We ask what happens when rights to social assistance cannot be fulfilled and explore the mechanisms of redress available to displaced people. In doing so, we recognise that displaced people are not merely recipients of social assistance, but also have agency and choice regarding how and under what conditions they engage with providers of social assistance. In section 4, we consider how displaced people navigate access to social assistance through everyday encounters with actors embedded in their displacement context and how they engage with state-led/formal humanitarian provision of social assistance on their own terms.

### **3. Providing formal social assistance to refugees and IDPs in conflict settings**

The classification and separation of social provisioning systems as non-market/market led or formal/informal (MacAuslan and Sabates-Wheeler 2011) is seldom clear-cut in practice when distributing to displaced people. In practice, lack of citizenship for refugees, even when they have rights on paper, often results in their rights being undermined, and thus, undermines their access to social protection. This poses a question about which actor(s) has an obligation to fulfil refugee rights and to provide them with access to social protection. Specifically, there is an increasingly polarised debate about if and how assistance for refugees should be connected with national social protection systems in fragile and crisis-affected settings. While it is possible to provide state-delivered or state-funded social protection to displaced people, there are many challenges and questions to resolve, from the standpoints of donors, governments, and humanitarian agencies, which often reduce the space for negotiation and programming design/implementation. This can result in completely parallel systems, with one covering citizens and the other covering refugees.

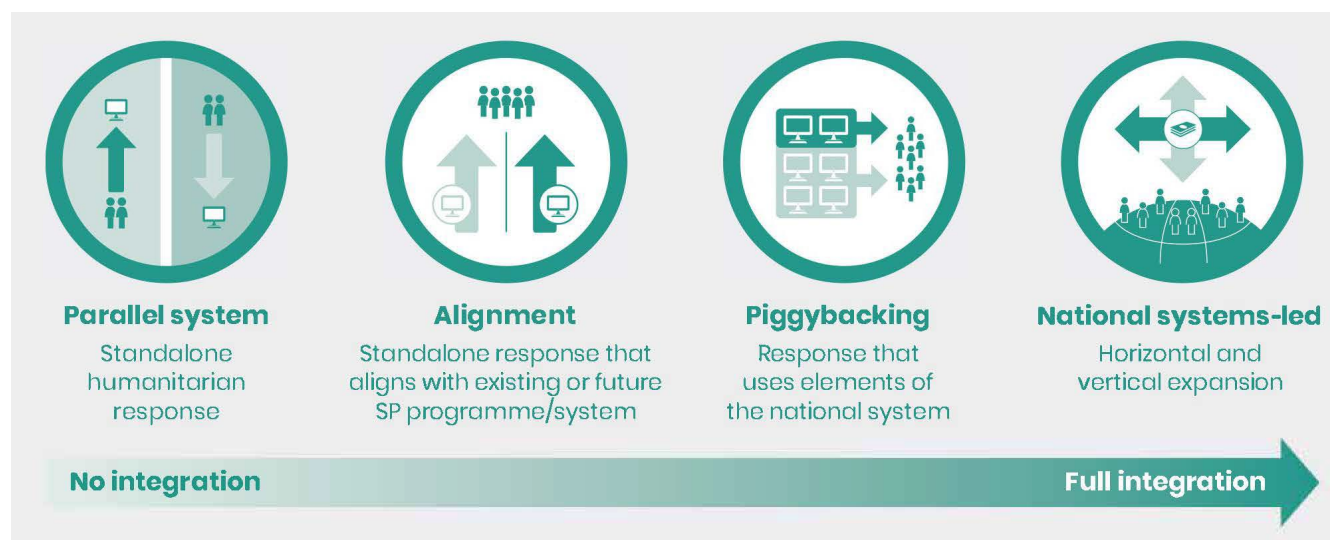
In cases where governments are unwilling and/or unable to afford assistance for non-citizens, different types of collaborations are supported by Northern donors and aid agencies keen to integrate their efforts with the nascent national social assistance programme of fragile and crisis-affected states. These partnerships often include both state actors (such as government ministries) and non-state actors (multilateral agencies and INGOs). This is the case for some large-scale national safety nets that are expanded, tweaked, or redesigned, and where efforts among multiple actors are combined. Such examples include: the Government of Lebanon National Poverty Targeting Programme with the World Food Programme (WFP 2017); the UNHCR emergency cash programme with the Government of Pakistan (UNHCR 2020c); the Government of Niger and UNHCR joint strategy (UNHCR 2021b); and the Government of Ethiopia Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA) work with UNHCR (UNHCR 2021a). Awareness of the blended forms of provision of social assistance for displaced populations is key. Instead of considering the humanitarian–development nexus as a zero-sum game between state-led and non-state provision (thereby accentuating the social policy–humanitarian divide), an integration approach analyses potential degrees of collaboration options around programmatic functions between state and non-state actors.

