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**CHANGE FROM WITHIN:  
THE OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH  
COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR) AND THE  
URBANISATION OF DISPLACEMENT**

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A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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July 2017

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## **Acknowledgements**

First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisors, Christopher McDowell and Gemma Collantes-Celador, for their guidance, advice, and patience during the completion of this thesis.

I would also like to thank my friends and colleagues at City, University of London, Hong Kong Polytechnic University and the British Institute in Eastern Africa, where the majority of the thesis was written, for making the PhD process more enjoyable, and a much less lonely experience.

The research and writing of the PhD were made possible thanks to financial support from City, University of London and The Leverhulme Trust.

Finally, I would like to thank my friends and family for their encouragement throughout. In particular, my mother, Ann, for always being my biggest supporter. Thanks for everything PB, LB, and WPB.

## **Abstract**

The thesis examines the response of The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to the urbanisation of displacement, focusing on the period 1994 to 2009. It utilises a framework based on international organisations theory, arguing that, contrary to traditional approaches to the study of international organisations, change in policy and practice resulted primarily from pressures within UNHCR. The thesis utilises state-influence and principal-agent theories to understand why UNHCR responded in the ways it did, and explain how change was achieved. It draws on constructivist insight, and the role of leaders, research and evaluation units, and epistemic communities, using the concept of the 'three UNs' as a means of framing the different actors and pressures for change shaping UNHCR's work.

The thesis is based on extensive primary documents produced primarily by UNHCR, as well as original interviews, providing new empirical data to further understanding of policymaking within UNHCR, and addressing an empirical gap on the existing literature on urban refugees. By mapping this data to the framework of 'pressure from within', 'pressure from above', and 'pressure from below', the thesis demonstrates the various actors involved in shaping change in policy and practice. It challenges attempts to characterise the 'three UNs' as separate categories, demonstrating their fluidity and frequent overlaps. The empirical analysis contributes to international organisations theory by demonstrating the important role of internal actors in eliciting change in policy and practice, identifying areas of international organisation theory in need of refinement and further exploration. Consideration is given to how positivist and post-positivist understandings can work together, and ways internal actors can shape the direction of their organisations, particularly leaders and research and evaluation units.



## List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

|           |                                                                    |
|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AGDM      | Age, Gender, Diversity Mainstreaming                               |
| AMERA     | African Middle East Refugee Assistance                             |
| CASWANAME | Central Asia, South West Asia, North Africa and Middle East        |
| CBO       | Community Based Organisation                                       |
| CES       | Central Evaluation Section                                         |
| CIREFCA   | Committee of International Conference on Central American Refugees |
| CIS       | Commonwealth of Independent States                                 |
| DEC       | Development Economics Vice Presidency                              |
| DECRG     | Development Economics Research Group                               |
| DIPS      | Director of International Protection Services                      |
| DPSM      | Division of Programme Support and Management                       |
| DOS       | Division of Operational Services                                   |
| DRG       | Development Research Group                                         |
| DSRSG     | Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General             |
| ECOSOC    | The United Nations Economic and Social Council                     |
| EPAU      | Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit                                |
| ETIC      | Euphrates-Tigris Initiative for Cooperation                        |
| ExCom     | Executive Committee                                                |
| FAO       | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations            |
| FGM       | Female Genital Mutilation                                          |
| FO        | Field Office                                                       |
| GAVI      | Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization                      |

|            |                                                           |
|------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| GFATM      | Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria       |
| GIS        | Geographic Information System                             |
| GNI        | Gross National Income                                     |
| GPA        | Global Programme on AIDS                                  |
| Habitat I  | The First United Nations Conference on Human Settlements  |
| Habitat II | The Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements |
| HDI        | Human Development Index                                   |
| IASC       | Inter-Agency Standing Committee                           |
| ICJ        | International Court of Justice                            |
| ICPD       | International Conference on Population and Development    |
| ICRC       | The International Committee of the Red Cross              |
| ICVA       | International Council of Voluntary Agencies               |
| IDP        | Internally Displaced People/Persons                       |
| IES        | Inspection and Evaluation Service                         |
| IGO        | The Inspector General's Office                            |
| ILGA       | International Lesbian and Gay Association                 |
| ILO        | International Labour Organization                         |
| IMF        | International Monetary Fund                               |
| IO         | International Organisation                                |
| IOM        | International Organization for Migration                  |
| IRO        | International Refugee Organization                        |
| MENA       | Middle East and North Africa                              |
| ODI        | Overseas Development Institute                            |
| OECD       | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development    |

|           |                                                                         |
|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| OIOS      | Office of Internal Oversight Services                                   |
| OSTS      | Operational Solutions and Transition Section                            |
| PARinAC   | Partnership in Action Initiative                                        |
| PDES      | Policy Development and Evaluation Service                               |
| PPRU      | Policy Planning Research Unit                                           |
| PRS       | Protracted Refugee Situations                                           |
| PTSS      | Programme and Technical Support Section                                 |
| QUIP      | Quick Impact Project                                                    |
| RBA       | Regional Bureau for Africa                                              |
| RBAO      | Regional Bureau for Asia and Oceania                                    |
| RBENA     | Regional Bureau for Europe and North America                            |
| SMC       | Senior Management Committee                                             |
| SRS       | Self Reliance Strategy                                                  |
| SRSG      | Special Representative of the Secretary General                         |
| UNAIDS    | Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS                          |
| UNCED     | United Nations Conference on Environment and Development                |
| UNCTAD    | United Nations Conference on Trade and Development                      |
| UNCTAD IX | Ninth Session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development |
| UNDESA    | United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs                |
| UNDP      | United Nations Development Programme                                    |
| UNEA      | United Nations Environment Assembly                                     |
| UNEP      | United Nations Environment Programme                                    |
| UNESCO    | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization        |

|                |                                                                                      |
|----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| UNFPA          | United Nations Population Fund                                                       |
| UNGA           | United Nations General Assembly                                                      |
| UN-Habitat     | United Nations Human Settlements Programme                                           |
| UNHCR          | Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees                          |
| UNHCR-RO-CAIRO | Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Regional Office in Cairo |
| UNHRC          | United Nations Human Rights Council                                                  |
| UNICEF         | United Nations Children's Fund                                                       |
| UNIFEM         | United Nations Development Fund for Women                                            |
| UNMISET        | United Nations Mission of Support to East Timor                                      |
| UNODC          | United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime                                             |
| UNRRA          | United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration                              |
| UNRWA          | United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East       |
| UNSC           | United Nations Security Council                                                      |
| UN Women       | United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women               |
| UNWTO          | United Nations World Tourism Organization                                            |
| USCRI          | United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants                                  |
| WFP            | United Nations World Food Programme                                                  |
| WGIP           | Working Group on Indigenous Populations                                              |
| WHO            | World Health Organization                                                            |
| WSIS           | World Summit on the Information Society                                              |
| WTO            | World Trade Organization                                                             |

## Key UNHCR Urban Documents

|                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1994 Guidelines</b>         | <p>“Community Services for Urban Refugees”</p> <p>1994, Programme and Technical Support Section and Community Services, The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.</p>                                                   |
| <b>1995 Discussion Paper</b>   | <p>“UNHCR’s Policy and Practice Regarding Urban Refugees: A Discussion Paper”</p> <p>October 1995, Inspection and Evaluation Service, The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.</p>                                     |
| <b>1996 Guidelines</b>         | <p>“Urban Refugees: A Community-based Approach”</p> <p>1996, Community Services Unit and Programme and Technical Support Section, The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.</p>                                         |
| <b>March 1997 Policy</b>       | <p>“UNHCR Comprehensive Policy on Urban Refugees”</p> <p>25 March 1997, The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.</p>                                                                                                   |
| <b>1997 Policy</b>             | <p>“UNHCR Policy on Refugees in Urban Areas”</p> <p>12 December 1997, The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.</p>                                                                                                     |
| <b>2003 Guiding Principles</b> | <p>“Protection, Solutions and Assistance for Refugees in Urban Areas: Guiding Principles and Good Practice”</p> <p>21 November 2003, Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit, The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.</p> |
| <b>2009 Policy</b>             | <p>“UNHCR Policy on Refugee Protection and Solutions in Urban Areas”</p> <p>September 2009, The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.</p>                                                                               |
| <b>2014 Policy</b>             | <p>“UNHCR Policy on Alternative to Camp”</p> <p>22 July 2014, The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.</p>                                                                                                             |

# Chapter One - Introduction

## 1. Introduction

In January 2013 the photo series *Hidden Lives: The Untold Story of Urban Refugees* was exhibited in St Pancras International Railway Station in central London. Stark portraits of refugees were positioned in the station's central concourse. "I don't have any legal documents. I don't have a job. I don't leave my house," read one quote from a refugee living in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The difficulties that urban refugees faced were clear: poverty, isolation, insecurity, vulnerability and poor living conditions. The project posited that refugee camps no longer accurately reflected contemporary refugee experience and that displaced people were not immune to the global trend towards urbanisation. The *Hidden Lives* photo series reflected two common tropes in discussions around urban refugees: that displacement would now be found primarily in urban areas and that refugees would face multiple hardships when living in towns and cities. A third theme included in the picture series is that of being forgotten; from the 'hidden' and 'untold' in the series title, to the images' evocation of how overlooked urban refugees are by humanitarian organisations and governments, as implied by setting refugees against vast dark cityscapes. The suggestion urban areas are challenging places to live and common locations for displaced people to be found are fair, but the implication displaced people in urban areas are 'forgotten' is increasingly questionable. The issue of urban displacement and the challenges facing urban refugees have moved towards the top of the international protection agenda.

Two years after the exhibition in St Pancras, Budapest Keleti Railway Station was closed to prevent refugees from boarding trains bound for Austria. A "refugee camp took shocking shape in the heart of a European capital" (Graham-Harrison, 2015), as thousands waited to be allowed to travel. This multitude of people was mainly a result of displacement caused by the Syrian Civil War, beginning in 2011 and "largely urban" (Culbertson et al., 2016: xi). Although the events in

Hungary came after the establishment of informal camps in the French town of Calais (Rigby and Schlembach, 2013; Rygiel, 2011), it was one of the most prominent examples of refugees living in a major urban centre during the 'European Migrant Crisis' (Jones, R. 2016; McDonald-Gibson, 2016). In Greece, meanwhile, the failure of island based centres led to increased numbers of displaced people moving to urban areas on the country's mainland (Human Rights Watch, 2017a; Human Rights Watch, 2017b). Similar images have become commonplace as European countries struggle to respond to the latest 'refugee crisis'. The consequences of global displacement, akin to the years following the Second World War, are once again highly visible on the streets of Europe. Over ninety years ago the international refugee regime was established to regularise the "status and control of stateless people in Europe" (Loescher, 1994: 351), and is still addressing similar issues.

The visible evidence of displacement found in Europe is a direct consequence of the situation in the Middle East. It is there, at the time of writing, that over five million Syrian refugees live (Weaver, 2017) among host communities rather than in remote camps. In Lebanon there are no official refugee camps and in Jordan around eighty per cent of Syrian refugees live in non-camp settings (Verme et al., 2016: 40). However, refugees are not benefiting from living among citizens. According to a study by The World Bank and The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the socioeconomic profile of Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon is "systematically different from the Syrian pre-crisis and their host communities' populations" (Verme et al., 2016: 52). Syrian refugees face humanitarian and development challenges in these two countries, primarily from a lack of capacity of host community institutions to provide basic services, the comparatively younger age of Syrian refugees, the mismatch of Syrian refugees skills and occupations and the labour demands of the economies of Jordan and Lebanon, and deterioration of social cohesion caused by such a large influx of people (Verme et al., 2016: 52). As many as nine in ten Syrian refugees live below the national poverty lines of Jordan and Lebanon, with the majority likely to remain in poor conditions in the future (Verme et al., 2016: xi, xvi). Although refugee camps have not been established

on the same scale as past instances of mass displacement, refugees are not benefiting from close proximity to the host communities in the Middle East. By rejecting dependency and the poor conditions available in neighbouring countries, many Syrian refugees have circumvented the humanitarian system in favour of seeking better opportunities in Europe.

No longer able to rely on past methods of responding to displacement, European countries have failed to identify a common approach addressing the concerns of individual states. According to United Nations' High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi (2016), this failure has led to a small number of European states "bearing a grossly uneven share of the responsibility for addressing the situation" of refugees on the continent. Germany received over one million refugees in 2015 (Le Blond and Welters, 2016) and Sweden received the highest number of refugees per capita in Europe, but this has come with challenges and subsequent restrictions (Traub, 2016). Meanwhile central European states including Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic, and Slovakia, have resisted pressures to accept larger numbers of refugees than already present (Hockenos, 2015). Inadequate asylum provisions, opposition to local integration, the clearing of temporary settlements, the closing of borders, and the pushing back of people to 'safe' countries, have all formed part of the recent response from European states. Like those in the *Hidden Lives* images, many trying to seek asylum in Europe face hardships and marginalisation, but unlike those in the photographs, they are far from invisible.

Long before the current situation in Europe, a change was already underway within UNHCR that would refocus refugee assistance and protection away from remote camps, toward towns and cities. By the 1980s UNHCR had "became identified with costly long-term care and maintenance in refugee camps around the world" (Loescher, 2001a: 12). Geopolitical support for anti-communist refugees living in camps and the reduced diplomatic communication in the later years of the Cold War meant that the international community failed to "devise comprehensive or long-term political solutions or to provide alternatives to prolonged camp existence" (Loescher, 2001a: 12). In many cases host states and



UNHCR preferred the use of camps (Sommers, 2001: 10), localising refugees to spaces near the borders of states, where they could not integrate into the host state, and from where they could be more easily repatriated. For some, this approach was based on a form of paternalism encouraging dependency, or as Hannah Arendt (2007: 268) stated in *We Refugees*, “If we are saved we feel humiliated, and if we are helped we feel degraded”. While the three ‘durable solutions’ of local integration, repatriation, and resettlement, are all based in principle on the idea refugees will meld into the receiving society, “encampment means separation from the host community” (Verdirame and Harrell-Bond, 2005: 333). Most host states viewed the displaced people reaching urban areas negatively (Sienkiewicz, 2007: 1). Though camps often exist for decades, they are based on the premise displaced peoples’ presence is temporary, and host states often support camps as they help in “facilitating organized repatriation of refugees” (Schmidt, 2003). As repatriation and other solutions were often not available, however, camps became associated with efforts to control and contain the movement of displaced people (Agier, 2008; Agier, 2011; Bauman, 2004; Duffield, 2008; Hyndman, 2000: 23). In *Imposing Aid: Emergency Assistance to Refugees*, Barbara Harrell-Bond (1986: 45) wrote of a Kenyan seeking assistance from UNHCR in Sudan in the 1980s, although “there was no budget for ‘urban refugees’ as the programme was restricted to helping refugees who agreed to go to settlements.” This reflects the attitude of UNHCR at the time and its preference for encampment, which would continue into the 2000s, and its scepticism towards urban refugees as a category of people requiring assistance.

During the 1990s humanitarian assistance was increasingly provided in country or region of origin, ensuring “population containment” and that war-affected populations would “remain within conflict zones and avoid crossing international borders” (Duffield, 2001: 4-5). For others, camps were justified on the basis that it was easier to provide services and assistance in single locations (Crisp and Jacobson, 1998: 29). Some camps have become important economic hubs, serving both refugees and host communities, aiding their longevity. Dadaab camp in Kenya, for example, has become an important part of the regional economy since its establishment in the early 1990s (Rawlence, 2016:

346-347). Camps create “international legibility and bargaining power for host states when they negotiate compensation for their hospitality” (Hyndman and Giles, 2017: 6). For these reasons, in a considerable amount of African and Asian states, encampment became “the standard way of hosting and assisting refugees” (Verdirame and Pobjoy, 2013: 471). Researchers in refugee and forced migration studies considered the use of camps throughout the 1980s; by the early 1990s encampment had become normalised and other issues dominated the field (Crisp and Jacobson, 1998: 27). Writing in 2005, Guglielmo Verdirame and Barbara Harrell-Bond (2005: 337) argued that, “there is still no concerted effort to put into practice a developmental model for assisting refugees as an alternative to camps”, as this would have “involved a U-turn from established UNHCR policies and practices”. The use of camps has continued into the twenty-first century, and they remain a common response to mass displacement. As the 2016 ‘What is a Camp?’ special issue of the *Journal of Refugee Studies* highlights, encampment still occupies a prominent place in the consideration of researchers (Turner, 2016; Jansen, 2016; Corbet, 2016; Lecadet, 2016; Peteet, 2016; Kublitz, 2016; Fresia and Von Känel, 2016).

At this time refugees were increasingly regarded as a security issue, with refugee camps becoming militarised and referred to as direct threats to national security (Mogire, 2006; Mthembu-Salter, 2006; Muggah and Mogire, 2006; Nahm, 2006). The ‘new wars’ that took place in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Balkans during the 1990s featured mass displacement as a core feature and a product of conflict (Duffield, 2001; Kaldor, 1999). Displacement came to be regarded as “not only a form of collateral damage but an instrument of war” (Betts and Loescher, 2011: 15), occurring in urban areas as well as rural settings and camps. During the 1990s, with the dominance of encampment and security concerns around migration, UNHCR began to change its policy and practice in response to the urbanisation of displacement. This remained limited, as refugees were “seen by states, agencies and sometimes researchers primarily as rural people who have been displaced into camps and relief centres, while urban refugees are anomalous” (Marfleet, 2006: 224).

Some academic attention focused on urban displacement during the twentieth-century, but it was limited, and it would not be until the first decade of the twenty-first century that researchers turned their attention to the issue in greater numbers. From the late 1970s, the term 'urban refugee' began to be used in academic and policy literature. In 1978, Acolia Simon-Thomas (1978) published a paper seeking to understand why refugees chose to move to cities, and asking how they could be better assisted. The following year, Louise Pirouet (1979) presented a paper at the African Studies Association on the 'small numbers, large problems' of refugees in Kenya's capital, Nairobi. From the 1980s onwards there was a growing number of papers, articles, and reports published on urban displacement. These tended to stress the difficult position of people in cities and their greater need for support, and were primarily concerned with displacement in Africa (Palmer, 1982; Francis and Jackson, 1986; Mageed and Ramaga, 1987; Cernea, 1993; Kibreab, 1996; Sommers, 1999; Sommers, 2000; Sommers, 2003; Kagwanja, Ndege and Odiyo, 2001; Huff and Kalyango, 2002; Lindstrom, 2003; Lammers, 2003; Macchiavello, 2003b; Landau, 2004; Campbell, 2005b; Refugee Law Project, 2005; Kihato and Landau, 2006; Zijlstra, 2006; Landau and Haupt, 2007; Smith, 2007; Asylum Access et al., 2009; Lewis, 2009). By the start of the twenty-first century, academic literature on urban displacement had "attracted attention in the discourse on refugees", but this had occurred "only recently" (Kagwanja, Ndege and Odiyo 2001: 1). The refugee and forced migration studies literature, as Loren B. Landau (2004: 1) argued in 2004, had "to date, been dominated by discussions of 'rural refugees'". Increased work on urban displacement did not concentrate on policymaking, focusing instead on studies of individual groups or populations of refugees, often localised to one city or country.

In 2001 Marc Sommers (2001) published *Fear in Bongoland: Burundi Refugees in Urban Tanzania*. This was the first book concerned specifically with urban refugees, providing an ethnographic account of the lives of a group of hidden urban refugees living in Tanzania's largest city, Dar es Salaam, in the 1990s, its methodology and focus addressing the particular circumstances and coping strategies of a small number of young male refugees. It did not consider UNHCR's

global policy towards urban refugees, which had become formalised in 1997. As will be discussed in chapter six, academic literature on urban displacement increased significantly in the 2000s. The urban refugee special issues of the *Journal of Refugee Studies* in 2006 and *Refuge* in 2007, followed a similar dedication to city-specific case studies, offering insight into a range of challenges facing urban refugees in cities such as Cairo (Grabska, 2006; Currie, 2007; Al-Sharmani, 2007) and Kampala (Dryden-Peterson, 2006; Bernstein and Okello, 2007), without concentrating on international policies impacting these individual situations, or how UNHCR addressed urban displacement at a global level.