In the case of Pakistan, cash transfer support for Afghan refugees mirrors that provided to Pakistani citizens through Ehsaas. Here, a parallel humanitarian response plan (HRP) coordinated by UNHCR, the Ministry of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON), and the Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees at federal and provincial levels has successfully distributed cash transfers of 12,000 Pakistani rupees to more than 75,000 Afghan refugee families following the outbreak of Covid-19. The 2021 HRP aims to target the most vulnerable 4.3 million (of 11 million) people identified as needing humanitarian assistance. This includes people displaced by rapid onset climate events and 1.4 million registered Afghan refugees who have a proof of registration card issued by UNHCR. The Government of Pakistan has further included 840,000 Afghan Citizen Card holders (ACC) and an estimated half a million undocumented Afghans as targeted beneficiaries

of the 2021 HRP (Humanitarian Insight 2021). Given the complexity of the displacement landscape wherein floods, drought, and conflict all contribute to overlapping and at times uneven distribution of displaced people, disaggregating displaced populations into clearly defined targeted groups remains a challenge. The exact number and location of ACC and undocumented Afghans is also difficult to determine as these are often both mobile groups and groups that are integrated in other populations. The number of undocumented Afghans displaced inside Pakistan has been estimated to be as high as 1.6 million (Furqan 2021). To achieve the targets set out in the 2021 HRP, the Government of Pakistan has requested US\$332 million from international donors, of which US\$148.1 million has been set aside for displaced Afghans in the country (Humanitarian Insight 2021). In times when governments have reduced overseas development aid, and with the distinct possibility of new refugee movements from Afghanistan into Pakistan on the horizon, it remains unclear whether a state such as Pakistan, with historically low revenues accrued from taxation, can raise the requisite funds for such a programme.<sup>3</sup>

In the past five years, the emphasis of policymakers on social protection in fragile and conflict-affected settings has predominantly centred on configuring shock-responsive social protection (Davies *et al.* 2009; OPM 2015). A handful of studies have attempted to explore how state-led/formal humanitarian organised social assistance can be provided in an integrated way for both citizens and non-citizens (Gentilini, Laughton and O'Brien 2018; Mitchell 2018; Seyfert *et al.* 2019). Integration in fragile and conflict-affected situations (FCAS) prompts a number of potential concerns for development actors. These include: (1) legitimising the government (e.g. due to human rights law violations); (2) the intentions, policies, and laws of public authorities towards affected populations; (3) risks to humanitarian principles; (4) engaging with a hostile state; (5) risk of corruption; (6) public resistance to national service provision; (7) the state being a party to the conflict (and therefore risking exclusion of people on the opposing side or sides); and (8) lack of government sovereignty and/or governance capacities over the territory (ODI 2020). Given these complexities, a range of possible modalities emerge for the provision of state-led/formal humanitarian social assistance provisioning (see Figure 3.1).

**Figure 3.1 Typology for integrating humanitarian assistance into social protection systems for displaced people**



Source: Seyfert *et al.* (2019: 6), originally O'Brien *et al.* (2018). Reproduced with permission.

In a parallel system, the provision of social assistance to refugees is independent from national systems – neither coordinated nor harmonised. This is the case in Mali. Since 2012, the WFP has had an emergency school feeding programme in place in the northern regions of Gao and Tombouctou (two meals per day), covering conflict-affected populations such as IDPs and returnees. This is differentiated from the school feeding programme implemented by the Government of Mali in the southern regions (one meal per day). One

<sup>3</sup> Estimates from the World Bank indicate that Pakistan is collecting only half of the tax potential of its economy. See World Bank (2019) Pakistan Raises Revenue (PRR), Factsheet, November 18 2019. Available [online]: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/factsheet/2019/11/18/pakistan-raises-revenue-prr>.

reason for parallel provision is that conflict and displacement in the northern areas of the country have undermined state ability to deliver routine social protection services (O'Brien *et al.* 2018a). Another example is the National Aid Fund (NAF), run by the Jordanian government to benefit vulnerable Jordanian citizens, and the UNHCR basic needs cash assistance programme targeting refugees. Many programme functions are run in parallel, such as information management. While the UNHCR registration database is used as a *de facto* social registry of refugees, the NAF has its own Management Information System (MIS), which links with the national unified registry (Government of Jordan 2021; UNHCR 2020d).

Alignment of humanitarian provision with national provision (e.g. method of registration, targeting, transfer values, and delivery) entails stand-alone functions (keeping the displaced caseload separate from government accountability), as well as a degree of coherence with national systems. In Lebanon, the value of the unconditional cash transfer received monthly by both Syrian refugees and National Poverty Targeting Programme (NPTP) households benefiting from the WFP e-cards is harmonised in order to minimise social tensions.

Piggybacking humanitarian provision onto nationally led delivery of assistance for displaced people combines stand-alone humanitarian assistance implemented and delivered through particular structures in the delivery chain of national systems. In Yemen, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) implemented a stand-alone project parallel to the government Social Welfare Fund (SWF), but made use of some of the SWF administrative systems to implement the programme. In 2017, UNICEF launched an Emergency Cash Transfer Project (ECTP), with funds from the World Bank through the International Development Association. The ECTP targeted 1.5 million vulnerable households across all districts, identified through the Social Welfare Fund (SWF) beneficiary list. Cash assistance was also provided to internally displaced people as part of the rapid response mechanism (SPaN 2019a).

In a national systems-led approach, refugees are part of the national caseload. In this case, approaches such as horizontal (increase in coverage) or vertical (increase in transfer amount to current caseload) expansion, as well as technical fixes, apply. This is the case in Mauritania, where the government is providing social assistance to Malian refugees in Mauritanian camps. Mauritania hosts 58,500 refugees, approximately 95 per cent of whom are Malians who have been arriving in the country since 2012. The provision of assistance to Malian and other refugees in Mauritanian camps is being integrated into formal state social protection provision, based on the Global Compact for Refugees (GCR). In response to Covid-19, this includes cash for refugees registered at Mbera Camp through national social protection mechanisms, building on World Bank funding to Mauritania and further supported by GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit), UNHCR, and other partners (UNHCR 2020e).

Different elements in the delivery chain of humanitarian social assistance (e.g., targeting, funding) can be integrated into state-led assistance to varying degrees. While assumptions can be made about what works best where, and about the priorities of different actors engaged in the provision of state-led/formal humanitarian social assistance in fragile and crisis-affected settings, this remains an open area of research.

### **3.1 Unbundling hybrid social and humanitarian assistance systems**

An illustrative example of the application of the shock-responsive social protection framework to humanitarian assistance in contexts of forced displacement can be found in recent work by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI 2020) (see Figure 3.2). Here, the focus is on state-led/formal humanitarian provision of social and humanitarian assistance. The framework provides policymakers with clarity on how best to integrate social and humanitarian assistance in any given fragile and crisis-affected situation. It seeks to unbundle, or separately analyse, the different stages in the policy, design, and administration of social assistance. When looking at blended forms of provision of social assistance for displaced populations, a multiplicity of providers can be found working together. This prompts the question of which actor has an obligation to fulfil individual citizen and non-citizen rights, and provide them with social protection.

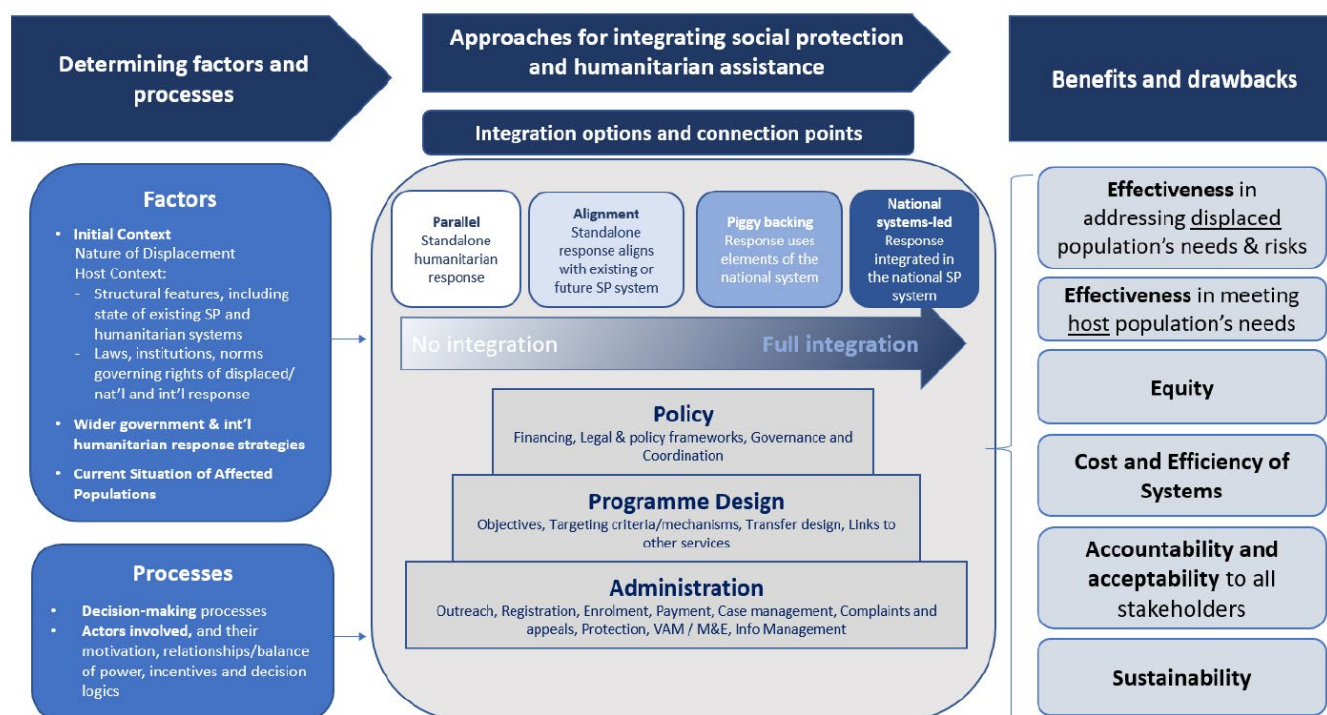
The framework begins by taking into account determining factors and processes that are likely to influence the adoption and impacts of an integration approach (see the left hand column of Figure 3.2). Delivering effective social provisioning for displaced people requires a deep understanding of the structures that underlie their inclusion and exclusion. Sometimes exclusion is determined by unequal access to resources and endowments that come together to regularly and repeatedly exclude displaced people from both



productive opportunities and social provisions. Context is key. The type, causes, speed of onset, location, frequency, and duration of the shock need to be given due consideration before formulating any attempt to integrate social and humanitarian assistance (Pelham, Clay and Braunholz 2011; Slater, Bailey and Harvey 2015; Kukrety 2016; Winder-Rossi et al. 2017; Ulrichs and Sabates-Wheeler 2018; O'Brien et al. 2018a; UNICEF 2019; WFP 2019). Furthermore, the degree of integration is contingent on the social, economic, and political situation of the affected area and the country. The current situation of affected populations and the different actors involved (in particular their power balance and incentives) can determine the approach to formal provision. State capacity in areas hosting refugees varies. As such, state capacity to provide social protection to its citizens and non-citizens varies as well. In practice, these factors can influence the way that (or degree to which) individuals (formally entitled or not) are able to leverage opportunities for accessing assistance.

The analytical framework developed by ODI proposes a typology of approaches for integrating state-led social protection and formal humanitarian assistance that builds on the work of Seyfert et al. (2019) (see the middle column of Figure 3.2). The top half of the middle column shows a continuum of integration options, ranging from an entirely parallel systems approach of zero integration to an entirely national systems-led approach of full integration. The lower half of the middle column indicates connection points, or components of the social protection system to which a degree of integration can be applied. Legal and policy frameworks, along with targeting criteria, are identified as connection points in the social assistance chain that can be aligned or piggybacked across the humanitarian–development nexus.