Recent literature has continued this trend by emphasising the challenges of urban displacement either by location or theme (Kihato and Landau, 2016; Crea, Calvo and Loughry, 2015; Refstie and Brun, 2012; Aysa-Lastra, 2011; Lyytinen, 2015a; Lyytinen, 2015b; Lyytinen, 2015c; Shum, 2014; Sandvik, 2012; Parmar et al., 2014; Buscher, 2011; Chatelard and Morris, 2011; Fábos, 2015; Danielson, 2013; Erensü and Kaşlı, 2017; Belloni, 2016). Doctoral theses on urban displacement have similarly centred on urban refugees in a single city, particularly major cities in Africa, including Dar es Salaam, Tanzania (O'Loughlen, 2016), Cairo, Egypt (Mahmoud, 2009), Kampala, Uganda (Lyytinen, 2013; McQuaid, 2014), Lusaka, Zambia (Frischkorn, 2013) and Nairobi, Kenya (Campbell, 2005a; Kassa, 2013; Lowe, 2015). The first edited book on urban displacement, published in 2015, *Urban Refugees: Challenges in Protection, Services and Policy*, adopted a similar case study strategy. The book contained chapters on urban refugees in Africa (Danielson, 2015; Hopkins, 2015; Lyytinen, 2015d; Campbell, 2015), Asia (Bartolomei, 2015; Pittaway, 2015; Hoffstaedter, 2015a; Takizawa, 2015; Koizumi, 2015), and Europe (Sorgoni, 2015), but made only limited reference to UNHCR's policies. The Foreword claimed UNHCR staff resisted embracing a new way of addressing urban displacement even in 2009 (Harrell-Bond, 2015: xiv), without further elaboration.

The thesis aims to address this omission, with the empirical chapters explaining the slow shift occurring within UNHCR between 1994 and 2009. It contributes to

the existing urban displacement literature, which has so far focused primarily on providing case studies of the experiences of specific urban refugee populations, by providing an analysis of UNHCR's response to the issue. The focus of recent work on UNHCR's response to the challenge of urban displacement has primarily been on the implementation and impact of the 'UNHCR Policy on Refugee Protection and Solutions in Urban Areas' (2009 Policy). Much of this work has been produced and issued by UNHCR (Crisp, Obi and Umlas, 2012; Morand et al., 2012; Riiskjær and Bonnici, 2011; Rosi et al., 2011; Campbell et al., 2011). Academic studies of UNHCR's policies have been more limited and often regionally specific, such as Patricia Ward's (2014) article on UNHCR's urban policy in the Middle East. One recent exception, published by *Refuge*, was written by former UNHCR employee Jeff Crisp (2017: 87), though acknowledging it, "inevitably reflects the position, experiences, and personal views of the author". The thesis offers the first in-depth study of UNHCR's policymaking, strategy, and change in response to the urbanisation of displacement. In so doing, it fills a gap in the existing refugee and forced migration studies literature, and complements existing empirical work by providing an understanding of the global policymaking around urban displacement.

While camps remained the focus of UNHCR's work in the 1990s, during the same period it increased its attention on urban areas and other non-camp settings. As the world's largest humanitarian organisation and the one specifically charged with aiding refugees, this shift has impacted the everyday lives of displaced people. On 22 July 2014, UNHCR's 'Policy on Alternatives to Camps' (2014 Policy) came into force. The 2014 Policy marked an important shift in the Organisation's view of both encampment and the presence of displaced people in urban areas. It portrayed camps as a last resort (UNHCR, 2014a: 4) and sought to ensure that long dominant 'care and maintenance' programmes be minimised (UNHCR, 2014a: 6). The critique of 'care and maintenance' programmes followed a focus in the 2000s by UNHCR upon self-reliance, with the Organisation often expecting refugees to become self-reliant within host communities (Moulin and Nyers, 2007: 363), claiming failure to do so could "quickly lead to resentment and become breeding grounds for further conflict" (UNHCR, 2005g: iv). The 2014

Policy stressed that refugee camps were to be avoided if possible, while those already existing should be phased out or transformed into ‘sustainable settlements’ (UNHCR, 2014a: 12). Settlements would integrate both refugees and host communities, be connected to local services (including markets and infrastructure), and be included in national development and housing planning (UNHCR, 2014a: 11). If these guidelines were followed, settlements would “require only limited humanitarian support” (UNHCR, 2014a: 11). However, as the case of Syrian refugees in the Middle East suggests, living among host communities outside of camps can be fraught with problems.

The 2014 Policy emerged at a time when the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951 Refugee Convention) and ‘business as usual’ in refugee protection was being challenged by states. Host states were growing impatient with the burden of protracted displacement within their borders, and increasingly concerned over the security implications of large scale cross border movements. The 2014 Policy evolved from a policy culture within UNHCR including a rethinking of the question of urban displacement, and arguably the challenge of environmental displacement. UNHCR became actively engaged with the urban refugee issue during the 1990s. In 1994 it published its ‘Community Services for Urban Refugees’ (1994 Guidelines), the first document released by UNHCR intended to address the issue of urban displacement and guide the Organisation’s work in urban areas. Although not a high-level policy, the 1994 Guidelines signalled the beginning of a growing interest in urban areas, continuing to this day. In the fifteen years that followed, UNHCR produced four, not entirely consistent, policies relating to urban displacement. The first, the ‘UNHCR Comprehensive Policy on Urban Refugees’ (March 1997 Policy), was released on 25 March 1997 and replaced in December 1997 by the ‘UNHCR Policy on Refugees in Urban Areas’ (1997 Policy). The 2003 ‘Protection, Solutions and Assistance for Refugees in Urban Areas: Guiding Principles and Good Practice’ (2003 Guiding Principles) was intended as a replacement for the 1997 Policy, but was never enacted nor made public, regarded as too much of a departure from UNHCR’s existing strategy, as will be explained in chapter five of the thesis. In September 2009 the ‘UNHCR Policy on Refugee Protection and

Solutions in Urban Areas' (2009 Policy) was published, sharing similarities with the 2003 Guiding Principles, and remaining the Organisation's official policy on urban refugees. The 2014 Policy, which came into place on 22 July 2014, reaffirmed and extended the 2009 Policy to cover all operational contexts, including but not limited to urban areas (UNHCR, 2014a: 6). The policies produced in the 1990s were concerned with limiting the growth of urban displacement and focusing on encampment, while the 2009 and 2014 Policies embraced towns and cities as legitimate locations for assistance, opposing all but essential creation of camps.

Within UNHCR, urban displacement is no longer an overlooked issue. More than an increased presence of displaced people in towns and cities, urban displacement has resulted from changes in international refugee policy, challenges to the existing humanitarian system, decisions made by refugees, and the broader context of global urbanisation impacting the lives of forced migrants. The thesis seeks to examine *why* and *how* the world's largest humanitarian agency underwent such a radical change in the places it perceived as acceptable locations for displaced people and where it envisioned its work to be, addressing an empirical and analytical gap in refugee and forced migration studies literature on the policy implications of the urbanisation of displacement. The seventy-five per cent increase in the global displaced population between 1996 and 2015, particularly since 2011 (UNHCR, 2016h: 6), has heightened the importance of forced migration as a global issue, and UNHCR's role as the leading international organisation responding to it. The thesis helps us understand how international organisations confront emerging challenges and where the impetus for policy change arises. It considers the complex collection of pressures involved in the making, unmaking, and revising of policy positions of an international organisation. In so doing it provides a valuable means of analysing the role of different actors, in particular those located within international organisations, and how they interact with those external to the organisation, to enable changes in policy and practice.

## 2. Rethinking 'Urban Displacement'

Urban displacement is a complex, multi-layered process resulting from the consequences of policy and policy failure, human ambition, and past false representation of the 'refugee condition'. It has in the past primarily been used in a limited capacity, as a way to refer to forced migrants residing in towns and cities. According to Jeff Crisp, Tim Morris and Hilde Refstie (2012: S40), urban displacement is inclusive of a variety of different categories of people, comprising of refugees, asylum-seekers, returnees, the internally displaced, and stateless. It was the term adopted for the urban focused High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges conference in December 2009 and has been used widely in the secondary literature, such as the February 2010 issue of *Forced Migration Review*, titled 'Adapting to Urban Displacement'. This term arose in part from the desire to be inclusive, as criticism had emerged prior to the release of the 2009 Policy of UNHCR's concentration on refugees in urban areas to the exclusion of other types of forced migrants. Both the 1997 Policy and the 2009 Policy were exclusively concerned with urban refugees. Meanwhile, 'urban displacement' highlighted refugees were not the only displaced people in need of UNHCR's support in towns and cities. Internally displaced people in urban areas ('Urban IDPs'), for example, have been excluded from UNHCR's policymaking (Fielden, 2008a).

The urban focused policies produced by UNHCR, discussed throughout the thesis, are primarily concerned with refugees. The March 1997 Policy, 1997 Policy and 2003 Guiding Principles do not mention other types of displaced people in urban areas. The 2009 Policy and 2014 Policy both specified they were intended for refugees only (UNHCR, 2009b: 3; UNHCR, 2014a: 3). The thesis examines UNHCR's policymaking and focuses on cross-border displacement, and the provision of international protection. To understand the shifting approach and official policy of UNHCR, however, it is important to consider which categories of people were excluded, and what this tells us about change in policy and practice. Similarly, other people of concern often benefit from policies and programmes intended for refugees. Urban displacement is used in the thesis to



refer to all types of displaced people in urban areas, though when discussing matters of policy, the more exact category of 'urban refugees' is used.

The thesis seeks to go further by problematizing 'urban displacement'. The increased movement of displaced people to urban areas can be understood as a critique of existing methods of international protection and a consequence of policies seeking to contain displaced people in camps. By the 1990s, camps had spread throughout refugee hosting states and become a de facto fourth 'solution' to mass displacement (Moretti, 2015). They did not, however, offer a lasting solution to displacement, serving instead as holding spaces in the absence of political will to achieve successful local integration, repatriation, or resettlement. Camps represented a "vital device of power" and "became emplaced as a standardized, generalizable technology of power in the management of mass displacement" (Malkki, 1995b: 498). The end of the Cold War meant there was no longer the same geopolitical value in accepting refugees and the willingness among states who funded assistance to continue supporting long-established displaced populations declined, leading to UNHCR suffering from a budgetary shortfall of tens of millions of dollars by the mid-1990s (UNHCR, 2006i: 114). However, the conflicts of the 'Turbulent Decade' (Ogata, 2005) meant the global refugee population continued to grow and "mushroomed" in the early 1990s (UNHCR, 2006i: 109). In 1993, forty-eight per cent of all refugees were living in protracted situations of five or more years (UNHCR, 2006i: 109), and the number of refugee camps multiplied. The camps were often overcrowded, run akin to youth reform colonies (Hyndman, 2000: xvi) and deeply unequal (Omata, 2017). The self-motivated movement of displaced people to towns and cities can be understood as a condemnation of the methods of protection existing at the end of the twentieth-century, in particular efforts to 'contain' such people in camps.

NGOs and later UNHCR came to recognise the problem of Protracted Refugee Situations (PRS), though this followed the decisions of many displaced people to reject the poor conditions and control they found in camps, international aid fostering dependency, and the dominant humanitarian system of the time. This repudiation was done in favour of self-defined strategies for survival, including

moving to urban areas, a clear case of individuals utilising their own agency. As Lucy Hovil (2007: 612) has argued in her study of self-settlement in Uganda, refugees are not “passive victims of their own fate”. Rather, their “ability to choose where they live, in contrast to the constraints on self-determination and freedom of movement that characterize the settlement [camp] structure”, was critical to their independence (Hovil, 2007: 612). Such claims challenge the image of refugees as being submissive or as people whose lives are shaped purely by the decisions of others. Carl Levy (2010: 101) has criticised Giorgio Agamben and his followers (Diken and Bagge, 2005) for their conflation of refugee camps and Auschwitz concentration camp, their over dramatization of encampment, tendency to “orientalise or exoticize refugees”, and their contribution to portrayals of displaced people as “passive, hapless victims”. African refugees are commonly viewed by outsiders as ‘helpless’ and in need of other people to plan for and take care of them, forming the basis of international funding appeals (Harrell-Bond, 1986: 11). Humanitarian organisations rely on a ‘politics of pity’ (Boltanski, 1999), a generalised response to suffering at a distance. According to Hannah Arendt (1990: 89), pity “does not look upon both fortune and misfortune, the strong and the weak, with an equal eye; without the presence of misfortune, pity could not exist, and it therefore has just as much vested interest in the existence of the weak”. Organisations including UNHCR have relied upon the image of the refugee requiring pity and being prominent in camps to sustain their work. For humanitarian agencies and host states alike, “to attract money, refugees must be *visible*” (Harrell-Bond, 1986: 8).

The operation and management of camps is diverse, from those run democratically to those under the control of ‘warrior refugees’ (Lischer, 2005) or the “benign imperialism” of NGOs (Levy, 2010: 101). The movement to urban areas, often at the sacrifice of free assistance offered in camps, shows displaced peoples’ ability to exercise agency over their own lives in the face of a system of protection seeking to localise them. In states where protection systems have sought to keep refugees in rural settlements, such as in Uganda, people have chosen to ‘vote with their feet’ and move on (Hovil, 2007: 614). They have often rejected an international protection system that counted them as “humanitarian

beneficiaries”, but not as “rights-bearing subjects, nor even as recognizably human, like us” (Hyndman and Giles, 2017: 2). The rejection of traditional international methods of assistance by displaced people has challenged the work of organisations like UNHCR, whose policies have, as shown in the case of Syrian refugees, failed to adequately respond to the current state of displacement found outside of camps.

The twentieth century saw large numbers of people move from rural to urban areas. In 1950, seventy per cent of the global population lived in rural areas, compared with only thirty per cent in urban areas (UNDESA, 2014: 7). In 2007, the global population became primarily urban for the first time in history (UNDESA, 2014: 7). By 2014, the percentage in urban areas had risen to fifty-four per cent, while the total global rural population is projected to fall during the twenty-first century (UNDESA, 2014: 1). The movement of people to urban areas has occurred throughout the world, including, latterly, states hosting large displaced populations in Africa and Asia, now entering an “urban age” (Datta, 2017).

A similar trend has been identified with displaced people. In 2007, the same year as the global population became primarily urban, UNHCR began to report that the majority of refugees lived in urban areas. This was a significant rise, as UNHCR had reported the number of urban refugees to be between 54,000 and 200,000 in 1995, and 1.9 million in 2001, which representing only 13% of the global refugee population (Marfleet, 2006: 225-226). The growth in urban displacement demonstrates displaced people were not apart from the motivations and drivers leading many others to urbanise. The Chief Executive Officer of the International Rescue Committee, David Miliband (2015), similarly claimed refugees chose to move to cities as centres of economic opportunity, more mixed and often more socially tolerant, offering opportunities to access education and contribute to society and the local economy. These reasons concur with the motivations of people who urbanise, without being displaced. The non-encampment of refugees, for instance in Jordan and Lebanon, can also serve the labour market goals of host states (Turner, 2015). However, such benefits are

balanced against the demands large refugee populations can place upon public services and national economies. In the case of Lebanon, there has been an increased restriction placed upon Syrian refugees entering and remaining in the country (McVeigh, 2013; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2017).

The personal motivations behind the urbanisation of displacement also challenge notions that refugees are exceptional, different from other migrants, and as such require outside assistance to change their lives. Camps are presented and perceived by humanitarian actors “as ‘exceptional’ and temporary spaces, where refugees can be fed, taken care of and protected until they can be reintegrated into a ‘national and human rights order of things’” (Fresia, 2014a: 440). Researchers have contributed to this view by disproportionately focusing their writing on formal camps and ‘refugee issues’, including the interaction between refugees and aid programmes, “leaving other aspects of their lives invisible” (Bakewell, 2008: 433). By considering the urbanisation of displacement, there is an opportunity to focus on the “other aspects of people’s social worlds” that “may be of much greater importance in their day to day lives” (Bakewell, 2008: 433), rather than features making refugees and other forced migrants unique. The urbanisation of displacement suggests refugees follow similar trends to other migrants, and do not wait to be ‘reintegrated’ into the ‘order of things’. As such, urban displacement challenges the dominant characterisations of refugees underpinning humanitarian practice and refugee law, as well as popular, media, and artistic portrayals of refugees as ‘desperate’, ‘dependent’, and ‘passive’. The portrayal of refugees in such terms has served to enable encampment and containment in the interests of states, rather than the interests of refugees. The urbanisation of displacement has significant consequences for states, the policy and practice of humanitarian and protection organisations, and the public representation of the refugee. Most importantly, states and humanitarian organisations can no longer rely on refugees waiting for them to decide their future. The policy implications of such a shift will be discussed throughout the thesis.

### 3. Research Problem

The thesis is concerned with one central research question:

- How should we understand UNHCR's response to the challenge of urban displacement and what does the response reveal about policymaking in an international organisation?

The research question is aided by two sub-questions:

- Why did UNHCR change its policy and practice in response to the urbanisation of displacement?
- How was change in policy and practice achieved in relation to the challenge of urban displacement?

To answer the central research question and the two sub-questions, the work of a variety of different actors, both internal and external to UNHCR, will be considered. Actors include UNHCR's leaders and research and evaluation unit, in addition to states and NGOs. Taken together this allows for a clear understanding of where influence on international organisations originates. The research considers the period between 1994 and 2009, while also drawing on events preceding and following this time. The empirical chapters are organised in relation to three consecutive time periods (1994-1997, 1998-2003, and 2004-2009), each culminating in the creation of a new policy or guidelines intended to guide UNHCR's approach to urban displacement. At the core of the thesis is a detailed study of the pressures faced by UNHCR, and the different operational contexts it works within, as a means of explaining shifting policy positions adopted over sixteen years. The study draws on concepts from different theories of international organisations, including both positivist and post-positivist insight. Utilising a mixture of different conceptual approaches allows for a conceptualisation of international organisations adequately representing the complex reality they operate within, as well as answering both why and how UNHCR responded to the urbanisation of displacement in the manner it did.

To understand why UNHCR responded to the challenge of urban displacement the thesis builds a framework around state-influence, agency slack, and the concept of mission creep. Within state-centric perspectives, some writers have cast international organisations as having a minimal role in global affairs and acting principally in the interests of powerful states (Mearsheimer, 1995; Waltz, 1979; Abbott and Snidal, 1998). Policymaking is understood in similar terms, with state-interests shaping the policy of individual international organisations. Others have suggested international organisations can be important sites for states to interact and build cooperation (Keohane and Nye, 2012), but the focus remains on states. State-centric theories demonstrate the importance state-influence and state-interests have in shaping the behaviours of international organisations, as will be seen in the case examined in the thesis, but the theories do not provide sufficient consideration of why and how international organisations pursue their own interests. Principal-agent theories understand international organisations as ‘agents’, who are meant to pursue the interests outlined to them by their ‘principals’, primarily states (Hawkins, Lake, Nielson and Tierney, 2006). Although states still set broad agendas, international organisations will have discretion over the specific way in which these are achieved. Such an understanding affords a greater role to international organisations and the different relationships they can have with states. Principal-agent theories have been criticised for not providing sufficient attention to what agents do when they have enough space for independent action (Oestreich, 2012: 7), or when they have principals other than states (Jönsson and Hall, 2005). Unpicking UNHCR’s response to the challenge of urban displacement requires a complex understanding of relationships between different actors, the powers UNHCR has, and the way it is able to leverage them.

The thesis provides an in-depth case study of an organisation that radically shifted its approach to a global challenge, largely of its own accord. It shows the contribution made by actors ‘from above’ and ‘from below’ (Chwieroth, 2008), particularly through their provision of support for change, and their ability to place limitations on organisational expansion. To answer the central research question, and understand how change in policy and practice occurred, the

framework utilises several additional insights: the power and authority of international organisations, the influence of epistemic communities, and the role of two internal actors within organisations, namely research and evaluation units and leader. Barnett and Finnemore (2004) have outlined three types of authority (delegated, moral and expert) and four types of power (control of knowledge, ability to classify the world, ability to affix meaning and the creation and diffusion of rules and norms) possessed by international organisations. These provide a useful framework for understanding the complex range of abilities and strategies used by international organisations to identify how change in policy and practice transpires. Barnett and Finnemore's use of these authorities and powers are commonly applied to organisations as a whole, as when the International Monetary Fund (IMF) utilised expert authority to shape domestic economies of states (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004: 45-72). Their work has been criticised for focusing on bureaucratic unity at the expense of internal complexity and competition (Bode, 2015: 51). In contrast, the thesis suggests the importance of studying ways in which specific actors based within international organisations utilise different forms of authority and power to exert influence and bring about change. To understand the policymaking around the urbanisation of displacement, and avoid conceptualising international organisations as single, unitary actors, the thesis focuses on the role of UNHCR's research and evaluation unit and leaders. The thesis utilises the 'three UNs' framework, to illustrate forces within UNHCR, as well as those above and below it, such as states and non-governmental organisations. The thesis provides an example of why and how change in policy and practice can be explained and understood (Hollis and Smith, 1990), utilising both positivist and post-positivist insight, as well as shedding greater light on the internal work of large UN organisations.

The thesis covers sixteen years, in which time there were notable shifts in UNHCR's response to urban displacement. It begins in the mid-1990s with the publication of the 1994 Guidelines, UNHCR's first set of guidelines specifically targeting the issue of refugees in urban areas, and ends in 2009, with the publication of the 2009 Policy in September, and the High Commissioner's

Dialogue on Protection Challenges conference on 'Challenges for People of Concern to UNHCR in Urban Settings' in December of the same year. Background to UNHCR's work is included in chapter three and a historical overview of the Organisation's work in urban areas opens chapter four. Between 1994 and 1997 urban displacement emerged as a new issue UNHCR sought to address, leading to the production of two separate policies in 1997. Between 1998 and 2003 UNHCR increased its knowledge of urban displacement and developed a new official approach, albeit never enacted. Between 2004 and 2009, UNHCR's research and evaluation unit and NGOs critiqued the Organisation's existing policy. With the support of the High Commissioner, this led to the creation and enactment of the 2009 Policy, providing a radical shift in how UNHCR viewed and responded to urban displacement. Scholars have criticised UNHCR's approach during this period, as it has generally been in relation to specific urban locations. Nonetheless there has never been an in-depth study of the Organisation's differing responses to urban displacement, or any attempt to historicise these within the context of the 1990s and 2000s. The thesis fills the existing gap in the work of urban displacement and the policymaking of UNHCR.

#### 4. Methodology

Tracing UNHCR's evolving understanding of urban displacement is key to the thesis and to do this from UNHCR's creation in 1950 required a method of data collection providing sufficient historical depth. Internal UNHCR documents have been collected and analysed for ways in which they discuss or omit urban displacement. In total over three thousand documents, predominantly produced by UNHCR, were accessed and reviewed. Over four hundred United Nations' published documents are cited in the thesis, making up the majority of the data on which this work is based. Using a large number of primary documents allows the thesis to cover a long time period, in addition to examining changing attitudes and the differing understandings of urban displacement held by separate parts of UNHCR. Primary documents were chosen as a means of providing broad insight into a phenomenon and response that was global in nature. With increased digitisation, there has been a greater openness within



UNHCR, allowing a broader selection of data to be gathered. The accessibility of a wider selection of data contrasts with observations made by other researchers in the past. As Thomas G. Weiss and David A. Korn (2006: xix) noted in the mid-2000s, UNHCR had “rigid rules blocking access to and use of archives and files.”

The thesis relies on an analysis focusing on the existence and frequency with which concepts occur in human communication. It utilises a form of content analysis, which has been described as “a way of systematically surveying how often and in what categories things occur within texts” (Luker, 2008: 187). The documents studied were primarily published between 1994 and 2009, with additional documents from before 1994 included in chapter four. The data gathered from these documents provides historical context to the period of concern in the thesis, including the only extended discussion of UNHCR’s understanding of urban displacement prior to 1994. These resources show increased reference to urban areas in relation to displacement.

In collecting documents, several search terms were used including ‘urban’, ‘city’ and ‘town’, subsequently checked for relevance. Documents were coded for both manifest and latent content (Holsti, 1969). Manifest content, or visible surface content, included: the use of the word urban, which actors mentioned urban displacement, statistics on the number of displaced people by location, and references to UNHCR’s urban policies. This content provided information, for example, on the number of people recorded by UNHCR in urban areas, showing evidence of an increase from the small numbers recorded in the 1990s to the larger numbers in the 2000s. Latent content addresses the underlying meaning of the content, such as under what terms urban displacement was discussed and by whom. Content analysis has been described as “the tool of choice to find out when and how people start talking about things in different ways, and when a topic gets framed in a new way” (Luker, 2008: 198). The thesis is concerned with tracing discursive shifts and issue framing in relation to urban displacement, and to achieve this, coding both manifest and latent content was deemed useful for understanding ways in which it occurred between 1994 and 2009. Content analysis of communications has tended to focus on three components: the

message, the sender and the audience (Holsti, 1969). As the majority of the documents used in the thesis were released publicly, with some explicitly intended to deliver a message, when analysing the data the thesis has considered the intended meaning, the author, and the planned audience. Due to its reliance on latent content, the thesis has sought to “offer detailed excerpts from relevant statements (messages) that serve to document the researchers’ interpretations” (Berg, 2001: 243).

Document collection involved the use of UNHCR’s extensive online archives, including the research platform Refworld. Searches were conducted using published UNHCR material to identify documents in which urban issues were mentioned. The search concentrated principally on the years covered by the thesis (1994-2009), from which time the majority of the documents have been digitised. Additional searches were conducted for the period between UNHCR’s creation in 1950 and 1994, in order to historicise the Organisation’s approach to urban displacement. Departments and sections within UNHCR, as well as other parts of the United Nations external to the Organisation, all produced documents on UNHCR’s activities. Works consulted include, Executive Committee (ExCom) Conclusions, ExCom Informal Consultative Meetings, ExCom Plenary Sessions, ExCom Standing Committee Reports, speeches made by the High Commissioner, material relating to the High Commissioner’s first three Protection Dialogues (2007, 2008 and 2009), UNHCR-produced News Stories, UNHCR-produced Media Pages, Operational Publications, Country Operations Plans, Protection Publications, the Legal and Protection Policy Research Series, Notes on International Protection, Statements by the Assistant High Commissioner for Protection and Director of the Division of International Protection, Handbooks and Guides, Legal Publications, the yearly Global Appeal, the yearly Global Report, Evaluation Reports, the *New Issues in Refugee Research* series, Statistics Catalogues and the Annual Consultations with NGOs.

Searches were conducted in the United Nations’ Archives and Record Management Section, providing additional documents published by other parts of the United Nations relating to urbanisation and UNHCR’s work. These

included Thematic Compilation of General Assembly and Economic and Social Council Resolutions, General Assembly Resolutions Relating to UNHCR, Secretary General Reports and UNHCR Annual Reports to the United Nations General Assembly. As noted previously, this resulted in the accumulation of over three thousand documents produced by either UNHCR or other UN bodies mentioning urban issues. Topic-based searches on Refworld were performed and provided access to reports, training manuals and other material produced by UNHCR, NGOs and others. The Forced Migration Online Digital Library at the University of Oxford was consulted and supplied additional historical material produced by academics and NGOs. The material provided more records from the period before that considered in the thesis, including conference papers and unpublished 'grey literature'. The library draws from material held at the Refugee Studies Centre (University of Oxford), Feinstein International Famine Center (Tufts University), the Program on Forced Migration (Columbia University in the City of New York), the Forced Migration and Refugee Studies Program (The American University in Cairo) and the Czech Helsinki Committee in Prague.

Primary data was gathered from semi-structured interviews conducted with staff of UNHCR. The interviews included in the thesis are a form of 'elite' interviewing, a well established means of acquiring data in the social sciences (Aberbach and Rockman, 2002; Goldstein, 2002; Harvey, 2011; Morris, 2009; Richards, 1996). The strength of this methodology is that it offers an insight into the "motivations and activity of those within the political process" (Lilleker, 2003: 207). The approach is suited to the focus of the thesis, as it aims to explore the various pressures and reasons leading to a shift in UNHCR's understanding of urban displacement. Access, finance, frequent staff rotation, organisational anonymity, and a lack of 'institutional memory' (Linde, 2009) common in large organisations, made obtaining interview data challenging. However, the use of interview data assists in addressing limitations emerging from using documents alone as a data source (Klofas and Cutshall, 1985: 371). The interviewees cited in the thesis include UNHCR staff based in the Organisation's headquarters and in one country office. The data gathered from these interviews was analysed for

latent content, in the same way as primary documents, as this was deemed the most effective way of understanding attitudes towards urban displacement. The interviews took place principally during research trips to Geneva, Switzerland in September 2013 and Nairobi, Kenya in January 2014. The locations were chosen to allow for insight to be gained from both headquarters and the field. Nairobi has a large urban refugee population, and the UNHCR office in the city had been active in assisting urban refugees prior to UNHCR establishing an urban policy, and was one of UNHCR's six pilot cities for the implementation of the 2009 Policy. Focusing on what occurred in Nairobi provided broader insight into ways in which the movement of refugees into one city could influence UNHCR's thinking on the global issue of urban displacement, particularly how a country office could influence UNHCR's policymaking during the creation of its new global policy in 2009. This will be discussed in depth in chapter six.

Interviewees were identified based on their knowledge of UNHCR's work and policymaking on urban displacement, in addition to the length of time they had spent either working for, or with, UNHCR. Interviews served to add to the data and address gaps where there were limited written records and to gather unofficial accounts of events. Two interviews were conducted with Jeff Crisp of the University of Oxford in June 2015 and January 2016. Crisp held the position of Head of UNHCR's Policy Development and Evaluation Service (PDES) until September 2013 and has been named, with permission, because of his unique insight into UNHCR's response to the urbanisation of displacement during the period of study covered in the thesis. These interviews provided understanding from someone who had been directly involved in UNHCR's policymaking, in addition to being one of the authors of both the 2003 Guiding Principles and 2009 Policy.

During the course of the research it proved challenging to identify interviewees with sufficient knowledge of the situation in the years between 1994 and 2009. The frequent movement of staff within UNHCR and outside of the Organisation has created a situation whereby institutional memory of specific displacement issues is weak. Many UNHCR reports, evaluations and written records are

attributed only to the Organisation and do not identify the staff who worked on them. The lack of named authors made identifying relevant individuals more difficult. Due to financial and logistical constraints, additional visits to the UNHCR's headquarters in Geneva were not possible. Primary documents were chosen as the best available source of data for the period covered in the three empirical chapters, and deemed to offer sufficient information to support the thesis. While not cited, interviews conducted in Geneva and Nairobi proved informative and helped provide greater context for understanding urban displacement, including how UNHCR has sought to implement the 2009 Policy.

## 5. Ethical Considerations

Research with, on or about displaced people raises important ethical questions and has received increased attention in recent years (Kabranian-Melkonian, 2015; George, 2015; Block et al., 2013). It has been argued that research on issues relating to human suffering is only justifiable if the intention of the research is to help alleviate hardship (Turton, 1996). Within research on displaced people, the notion of 'doing no harm' has come to play a central role, with researchers seeking to ensure their work has not endangered or caused undue harm to participants. 'Do no harm' has been criticised for not going far enough and being "insufficient to ensure ethically sound research practice" (Hugman, Pittaway and Bartolomei, 2011: 1271). These concerns have often focused on challenges that emerge, including the means to obtain genuinely informed consent from research participants, and the ability to take into account and adequately respond to participant's capacity for autonomy (Mackenzie, McDowell and Pittaway, 2007).

Due to the chosen research questions and the thesis' focus on UNHCR and policymaking, it was not considered necessary to conduct research directly with displaced people. The thesis draws primarily on 'unobtrusive measures' (Webb et al., 1966), as it does not obtain data from research subjects, except for a select number of staff. As displaced people were not interviewed or surveyed for the thesis the issues of their ability to provide informed consent, or the dominant

position a researcher might have when conducting research with displaced people (Marmo, 2013), did not arise. Instead, the majority of data for the thesis is drawn from United Nations documents. As these documents were publicly available and dealt with changes in policy, rather than individual experiences or lives of displaced people, they were judged safe to be cited and quoted in the thesis. The School of Arts and Social Sciences Ethic Committee at City, University of London (then known as City University London) approved the fieldwork for the thesis in 2013. All interviews, with the exception of those conducted with Jeff Crisp, were made anonymous to allow for greater openness, as participants were primarily current members of staff of UNHCR or organisations working directly with UNHCR. All interviews were voluntary, with participants given details of the research project in advance and made aware that they could terminate the interview at any time. No interviewee was judged to be vulnerable or unable to give informed consent.

## 6. Limitations

The thesis has several limitations stemming from the case section, period covered, and data sources. The choice to study one organisation's response to one issue raises questions as to its broader applicability. Utilising the same conceptual framework to compare UNHCR's response to more than one changing global displacement issue would have provided a different level of analysis and may have produced different results. The thesis would not have provided the same level of depth as it has by focusing exclusively on the issue of urban displacement. Similarly, different insight may have arisen from a piece of work centred on ways more than one international organisation responded to global urbanisation during the same time period. The choice to analyse one organisation was made to provide comprehensiveness, ensuring the complexity of UNHCR was given sufficient attention. To compare how separate organisations have responded to global urbanisation and UNHCR's reaction to different displacement issues, would provide valid opportunities for further research. The selection of one organisation and one issue was thought to be the most apt for answering the central research question.

Limitations arise from restricting the period of time covered to between 1994 and 2009. The long period between UNHCR's creation in 1950 and the mid-1990s is solely covered as historical background in chapter four. Attempting to address UNHCR's earlier response to urban displacement would have required sacrificing depth. Similarly, in the years since 2009 there have been important developments in UNHCR's approach to urban displacement, in particular the Organisation's response to the Syrian refugee situation since 2011 and the publication of the 2014 Policy. The thesis is centrally focused on the issue of urban displacement, and the change in policy on urban refugees. The time period selected allowed for a focus on policymaking concerning urban refugees as the sole focus of the policies released between 1994 and 2009, in contrast to the 2014 Policy, which was on all refugees found outside of camps. Recent developments in policies impacting the urban displaced would make for valuable future research. The thesis focused on a shorter period of time in greater depth, and consideration of the implementation of the 2009 Policy and 2014 Policy would not have helped answer the chosen research questions. The 2014 Policy is not concerned solely with the urban displaced, in contrast to the March 1997 Policy, 1997 Policy, 2003 Guiding Principles and 2009 Policy.

Finally, as discussed in the previous section, the data sources used in the thesis have limitations. As the period under consideration began more than two decades ago, many potentially relevant people have moved on to other work, were not contactable, had few relevant recollections or were unwilling to participate. Other people were only able or willing to speak about the implementation of the 2009 Policy, with some UNHCR staff repeating the Organisation's official positions on urban displacement. The collection of an extensive set of primary documents, produced by different parts of UNHCR as well as other organisations, helped ensure a range of actors informed the thesis, not simply the official approach of the time. The documents making up the majority of the data source in the thesis are limited in that they represent only what was officially recorded and published. Drawing on alternative sources, including reports produced by NGOs, independent consultants and government

bodies, as well as interviews and official government correspondences, helped mitigate this limitation. As scholars have noted, and as will be discussed during the three empirical chapters, an important part of policymaking occurs informally and is sometimes not recorded or documented. The thesis has utilised writings produced by current and former UNHCR employees, to help counter lack of access to informal meetings or conversations that occurred regarding urban displacement, as they had “access to discussions, documents, and other information that have not been placed in the public domain” (Crisp, 2017: 87).

## 7. Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is organised into seven chapters. Chapter two establishes a conceptual framework for understanding UNHCR’s response to the challenge of urbanisation of displacement, including both why and how changes in policy and practice took place. It outlines the concepts of state influence, agency slack, and mission creep, which help demonstrate why change occurred. It then provides a conceptual basis for understanding how this took place, beginning with consideration of Barnett and Finnemore’s explanation of the different types of authority and power utilised by international organisations. The chapter outlines three additional actors that will be employed in the thesis to understand how change in policy and practice occurred: epistemic communities, research and evaluation units, and leaders. Focusing on these actors helps understand the roles they can play in the policymaking of international organisations. The thesis challenges frequent assumptions within the study of international organisations that external actors, such as states, are the primary drivers of policy change, or that such change is driven by ideational or cultural reasons rather than rational self-interest.

Chapter three introduces the framework of the ‘three UNs’. Employing this concept gives an understanding of the UN as comprising an intergovernmental organisation and an international secretariat, with a variety of independent actors influencing the first two. The three UNs are used to frame the empirical chapters, as well as discussion in chapter three of policymaking in different parts



of the United Nations, including the Security Council, General Assembly and Programmes and Funds. The framework of the three UNs is applied to the case of policymaking within UNHCR and supplies grounding for understanding change in policy and practice within the broader UN system, as well as historical context for UNHCR's actions. In addition, the framework assists in comprehending the different roles of actors 'above' and 'below' organisations, for instance states and NGOs, and how they interact with an organisation such as UNHCR.

Chapter four is the first of three empirical chapters, concentrating on UNHCR's response to the urbanisation of displacement between 1994 and the release of the 1997 Policy. It begins by providing a history of UNHCR's limited engagement with urban displacement prior to 1994. The chapter goes on to show how the Organisation sought to contain the movement of people to urban areas through its ability to 'classify the world' and control knowledge. It demonstrates the work of UNHCR's Inspection and Evaluation Service (IES) and how it would be influential in the Organisation's first attempt to formally regulate the issue in 1997, as well as the basis for the urban displacement epistemic community. It suggests the UNHCR's strategy was in response to events already occurring 'in the field', seeking to manage these developments through policy, which in fact reflected state preferences for encampment.

Chapter five provides an analysis of the years following the release of the 1997 Policy, leading to the completion of the 2003 Guiding Principles. The chapter shows agency slack existing at the time, allowing UNHCR to determine its response to urban displacement. A lack of strict rules resulted in the occurrence of mission creep, particularly in the field, with UNHCR going beyond in some countries what was permitted by its own 1997 Policy. In 1999 the Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit (EPAU) replaced IES, employing a mixture of expert authority, ability to affix meaning, and control of knowledge, to advocate for change in the Organisation's approach to urban displacement. The epistemic community grew during the period, but the failure to enact the 2003 Guiding Principles showed senior parts of UNHCR were still not willing to embrace a radically different approach towards urban displacement. The chapter shows the

important part played by epistemic communities and research and evaluation units, but also their limitations in bringing about changes in policy and practice without the involvement of the Organisation's leader.

Chapter six studies the years leading up to the release of the 2009 Policy, when UNHCR started to embrace working in urban areas. It shows the importance of the urban displacement epistemic community, centred on EPAU, and, from 2006, the Policy Development and Evaluation Service (PDES), in informing UNHCR's new approach. The chapter reveals the importance of leadership in an international organisation by displaying the vital role High Commissioner Guterres had in framing urban displacement and ensuring a new policy was released. IES/EPAU/PDES, field offices and the High Commissioner all played an important role in the Organisation's shift in approach and policy. Chapter six shows the way in which these actors used moral and expert authority, as well as the global trend towards urbanisation, to support UNHCR's expansionism. The chapter helps answer the central research question of the thesis, demonstrating why UNHCR came to shift its official understanding of the challenge of urban displacement, while suggesting the important role of certain internal actors in the policymaking process. The period of concern in chapter six demonstrates ways UNHCR responded to criticism of its urban displacement policymaking, signalling the growing importance of the urban displacement epistemic community, centred on the Organisation's research and evaluation unit.

Chapter seven summarises the principal arguments and contributions, including the important role played by internal actors in UNHCR's changing approach. The chapter contends there is a need to emphasise the role of leadership, research and evaluation units, and how these work through epistemic communities, when studying policymaking in international organisations. It outlines key empirical contributions, including policymaking on urban displacement, how global refugee policy is created, and the importance of mission creep and state influence on UNHCR's work. It then outlines the main conceptual contributions, namely, that agency slack existed yet state influence remained throughout, that pressure from within international organisations explains how changes in policy

and practice come about, and that the three UNs should not be considered as distinct categories, but rather as being fluid and interactive. The conclusion ends by pointing to future research agendas, including studies of the implementation of the 2009 Policy.

## Chapter Two - Why and How International Organisations Change

### 1. Introduction

The analytical and conceptual framework for the thesis has evolved from international organisation theory within the international relations literature and aims to examine the way in which the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) responded to, and accelerated, the challenge of urban displacement. The thesis is centrally concerned with why and how changes in policy and practice within organisations occur. There are a number of concepts within international organisation theory that have explanatory potential, with the thesis drawing and building upon those most beneficial for understanding UNHCR's reaction to the urbanisation of displacement. To adequately explain UNHCR's response between 1994 and 2009, a conceptual framework has been developed that takes insight from positivist and post-positivist approaches. To comprehend *why* UNHCR responded in the way it did, the thesis discusses the influence of state-interests and mission creep. Following this understanding of why change in policy and practice occurred, the chapter focuses on *how* change takes place. It draws on Michael Barnett and Martha Finnemore's (2004) constructivist understanding of the authority and power of international organisations, and expands upon it, by combining it with insights on the role of epistemic communities, research and evaluation units, and leaders.

The study of international organisations has been a key area of interest for scholars of international relations for many years. Following the Second World War, a new international political system was created based around the recently established United Nations. Attempts to understand the work of the different agencies and programmes that make up the UN has tended to focus on their relationships with states. Since the end of the Cold War there has been an increased attempt to develop new ways of understanding the place these

organisations have in the world. For example, recent work has utilised search-engine data to better understand the political economy of organisations (Pelc, 2013), the role of shared beliefs in the lending decisions of monetary organisations (Nelson, 2014), and to conceptualise international organisations as policy advisors (Fang and Stone, 2012). Understanding how changes in policy and practice come about tends to start with the interests of states, privileging their influence in establishing and shaping the direction of international organisations. While such influences are important, other accounts of change have shown that it can stem from an organisation's self-interested desire to expand, or from their bureaucratic nature.