**Figure 3.2 ODI analytical framework for linking social protection and humanitarian assistance in responses to displacement**



Source: ODI (2020: 25) [CC BY-NC-ND 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/)

In what follows, we explore the hybrid character of state-led/formal humanitarian social assistance provision in fragile and crisis-affected settings through the example of Lebanon (see Table 3.1). This offers an opportunity to consider the efficacy of the approaches presented above.

**Table 3.1 Unbundling the integration of social assistance in hybrid systems**

<b>Programme</b>		E-card voucher assistance			
<b>Country</b>		Lebanon			
<b>Years</b>		2014–ongoing			
<b>Target population</b>		Syrian refugees Poor hosts (NPTP)			
<b>Partners</b>		WFP, World Bank, Government of Lebanon			
<b>Integration continuum</b>		<b>Parallel system</b>	<b>Alignment</b>	<b>Piggybacking</b>	<b>National systems-led</b>
<b>Policy</b>	Financing		X		
	Legal and policy frameworks		X		
	Governance and coordination			X	
<b>Programme design</b>	Objectives				X
	Targeting criteria/ mechanisms	X			
	Transfer design		X		
	Links to other services			X	
<b>Administration</b>	Outreach	X			
	Registration	X			
	Enrolment	X			
	Payment				X
	Case management			X	
	Complaints and appeals	X			
	Protection	X			
	Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (VAM)/ Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)			X	
Information management		X			

Source: Authors' own

The WFP Lebanon Country Strategic Plan (January 2018–December 2021) is aligned with the government-endorsed Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (2017–2020), the United Nations Strategic Framework (2017–2021), and the Lebanon National Agriculture Strategy (2020–2025). The plan positions the WFP as a major partner of the Government of Lebanon and other UN agencies in both crisis response and towards the achievement of the SDGs.

In 2012, the Government of Lebanon requested the WFP to return to the country to address the food and nutrition needs of the growing population of Syrian refugees. In 2013, the WFP scaled up and expanded its assistance programme and shifted its transfer modality from vouchers to electronic card (e-cards). The system enables targeted beneficiaries to purchase food commodities at WFP-contracted shops only. As of 2021, more than 480 retailers throughout Lebanon contracted by the WFP have a devoted point-of-sale device to process beneficiary e-cards. For the successful roll out of this innovative approach, the WFP relied on guidance and support from the Lebanese Central Bank. To receive assistance from the WFP programme, Syrian refugees must be registered with UNHCR. The WFP provides e-cards to targeted refugees in Lebanon based upon their refugee status and eligibility for assistance, as determined by the Vulnerability

Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (a multisector analysis that the WFP conducts annually with UNHCR and UNICEF) (Gentilini et al. 2018).

In 2014, in response to rising poverty in communities hosting Syrian refugees, and to mitigate tensions between the refugees and the Lebanese population, the government introduced food voucher assistance for poor Lebanese families through an e-card with support from the World Bank and the WFP, which was already implementing a similar e-card programme. By 2017, the WFP e-card programme had reached more than 680,000 Syrian refugees in Lebanon. This approach depends on functioning markets, technical capacity, adequate banking services, and infrastructure throughout the country. The e-cards for Lebanese families were made available to the poorest 10,000 households (53,000 people) in the NPTP database. Both Syrian refugees and NPTP households benefiting from the WFP e-cards are eligible to use them at the 480 WFP-contracted shops across the country. The value of the unconditional transfer received monthly by each group of beneficiaries through the e-card was also harmonised so as to avoid any social tensions that could arise. As such, the value of the NPTP voucher has ranged between US\$27 and US\$30 per household member per month, capped at six household members. For refugees, the voucher value has remained stable at US\$27 since February 2016 (SPaN 2019b).

Both the World Bank and the WFP saw the importance of this step not only in terms of a means of reducing poverty and tension among the two communities by providing a level of assistance parity received by refugees, but also as an opportunity to strengthen the NPTP. This included financing operational support, training, and capacity development assistance for the Ministry of Social Affairs from the WFP so the ministry could assume overall responsibility for the implementation of the food voucher programme (Gentilini et al. 2018).

The fact that these two programmes connect to both refugees and Lebanese citizens based on need and/or vulnerability and not on the basis of rights has implications on which actor has social protection obligations. While the Lebanese case study seemingly endorses a technocratic fix that allows a convergence between state and non-state actors in the provision of social and humanitarian assistance, closer examination reveals social and humanitarian assistance coverage remains far from adequate. As the authors of the ODI analytical framework rightly point out:

In fragile contexts, social protection systems must be used with caution, to avoid inadvertently contributing to conflict dynamics [...and] may be undesirable in contexts with a long history of sectarian and ethnic violence, depending on perceptions of government partisanship in these conflicts. (ODI 2020: 16)