The chapter will give a brief overview of how change in policy and practice is viewed within the international organisation literature. It will then focus on three core concepts that help understand the impetus for an organisation's change: state-influence, agency slack, and mission creep. The chapter examines how change can come about, by examining constructivist's understanding of the authority and power possessed by organisations. In contrast to existing approaches, which tend to homogenise organisations, the chapter points to the necessity of considering the different component parts comprising large international organisations. Consequently the chapter proposes using work on epistemic communities to help understand change in policy and practice, in particular the role of two internal actors: research and evaluation units, and leaders. The framework will be used to consider the policymaking surrounding the challenge of urban displacement, and the role of UNHCR's High Commissioner and research and evaluation unit, the Inspection and Evaluation Service (IES), Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit (EPAU), and Policy Development and Evaluation Service (PDES). Previous studies of UNHCR have given greater attention to the role of the Executive Committee (ExCom) and the interaction between the Divisions of Protection and Operations (Loescher et al., 2008), or have afforded important consideration to the role of the High Commissioner without focusing on leadership as a conceptual or theoretical tool (Hammerstad, 2014). Through the course of fieldwork and data gathering for the thesis, it became apparent that EPAU/PDES and High Commissioner António

Guterres in particular had played a vital role in UNHCR's urban displacement policymaking. Based on this insight and the suggestion within the literature that research and evaluation units and leaders could be instrumental in policymaking, the thesis pays particular attention to these as a way of effectively answering the question of how UNHCR came to respond to the challenge of urban displacement. As will be seen in chapters four, five and six, IES/EPAU/PDES and High Commissioner Guterres were integral to understanding UNHCR's response to the challenge of urban displacement.

## 2. Understanding Change in Policy and Practice

There are four explanations in the international organisations literature for the reason why changes in policy and practice occur: resource conflict, world polity, statist, and bureaucratic culture (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004: 41-44). The thesis draws on statist theories, in particular the importance of the interests of states, the existence of agency slack, and the presence of mission creep. These concepts will be discussed later in the chapter. Resource conflict is concerned with organisations altering their work or goals to minimise the extent to which they are dependent on other actors. World polity is concerned with the way in which international organisations respond to broader shifts in norms and culture in the international system. Statist looks at how states make demands of international organisations, including state-centric and principal-agent theories (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004: 42-43). While most of these approaches emphasise the impact of external stimuli, bureaucratic accounts argue that a shared culture between the staff of an organisation shapes the way in which it responds, to issues, including how employees interpret, negotiate and react to rules and actions, as well as how they see their overall mission. The future of organisations is built on the existing rules and culture already prevailing within them. Due to these rules and culture, bureaucracies are expansive by their very nature (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004: 43). International organisations are rational-legal authorities that tend to promote rational-legal bureaucratic action for which they are in the best position to provide. They confront problems and solutions in ways that require them to expand, which is similar to the concept of

'mission creep' popular with principal-agent theorists, as a way of explaining gradual expansion of organisations.

The interpretation of organisations as expanding in part to meet their own needs is central to Barnett and Finnemore's analyses of three empirical cases: the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the United Nations Secretariat, and UNHCR. It has been claimed that resource conflict, world polity, and statist approaches see organisations as "empty vessels that channel external stimuli (from states, markets, or world culture) into functional or appropriate behavior in an unproblematic way" (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004: 43). In contrast, focusing on bureaucratic culture "yields insight into the ways they exercise power and how their good intentions can sometimes lead to unfortunate and tragic outcomes" (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004: 44). International organisations are initially given authority to allow them to perform the various functions that are expected of them. However, they soon begin to utilise this authority to gradually expand the scope of their control (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004: 44; Mills, 2005: 162). Despite Barnett and Finnemore's claim, a principal-agent approach does not cast organisations as 'empty vessels', but permits they might make their own decisions, choose their own course of action, and expand in their own interest, when sufficient 'agency slack' exists. The latter concept is used throughout the thesis and will be discussed later in the chapter.

Constructivism contributes to understandings of international organisations and the central role that norms can have to social existence (Onuf, 1989; Onuf, 1998; Kratochwil, 1989; Kratochwil, 2000; Klotz, 1995; Finnemore, 1996). However, constructivist attempts to emphasis how beliefs and ideas shape interests can come at the expense of the important role rational self-interest serves to organisations. Though constructivists may acknowledge that organisations are rational-legal authorities, the attention afforded to this in their analysis is often less than that given to ideas and beliefs. Although acknowledging that both material and ideational factors are important, they have "tended to focus on the latter and leave the former underspecified" (Rae, 2007: 132). In the case of UNHCR and the urbanisation of displacement, as the thesis will show, material

factors are key to understanding why the organisation changed. Constructivists have suggested their approach is either incompatible or antagonistic with more traditional theories, in particular realism (Wendt, 1999; Patomäki and Wight, 2000; Lebow 2001). However, “constructivist research is as compatible with a realist worldview as with any other” (Barkin, 2003: 325). The case has been made that a ‘realist/constructivist synthesis’ can be achieved by focusing upon, “the points of tangent, in which the two approaches reinforce each other where they are orthogonal, that is nonetheless cognizant of the real points of tension between them” (Barkin, 2010: 7). Focusing on the core concepts of realism and constructivism, such as power politics and intersubjectivity, rather than discussing them as opposing paradigms, allows for such a synthesis (Barkin, 2010: 4-5). To aid this, international relations can be analysed as a disciplinary matrix, emphasising the “points of tangent, points of opposition, and dimensions in which the two approaches are orthogonal” (Barkin, 2010: 7). The thesis will utilise rationalist approaches in explaining why change in policy and practice occurred, while drawing from constructivist approaches when trying to understand how such change occurred.

Principal-agent perspectives have been criticised for lacking a strong theoretical understanding of what international organisations want from their interactions with states or their motivations for change beyond expansion for its own sake (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004: 4). Despite this, principal-agent and constructivist theories can work in tandem with one another. The two can be “complementary”, as a principal-agent approach “generates more testable hypotheses” while constructivism “presents more as a lens which one can train on the processes within organizations” (Oestreich, 2012: 10-11). As discussed previously in this chapter, realist constructivism has highlighted the way in which the two can work together, by focusing on core concepts drawn from each approach and how they support one another (Barkin, 2010). Both principal-agent and constructivist approaches agree that international bureaucrats develop preferences independent of states (Hall, 2016: 8). In the case of UN post-conflict peacebuilding, it has been claimed that the behaviour of UN



organisations has been guided by delegation from member states, which is in line with principal-agent theorising (Karns, 2012).

However, this does not explain the emergence of new ideas, including normative ones, which is more of a constructivist claim (Karns, 2012). Others have suggested that to understand the agency of international organisations it is important to use a “spectrum of theoretical approaches, ranging from principal-agent theory to constructivism” (Fröhlich, 2014: 181). There have been calls to avoid creating theoretical silos (Weiss and Wilkinson, 2014: 21-22), close the divide between rationalists and constructivists (Checkel, 1997) and adopt a more pragmatic form of constructivism (Haas and Haas, 2002), all of which suggest the importance of adopting insights from different theories to explain complex realities, such as the urbanisation of displacement. Some constructivists have argued in support of taking an inclusive approach towards realist positions as, for example, in consideration of issues such as global poverty reduction (Fukuda-Parr and David Hulme, 2011). They have noted that while ideas are important, “the economic and political interests of states, and the elites who manage national affairs, take priority” (Fukuda-Parr and Hulme, 2011: 32). Principal-agent theories show the rational self-interest of organisations, the continued role of state influence, and the importance of agency slack, though constructivism allows for an understanding of what organisations do with the independence they gain from the existence of agency slack. Principal-agent theories indicate “that the primary goals of bureaucracies is their own expansion: expansion of budgets, of powers, and of existence over time” (Oestreich, 2012: 7). To analyse why UNHCR responded in the way it did to the urbanisation of displacement, the chapter will discuss state influence, agency slack, and mission creep.

### 3. State Influence

State influence is an important means of explaining changes in policy and practice. State-centric theories, including realist ones, often consider international organisations as being of significance “only on the margins”

(Mearsheimer, 1995: 7), and when they do play a sustained part in shaping international politics it is believed to be in the interests of powerful states and that they are subject to the rise and fall of the states they work for (Keohane, 1980; Gilpin, 1981; Kennedy, 1987). From a realist perspective, decision making within organisations is designed to favour powerful states and the involvement of other actors, including non-governmental organisations, only occurs when it benefits state interests (Sending and Neumann, 2006). Like all other aspects of international organisations viewed from this position, policy change emerges to assist the interests of states. In some cases this line of thinking remains compelling, with the interests of powerful states shown to dictate the direction and actions of some organisations.

Powerful states have been said to “limit the autonomy of IOs [international organisations], interfere with their operations, ignore the dictates, or restructure and dissolve them” (Abbott and Snidal, 1998: 5). One example being the influence that countries, including the United States, have on the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and its lending choices (Copelovitch, 2010; Dreher and Jensen 2007; Stone, 2002; Stone, 2004; Stone, 2008; Thacker, 1999). United States policymakers use their influence within the IMF to further their country’s foreign policy and financial objectives, resulting in the IMF providing “larger loans to countries heavily indebted to American commercial banks” and “larger loans to governments closely allied to the United States” (Oatley and Yackee, 2004: 415). Realism encompasses a variety of different positions in the study of international relations ranging from the classic realism, with its focus on the role of human nature on international relations, to neorealism with its concern for structures and interacting units (Carr, 1939; Morgenthau, 2005; Waltz, 1979). Offensive realism meanwhile, assumes anarchy and insecurity of the international system, leading to incursive strategies by states as a means of survival (Snyder; 2002; Wohlforth, 1993; Zakaria, 1998). By contrast, defensive realism claims that similar global features lead states to signal restraint in a bid to gain security (Copeland, 2001; Jervis, 1976; Jervis, 1978). Realism includes a broad set of ideas, including the anarchical nature of the international system, the self-interest of states and the use of fear (Weber, 2001: 34), with

international organisations being seen as a means for states to achieve their goals. On the basis of these assumptions, change within international organisations is seen as being largely shaped by the will of states. This has led to criticism that the political realities after the Second World War and the emergence of new, large, and complex international organisations charged with multiple tasks, requires an approach shifting analysis beyond the study of state-based power politics (Kratochwil and Mansfield, 1994).

Institutionalism, which emerged in opposition to realism, also encompasses a broad range of theories but at its core emphasises a set of common goals held by states, though rejecting the centrality of military power. By comparison, institutionalism has given greater importance to international organisations, as sites where interest constellations can play-out and cooperation between states can occur. International organisations define issues, facilitate coalitions by bringing officials together, and allow weak states to pursue linkages between issues enabling them to more effectively bargain with powerful states (Keohane and Nye, 2012: 29-30). Like realism, the attention of institutionalism is on states, as “governments regulate and control transnational and interstate relations” by “creating or accepting procedures, rules, or institutions” (Keohane and Nye, 2012: 5). For some institutionalists, international organisations serve to promote ‘common interests’ while avoiding ‘common aversion’, specifically to a worse-for-all situation that could emerge without cooperation (Hasenclever, Mayer and Rittberger, 1997: 44-53). It is through this that international organisations are seen as a means of managing global issues (Ruggie, 1992: 561). Institutionalism contrasts with the belief of some realists that international organisations merely reflect the global distribution of power between states (Mearsheimer, 1995). Realist and institutionalist theories are alike in centring upon states, rather than international organisations themselves. The power and authority of international organisations, either limited or extensive, is granted to them by states. Policy change, whether to limit or expand the mandates of organisations, is similarly understood from the position of states. Some states seek change as it benefits them, with organisations being compelled to act as they are instructed.

State-centric theories place too much focus on the influence states have in directing how international organisations act and change. As international organisations can act against the express interests of states, it is necessary to consider ways of understanding that take into account the autonomy and agency of organisations, as well as the inability of states to constrain the actions of organisations. The issue has been termed the ‘Frankenstein Problem’, as “states risk the institution becoming a monster and acting contrary to their interests” (Guzman, 2013: 999). This ‘problem’ can also stem from states disagreeing with one another over the appropriate course of action on a particular issue, limiting the ability for constraints to be placed on organisations, and providing space for organisations to pursue their own goals. Institutionalist theories tend not to give sufficient attention to the complex negotiation process international organisations enter into with key state funders, which helps determine the amount of freedom afforded to them to choose where and how they work. When explaining UNHCR’s actions in relation to urban displacement, it is important to consider international organisations “as *actors* that implement policy decisions and pursue their own interests strategically” (Hawkins, Lake, Nielson and Tierney, 2006: 5), rather than only as sets of rules (Martin and Simmons, 2012: 328-329). Through this it is possible to understand the autonomy international organisations hold, where autonomy is understood as the “range of potential independent action available” to organisations, which may or may not benefit or undermine the position of states (Hawkins, Lake, Nielson and Tierney, 2006: 8). The autonomy possessed by international organisations is related to the availability of ‘agency slack’, which will be discussed in the following section. Considering the autonomy of international organisations does not discount the influence states can exert on them, but it allows analysis of the way in which organisations interpret and act in response to such influence, or how they think states might wish them to act. The latter is of particular importance when states do not give direct instructions and show limited interest in an issue, allowing organisations to respond in a way that takes into account what they perceive to be state interests, without these being explicitly outlined to them.

In considering the agency of international organisations, the thesis draws on the work of Joel E. Oestreich (2012). The challenge in studying international organisations is distinguishing between independent actions and delegated discretion or authority (Haftel and Thompson, 2006). Oestreich (2012) has proposed a two-step approach to understand cases where international organisations were able to overcome resistance. It includes identifying a course of action an international organisation was determined to pursue that was not dictated to it, with “the actual carrying out of that action in a way with meaningful results to the international system” (Oestreich, 2012: 13). The approach provides cases of international organisations having and using their own agency, rather than simply using the discretion delegated to them by states. The thesis benefits from this method, as UNHCR’s shifting perspective to urban displacement demonstrated determination on the part of the Organisation to address the challenge, as it was not directed to do so by states. UNHCR’s understanding of urban displacement resulted in a meaningful change in global refugee policy and the strategy the Organisation took as the world’s largest humanitarian organisation, with implications for millions of ‘people of concern’. Though this change did not come as a result of specifications made by states, as an organisation UNHCR is dependent on states to continue its work, and as such, its change in response to urban displacement was shaped by the Organisation’s knowledge of state preferences.

Barnett and Finnemore’s (2004) work provides a case of constructivist research that is compatible with state-centric approaches. Their analysis of international organisations is centred on the role of bureaucratic culture; although they claim their work still acknowledges the role states have in shaping the preferences and operations of organisations (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004: 34). In practice however, their case studies often give only minimal time to the role of states, as their analysis of UNHCR’s turn in the 1990s towards repatriation as the preferred durable solution for refugees provides an instance of this (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004: 73-120). Here they acknowledge that state preferences were important in explaining UNHCR’s preference for returning refugees to their country of origin, although their analysis focuses on the development of a

‘repatriation culture’ and the central place this had in the acceptance of repatriation among the Organisation’s staff (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004: 78). The emergence of such a culture is explained through three forums: discourse, structure and informal rules (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004: 98). They show how UNHCR was able to normalise repatriation through its discussion of the issue, as well as altering the structures and rules that had once limited its use. The case of UNHCR is said to provide an example of an international organisation acting independently and pathologically, in contrast to the Organisation’s mandate to protect refugees. In making this case, however, they afford little attention to the specific part played by states in pressuring UNHCR to adopt such a stance or the broader context in the post-Cold War era that saw states less willing to resettle refugees. By the late 1980s there were “strong pressures on UNHCR to concentrate its focus on repatriation” (Hammerstad, 2014: 124), as “governments everywhere were also becoming more restrictionist and were putting pressure on UNHCR to return refugees to their home countries as quickly as possible” (Loescher, 2001b: 47). The thesis aims to avoid a similar view, by considering ways in which states have influenced UNHCR’s response to urban displacement. This influence was often not explicit, instead, UNHCR’s approach to urban displacement, particularly during the 1990s and into the 2000s, reflecting the broader wishes of states to restrict and contain the movement of displaced people.

#### 4. Agency Slack and Mission Creep

Principal-agent approaches consider states to be the most important actor in international politics, however unlike state-centric theories, they provide a greater means of understanding why changes in policy and practice happen, other than explicit instructions from states. Sometimes termed “rational choice institutionalism” (Larsson and Naurin, 2016: 5) and informed by neo-institutional economics (Staton and Moore, 2011: 564; Garrett and Weingast, 1993; Posner and Yoo, 2005), principal-agent approaches suggest that states create international organisations to perform certain functions, such as addressing collective-action problems or providing information or legitimacy,

and delegate power to them to perform these tasks. In doing this, a contract is established between the principals (states) and the agents (international organisations). The agent is expected to pursue the interests of the principal as set out to them during their creation (Hawkins, Lake, Nielson and Tierney, 2006) and principals generally aim to make agents accountable to them (Gehring and Dörfler, 2013: 569; Grant and Keohane, 2005). The hypothesis shares similarities with state-centric approaches, in that both understand change as principally coming in response to the demands of states. Principal-agent approaches, however, attribute a stronger role to agents. For example, principals may dictate the broad agenda, but agents will have discretion over how it is achieved (Abrahms and Potter, 2015: 324). The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is an example of an international organisation whose core aims have been established by powerful states, but whose staff retains autonomy over the Organisation's everyday decision-making and actions (Nelson, 2014: 303; Stone, 2011: 25-26). In addition to authority granted to them, agents obtain additional authority when either 'shrinking' or 'slippage' occurs. The former occurs when "an agent minimizes the efforts it exerts on its principal's behalf", while the latter happens when "an agent shifts policy away from its principal's preferred outcome and toward its own preferences" (Hawkins, Lake, Nielson and Tierney, 2006: 8). Both produce "independent action by an agent that is undesired by the principal" (Hawkins, Lake, Nielson and Tierney, 2006: 8). This insight is key to principal-agent understandings of the authority of organisations and presents a notable difference to the emphasis found within state-centric approaches, upon delegated authority. The available 'agency slack', a concept which captures "the extent to which organizations have some leeway to pursue their agency interests independently of their principals" (Andonova, 2009: 203), will be discussed in more detail later in this section.

A principal-agent model is beneficial in highlighting the different interests that exist between principals and agents. Principals hold preferences, which can be disconnected from the actual behaviours of subordinate agents (Abrahms and Potter, 2015: 317; Kiewiet and McCubbins, 1991). Given this, agents will often pursue their own interests or, if the agent is an organisation, the interests of the

individuals that comprise them (Kiewiet and McCubbins, 1991: 24-25) and engage in “opportunism when given discretion” (Fang and Stone, 2012: 538). It is in the best interest of organisations to follow a path that demonstrates to their principals that they are fulfilling their mandates, while at the same time, satisfying “organizational incentives to prosper and expand, and to elicit additional political, social, and material resources” (Abbott et al., 2016: 16). As will be presented in later chapters, UNHCR’s actions in response to the urbanisation of displacement saw them demonstrating to donor states that they were adhering to their existing mandates and supporting state preferences, while meeting organisational preferences for expansion. Principals are aware of these tendencies and create mechanisms to oversee the actions of agents (Brehm and Gates, 1997: 25-46; Johnson and Urpelainen, 2014: 178). When agents deviate from their assigned tasks, they can be held to account, reprimanded, or replaced. When the preferences of principals and agents diverge, the discretion of the agent often decreases (Johnson and Urpelainen, 2014: 187).

Principal-agent theories demonstrate the continued importance states have in shaping the work of international organisations. Some principal-agent work has also highlighted the internal complexity of international organisations and warned against treating them as single units (Park and Weaver, 2012: 91). For example, a principal-agent model has been used to understand the tactics of militant groups; wherein leaders of these groups, are constrained from leaving and are “organizational lifers”, while lower-level members have “the option of fading back into the population” (Abrahms and Potter, 2015: 317). These differences in commitment and longevity shape the goals of each. Lower-level members prioritise short-term gains, in contrast to leaders who are more driven by long-term strategy. With this, principal-agent theory can also be used to understand the internal dynamics of groups or organisations, as it shows the “disconnect between the preferences of leaders and the actual behavior of subordinates” (Abrahms and Potter, 2015: 317). International organisation can be conceptualised as agents working under their principals, that is, powerful donor states. Within these organisations there are additional relationships between leaders and subordinates, who can also be understood as being



principals and agents. In the case of UNHCR, there are divisions between staff members. One example, which will be discussed in later chapters, being between headquarters staff, who often write the Organisation's policies, and field-based staff, who implement them, to varying degrees.

Instructions from states can explain some shifts within international organisations, while other changes occur when there is available 'agency slack' (Hawkins, Lake, Nielson and Tierney, 2006; Pincus and Winters, 2002; Weaver, 2008). When agency slack exists, a space is created within which independent action by an agent can occur, despite it not being sanctioned by the principal. It occurs when agents either reduce the work they do on behalf of a principal, or prioritise their own preferences over those of the principal. It requires self-interest on the part of the agent, but also the inability, or choice not to, of the principals to enforce preferences on the agent. Principal-agent theory begins with the assumption that agents will pursue their own interests when possible. When international organisations are agents, the bureaucrats that work for them will seek to further their own careers with growth in budget and influence of their organisations playing a part in their professional objectives (Moe, 1996: 458-459; Oestreich, 2012: 6). Agency slack, the available scope for agents to pursue their own interests separate from their principals, most commonly occurs when "oversight is lax" (Oestreich, 2012: 6). In the case of urban displacement, states exercised only limited oversight on UNHCR on the issue between 1994 and 2009. When multiple principals exist (Johns, 2007), principal-agent theory suggests agents are less constrained in the way they function, as they can negotiate between principals and play them off against one another (Salehyan et al., 2014: 643; Nielson and Tierney, 2003). For UNHCR, the principals it is most concerned with are the small number of states funding its global operations, and, as will be discussed in chapter three, whose preferences they are keenly aware of at all times.

Principal-agent approaches also start from the assumption that agents, when possible, will seek to pursue their own interests over those of their principal, establishing a situation where 'mission creep' is perpetually occurring. Both

bureaucracies and individuals within organisations are thought to seek expansion above all else (Brehm and Gates, 1997: 15). Mission creep has been discussed in the literature as international organisations' tendency to "expand their activities to the borders of their domains and beyond" (Abbott et al., 2016: 21), including when new issues emerge or old ones are redefined (Kahler, 2009). The expansionist tendency has been criticised for leading to underperformance and a lack of accountability, as well as under the notion that 'less is more' (Einhorn, 2001; Gutner, 2005). As previous studies of UNHCR have shown (Hammerstad, 2014; Loescher, 2001; Loescher, Betts and Milner, 2008), and as chapter three will demonstrate, the Organisation has expanded extensively since its creation in 1950, in particular since the end of the Cold War. UNHCR's donor states had limited interest in and provided few explicit instructions on urban displacement, supplying agency slack from which the Organisation engaged in mission creep, until in 2009 it had established and enshrined in policy that it should be working in the urban areas of refugee-hosting states around the world.

Principal-agent theory is not limited to the study of state-organisation interactions and has also been used to understand other actors. Studies have included formalised, internationally recognised and largely accepted actors, such as diplomats (Jönsson and Hall, 2005), the United Nations Secretary General (Fröhlich, 2014), international bureaucrats (Johnson and Urpelainen, 2014), international courts (Alter and Helfer, 2010: 567), aid agencies (Dietrich, 2016: 98), military leaders (Weisiger, 2016), and private transnational regulatory organisations (Abbott et al., 2016: 4). Other studies have used principal-agent theory to study less formal and illegal actors and activities, for instance rebel groups and child soldiers (Beber and Blattman, 2013), child labourers (Chwe, 1990), terrorist groups (Byman and Kreps, 2010; Abrahms and Potter, 2015), and the external funding of rebel or insurgent groups (Salehyan et al., 2011; Salehyan et al., 2014). Principal-agent theory has been credited with explaining the role of interpersonal relationships, but not the role of information asymmetries between principals and agents (Hardt, 2013: 381). Agents often have expertise and specialist knowledge, which they are able to skew or withhold, giving them power in their relationship with their principal (Moe,

2005; Hardt, 2013: 381). In the case of the establishment of peace operations by regional organisations, friendship between individuals including ambassadors on peace and security committees, has been said to play a role in reducing information asymmetry, with increased sharing occurring due to “an emotional state-of-being rather than a fixed incentive” (Hardt, 2013: 386). The thesis will contribute to existing principal-agent approaches by showing the influence of personal relationships within UNHCR on the ways in which the Organisation responded to the challenge of urban displacement. The thesis will demonstrate how UNHCR’s expertise and specialist knowledge was key to enabling it to bring about a change in how it approached urban displacement, despite a lack of clear instructions or interest from states.

Principal-agent approaches suggest different ways of understanding policy change, interests, and relationships, rather than merely considering rational self-interest, and a clearly defined hierarchy between dominant states and subordinate organisations. In so doing they contribute to the evolving body of literature on agent-based, rather than state-centric, accounts of international organisations (Avant et al., 2011; O’Dell, 2012: 478). The use of principal-agent theory within international organisations (Hawkins, Lake, Nielson and Tierney, 2006), has been criticised however, for focusing on ways in which principals seek to control or punish agents (Beber and Blattman, 2013: 71). The attention given to methods of regulation stems in part from the belief that the authority of organisations is “always authority on loan” (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004: 22), and that states can take it away at any time. Insufficient attention has been paid to how agents act when given space for independent action (Oestreich, 2012: 7). Principal-agent theorists assume organisations will seek greater independent action, without sufficiently explaining why they would want such additional agency slack, or what they might do with it. The thesis will contribute to these debates by analysing a case where an agent, UNHCR, possessed space for independent action on an issue, urban displacement. It will show that when agency slack existed, UNHCR engaged in mission creep. However, to understand how they achieved this, it is important to consider constructivist insight on the

power and authority of international organisations, as well as the role of influential actors within UNHCR.

Principal-agent approaches have difficulty ascertaining “who the ‘real’ principal is” (Jönsson and Hall, 2005: 108). A range of different actors can be considered as a principal, including states, foreign ministers, a ruling party, or the electorate (Jönsson and Hall, 2005: 108). In the case of international organisations, questions arise if all states are their principals, or only powerful ones. Similarly, there are often various agents and principals interacting at any one time, which principal-agent theory “does not tell us nearly enough about” but only “explains one small slice of what all of us might agree is international relations” (Weiss and Wilkinson, 2014: 26). UNHCR can be considered as both an agent and a principal, depending on the relationship in question. For example, it may be the principal in regards NGOs it funds, but the agent when interacting with donor states. Agents themselves are often considered to be fairly heterogeneous (Abrahms and Potter, 2015: 334), raising questions as to the extent to which all principal-agent theorists consider the internal complexity of large organisations. As suggested earlier in the thesis, all too often international organisations are considered as a single actor, leading to “incomplete and inaccurate conclusions” (Park and Weaver, 2012: 91).

Principal-agent theory has been criticised for overlooking the role of transnational non-state actors (Park, 2009: 93; Keck and Sikkink 1998: 9). The role of non-state actors includes direct interaction with international organisations, but also attempts to influence organisations by seeking to inform the perceptions of powerful states (Park, 2009: 93). While it does draw attention to the self-interest of the individuals who make up organisations (Kiewiet and McCubbins, 1991: 24-25), principal-agent theory is nonetheless continually concerned with the creation of agency slack obtained from states, and understands the goals of international organisations in narrow terms: the expansion of budgets, mandates, powers, and the prolonging of careers (Brehm and Gates, 1997: 15). Understanding of the interests of international organisations is similarly narrow (Park, 2009: 93), as principal-agent theory

tends to emphasise the concerns prescribed by states and self-serving expansionism.

The achievement of goals and strongly held beliefs, including the saving of lives or maintenance of human rights, are also useful means of understanding the actions and motivations of staff of humanitarian organisations such as UNHCR. As will be seen in the case of UNHCR, belief in the rights of refugees is an important motivator for some staff members in their everyday work and is utilised as a justification for the Organisation's expansion. As will be discussed later, to understand how organisations such as UNHCR change, it is important to consider the way in which new issues are framed in relationship to their existing mandates. Principal-agent theory is based, however, on the relationship to and the role of states who, if they are able and wish to will curtail goals and the amount of slack available to organisations. Existing principal-agent theory does not provide sufficient analysis and explanation of how international organisations go about engaging in mission creep, or how this process reflects the broader interests of principals that have already been set out. The case of UNHCR and urban displacement demonstrates the existence of agency slack, as states did not have a clear or strongly held position on the issue, allowing the Organisation to engage in mission creep. The situation afforded UNHCR the opportunity to stretch its mandate to include working in urban areas, though it achieved this not by seeking to rewrite its formal mandate, as set out in the 1951 Refugee Convention, but by framing their expansion as a response to the changing global context of urbanisation. State-influence and the existence of agency slack can help explain why UNHCR engaged in mission creep, but it does not detail how the Organisation achieved this expansion. The following section will provide a means of explaining how mission creep took place, by utilising constructivist understandings of the authority and power of organisations, and demonstrating a way in which positivist and post-positivist approaches can be utilised together.

## 5. Authority, Power and International Organisations

State influence, agency slack and mission creep are useful tools in understanding why changes in policy and practice occur. However, state-centric and principal-agent theories give limited attention to how changes in policy and practice happen. It is worth considering constructivist insight in helping understand how change occurs, as it focuses on the role of culture, bureaucratic behaviour, norms, socialisation, and other issues more commonly associated with sociological theory (Adler, 1997; Desch, 1998; Hopf, 1998; Wendt, 1992; Wendt, 1995; Williams, 2003). Constructivism is concerned with ideas, as these shape “what actors want, who actors are and how actors behave” (Ba and Hoffman, 2003: 21). It combines a concern for norms, ideas, and agency with material interests, power, and structural constraints (Kınacıoğlu and Gürzel, 2013: 591; Cipler, 2015: 254; Seyedsayamdost, 2015: 516). Norms have been described as “collective intentionality” establishing “intersubjective frameworks of understanding” that include a “shared narrative about the conditions” that make governance necessary and identify the objectives that are to be accomplished (Ruggie, 1998: 870). Constructivism is interested in how “ideational factors and identity issues complement the systemic components of the world” (Kınacıoğlu and Gürzel, 2013: 591).

Similar to principal-agent approaches, constructivists are concerned with organisations’ independence and ability to shape the actions of states (Williams, 2011: 121). Unlike principal-agent theories, with its concentration on the assumed rational self-interest of international organisations, constructivists argue that self-interest can change and is shaped by beliefs and ideas held by both collective groups and individuals. The thesis will draw on both principal-agent and constructivist approaches, demonstrating that UNHCR’s response to the challenge of urban displacement was shaped by state influence and the rational self-interest of the Organisation to expand and ensure its relevance to donor states, as well as the beliefs of some staff, that UNHCR could better support displaced people in urban areas. Actors are understood to be in a constant state of learning and interacting, resulting in a large number of variables that can inform their actions and decision-making (O’Dell, 2012: 478; Oestreich, 2012: 8; Cipler, 2015: 254). Constructivism does not reject the

principal-agent belief about self-interested agents pursuing their own goals when agency slack is available, but it helps explain how expansion happens (Finnemore and Sikkink, 2001). The thesis contributes to efforts to both explain and understand changes in global politics (Hollis and Smith, 1990).

### 5.1 Types of Authority and Power

Among the most well-known and useful examples of constructivist engagement with international organisations is the work of Michael Barnett and Martha Finnemore (1999; 2004). In their work, they have outlined three types of authority international organisations possess (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004: 20-29), which will be used in the thesis to understand how UNHCR achieved a change in policy and practice in response to the urbanisation of displacement. One type is 'delegated authority', which "results in the unproblematic service of state interests" (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004: 22). 'Moral authority' is particularly noticeable amongst humanitarian organisations (Barnett, 2011), which often have a self-perception and self-presentation of being 'more moral' than states. They see themselves as concerned with universal goods rather than self-interest, coupled with a belief in impartiality, neutrality, and objectivity (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004: 23). Finally, 'expert authority' stems from specialist knowledge on a given issue or topic. Professionals and experts who make up international organisations believe that "as repositories of socially valued knowledge they can and should be trusted" (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004: 24).

Related to moral, delegated and expert authority, Barnett and Finnemore (2004: 29-34) outline four types of power possessed by international organisations. They include control of knowledge, ability to classify the world, ability to affix meaning, and the creation and diffusion of rules and norms. The four types of power offer a useful framework for understanding the way in which international organisations use their own power to bring about mission creep, including use of "structures, mandates, and norms" (Helfer, 2006: 659). More specifically this can relate to the way they view a given issue and the policies

they adopt. Social construction plays a vital role in bureaucratic international organisations' power over information and knowledge. As Barnett and Finnemore (2004: 30) state, "information or raw data may stay the same, but the way we interpret them (and act as a consequence) changes as meanings change... Those meanings are socially constructed and often are constructed by bureaucracies." As the leading collectors and interpreters of information, bureaucracies map social reality, and in doing so, simultaneously create rules that define and categorise the world. Power is also fundamentally about communication and the ability to shape the minds of others. In similar terms, communication power has been described as the ability to control, shape and influence the transfer and reception of information (Castells, 2007: 238-239). With this ability, information "decisively mediates the way in which power relationships are constructed and challenged in every domain of practice" (Castells, 2009: 4). An important power possessed by international organisations is their ability to turn raw information into knowledge, communicate effectively, and (re)construct social reality. The "control over information" that international organisations possess affords them a "basis of autonomy", and gives bureaucrats power over politicians (Barnett and Finnemore, 1999: 708-709). The four types of power will be utilised in the thesis to analyse how UNHCR's change in response to the urbanisation of displacement was achieved.

The creation of new categories of 'at risk' people demonstrates the power that comes from being able to turn information into knowledge. There has never been an in-depth study of the emergence of the category of the 'urban displaced' or 'urban refugees' before. However, extensive work has been completed on the case of 'climate refugees' or 'environmental refugees', when as a new category of displaced people, imagined through the use of information and ascribed urgency by organisations and academics through 'apocalyptic narratives' (Bettini, 2013: 63). Referring to this type of migration as a 'flood' (Bogardi and Warner, 2009), 'tide' (Christian Aid, 2007) or 'tsunami' (Knight, 2009) is an exercise in power, as it attempts to demonstrate a certain type of knowledge on the issue beyond providing information. These terms have been criticised for their "conceptual inadequacy in interpreting the complex structural causes and consequences of



flight”, as well as for being based on “stereotyping which involves disaggregation, standardization and the formulation of clear cut categories” (Zetter, 1991: 44). Another important construct is that of refugees as ‘vulnerable’, with specific categorisations of most ‘at risk’ refugees emerging later. During the 1980s and 1990s, an increased number of health specialists joined UNHCR’s ranks, adding to the largely legal background of the Organisation’s staff. With this diversification of staff, refugees were depoliticised, ‘medicalised’ (Pupavac, 2006: 2), and “classified not only according to their legal status, but also according to their vulnerability” (Glasman, 2017: 13). The shift in how refugees were understood led to an increasing categorisation of such people according to their needs and perceived vulnerabilities, with UNHCR’s activities reoriented to address ‘people with disabilities’, ‘unaccompanied minors’, ‘the elderly’, and other specific groups of displaced people (Glasman, 2017: 16). The representation of specific vulnerable groups often leads to a false depiction of individuals and their lives. For example, “while refugee women are represented as vulnerable, they are not always so”, and commonly act “definitive to their own struggle despite or in spite of contravening forces” (Baines, 2004: 100). For others, being a refugee can be a “transformative experience and practice”, while involving “empowering experiences” and a freedom from sociocultural norms present in a person’s country of origin (Korac, 2009: 7). This line of thinking contrasts with the tendency for refugees to be portrayed as “bewildered and bereft victims”, homogenised and “indistinguishable” as part of a “collective category of concern” (Gatrell, 2013: 10). Some refugees will, in turn, “emphasize their vulnerability for tactical reasons” (Gatrell, 2013: 242), for instance to better their access to resources or resettlement, demonstrating a form of agency unpopular with humanitarian organisations. As discussed in chapter one, the “rescue narratives that often underwrites international assistance” (Hyndman and Giles, 2017: 28), silencing of refugee voices (Malkki, 1995a; Malkki, 2015: 16; Harrell-Bond, 1986; Glasman, 2017), and portrayal of refugees as victims, often benefit organisations like UNHCR, while removing or obscuring the autonomy of refugees. Such actions leave an inaccurate public portrayal of what it means to be a refugee, as “*all* [humanitarian agencies] rely on a public which

will respond to media portrayal of extreme human suffering” (Harrell-Bond, 1986: 11).

In some cases, categorising people follows policy, rather than policy responding to real world circumstances (Bakewell, 2008). New categories are “legitimated and justified by bureaucrats with reference to the rules and regulations of the bureaucracy” and can have potentially life threatening consequences (Barnett and Finnemore, 1999: 710). For constructivists, the study of rhetoric, including the way in which statements and documents are linguistically constructed, is important and inherently linked to the control of knowledge (Kınacıoğlu and Gürzel, 2013: 591). Constructivist influenced outlooks on the creation of ‘new’ security threats have similarly highlighted the need for securitising actors to convince an audience of the necessity of a given course of action to legitimise the use of emergency measures, beyond the realm of ‘normal’ politics (Buzan et al., 1998; Roe, 2008). As a part of such a process, words play an important part in understanding power in international relations (Epstein, 2008). For example, whales have been reframed from being considered as ‘resources’ to ‘magnificent creatures’, allowing for anti-whaling discourse to promulgate and influence policies relating to international whaling (Epstein, 2008).

The focus on the role of ‘dominant voices’ by those who utilise a securitisation framework has, however, been criticised for relying on the role of certain actors, such as political leaders, and speech at the expense of other types of representation, including images (Hansen, 2000; Hansen, 2011; McDonald, 2008). Although the thesis utilises speeches by UNHCR’s High Commissioners, it also draws on the role of other voices above and below the Organisation, to provide a broader understanding of how urban displacement was framed and the impact this had on policy and practice. Changing discourse and associated norms towards one course of action or another remains affected by the will of states (Sandholtz, 2008b; Thomas, 2000). The historical norm against international assassinations, for example, stemmed from the belief of great powers that it reinforced their position and legitimised other forms of acceptable violence available to them (Thomas, 2000). The example of international

assassinations suggests that shifts in discourse influence international norms, though the desires of states also play a part. The creation of new categories of people, as an act of power, will be seen throughout the thesis as urban refugees are at various points cast as violent dependents and vulnerable people.

In addition to controlling the creation of knowledge about the world, international organisations have the ability to classify the world, affix meaning, and create and diffuse rules and norms. According to constructivist understandings, bureaucracies like international organisations are a means to order and (re)make the social world, and the way they do this is through the manufacturing, reshaping or application of social categories (Handelman, 1995: 280). Definitions and categorisation are extremely important in global issues and are an act of power, such as in forced displacement, with the expansion or not, of the category of who is a 'refugee' (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004: 32; Castles, 2002). The ability to classify the world is related to international organisations' ability to affix meaning to different aspects of society as events have no objective meaning and must be ascribed value by actors (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004: 33). International organisations act as framers and attach meaning to events, enabling them to set boundaries for action. As will be discussed in the thesis, UNHCR would affix a certain type of meaning to being a displaced person in an urban area, subject to change over time, and related to the Organisation's changes in policy and practice.

Constructivists have long been concerned with the capacity of actors to diffuse norms (Landolt, 2004) and give legitimacy to global rules (Weise, 2015: 103), with international organisations deriving power from their ability to create rules and norms. A norm "contains elements of both prescription—arising from the characterization of certain behavior as "proper"—and description—arising from the fact that the creation of "collective understandings" depends upon a certain amount of regularity of behavior among relevant actors" (Thomas, 2000: 106). Rules and norms act as guides for understanding shared narratives between actors about a given condition, and what is to be accomplished (Ruggie, 1998; Zelli, Gupta and van Asselt, 2013: 115). International organisations are often

“eager to spread the benefits of their expertise and often act as conveyor belts for the transmission of norms and models of good political behavior” (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004: 33). International organisations, as a result, have been labelled the ‘missionaries of our time’, as their staffs often believe their role is to spread and enforce global norms and values (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004: 33). Humanitarian and development organisations, such as UNHCR, are among those most likely to be labelled as ‘missionaries’. In the case of UNHCR and other humanitarian workers, it has been claimed that they “come to view themselves as the best advocates for refugees”, regarding host states as either lacking the capacity or ethics necessary to provide adequate support (Harrell-Bond, 1986: 13). The self-perception of humanitarian staff helps justify the expansion of the organisations they work for, as they “frequently legitimate and facilitate their own expansion and intervention in the affairs of states and nonstate actors” (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004: 33). As will be examined in the thesis, UNHCR’s expansion in response to the urbanisation of displacement was influenced by the belief among some staff members, including those within the research and evaluation unit, that the Organisation had to grow to address this new challenge.