Cautiousness in moving towards integration is indicative of irreconcilable tensions between UNHCR and the Lebanese government. The former recognises all Syrians in Lebanon as *de facto* refugees in order to appease the security and political concerns of the Lebanese government, which refuses to countenance displaced Syrians as legally defined refugees (Janmyr 2017; Janmyr and Mourad 2018). In 2015, the Lebanese government suspended UNHCR registration of displaced Syrians and, in the process, stripped more than 70 per cent of Syrians residing in Lebanon of their legal residence papers (Frangieh 2016). The decision also served to simultaneously restrict Syrians from entering Lebanon – denying admission to poorer Syrians, but keeping the borders open to those with greater financial resources (Frangieh 2015). Furthermore, the Bilateral Agreement (1994) between Syria and Lebanon provides temporary residence permits for 12 months to Syrian refugees entering through regular border crossing. While re-entry renews permits for free, a fee of US\$200 applies for everyone over 15 years of age to annually renew without re-entry (and the associated security risks a re-entry entails). This has great economic implications for already severely impoverished Syrians and may result in undermining their legal status (te Lintelo et al. 2020). The informalised, fragmented, and restrictive refugee practices of the Lebanese government have shaped refugee attitudes towards return (Kvittingen et al. 2019; Yahya and Muasher 2018; Fakhoury 2021). Such moves on the part of the Lebanese government can be understood as a means to transform Syrian refugees<sup>4</sup> into Syrian economic migrants. The intention is clear. While the former can potentially lay claim to legal rights and entitlements, the latter are arguably a readily available pool of disposable labour that can be

<sup>4</sup> This is *de facto*, as the Lebanese State does not recognise the term 'refugee' nor its legal implications, and is not a signatory of the Refugee Convention.

returned to their country of origin when no longer required. The success of the WFP programme should also be tempered by the fact that Syrian refugees have to be registered with UNHCR. As noted above, UNHCR registration has been suspended since 2015, which has rendered an estimated 500,000 displaced Syrians invisible.

The evidence and lessons learned from the links between these programmes can direct future research towards a deeper understanding of non-market social and humanitarian assistance provision through hybrid systems for displaced populations. The Lebanon case study shows that we have to be wary of assumptions that displaced people automatically seek institutionalised assistance. This prompts the question: in what ways do state-led/formal humanitarian systems of social protection engage with locally embedded social assistance initiatives? Forcibly displaced people can be actively excluded from accessing state-led/formal humanitarian provision of social and humanitarian assistance by virtue of their legal status and/or by discriminatory policies. The following section considers whether there is any recourse for displaced people in such situations.

### **3.2 Redress and grievance mechanisms**

The logic of the rights-based approach requires a mechanism to consider situations in which responsible institutions have failed to guarantee rights. Individuals should be able to register grievances with a reasonable expectation of redress. For this to be reasonably effective, it requires a well-publicised redress process and individuals with enough confidence in the system to be willing to register formal complaints. In some cases, this appears to work effectively. In the case of the WFP e-Card Voucher Assistance programme in Lebanon, a verification system is in place for appeals (e.g. from families that stopped receiving WFP food assistance). Verification consists of a household visit to assess the socioeconomic and food security status. A total of around 31,000 families have been visited (more than 97 per cent of all planned visits) and of these, 23 per cent (more than 7,000 families) have been included once again for assistance (EI-Huni 2014).

Other internationally mandated institutions have general processes to address grievances. For example, communities and individuals who believe that they are adversely affected by a World Bank supported project may submit complaints to existing project-level grievance redress mechanisms or the Grievance Redress Service at the Bank. Project-affected communities and individuals may submit their complaint to the independent Inspection Panel of the Bank, which determines whether harm occurred or could occur as a result of Bank non-compliance with its policies and procedures (World Bank 2016). The Inspection Panel is based in Washington DC and for obvious reasons suggests that it be contacted by email, thus limiting access to this mechanism, particularly for those in fragile and conflict-affected states. The UNHCR also has an institutional complaints process, although it is targeted more to allow staff members to report safeguarding or corruption issues in a confidential context. In this situation, the requirement to submit requests online is less restrictive.

The large number of complaints registered and dealt with by the WFP in Lebanon suggests that this should be considered as an example of good practice. The effective operation of a redress and grievance mechanism is generally much harder to identify. Research conducted on the impact of redress mechanisms in the larger-scale systems of social protection more widely has found very little indication of the use of such mechanisms, at least to any significant extent (Sabates-Wheeler et al. 2020).

Where individuals adversely impacted fail to achieve satisfaction through official channels, or where they have no information or cannot access those channels, they may organise a protest. The act of protest in response to a failure to achieve a form of social protection is a clear indicator that the potential recipient considers this form of protection to be a right (Ataç, Rygiel and Stierl 2018). This action distances individuals significantly from the context of humanitarian aid. It makes no sense to protest about a disappointing gift. Protest only makes sense in the context of an entitlement. In this sense and for some time now, it is interesting to note a discernible tendency for displaced people to protest to UNHCR rather than to host states (Harrell-Bond 2008).

There is a substantial literature on refugee protest to UNHCR. In some cases, this concerns the failure of the agency to organise resettlement, but it also concerns day-to-day management of refugee life in a host country. It is significant that refugees hold formal humanitarian and state actors responsible for this failure. Unfortunately, protests are rarely successful and in some cases have resulted in terrible tragedies. The worst

of these events was undoubtedly the attack by Egyptian police on the protest involving several thousand Sudanese refugees outside the offices of UNHCR Cairo in December 2005, which resulted in the death of 29 refugees (Forced Migration and Refugee Studies Program 2006). Many others fizzle out with less violence, but few significant results. In the face of such failures, refugees may turn to alternative forms of securing social protection.

## 4. Navigating access to social assistance provision

Eligibility for state-led/formal humanitarian provision of social and humanitarian assistance depends on formal entitlements specified in international and national laws, regulations, and policies. Provision can be granted, denied, controlled, and obscured at this level. As argued earlier, even where formal rights exist for refugees and displaced populations, states are often able to manoeuvre around these so that the displaced are left unprotected. In practice, successfully claiming social assistance often turns on the way that individuals are able to leverage opportunities for accessing resources. In some cases, getting the formal rules right might be adequate, but in the majority of cases related to displaced populations, ensuring legislation and regulations are in place is simply not enough to ensure that the most vulnerable have access to social provision.