Most studies of norm diffusion have focused on “good norms” such as the abolition of slavery or bans on landmines (Deibert and Crete-Nishihata, 2012; 354), but norms can also ‘regress’ by shifting back towards state-centric forms of control (Deibert and Crete-Nishihata, 2012; McKeown, 2009). There are different types of norms that can be internalised, including those that require action and those that allow for but do not necessitate action. In the case of global efforts to halt maritime piracy, when actors have been said to internalise a norm that does not require action, cooperation will occur on a case-by-case basis and be less stable (Struett et al., 2013: 99). For repression of piracy to be effective on a global scale, states have to move towards viewing anti-piracy provisions as duties, rather than as a choice for individual sovereign states to make (Struett et al., 2013: 99). There is therefore a difference in the extent to which states feel they need to adhere to a norm, with anti-piracy efforts being an example of norms states do not believe they are compelled to act upon. Cooperation is more likely to occur and be successful when actors internalise a norm that requires

action. As will be shown in the thesis, although a change in policy emerged in response to the urbanisation of displacement, a new global norm did not, which resulted in the inconsistent application of UNHCR's global policies in the field. By the end of 2009, an agreed upon 'collective understanding' of urban displacement had still not been achieved, despite a change in UNHCR's official policy. Many refugee-hosting states and some UNHCR staff would maintain a preference for encampment and opposition to the movement of displaced people to urban areas. Understanding the change in how urban displacement was viewed by staff of UNHCR, including the creation, labelling, and categorisation of a new group of vulnerable refugees, requires consideration of different types of authority and power the Organisation possesses.

## 5.2 The Importance of Internal Actors within International Organisations

A common issue shared by different theories is a tendency to homogenise international organisations as unitary actors. In reality, they are complex bodies consisting of a large number of departments, individuals, clusters of individuals and sections, each with their own opinions, ideas, histories and ways of interpreting the world. As will be seen in the thesis, to analyse and understand how UNHCR responded to the urbanisation of displacement it is vital to consider the part played by actors within the organisation. State-centric theories regard international organisations as having been created to serve the interests of states and rarely acknowledge the different ways in which state desires are interpreted or responded to within a given organisation (Mearsheimer, 1995; Baldwin, 1993). States also hold different levels of influence, can be grouped together based on regional interests, or support different agendas based on current events. Existing theories commonly fail to discuss the extent to which states differ in how they view problems and how they perceive the role and objectives of international organisations. The means through which international organisations function is commonly a compromise between conflicting interests, with the concerns of different states playing a role. Principal-agent and constructivist theories give greater credence to the complexity of organisations, but with a tendency to ignore internal intricacies, for instance the relationships

between departments, and how they impact changes in policy and practice (Abbott and Snidal, 1998; Thatcher and Stone Sweet, 2002). One constructivist study of environmental reform at the World Bank focuses on states, in particular the United States, with little attention to the role of different parts of the World Bank, other than its Executive Board (Nielson and Tierney, 2003). Barnett and Finnemore (2004) prioritise the importance of bureaucratic culture in determining how international organisations shift their position on an important policy challenge, but in so doing they homogenise the attitudes of the staff in large and diverse organisations. As will be seen later in the thesis, the response of UNHCR's different field offices to the challenge of urban displacement demonstrates how varied the response to a single global issue can be, even within the same organisation. When Barnett and Finnemore (2004: 18) explain the features of modern bureaucracies, one of the four features is impersonality. Bureaucratic culture guides rather than determines action, although the "rules and routines of a bureaucracy shape bureaucrats' view of the world, define their social tasks, shape their interests, and orient them in similar ways toward the world" (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004: 19). Bureaucratic culture places a substantial amount of attention on the importance of an organisation's shared culture, and much less on the agency or autonomy of individuals. Organisations, particularly large and diverse ones, will have multiple and overlapping cultures. Shared culture is certainly powerful, in particular in an organisation that possesses a strong sense of its own identity and position in the world, however focusing primarily on culture risks ignoring the people and departments that make up large organisations. These individuals and departments have their own histories, powers and views, which shape their work and how they understand the mandate of the organisations they work for.

Principal-agent and constructivist theories provide depth and breadth in considering both internal and external factors shape the way in which international organisations operate. The thesis will utilise insight from both sets of theories, especially the concept of 'agency slack' and expansion in response to internal interests and motivations, including strongly held beliefs. In particular, the thesis will demonstrate that UNHCR did not deviate or contradict the

interests of states, but rather stretched its existing mandate, exploiting the states' lack of a clearly defined position, to respond to the challenge of urban displacement as it saw fit. The thesis contributes to existing principal-agent theories by examining the way agents can expand, within the remit of their existing mandates set out by their principals, on an issue principals do not hold a clear position on. By drawing on constructivist approaches to power and the role of ideas, the thesis is able to show the way in which UNHCR made use of available slack, framing urban displacement as a challenge it had to respond to within its existing mandate as set out in the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951 Refugee Convention). To gain a fuller understanding of how this affects organisations such as UNHCR, it is necessary to consider the role individual agency plays in bringing about changes in policy and practice. This is most visible by looking at how research and evaluation units and organisational leaders work to shape policy and action of international organisations. The decision to focus on UNHCR's High Commissioner and its research and evaluation unit, IES/EPAU/PDES, emerged during the fieldwork and data gathering process of the thesis. Analysing the role of these two actors helps address some shortfalls in constructivist theorising, as it has been criticised for neglecting aspects of leadership such as the important relationship between leaders and followers (Dunne and Teitt, 2015: 373). While Barnett and Finnemore acknowledge powerful individuals can play a role in policymaking, the point is not elaborated sufficiently to be convincing. Different units or departments within organisations are said to sometimes develop their own subcultures and responses to rules (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004: 19), but the role these have on policy change is not addressed. Taken together, these factors include elements of power and authority, incorporating the concept of mission creep and developing constructivist understandings further by gaining a better grasp of the differences existing within organisations and the power of individuals.

## 6. Epistemic Communities and Research and Evaluation Units

Research and evaluation units within international organisations can play an important role in policymaking. Despite many large international organisations having teams devoted to policy-relevant knowledge production and evaluation, the specific role of these units has received little academic attention. As the case of UNHCR and urban displacement demonstrate, research and evaluation units can be essential for understanding how changes in policy and practice occur. The most relevant body of thinking for viewing the role of research and evaluation units is the work on epistemic communities, a concept originally introduced by John Gerard Ruggie (1975) and expanded upon by Peter M. Haas and Emanuel Adler in a special issue of *International Organization* (Haas, 1992b; Adler and Haas, 1992). Epistemic communities are networks of “professionals with recognised expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge within that domain or issue-area” (Haas, 1992b: 13). While members of epistemic communities may have different backgrounds, they tend to have shared beliefs (Haas, 1992b: 3). Research and evaluation units within international organisations often exist as part of these communities, and, in some cases help establish and lead them.

Epistemic communities are traditionally thought to be conducive with principal-agent theories, because epistemic communities are “guided by various kinds of normative and casual beliefs as well as circumstance”, different from the “behavior typically analyzed and predicted by rational-choice and principal-agent theorists” (Haas, 1992b: 20). Rather they fit alongside theorising on the role of ideas, identities, norms and non-state actors, similar to constructivist theorists (Ciplet, 2015: 254). Some authors have listed epistemic communities alongside transnational social movements, activists and profits-focused corporations, as examples of non-state actors involved in global problem solving (Plesch and Weiss, 2015: 202) engaged in issue framing and agenda setting (Death, 2015: 580-581). Together with these other actors, epistemic communities are said to make “essential contributions to global problem solving”, though they have debatably done little to tackle broader international challenges, including climate change, poverty or mass atrocities (Plesch and Weiss, 2015: 202). Epistemic communities however differ from networks of



activists or civil society groups, in part because they can involve a range of different actors, coalescing because of shared beliefs or a shared policy problem.

Epistemic communities have risen around different issues and involve a wide range of actors. The various empirical studies that have emerged have sought to understand the impact of the shared beliefs of these communities on resolving policy problems, addressing state opposition or disinterest, and their attempts to redefine state interests (Ruggie, 1998: 868). In so doing these studies face the challenge of separating ideational from institutional impacts, a “problem not unique to the epistemic community literature” (Ruggie, 1998: 868). Research and evaluation units within international organisations may face similar problems, as they have to balance changing attitudes with changing policies. An epistemic community developed around anti-genocide and the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) in the United States, including experts, activists and practitioners, as well as institutions such as the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and the United States Institute of Peace (Williams and Bellamy, 2012: 290). The community members engaged in activism, commented on existing policy, served as policy advisors and acted as a source of expertise for the government to use (Williams and Bellamy, 2012: 290-291). Epistemic communities have been discussed in relation to health governance, where they have played a role in shaping policymaking, while divisions have emerged between national and international communities (Lee and Chan, 2014). Other examples, show the diversity of epistemic communities, around global tobacco control (Mamudu, Gonzalez and Glantz, 2011) or the working group within the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI), characterised as another global health epistemic community (McNeill and Sandberg, 2014: 330), consisting of expert representatives from UNICEF, Gates Foundation, World Bank, WHO, and developing and donor countries (McNeill and Sandberg, 2014: 330). Another case is the Euphrates-Tigris Initiative for Cooperation (ETIC), established to promote development and cooperation in the Euphrates-Tigris region. The ETIC involved a mixture of scholars and professionals from Turkey, Syria, Iraq and other countries outside the region, and has been described as being “remarkably

consistent” with the notion of an epistemic community in terms of its role and composition (Kibaroglu and Scheumann, 2013: 296).

Studies have often centred on independent institutions within epistemic communities. Think tanks and institutions including the Carnegie Foundation, Hoover Institution, Brookings Institute, and Heritage Foundation, have “mobilize[d] expertise and coordinate[d] epistemic communities to influence global policies” (Mansbach and Pirro, 2016: 104). In the case of internal displacement, the Brookings Institute raised the profile of those displaced within their countries and helped bring about changes in international policy (Weiss and Korn, 2006). These are independent actors rather than components of international organisations, but research and evaluation units within larger organisations sometimes occupy a similar role. These units can lead epistemic communities, utilising their specialist knowledge and unique position within larger organisations, but with a greater degree of autonomy to critique current policy and practice. One example can be found within the World Bank and is discussed in the following section. Research and evaluation units draw strength from their position as insiders and outsiders to the UN system, similar to leaders like Francis Deng (Bode, 2014). In a similar way to Deng, research and evaluation units within international organisations exist at the border between the second and third UNs. As will be discussed in chapter three, the second UN is comprised of long serving and career staff members, while the third UN is made up of independent actors including NGOs and external experts, who work with and influence the states and staff that make up the first and second UN. Research and evaluation units within UN agencies are part of the second UN, but they regularly interact with and sometimes resemble parts of the third UN. The three UNs, and their importance for the study of UNHCR, will be discussed fully in chapter three. These categories will serve as a framework for understanding UNHCR and urban displacement in chapters four, five and six.

## 6.1 Research and Evaluation Units within International Organisations

This section will explore the study of research and evaluation units within international organisations, which will be used in the thesis to examine the role that UNHCR's research and evaluation unit played in shaping the Organisation's response to the challenge of urban displacement. It will concentrate on the case of the World Bank's research and evaluation unit, which is highly specialised and located within a prominent organisation, and regards itself as "one of the most influential centers of development research in the world" (World Bank, 2017). This case offers comparisons relevant to the thesis, as the World Bank and UNHCR are comparable in size, scope, and are both leading organisations for international poverty and displacement. Under Robert S. McNamara's leadership, from 1968 to 1981, the World Bank placed a great emphasis on its research output with the aim of having an "intellectual foundation for development" (Marshall, 2008: 39). In recent years the World Bank has further accentuated its epistemic role, as it engages in the production and dissemination of data and research, acting as a source of information, knowledge and authority on global development (Dethier, 2007: 469; Kopiński and Sun, 2014: 604). In so doing, it engages in a "lending, learning, and knowledge" (Dethier, 2007: 469) cycle highlighting the connection between the Organisation's operations, reviews and creation of knowledge on international development. For most staff, ideas and knowledge are the core contribution the World Bank makes to international development, which comes in part as a result of the Organisation's extensive research output (Marshall, 2008: 72-74). The majority of this is produced by the Development Economics Vice Presidency (DEC), which includes five teams. One of these teams, named the Development Research Group (DRG) or Development Economics Research Group (DECRG), accounts for the majority of spending and output (Dethier, 2007: 470-472). The DRG/DECRG is "virtually unmatched in terms of the volume, quality, and impact of its work on development issues" (Rao and Woolcock, 2007: 479).

The World Bank conducts hundreds of research projects and produces even more research publications every year (Dethier, 2007: 471). At its best its research work has been described as "truly outstanding" and "without parallel" (Marshall, 2008: 73), however DRG/DECRG output has also been criticised for its

similarities to positions the World Bank hopes to advocate, or has already adopted (Banerjee et al., 2006; Marshall, 2008: 143). Research and evaluation units within international organisations, such as DRG/DECRG, are affected by the policy objectives of their organisation, explicitly or otherwise. The independence of research and evaluation units also depends on their position and the autonomy granted by their organisation, which can change over time, as will be seen in the case of UNHCR examined in chapters four, five and six. The background of staff, and of research and evaluation units can be of significance. Throughout the history of the World Bank, economists have dominated the Organisation's research output (Markoff and Montecinos, 1993; Rao and Woolcock, 2007: 483-484), which has been criticised for producing specific types of research, often ignoring important political, cultural and social issues (Ferguson, 1990; Rao and Woolcock, 2007: 479-480). Similar to discussions around leadership, to be addressed later in the chapter, it is important to consider the role of individuals within research and evaluation units, their interpretation of organisational mandates and their personal histories, including education, which can shape the approach they take to their work. It is important to consider the extent to which research and evaluation units are challenged by others or, as in the case of DRG/DECRG, they establish a 'disciplinary monopoly' on research in their field (Rao and Woolcock, 2007: 479). Despite its dominance on development research, the World Bank is held accountable to states and people affected by its operations, through the Organisation's Inspection Panel (Buntaine, 2015; Fox, 2000; Fox, 2002; Hunter, 2003). Concerns raised by members of the third UN through the Inspection Panel have led to changes in the World Bank's lending (Buntaine, 2015; Clark, 2003). Meanwhile, the Bank Information Center partners with members of the third UN around the world to influence World Bank policy and activities, creating a degree of openness, accountability and responsiveness within the World Bank, that helps counter its possible monopoly on development research. As will be seen in the thesis, UNHCR does not dominate displacement research in the same way, although the Organisation is less open and accountable to beneficiaries and external researchers. The result of this is that policymaking is less driven by external

actors, as with the World Bank, and instead draws much more from internal actors, including its research and evaluation unit, IES/EPAU/PDES.

Individuals within research and evaluation units can play an important role in steering the policy and operations of the larger organisation they are located within. In the case of the World Bank, decisions on which development issues to focus upon are often influenced by the choices of individuals within its research and evaluation unit. Researchers and research managers are able to invest time in issues they feel lack sufficient existing evidence and knowledge (Dethier, 2007: 473), suggesting the important agency possessed by those in leadership roles within the DRG/DECRG, and their ability to initiate changes in policy and practice. The research staff are able to apply their research preferences due to the World Bank's engagement with "policy relevant" research and academic debates on development, as well as the "unwritten rule" that World Bank researchers should publish at least two articles in academic journals each year (Dethier, 2007: 475). These publications and engagements point to the important part the World Bank's research and evaluation unit plays in producing knowledge, setting agendas, and engaging with other non-state researchers. The literature on the DRG/DECRG does not utilise the idea of epistemic communities (Dethier, 2007; Marshall, 2008; Rao and Woolcock, 2007), however other work on the World Bank has shown the Organisation as a whole is part of various epistemic communities related to international development issues (Haas, 2016; Woods, 2006: 68). The World Bank is a central supporter, funder and "knowledge bank" (Stone, 2003) for the Global Development Network, which acts as a means of connecting policy and research institutes.

There is space for further study on research and evaluation units and the broader ideas about epistemic communities, as well as how these connect to wider debates relating to policymaking. Although largely neglected by theorists of international organisations, research and evaluation units play an important part in agenda setting, producing knowledge, networking around single-issue areas, and bringing change in policy and practice. They do this from the unique position of being located within a larger international organisation, while

maintaining close ties to members of the third UN and occupying a position from which they can, and often are, encouraged to critique current policies and practices. To answer the question of how change in policy and practice was achieved in response to the urbanisation of displacement, it is important to consider the role played by UNHCR's research and evaluation unit.

## 6.2 The Influence of Epistemic Communities and Research and Evaluation Units

Epistemic communities have a number of important pathways to accomplishing policy change on a given issue. These pathways will be used to examine how changes in policy and practice occurred in response to urban displacement in chapters four, five and six. Uncertainty over global issues, from nuclear war (Adler, 1992) to the depletion of the ozone layer (Haas, 1992a), has given rise to demands for information. The type of information that may be required includes the potential action of others, the likelihood certain events will occur, and the ability of a state to succeed when opposed by others, and is not guesswork or raw data, but expert interpretation of various physical and social phenomenon (Haas, 1992b: 4). Epistemic communities emerge as providers of this kind of information and "become strong actors at the national and transnational level as decision makers solicit their information and delegate responsibilities to them" (Haas, 1992b: 4). Their control over and interpretation of information, and creation of knowledge, give epistemic communities influence in international politics. They are able to shape the views of other actors through their interpretation of information. One example is the influence of an ecological epistemic community on the global restrictions placed on the use of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) due to their negative impact on the stratospheric ozone (Haas, 1992a). Like NGOs (Mills, 2005: 172), epistemic communities use information to play a role in spreading certain norms and helping to shape international agendas. Studies of norm entrepreneurship have centred on leaders including the UN Secretary General (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998), but the concept can be used in similar terms to understand those leading epistemic communities. Similar to leaders, research and evaluation units can occupy key positions within epistemic communities producing 'norm bandwagons' and

'norm cascades' (Sustein, 1996), whereby a given norm popularises and leads to changes in action. Once created, these norms have to be accepted and internalised by other actors, and then followed by the creation of, and belief in, a new approach or policy. Epistemic communities are "a major means by which knowledge translates into power" (Cross, 2013: 138). Counter-epistemic communities can also arise, blocking or undoing recent policy changes (Youde, 2005). In the case of the South African Government and its challenge to international efforts to control HIV/AIDS, a counter-epistemic community emerged to provide policy recommendations and scientific expertise to support the Government's position, and challenge established thinking and approaches (Youde, 2005).

The role of epistemic communities extends directly to policymaking, specifically their ability to shape research agendas. Their expertise and prestige on a given topic is said to make them "ideal for consultation by decisionmakers" and their influence in turn makes them "important driver[s] of new ideas" (Santos, 2015: 57), which also applies to research and evaluation units as they hope to shape policymaking within their organisation. As the case of DRG/DECRG has shown, research and evaluation units dominate research and knowledge in a given field, making them the natural place for policymakers to turn. Epistemic communities can influence the decisions of states by either setting out and explaining the interests of other states, or articulating the key aspects of an issue, allowing decision makers to be better informed when asserting their own interests (Haas, 1992b: 4). The beliefs and policy preferences of states are affected by recommendations of epistemic communities, which they can utilise to influence other states. The influence of epistemic communities also shows points of weakness in state-centric and principal-agent approaches to international organisations. They demonstrate ways in which states can be uncertain in their actions and prone to external influence, rather than simply dictating action to organisations as part of a one-way hierarchical relationship.

Knowledge-based experts can be credited with influencing four policy processes: policy innovation, policy diffusion, policy selection and policy persistence (Lee

and Chan, 2014: 308). The thesis is primarily concerned with the innovation, diffusion, and selection of UNHCR's policies related to urban displacement. Knowledge-based experts influence the policy process by shaping how issues are understood and consequently influence the choice of one set of norms and rules over another (Adler and Haas, 1992). Experts are important at multiple stages in the policymaking process, from the formation of new policies to deciding which policy direction is most appropriate. During the 1990s there emerged an epistemic community involving scholars, activists and policymakers who sought to address the issue of small arms and light weapons (Garcia, 2006; Grillot, 2011: 536). Researchers expressed problems resulting from these weapons being readily available, which "served to generate knowledge and heighten awareness", in turn prompting the UN to release resolutions and reports and make call, for increased restrictions (Grillot, 2011: 536). In the case of health governance, rights to health and access to medicine emerging from health-focused epistemic communities have been integrated into formal international law (Lee and Chan, 2014: 309). This suggests the work of epistemic communities feeds directly into international policy, and research and evaluation units can influence the policies of their organisations. Although a new global norm was not created in response to urban displacement, the thesis will show that UNHCR's research and evaluation unit and the epistemic community it led, nonetheless generated knowledge and influenced policymakers, resulting in a change in the Organisation's approach.

### 6.3 Research and Evaluation Units and Leadership

One criticism of epistemic community literature is that it does not give sufficient attention to the internal dynamics of these communities. Epistemic communities possess differing levels of influence, and therefore, "the more internally cohesive an epistemic community, the more likely it will achieve a high degree of influence on policy outcomes" (Cross, 2013: 138). It is important to consider the connection between leaders and research and evaluation units within the broader epistemic communities in which they work. The people at the head of international organisations often help create epistemic communities. One person



who has done this effectively, around the issue of HIV/AIDS, was Peter Piot, the executive director of UNAIDS from 1995 to 2008. Piot in turn used this epistemic community to maintain his centralised power and loyalty among top officials (Harman, 2011: 433). The HIV/AIDS epistemic community helped reinforce Piot's legitimacy (Harman, 2011: 435), which demonstrates a way leaders gain legitimacy from their position and personal background. Piot and UNAIDS' success in positioning and maintaining HIV/AIDS as an exceptional issue was based on being inclusive, involving a broad spectrum of actors (including states, civil society, and the private sector) and maintains legitimacy, rather than focusing on a narrow network of leaders and communities of experts (Harman, 2011: 434-435, 443). The strategy adopted by UNAIDS contrasts with that of the Global Program on AIDS (GPA), who had failed to elevate the issue as they drew "on a narrow epistemic community and failed to broaden the alliance to include wider parts of the international system" (Harman, 2011: 443). A similar issue has arisen in water governance, where the limited integration between the epistemic and legal water communities has resulted in a lack of action on the ground (Mukhtarov and Gerlak, 2013: 318). In comparison, other global health issues (such as malaria and tuberculosis) have utilised similarly broad alliances as that for HIV/AIDS, while lacking a clear head organisation and leader (Harman, 2011: 443).

There is an important intersection between leaders and broader alliances with other actors, working together as part of an epistemic community. Change in policy and practice is often realised when both the organisation's leader and research and evaluation unit, with the support of a broader issue-focused epistemic community, seek similar outcomes. Research and evaluation units can generate ideas and supporting evidence, while leaders can use their position to help bring about a change in policy. The role of leaders in international organisations will be considered in the following section. The thesis will demonstrate that to understand how change in policy and practice was achieved in response to the challenge of urban displacement, it is vital to consider the work of the urban displacement epistemic community, including the part played by UNHCR's research and evaluation unit. In explaining the dramatic shift in

policy that occurred, particularly in the lead up to the release of the 2009 Policy discussed in chapter six, the thesis will argue it is vital to consider the relationship between UNHCR's leader, High Commissioner António Guterres, and its research and evaluation unit, PDES.

## 7. Leaders in International Organisations

The role of leaders in international organisation is often neglected within state-centric, principal-agent and constructivist approaches. Despite this, leaders play an important role in shaping responses to new issues and guiding expansion when agency slack exists. According to Robert W. Cox (1996: 205), "the quality of leadership may prove to be the most critical single determinant of the growth in scope and authority of international organizations". Leadership has been defined as the interaction between two or more group members involving the expectations and perceptions of members as well as structuring or restructuring of a situation, while leaders have been described as 'agents of change' who set the goals of others and the path for these goals to be achieved (Bass, 2008: 25). Leadership will be used to help analyse how change in policy and practice was achieved by UNHCR in response to the urbanisation of displacement, with a focus on the part played by the three individuals who were High Commissioner between 1994 and 2009.

Though it has been claimed that the role of individual leaders is "an important lacuna in IO [international organisation] research" (Oestreich, 2012: 18), there is in fact a body of literature within the study of international organisations, which focuses specifically on the role of leaders and leadership. Much of this centres on the role of leaders within the UN system, in particular the UN Secretary General (Chesterman, 2007; Gordenker, 1967; Gordenker, 2010; Kille, 2006; Rivlin, 1993). Although there have been suggestions that the Secretary General has limited powers (Chesterman, 2015: 505), they, like other leaders, can have an important role in shaping the direction and policymaking of their respective organisation. The role of the Secretary General can include trying to get others to invest in a cause beyond their own short-term self-interest (Thakur, 2006: 333).

To do this they must articulate “a bold and noble vision for a community” and establish “standards of achievement and conduct, explaining why they matter and inspiring or coaxing others to adopt the agreed goals and benchmarks as their personal goals” (Thakur, 2006: 333). The role of the Secretary General has been said to occupy a relatively minor position, with the Secretary General having “few powers, minimal staff, and his or her influence... [being] greatest in orphaned conflicts and marginal causes” (Chesterman, 2015: 505). Others have used the head of specialist parts of the United Nations as their subject of inquiry, such as UNAIDS and UNCTAD (Harman, 2011; Smith and Taylor, 2007), the Special Representative and Deputy Special Representatives of the Secretary General (de Coning, 2010), or the ‘empowered individuals’ who operate within the UN but are not permanent employees of it, such as international civil servants (Bode, 2014; Bode, 2015).

The literature has emphasised the personality of individual leaders and their background, including nationality and leadership styles. These considerations include looking at those in formal leadership positions, such as Secretary Generals, and informal types of leadership, including ‘norm entrepreneurship’, which can be employed by individuals in various positions, including diplomats, bureaucrats and chairpersons (Bauer, 2006; Chesterman, 2007; Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998; Kille, 2007; Rushton, 2008). Leaders act as norm entrepreneurs when they bring about new norms, while followers collectively form a ‘tipping point’ of actors acceding to the prescription of new norms (Dunne and Teitt, 2015: 388). For this to happen there must be acceptance by followers, for leaders cannot rely on hegemony or resources alone (Jesse, Lobell, Press-Barnathan and Williams, 2012; Kindleberger, 1981; Pedersen, 2002). Within the context of an international organisation such as UNHCR, the followers may all be members of the organisation below the High Commissioner, or those working for a specific branch, such as the Division of International Protection or a regional bureau. To achieve successful followership, followers must not only accept leaders, but also depend on the “credible inclusion of the interests and/or ideas of potential followers into the leadership project” (Schirm, 2010: 197).

Attention should be paid to the individual, rather than simply the position they occupy, as ‘people matter’ (Weiss, 2013). Different leaders possess different qualities and skills impacting how and why they lead in the manner they do. There is a connection between individual leadership and international agency (Reinalda, 1998; Oestreich, 2007; Hochschild, 2010). Some of this echoes previous discussions about the important role individual personalities can have in politics (Greenstein, 1967) and constructivists’ priority of ideational over material factors (Seyedsayamdost, 2015: 516), but applied to the context of international organisations. For example, a constructivist analysis of the World Bank and poverty alleviation in the 1970s (Finnemore, 1996), has been criticised for emphasising too strongly the role of norms and the Organisation’s leader Robert McNamara, at the expense of the Cold War context and the fear of Communist expansion (Seyedsayamdost (2015: 516-517). Different leaders display various means of guiding those under them (Hermann, 2005), with some exhibiting expansionist tendencies (Kille and Scully, 2003), while others seek the maintenance of the status quo. In the case of diplomacy, it is often the face-to-face interaction between two or more prominent individuals who bring about important changes in international politics (Holmes, 2013). As will be seen in the thesis, close relationships between different actors helps contextualise how change in policy and practice occurred within UNHCR in the years leading up to the release of the 2009 Policy. At this time, the newly appointed High Commissioner, António Guterres, developed a close working relationship with PDES, which informed how UNHCR’s leader viewed urban displacement and increased the prominence of the issue within the Organisation.

Numerous types of personal characteristics and backgrounds have been discussed as having an impact on leadership. One example of this is gender, which has included discussions about the masculinity or femininity of leaders, and how this impacts their work. Work on the link between gender and leadership has included discussions of the role of supposedly ‘feminine traits’, such as being ‘nurturing’ or ‘mothering’, can have in leading conflict resolution (Steady, 2011; Hawkesworth, 2012). There have been critiques of the supposed importance of displaying qualities such as ‘masculine’ charisma, instead of

highlighting the importance of expertise, skills, and legitimacy (Harman, 2011: 444). Various authors have discussed the way in which women are centred upon as recipients of international aid or used in the measurement of the achievement of UN goals (Pietilä and Vickers, 1994; Winslow, 1995; Jain, 2005), while obstacles facing women achieving senior leadership positions within the UN or other international organisations have been ignored (Haack, 2014). As many leaders within the UN system are appointed, the gatekeepers who assign them play an important role (Haack, 2014: 51), and can favour certain types of people or leadership styles over others. In a study of the linguistic style of Hilary Clinton over a twenty-one year period, it was claimed that “her language grew increasingly masculine over time” before being “more feminine” as part of a “shift in the self-presentational strategies advised by her campaign staff” (Jones, J. 2016: 625). Such work suggest that when considering leaders it is important to contextualise them as individuals and how their own background impacts the way in which they lead. It is also important to remember that, as the case of Hilary Clinton suggests, personal features can be utilised and shifted to fulfil political goals. In the thesis, the background of UNHCR’s High Commissioners is considered when explaining their personal motivations and the Organisation’s response to urban displacement, in particular Ogata’s “political science background” (Hammerstad, 2014: 92) and Guterres’ experience as a senior politician.

### 7.1 The Authority and Power of Leaders

The literature on leadership in international organisations is concerned with the way in which leaders frame issues, bring about change, and the types of power and authority they possess. The focus of this work has been on the ability of leaders to set and pursue independent paths for their organisations (Chesterman, 2007), act as norm or policy entrepreneurs (Kennedy, 2007; Rushton, 2008), and bring about policy change (Hall, 2016: 6). Effective leaders often play a key role in an organisations’ ability “to expand its tasks and enhance its authority”, while maintaining a strong link to the development and evolution of the world system (Cox, 1996: 317). The capacity of leaders of organisations

within the UN system to expand and maintain authority is based on their ability to maintain effective relationships with other actors, including states (Cox, 1996). As will be discussed in the thesis, UNHCR must continually negotiate its relationship with states, and while states' interest in urban displacement between 1994 and 2009 was limited, the High Commissioners were aware of and responsive to state interests.

The authority of leaders has also been said to stem from their relationship with the norms and values of the organisations they work for. In the case of UN officials, their positions are based on "representation of UN values, standards and norms", rather than possession of specific knowledge or resources (Hochschild, 2010: 30). For example, the Secretary General has been able to use legal-rational explanations and persuasion in their interaction with global actors (Johnstone, 2003). The Secretary General is a "key member of an interpretive community associated with the implementation and elaboration of charter-based law", which they influence through persuasion, while their political leverage is reinforced by their "ability to draw upon values and principles embodied in the UN Charter" (Johnstone, 2003: 441-442). The involvement of former Secretary General Kofi Annan in matters of human rights provides an example of persuasive power, such as his calls in August 1999 on Indonesia to accept an intervention force, after a majority of East Timorese voted in favour of independence (Johnstone, 2003: 449-450). While there is an important "normative authority of the office" (Johnstone, 2003: 442) of the Secretary General, other leaders within the United Nations system equally derive influence through the use of norms. Former President of the World Bank, Robert McNamara, was a key 'moral entrepreneur', regarding the diffusion and popularity of the anti-poverty norm in the 1970s, when poverty became understood as a key part of development (Finnemore, 1996: 2, 90). Under McNamara's leadership, the World Bank's "influence, its visibility, and its credibility among development experts made it an effective proselytizer for poverty concerns" (Finnemore, 1996: 90). As mentioned previously, the expert authority of international organisations has been discussed within constructivist literature (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004), but, as the discussion here

demonstrates, leaders can utilise persuasion and harness the values and standards of their position and organisation to bring about change in approach or policy. As will be discussed in chapter six, High Commissioner Guterres framed UNHCR's need to expand its work in urban areas as a necessary action under the Organisation's core mandate to ensure the protection of displaced people.

In the case of the Special Representatives of the Secretary General, three types of leadership have been outlined as important to understanding their authority and power: leadership in conflict, leadership in administration, and leadership in ideas (Fröhlich (2014: 183-185). These show a range of areas in which leadership can be expressed within international organisations. Special Representatives, focused on a specific theme or issue such as sexual violence or children in conflict, can be considered as "ex officio norm entrepreneurs" due to their position as independent and high profile advocates for the principles of the Charter of the United Nations (Fröhlich, 2014: 184). Francis Deng held a similar position from 1992 until 2004, when he was the first United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons. In this role, Deng exercised intellectual leadership over the issue of internal displacement, relating to three factors (Bode, 2014). The first was his position as both a UN insider and outsider, as he was part of the UN Secretariat but also the world of non-governmental organisations, academics, and independent experts. The second was his social and career background, which made his personality suited for leadership on internal displacement. The third was the effective way he framed the issue of internal displacement at an opportune time. These serve as important means of understanding the power of leaders, but they can also be extended to aiding the understanding of the role of research and evaluation units. As will be seen in the thesis, UNHCR's EPAU and PDES similarly used a form of insider and outsider positioning, as well as effective framing of the issue of urban displacement. High Commissioner Guterres did not hold the position of an insider and outsider, but did possess a suitable background and was effective in his framing of urban displacement at an opportune time.

Personal background and the way leaders choose to frame issues are important to their role (Bode, 2014). In the case of the democracy promotion efforts of the UN Secretary General Boutros-Ghali, his personality, role as a norm entrepreneur, and ability to draw attention to an issue, were each important to understanding his effective leadership (Rushton, 2008: 100). In the case of relationships between the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and NGOs, “intrepid personalities on both sides have worked against the grain to enlarge political space for marginalized people”, including the heads of bodies such as Uganda Debt Network and Malawi Economic Justice Network, who have relied upon their “charismatic leadership” (Scholte, 2012: 197). Similar interactions between NATO and NGOs have also been “based on the personality of individuals involved in interactions”, rather than a more formal relationship (Gheciu, 2012: 102). UNHCR’s High Commissioner Ogata’s background has been highlighted in discussions of her impact on the Organisation. Although she had been a professor of international relations and a diplomat, upon becoming High Commissioner in 1991 she had “no direct experience with refugees” (Loescher, 2001a: 273). Ogata’s background, as will be discussed further in chapter four, helps understand the strategy she adopted while leading UNHCR and the way in which she positioned displacement issues. In particular, studying Ogata’s time as High Commissioner not only highlights the influence state interests had in UNHCR’s changing approach to urban displacement during the 1990s, but also the Organisation’s willingness to engage in mission creep.

Framing has long been important in sociology and concerns how issues are given attention, assigned meaning and displayed to an audience, in addition to being interested in ways in which the presentation of an issue impacts how information is processed. Those who utilise framing often draw on the work of Erving Goffman (1974) and theories relating to agenda setting (McCombs and Shaw, 1972). Framing is concerned with how leaders make claims and argue for certain courses of action, including effectively drawing attention to a given problem and providing possible solutions to it. Framing should be done in a way that meets existing ‘acceptable standards of discourse’ (Johnstone, 2003: 446). Leaders can play an important role in bringing about a change in rhetoric,



including how an issue is talked about and presented (Hall, 2016: 11), by utilising 'quiet' or 'soft' diplomacy with 'going loud' and making themselves known as a leading figure on a given issue (Harman, 2011). State-centric means of understanding international organisations focus on material power, although leaders are able to exert influence over issues, even when they lack this power. In the case of the UN Secretary General, their ability to influence is based on how well they are able to persuade others to see and join their position (Johnstone, 2003: 441-442). As mentioned previously in the chapter, international organisations can frame issues in a certain way, but the way in which this is done and to what ends, often comes down to the organisation's leader. The way a leader does this, can be the result of their interaction with their organisation's research and evaluation unit, as will be demonstrated in chapter six. To understand how UNHCR changed in relation to the urbanisation of displacement, it is necessary to consider how the High Commissioner, in particular, framed the issue.

Both leaders and followers are strategic in their use of information. Informational agents, including policy advisors, bureaucrats, and international fact-finding commissions, often simultaneously serve multiple principals with different preferences (Johns, 2007). In addition to being followers of their principals, these actors exhibit leadership qualities within the area they work in. The presence of multiple audiences impacts the amount or kind of information an agent communicates with their principals (Johns, 2007: 270). High-level bureaucrats, for example, may deliberately withhold or bend the information they provide to their principals (Johns, 2007: 268). The "great deal of discretion" (Johns, 2007: 269) these bureaucrats have in communication with their principals is a form of power they can exercise, showing ways that those within international organisations are not simply subservient to those who establish and fund their operations. Analysing the specific role of leaders to control, utilise, and shape information expands on Barnett and Finnemore's (1999; 2004) claim that the control of knowledge and ability to classify the world are important powers held by international organisations.

The literature on leadership is useful for understanding how changes in policy and practice can happen when agency slack exists and an organisation wishes to engage in mission creep. It shows the important role individuals, particularly those in powerful positions, can have in shaping the way in which an organisation acts, in particular the way in which leaders engage in issue framing and their ability to shape the behaviour and actions of other actors. The ability of leaders to frame issues or act as experts is often dependent on the support of specialist research and evaluation units, particularly when leaders are not experts in the issue their organisation addresses. Research and evaluation units can shape the thinking of leaders and provide the supporting evidence necessary for leaders to frame issues. The thesis builds on leadership literature by combining emphasis on the influence of leaders and their ability to frame issues with a consideration of how they are supported, or contradicted, by research and evaluation units. The analysis will draw on both the literature on leaders and epistemic communities, along with concentrating on two actors internal to UNHCR, the High Commissioner and IES/EPAU/PDES, to better understand how the Organisation responded to the urbanisation of displacement.

## 8. Conclusion

The chapter has provided a conceptual framework for understanding *why* and *how* UNHCR responded to the urbanisation of displacement between 1994 and 2009. It begins by establishing the rational interests that can be used to comprehend UNHCR's interest in urban displacement, beginning with state influence. Although states did not often express strong preferences regarding urban displacement, UNHCR was nonetheless aware of the interests of its donor states and ensured it addressed urban displacement inline with these broader preferences. When states did assert clear direction to UNHCR on the issue, such as the United States did in 2009 and which is discussed in chapter six, the Organisation followed the instructions given to them. State influence alone does not provide sufficient explanation for UNHCR's response to urban displacement, which further benefited from agency slack and mission creep. State-UNHCR relations can be conceptualised through the use of principal-agent theory, with

states limited interest in urban displacement providing agency slack, providing the opportunity for UNHCR to determine for itself how it should respond to the urbanisation of displacement. UNHCR's subsequent move to work increasingly in urban areas can be understood through the concept of mission creep, wherein international organisations will seek to expand the remit of their work. Change in UNHCR's case can be understood as having emerged from a combined adherence to state interests and an attempt to increase the Organisation's scope and work. For some members of staff, this expansion would enable UNHCR to better meet its core mandate for the protection of displaced people.

The chapter has set out a means of analysing how changes in policy and practice occur. It utilises Barnett and Finnemore's explanation of the authorities and powers possessed by international organisations, with a focus on UNHCR's ability to control knowledge, classify the world, and affix meaning. Barnett and Finnemore's approach has been criticised for tending to homogenise international organisations as unitary actors and does not adequately explore the internal forces that help explain how their policies and practices change. The chapter has proposed utilising work on epistemic communities, research and evaluation units, and leaders, to address this criticism. These actors are considered in each of the three empirical chapters of the thesis, including how they interact with one another and other actors, and utilise the authorities and powers outlined previously. The importance of different actors is explored further in the following chapter, which outlines the existence of 'three UNs', and the importance of actors internal to UN organisations, as well as those 'above' and 'below' them. This acknowledges the pressures that UNHCR experienced from both above and below, while suggesting that international organisations can "develop considerable autonomy from their external environment" (Chwioroth, 2008: 482). By examining the way they interact and influence one another, it is possible to see how a change in policy and practice can emerge from research and evaluation units, and how they utilise epistemic communities to achieve this.

## Chapter Three - Policymaking in the United Nations

### 1. Introduction

The chapter will present an overview of policymaking in the United Nations system. Speaking in 1955, United Nations Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld stated, “Everything will be all right - you know when? When people, just people, stop thinking of the United Nations as a weird [Pablo] Picasso abstraction and see it as a drawing they made themselves” (Quoted in: Saputell, 2011: 7). Hammarskjöld articulated the complexity often surrounding the UN system, which over half a century later, remains a vast bureaucracy “whose size and structure still bewilder many of its own employees” (Saltmarsh, 2011). It is expanding further still in response to new global challenges such as climate change and HIV/AIDS. To understand how and why parts of the United Nations respond to new issues, it is necessary to consider the important influence different actors have and how they interact with one another. All policymaking in the United Nations includes different actors, including various UN organisations and bodies, states and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), although the extent to which these actors are involved and interact with one another varies considerably.

Chapter two discussed the important role research and evaluation units and leaders can play, as part of epistemic communities, on the policymaking of international organisations. In considering the way in which UNHCR’s High Commissioner and IES/EPAU/PDES operated within a constellation of actors both internal and external to the Organisation that shaped policymaking, the chapter details the ‘three United Nations’ (‘three UNs’) framework, which provides a means of understanding the role of actors ‘above’, ‘below’, and ‘within’ the UN. Chapter three begins by detailing the three UNs framework, before focusing on the impact of each of the three parts of the UN system: the Security Council, General Assembly, and the Programmes and Funds. The Security Council is the ‘most powerful’ part of the United Nations, while UNHCR

is directly accountable to the General Assembly and is one of the Programmes and Funds. The final section of the chapter will use the three UNs framework to examine policymaking in UNHCR, stressing the interaction between them. Particular focus on the connection between members of the second and third UN, identified as the most relevant for the thesis, and the emergence of an urban displacement epistemic community. In contrast to analysing only the influence of external or internal actors on international organisations, the three UNs framework allows for a clearer understanding of the way that a diverse range of actors interacts and supports one another, and how this leads to a change in policy. The three UNs framework will be used in the following three chapters to explain UNHCR's response to the challenge of urban displacement.