Even where displaced people are formally eligible for social or humanitarian provision, this does not mean that they actually receive assistance or that they receive it in an equitable way to non-displaced people or according to their needs (rather than the needs of the dominant economic system). There is a range of reasons for this related to the provider of such provisions, including lack of resources, institutionalised discrimination, and lack of capacity. Failure to access assistance is also related to the intentional and unintentional tactics of the displaced persons themselves to remain invisible, and to retain power over their own identity and decision-making processes.

In this section, we explore some of the ways that displaced people access social and humanitarian assistance – whether formally entitled or not. We also look at the reasons why it sometimes may be beneficial for them not to make formal claims on provision, as well as why displaced people sometimes prefer to choose to remain invisible and instead rely on less formalised channels of provision. We focus on access to non-market provision of social assistance, specifically state or internationally provided cash or food transfers, and transfers received through local NGOs, faith-based organisations, local organisations, and familial networks.

As discussed in section 2, exclusion from state or humanitarian provision might be political and intentional. Displaced people may find themselves legally excluded from access by virtue of designated migration status. In these cases, exclusion from formal provisions is enforced. Furthermore, both concentrated and targeted access, as well as denial of access to state-led provision of social assistance, can also be based on identity markers, such as ethnicity or/and religion. For instance, refugee camps can become hubs for social assistance for specific vulnerable groups. Bran Jansen's (2016) work on Kakuma camp in Kenya describes a process of what he terms 'digging for aid', or how resources available in and through refugee camps are akin to natural resources that can be vied for and harvested by those who can access the camp. In contrast, the 2013 World Bank report, *Inclusion Matters*, provides plenty of examples of targeted denial of access – particularly where religion is often a strong exclusionary force in many societies. The report pays considerable attention to the exclusion of migrants and displaced populations.

### 4.1 Exclusion and invisibility: strategies and tactics for access

In some cases, states deliberately choose to render some populations invisible (Agier 2011). Using the case of the forced evictions of urban IDPs in Zimbabwe, Benhura and Naidu (2019) show how government policy exemplified exclusion tactics, doing so by condemning hundreds of buildings as illegal and then demolishing them. The state simply treated IDPs as if they were objects, over which it exerted authority. The report also demonstrates that the Zimbabwean government treated humanitarian organisations with suspicion for assisting IDPs. In this case, as in many others, invisibility creates vulnerabilities and precariousness, which is sometimes used strategically by governments.

While the exclusion of refugees and IDPs might be deliberately maintained and upheld by the ruling power in any one country, or even by a supra-national regulator, this structural framing of elite politics of exclusion is just one lens through which to look at why displaced people remain outside welfare provision. Another perspective is given by Polzer and Hammond (2008), who emphasise the various intentional strategies of displaced people to become visible to the powers that be, at times – sometimes seeking to circumvent the dominant system and at other times even to subvert it. Scott (1985) famously describes these tactics of (in)visibility as the ‘weapons of the weak’ – referring to the ways in which the vulnerable work to stay invisible to the powers that be by hiding and obscuring identities and activities that the state or other powerful institutions prohibit (also see Kibreab 1999).

To choose to be invisible is a survival resource for many IDPs and refugees, especially if they face a context of oppression, the threat of physical violence, or expulsion from the community or country. For instance, Turner’s (2016) study of Burundian refugees shows that migrants may choose to leave the protection and predictability of refugee camps in order to seek their fortune in precarious situations of illegality, slipping under the radar in growing cities. In this sense, displaced people chose invisibility as a survival resource, even as visibility and invisibility are not routes to empowerment (Polzer and Hammond 2008). Polzer and Hammond frame (in)visibility as fundamentally relational in the sense that the processes leading a group to be (in)visible are indicative of the power relationships and structures that define the contexts in which they live and move.

Using the case of a resettlement programme of a poor and food insecure population in Ethiopia, Laura Hammond (2008) shows how the poor can unwittingly worsen their exposure to invisibility through participation in a government programme that aimed to deliver them from vulnerability. Those participating in the programme progressively lost their status and agency as people of concern to government social welfare bodies, as well as humanitarian organisations. Evidence suggests, however, that the solution left the displaced population even more needy and further outside the purview of welfare concern than they were before. Hammond suggests that the voluntary engagement of the poor in the programme allowed the government and international agencies to look away from a population that remains poor and marginalised. Hammond’s account of complicit invisibilisation is not so different from the approach of ‘many other forced migrants who move thinking that they will be better off, only to find themselves further marginalised and at risk due to their invisible status and/or discriminatory policies that seek to discourage people like them from immigrating’ (*ibid.*: 426).

Yet, ‘Invisibility is a relationship between those who have the power to see or to choose not to see, and ... those who lack the power to demand to be seen or to protect themselves from the negative effects of imposed visibility’ (Polzer and Hammond 2008: 421). In other words, invisibility does not necessarily indicate politically motivated exclusion on the part of a powerful elite and cannot, therefore, be associated directly with disempowerment. That is, (in)visibility does not always imply passivity on the part of the invisible. In fact, invisibility can be an active choice on the part of the displaced persons to remain hidden. It can also be a strategy to access resources that otherwise would not be available to them.

Long and Rosengaertner’s (2016: 5) research, which focuses on protection through mobility, concludes that: ‘Current approaches often leave refugees forced to choose between seeking asylum and the protection of the international community (including legal guarantees against refoulement as well as humanitarian assistance) and pursuing autonomy and socioeconomic opportunity through either legal or unauthorised channels,’ Janmyr and Mourad’s (2018) work on Syrians in Lebanon evidences this dynamic. Here, households weigh up access to employment and residency through local registration and brokerage offered through *shaweesh* (labour supervisor/manager in informal tented settlements) against benefits perceived to accrue from having official refugee status. In her study on Sudanese refugees in the Moyo District in northern Uganda, Hovil (2002) observes individuals using poll tax tickets to regularise their status rather than apply for asylum. Crucially, these documents allowed them to live and work outside of the refugee camps, which were seen as offering connotations and conditions associated with refugeehood, or the state of being a refugee. Elsewhere, the Government of Colombia estimates that as many as 30 per cent of IDPs in the country have chosen not to register themselves as being internally displaced for fear that their official status may make them more vulnerable to exploitation by parties to the conflict (Refugees International 2006; see also Riaño-Alcalá 2008).

Different levels of visibility and invisibility may be useful for displaced people themselves, who become active architects of their own visibility or invisibility. Feldman (2008: 426) argues that for Palestinian refugee groups and advocates, 'visibility practices' that increase their visibility to powerful potential allies, have been central to the project of articulating national identity and are often a prerequisite for the justification of political and economic claims. In contrast, Gale (2008) tells of how Sierra Leoneans use their invisible status to exploit economic opportunities offered by living in Guinea. Choosing to continue living in a camp that aid agencies had abandoned and no longer service, the Sierra Leonean refugees in Gale's study consider themselves to be marginally better protected than they would be if they returned, while also being able to access social and economic networks in Sierra Leone. Bakewell (2008) discusses the example of Zambians who opted to forgo official refugee status for a variety of reasons, including being able to access land and move freely outside the camps. Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (2016) draws on an analysis of (in)visibility from the Middle East and North Africa to illustrate how the ideal refugee is formed by the balance of visibility and invisibility, with only specific forms of refugee behaviour becoming hyper-visible in international understandings.

## 4.2 The embedded character of social and humanitarian assistance provisioning

The examples listed above illustrate that (in)visibility turns on the specific requirements of displaced people. It involves a calculation of how being visible to actors operating in state-led/formal humanitarian provision of social and humanitarian assistance may work to their advantage to better secure the basic needs of themselves and their dependents. This displaced-person perspective of social and humanitarian assistance also serves as a reminder that we should not be mesmerised by the neat formulations of state-led/formal humanitarian social assistance provisioning, with the insistence on a mimetic and isomorphic articulation of humanitarianism that centres European ways of knowing, being, doing, and seeing. Rather, what is required is 'a greater acknowledgement of the everyday projects through which displaced individuals and host communities constitute political and social protection space themselves' (Cole 2021: 94).

This follows from work that reveals the subtle de-centred and everyday processes through which protection space for displaced people is not simply seen as the preserve of those embedded in a state-led/formal humanitarian infrastructure of humanitarianism but reconfigured as networks of protection that together contest who is a legitimate player in the humanitarian field (Lyytinen 2015; Zaman 2016; Darling 2017). Turning our attention to the everyday embedded sites of interaction and exchange (see the upper right-hand quadrant of Figure 2.1, mapping social and humanitarian assistance provisioning) highlights how displaced persons and local communities are co-creators of securing meaningful and sustainable spaces of refuge alongside, or at times instead of, professional refugee protection institutions and states (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Qasmiyeh 2018; Betts, Pincock and Easton-Calabria 2018; Campbell 2006; Lyytinen 2017; Zaman 2019b). Central to these spaces are faith communities (Ager, Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Ager 2015; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Pacitto 2019; Saunders, Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Snyder 2016; Iqbal 2019; Barzegar 2019) and solidarity groups.

UNAIDS (Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS) identifies three levels of faith-based communities: formal religious communities with a leadership structure and an organised hierarchy; independent non-governmental organisations (NGOs) influenced by faith; and networks, informal social groups, or local faith-based communities (Samuels, Geibel and Perry 2010). Much of the literature emphasises the first two types, which overlooks the fact that in fragile and crisis-affected states there are high levels of religiosity and prominent faith-related structures in civil society, thus rendering such distinctions as not very meaningful (El Nakib and Ager 2014). The often decentralised character of local faith-based community groups makes it particularly challenging both to estimate the total annual value of the social and humanitarian assistance they provide (Religions for Peace 2010; Stirk 2015) and to map their relationships with actors and agencies operating under the aegis of state-led/formal humanitarian provision (Walker *et al.* 2012). A question then remains regarding the scalability of locally embedded social and humanitarian assistance provisioning. Further research can be oriented towards how assistance through social structures relate and compare to the scale at which state-led/formal humanitarian interventions operate.

Solidarity responses to displacement have garnered much attention since the refugee crisis of 2015, when the spontaneous movement of people from West Asia along the Balkan route rose to prominence as a security concern for European states. Largely based in critical border studies, the literature here focuses on the peripheral regions of Southern Europe: Italy (Zamponi 2018; Gattinara 2018); Greece (Cabot 2016, 2019);

Zaman 2019a; Mitchell and Sparke 2020; Oikonomakis 2018; Rakopoulos 2016; Rozakou 2012); and Spain (López-Sala and Barbelo 2019; Agustin and Jørgensen 2019; Alcalde and Portos 2018). As with faith-based responses to displacement, there is a distinct lack of empirical data on the value of social assistance provided through such efforts. More generally, there is an absence of granular knowledge on the embedded landscapes of care, wherein solidarity and faith-based responses to situations of mass displacement are located. Further research can be undertaken on the relationships between solidarity and faith-based actors, and also more widely on the dynamic between those actors anchored in landscapes of care and those whose provision of social and humanitarian assistance is bound up with monitoring and containment concerns. By centring research from the perspective of displaced people, we can develop a keener and more nuanced understanding of how they gain access to social and humanitarian assistance, and the fluidity by which they are able to negotiate different systems and offers of assistance.

## 5. Conclusion: Rights-based provision, alternatives and future research

A human rights approach provides the only comprehensive way of systematically incorporating forcibly displaced people into social protection systems. Yet, there is significant reason to doubt that this is achievable. Where it is properly implemented and effectively institutionalised over the long term, rights provide a welcome alternative to humanitarian aid as an organising principle for the distribution of vital support to those people who fall outside state-based systems. Few would argue with the goals of ensuring equality of treatment while maintaining the dignity of recipients. This should remain the objective of social protection systems. The Arendtian analysis with which this paper opened argues that rights cannot be fulfilled in the absence of the nation state. For Arendt, rights are not bad, but simply partial. Refugees had to depend on the relationship that had failed them – their connection to their nation state. It was not only that. It was not only that Arendt saw no sign of any alternative to the nation-state system when she was writing in 1949, at the point of origin of the international refugee regime, but that she also saw reason to doubt that it could ever be the case.

In this paper, we have largely supported Arendt's view. As the international refugee regime marks the 70th anniversary of its founding legislation, there will be plenty of reflection. There have been major changes over that period, most obviously the broadening of what was initially a European focused set of concerns to apply to much of the world and from refugees as defined in that convention to a much larger group of people displaced within and beyond the borders of their own countries. The fact that the international regime supporting refugees is still in place is an achievement, but the fact that it is still needed reinforces Arendt's doubts about the possibility of ensuring the absolute universality of those rights.

The attention that social protection has received in the field of displacement over the last five years charts an exciting new direction. It currently offers the best hope of uniting the humanitarian origins and development ambitions of the displacement regime. The focus on rights as a basis for social protection must be secured wherever possible. The framework set out in ODI research provides a clear way to chart the range of possibilities to do that. The gradual move towards mainstreaming protection for displaced people into state-based provision has the drawback that it will require continued financial support from the Northern mandated regime. The challenges of ensuring this support is sustainable are well known, although this is nonetheless a positive step.

At the same time, the analysis in this paper demonstrates that that is not currently sufficient. The individual nature of human rights means they miss relationships that are important to the provision of social protection. Beyond state-led/formal humanitarian provision, social protection is fundamentally relational. It relies on collectives, households, families, communities, and co-religionists who may be co-located or may be widely dispersed. These systems of provision are not based on rights. Rather, they rely on the reciprocity of the gift, although the networks of obligation in which they are embedded allow reciprocity to be delayed, even across generations, maintaining the dignity of the recipient. These systems do not present any kind of alternative. They are frequently exclusionary and time limited. Nonetheless, they almost always provide part of the range of social provision that displaced people draw upon and they therefore need to be taken seriously. The



current developments of state-led/formal humanitarian social provision overlook these systems almost entirely. Perhaps it is inevitable that they remain separate, however, given the very different logics which govern them.

There is interaction between these two systems. The state-led/formal humanitarian system has become good at preventing death, at least on a large scale. This humanitarian imperative is now effectively implemented and in recent decades we have seen no repeat of large-scale starvation that occurred as recently as the 1980s. Yet, as the growing numbers of people in protracted displacement highlights, the humanitarian imperative is not sufficient. Few people are happy to rely exclusively on the support provided, at least where they have a choice. Forcibly displaced people therefore use their agency, gather information, and use the more limited institutional social protection offered where they can. In this way, they develop a portfolio of social protection; that is, a range of possibilities that provide the closest displaced people can get to a form of insurance, as we have discussed. For these reasons it continues to serve a purpose.

We need to pay more attention to the situations in which state-led/formal humanitarian provision does not perform as expected from the perspective of those who receive support. Where individuals reject the official system, even to the extent of trying to remain invisible, this highlights situations where trust in that system has failed, possibly for good reasons. Individuals may also try to deceive the state-led/formal humanitarian system, to try to obtain social protection for which they are not considered eligible. A greater understanding of the blind spots in the state-led/formal humanitarian system, and an appreciation of how social protection looks from the perspective of those who need it, would provide a clearer basis for analysis of these interactions.

This review of the displacement and social protection landscape identifies two clear future directions for further research. First, there needs to be clearer and more holistic understanding of how social protection is accessed in displacement settings that maps provision beyond what is offered through the state or the formal humanitarian system. Possible research questions include:

- In what ways do urban or camp contexts influence interaction between locally embedded responses and state-led/formal humanitarian systems of social protection?
- In what ways do state-led/formal humanitarian systems of social protection contribute to securing wider distributive outcomes for displaced people and resident others?
- What can we learn from systems for transfers and delivery of remittances for social assistance?
- To what extent have locally embedded actors expanded their social protection provision beyond their own communities?
- What is the role of local authorities in providing social assistance in areas governed outside of the incumbent state in a conflict setting?
- What can we learn about the role of non-state actors in mediating access to state-led/ formal humanitarian provision of social protection?

A second avenue for further research directs us to interrogate the impact of social protection measures in displacement settings. Here, possible research questions include:

- To what extent do social protection programmes support refugees to make a meaningful contribution to their host country?
- What are the determinants and impacts of remittances sent from or to internally displaced populations?
- What is the impact of new actors organised through collective action at national, metropolitan, and community scales on the social assistance strategies of displaced people? What role do they play?
- In what ways do social assistance programmes translate gender, age, and diversity policy frameworks into action on the ground?

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