## 2. The Structure of the Three United Nations

The United Nations is composed of six Principle Organs<sup>1</sup> that contain a number of organisations and institutions that comprise the 'UN Family' (Baehr and Gordenker, 2005; Luck, 2006; Peterson, 2006) including the Programmes and Funds and the Specialized Agencies<sup>2</sup>, which are primarily funded by contributions from states. To understand policymaking in constituent elements of the UN, the thesis utilises a framework that encapsulates all of the actors involved in the process of institutional change. The conceptualisation of the three UNs is based on an understanding and distinction between the UN of member states, the UN of the secretariat, and the UN of closely associated actors. The three UNs framework originated with the work of Inis Claude (1956; 1996), who reported that the first UN was an intergovernmental arena comprising representatives of states, while the second UN consisted of international civil servants and professional secretariat. The first UN has a number of roles, including acting as a conduit for the desires of great powers, a means for states

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<sup>1</sup> These are the Security Council (UNSC), the General Assembly (UNGA), the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the Secretariat, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the Trusteeship Council, which has been inactive since 1994 when Palau, the final United Nations trusteeship territory, gained independence.

<sup>2</sup> For a full list of the Programmes and Funds and Specialized Agencies: <http://www.un.org/en/sections/about-un/funds-programmes-specialized-agencies-and-others/index.html> [Accessed: 1 January 2017]

to cooperate, a place to legitimise actions, a constructor of an international social world, and a governor of a global society of states (Barnett and Finnemore, 2009), the first UN concentrating on the role of states and the way that they impact policymaking.

The second UN is characterised as a “distinct sphere, consisting of career and long-serving staff members who are paid through assessed and voluntary contributions” (Weiss, 2011: 129). The independence of this ‘international civil service’ is enshrined in Article 100 of the Charter of the United Nations, which declares that the Secretariat “shall not seek or receive instructions from any government or from any other authority external to the Organization” (UN, 1945: 18). Former Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld also stressed that while states make decisions, UN officials could and should seek to work for collective good, rather than follow state interests (Weiss, 2011: 129-130). The number of United Nations employees has risen dramatically, from 300 in 1946 to over 44,000 in 2016 (UN Careers, 2016). Individual agencies often employ thousands of staff; for example, in 2014 the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) had over 1,000 staff in its New York Headquarters and over 5,000 in the field (Rogers, 2014). The growth in UNHCR is more marked, with the majority occurring in the twenty-first century. At the end of 1951, UNHCR employed 33 officers and the Organisation was so small that “the entire staff could gather around to sing carols while the High Commissioner played the piano” (Loescher, 2001: 50) at the office Christmas party. Fifty years later this had risen to over 5,000 staff worldwide (Loescher, 2001: 1), and by October 2016 it had further increased to 10,700 people (UNHCR, 2016d). The second UN is comprised of a multitude of individual actors who are independent, though some, particularly long-serving permanent staff, remain aware of and influenced by state preferences.

Expanding upon Inis Claude’s definition of the first and second UN, a third category emerged from the work of the United Nations Intellectual History Project in response to the growing number of NGOs and unofficial groups interacting with the United Nations. The expanded framework, which included a

third UN, provided a “sharper way to depict interactions in and around the world organizations”, and responded to the neglect by some researchers of the “amorphous, fluid, and ill-defined group of actors who engage with the United Nations at various levels, at various times, and on various issues” (Weiss et al., 2009: 123-125). The third UN includes “nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), external experts, scholars, consultants, and committed citizens” who are independent from, but work closely with and provide input to, the first and second UN (Weiss et al., 2009: 123). Similar to the role of think tanks, philanthropic groups, and elites in shaping statecraft (Dodds and Elden, 2008; McGann, 2007; Parmer, 2002; Parmer, 2004; Smith, 1991), the third UN demonstrates the part NGOs, prominent individuals, academics, and others, can have in influencing policymaking in international organisations. The key characteristic of the third UN is its independence from states and the UN secretariat, as it consists of ‘outsiders’ complementing the ‘insiders’ of the first and second UNs (Weiss et al., 2009: 128). Members of the third UN have been present throughout the UN’s history, with NGOs’ involvement enshrined in Article 71 of the Charter of the United Nations (UN, 1945: 13-14). The participation of NGOs in the United Nations has expanded considerably since the signing of the UN Charter in 1945. In 2006, 72 per cent of World Bank-funded projects involved NGOs, while over 3,000 NGOs had consultative status within ECOSOC in 2013 (Jönsson, 2013: 3-5). Although NGOs have a formal involvement in the United Nations system, membership of the third UN is both “temporary and contingent” for some actors, as the “importance of particular individuals and organizations in multiactor policymaking or project execution varies by issue and over time” (Weiss et al., 2009: 128).

The first, second, and third UNs can play eight roles that are relevant to policymaking (Weiss et al., 2009: 128-129):

Providing a forum for debate; generating ideas and policies; legitimating ideas and policies; advocating for ideas and policies; implementing or testing ideas and policies in the field; generating resources to pursue ideas and policies; monitoring progress in the march of ideas and the implementation of policies; and occasionally burying ideas and policies.

The degree of involvement of each of the three UNs within these various roles differs depending on “how new a particular policy approach is at a given moment, and how much it flies in the face of strong national or regional interests and received wisdom” (Weiss et al., 2009: 129). The formulation of new ideas and the creation of new policies and practices form an important part of what all three UNs do. The concept of there being three UNs is a useful means for considering the role and importance of different actors on policymaking within the United Nations, from those ‘above’, ‘below’, and ‘within’. Each of the three UNs help shape a single issue to varying degrees, as can be seen in the case of global economic governance. In this case there are “four main clusters of somewhat autonomous activity”, which is the “United Nations proper” (including regional commissions and the principal organs), the specialised agencies, the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, and the World Trade Organization (Weiss and Thakur, 2010: 157). The organisations within each of these four clusters are “comprised of their governing bodies (the First UN), secretariats in addition to field offices and activities throughout the world (the Second UN), and accredited NGOs that function as lobbyists or executing partners (the Third UN)” (Weiss and Thakur, 2010: 157). The characterisation of the United Nations as a ‘triptych’ (Jolly et al., 2009: 5), a term commonly used to describe a piece of art involving three distinct but related panels, has been criticised. Describing the first, second, and third UN as separate, “highlights the boundaries between” them and “makes it possible to separate them”, and “arguably impedes us from capturing the processes of decision-making in the UN more dynamically” (Bode, 2015: 52). Focusing on the separation between the three UNs detracts from the myriad ways in which they overlap and relate to one another, which interaction often results in a change in policy and practice. To address this critique, it is important to consider when and the way in which members of the first, second, and third UN interact with one another, as well as occasions when actors shift between these categories. The thesis will consider the connection between the three UNs through the case of UNHCR’s response to the challenge of urban displacement. In this case, policy change stemmed primarily from within the second UN, with support provided by members of the third UN. The thesis



demonstrates the prominence of the second UN in policymaking. To understand UNHCR's response to urban displacement, it is necessary to focus on the role played by specific actors within the second UN, in particular UNHCR's research and evaluation unit and the High Commissioner, and how they interacted with actors from the third UN as part of an epistemic community.

### 3. The First UN

This section will focus on the role of the first UN in policymaking within the UN system. Focusing on the first UN highlights the role that states can have on different parts of the United Nations, relevant to the thesis' contention that states played a role in shaping the way UNHCR responded to the challenge of urban displacement, albeit limited at times due to a lack of clear engagement or direction on the issue. The influence of the first UN is most apparent in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). The Security Council is primarily charged with preserving international peace and security, and as a result, has received a substantial amount of attention in the literature on international organisations (Cronin and Hurd, 2008b: 3; Weiss, 2006: xiii). It is composed of fifteen states including five permanent members<sup>3</sup>, and provides a clear example of the different levels of influence possessed by states. The permanent members can exert influence through their ability to veto resolutions, while wealthy states can attempt to influence non-permanent members through financial aid, which "increases during the years in which key diplomatic events take place (when members' votes should be especially valuable)" (Kuziemko and Werker, 2006: 905). Non-member states can also participate in formal meetings and informal consultations, the numbers of which have risen from 117 in 1988 to 532 in 2002 (Luck, 2006: 19).

The General Assembly is the UNs' "chief deliberative, policy-making, and representative organ" (UNGA, 2000c: para. 30/32), determining the ten non-

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<sup>3</sup> The permanent five members are China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. The remaining ten members are elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms and represent different geographical regions of the world.

permanent members of the Security Council, and composed of 193 member states (as of July 2017). The General Assembly does not “directly create international law rules binding on member states”, but it maintains an important role in “norm-creation and norm adjustment” (Peterson, 2006: 5). This influence on norms can come in the form of “sponsoring diplomatic conferences that draft global multilateral treaties on particular subjects or convening global conferences or summits to address particular issues”, or “urging states to adopt new norms, as in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, or may be reminding them of previously-established ones, as in the Declaration on the Inadmissibility of Intervention into the Domestic Affairs of States” (Peterson, 2006: 100). The General Assembly, or ‘Parliament of Nations’ (Kennedy, 2006), has two core functions: the first is as a deliberative body, including the creation and adjustment of norms, and the second as the definer of the UN system (Peterson, 2006: 2-7). States have refused to transfer legislative authority to the General Assembly, therefore preventing it from creating binding international law. The General Assembly remains relevant as it can “reorganize much of the UN structure through its authority over the budget, its ability to reorganize the Secretariat, and its power to create its own subsidiary bodies” (Peterson, 2006: 6). Though all states have equal voting in the General Assembly, different states have varying levels of influence (Keohane and Nye, 2012: 47). The reason for this is that policymaking does not only occur in formal meetings and deliberations (Alger, 1995: 8; Byrne, 2011; Krause, Knight and Dewitt, 1995: 173), but in informal meetings and discussions in “UN corridors” (Weiss and Thakur, 2010: 7). Some states are in a stronger position to be able to have their ideas spread than others, including those participating in regional and other caucusing groups, for example the Group of 77 (Peterson, 2006: 43-50), although all have an equal vote within the General Assembly. In both the Security Council and General Assembly, the role of states is paramount. The decisions, policies and viewpoints decided by the Security Council and General Assembly, influence directly or indirectly the work of other parts of the United Nations system, including UNHCR.

States have different agendas that they address through the General Assembly, as demonstrated in the 2014 General Debate of the 69<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly, where differing policy priorities and actions of states within the General Assembly were evident. Leaders are afforded fifteen minutes to address any issues they wish. An analysis of the seventeen largest powers by the Canadian International Council (OpenCanada Staff, 2014) demonstrated the clear focus on issues of terrorism and extremism by the United States and the United Kingdom, in contrast to the development issues featured prominently in the speeches made by the representatives from Canada, Japan, and South Africa. It is telling that the person who exceeded the fifteen-minute voluntary guideline by the longest amount of time was the then President of the United States Barack Obama, who spoke in excess of thirty-five minutes. Although not binding on policy, these addresses are important avenues for agenda setting and create opportunity for each state to clearly express its policy priorities. The General Assembly illustrates the important role members of the first UN have in policymaking as states both make up the General Assembly, with its evident powers, while at the same time restricting it, in order to maintain sovereign authority.

The first UN plays a role in policymaking in the Programmes and Funds, one being UNHCR. Within the UN, the Programmes and Funds and the Specialized Agencies collectively account for the majority of the humanitarian and development work the United Nations carries out. The main difference between them is the way in which they are funded: the Programmes and Funds are financed through voluntary contributions and non-assessed contributions, while the Specialized Agencies are autonomous organisations working within the United Nations system who receive both voluntary and assessed contributions. The Specialized Agencies<sup>4</sup> have developed independently from other parts of the

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<sup>4</sup> The Specialized Agencies are: World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), International Labor Organization (ILO), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), International Maritime Organization (IMO), World Meteorological Organization (WMO), World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), International Civilian Aviation Organization (ICAO), International Telecommunication Union (ITU), United Nations

UN system, often with exemption from UN examinations (Baehr and Gordenker, 2005: 33-34), and as a result are highly individual and can “compete or act as independent fiefdoms” (Baehr and Leon Gordenker, 2005: 34). Unlike the independence possessed by the Specialized Agencies, other parts of the UN system such as the Programmes and Funds, “owe their existence to specific resolutions of the UN General Assembly and in principle could be dissolved by it” (Baehr and Gordenker, 2005: 33). The fact the Programmes and Funds, including UNHCR, can potentially be disbanded by states puts them in a vulnerable position with regard to long-term planning, thus making them more susceptible to the wishes of states.

Differences in methods of funding have a significant impact on the operations and policymaking of the Programmes and Funds and Specialized Agencies, which will be discussed later in the chapter. In practical terms, it means, for example, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has greater financial stability year-to-year than the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), or UNHCR. Lack of financial stability means that organisations including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNHCR must devote more of their time to fundraising than the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), as well as ensuring their work receives the support of donor states. When organisations such as UNHCR engage in mission creep, this is done in part to remain relevant to states. The Specialized Agencies make their own budgetary decisions, which may or may not be in line with the guidelines and priorities of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). The Programmes and Funds however have to submit their reports to ECOSOC before they are addressed again in the committees of the General Assembly (Baehr and Gordenker, 2005: 34-35).

There are currently eleven Programmes and Funds within the United Nations system.<sup>5</sup> The majority of the Programmes and Funds were formed during the

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Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), Universal Postal Union (UPU) and World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

<sup>5</sup> The Programmes and Funds are: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

first thirty years following the establishment of the United Nations and remain in operation today.<sup>6</sup> Many of the Programmes and Funds cooperate with one another either through being members of consortiums, such as the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) or the Cluster Approach, in an attempt to foster improved coordination between the United Nations and other organisations in addressing specific issues during humanitarian emergencies. The majority of the clusters are led or co-led by one of the eleven Programmes and Funds. UNHCR is one of the lead organisations for protection, shelter, and camp coordination and management (Loescher, Betts and Milner, 2008: 108). Utilising the framework of the three UNs assists in understanding the shifts in policy that occur within the Programmes and Funds, demonstrating the important influence of states. When organisations such as UNHCR engage in mission creep, they do so by balancing a desire to increase their own powers and remit for work against states' concerns regarding challenges to and loss of their authority.

When considering the role played by states in shaping policy and practice, the focus is often placed upon high-income states, including those that are among the main donors to UNHCR. However, low and middle-income states can, often collectively, exercise power through the Programmes and Funds. Their influence can be seen in the case of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) founded amid decolonisation in 1964 to “create a forum in which the more prosperous member countries [of the United Nations] would come under pressure to agree to measures benefitting the less-developed countries” (Nye, 1973: 334). Though UNCTAD was intended as an event, it

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(UNHCR), World Food Programme (WFP), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and United Nations Human Settlement Programme (UN-Habitat).

<sup>6</sup> The closure of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) in 1947 and the creation of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) are exceptions. UN Women was formed by the merging of four parts of the United Nations: Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN- INSTRAW), Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI) and United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

evolved into a permanent organisation under the General Assembly. It does not have an autonomous budget or a supreme governing body, which would help protect its funding and prevent it from being closed. As the “intervener between poor and rich states” (Walters, 1973), representatives to UNCTAD from low and middle income countries play an important role in shaping its strategy and policymaking. UNCTAD has “traditionally been the one UN agency which is regarded as the multilateral site where the global South might articulate its needs and problems and where international development is firmly on the agenda” (Smith and Taylor, 2007: 1).

However, this “Poor Nations’ Pressure Group” (Nye, 1973) has seen the interests of high income states shape the direction of UNCTAD’s response to issues within its purview. Considering the influence high-income states had on UNCTAD assists in understanding the similar impact donor states have on UNHCR. The influence of states has come in the form of limiting action or policy, with UNCTAD being said to stand for ‘Under No Condition Take A Decision’ (Smith and Taylor, 2007: 2). With the growth of neoliberalism in the 1980s, increased control over UNCTAD’s policies was exerted by high-income states, particularly the United States. In 1984 a ‘reflection group’ was created by various wealthy states to reassess their relationship with UNCTAD (Smith and Taylor, 2007: 71-72). The “chief target of the US campaign was the director general of UNCTAD, Gamani Corea”, whose leadership the United States did not support (Lavelle, 2001: 38), favouring instead Alister McIntyre (Smith and Taylor, 2007: 72), who upon replacing Corea, “quietly removed several of UNCTAD’s more anti-Western executives from front-line positions... [And] eventually ‘reassigned’ approximately thirty senior staff” (Lavelle, 2001: 39). The case of UNCTAD suggests the power states have over organisations, but it also highlights that leaders potentially have enough influence to compel powerful states attempt to have them removed. As was discussed in chapter two, leaders can play an important role in policymaking, and as will be demonstrated in chapters four, five, and six, the High Commissioner played a vital role in shaping the way in which UNHCR responded to the challenge of urban displacement.

Following the removal of many key UNCTAD staff deemed to be in opposition to neoliberal interests, a more favourable leadership was built. The removal of anti-neoliberal views exhibits one of the roles of the three UNs discussed previously in this chapter, namely the ability to ‘bury ideas and policies’ (Weiss et al., 2009: 128-129), with members of the first UN doing so in favour of the promotion of neoliberalism. The new leadership was chosen on the basis of being acceptable to the United States Government and “those persisting in contrary views left the secretariat either voluntarily or involuntarily” (Lavelle, 2001: 40). The change in leadership led to a shift with the Organisation, which came to a head at UNCTAD IX in 1996, during which a “definite sea change in UNCTAD’s ideological orientation became clear and obvious” (Smith and Taylor, 2007: 77). The changing nature and focus of UNCTAD offers a clear example of the importance of states, particularly high-income states, on agenda setting and in shaping policy within the Programmes and Funds. Members of the first UN, particularly high-income states, remain crucial to understanding policymaking within the Programmes and Funds. As will be seen during the following analysis of UNHCR’s response to the challenge of urban displacement, states play an important part in shaping the direction of international organisations, and can curtail organisations from engaging in mission creep, if they feel it is in their interests to do so. International organisations are aware of these restrictions, and, as such, engage in mission creep while ensuring their work is viewed as relevant to states. The case of UNCTAD demonstrates the potential influence leaders can have, to the extent powerful states would seek to have them removed from their roles. The thesis will similarly demonstrate the importance of state influence on UNHCR, the way UNHCR chose to frame urban displacement, and the important role of the High Commissioner.

#### 4. The Second UN

The second UN impacts upon the policymaking of international organisations, particularly those within the UN system. Of the large number of individual components of the Second UN, the United Nations Secretary General is arguably the most influential, giving insight to the ability of leaders to shape policy and

practice. Though possessing no formal powers over the Security Council, the Secretary General can address the Security Council and request that they act, or debate a given issue. For example, following the independence of Timor-Leste in 2002 the Security Council created a UN Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET). Two years later it was the Secretary General who requested that the Security Council reduce UNMISET's size and extend its mission for another year (Sandholtz, 2008a: 146). In 2004 a high-level panel, appointed by Secretary General Kofi Annan, issued a report calling for a reorganisation of political relations within the UN system. The report, 'A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility', called for an enhanced role for the Security Council, far beyond that envisioned by the founders of the UN, as a reconsideration of the relationship between the Security Council and the broader members of the UN (Cronin and Hurd, 2008a: 199). Though the Secretary General cannot force the Security Council to follow a course of action, for example extending the term of UNMISET, the Secretary General will nonetheless recommend solutions and place items on the agenda. The Secretary General maintains an important position in shaping the way issues are viewed, placing items on the international agenda, and recommending courses of action for different parts of the UN (Chesterman, 2007; Gordenker, 1967; Gordenker, 2010; Kille, 2006; Rivlin, 1993; Thakur, 2006).

Studies have shown that several Secretary Generals played an important part in promoting solutions to international disputes and conflicts (Bordreau, 1991; Kille and Hendrickson, 2010; Newman, 1998). The Secretary General influences the international agenda by using their "administrative powers related to supervising reports, planning budgets, and staffing decisions as conduits of influence" (Kille and Hendrickson, 2010: 510). Further, the Secretary General is "imbued with moral authority" and uses this to balance the individual interests of states (Kille and Hendrickson, 2010: 510). The capacity of different Secretary Generals to utilise the authority and powers of their post rely on other factors, including personal traits, which impact their ability to shape policy (Gordenker, 1967: 320). As Leon Gordenker (1967: 320) has noted: "No matter how dispassionately or scientifically the office of Secretary-General is studied, it still



is occupied by a human being with a will. The human qualities of the Secretary-General contribute to his influence.” Any analysis of the position “must go beyond the institution of the Secretary-Generalship to the actual person serving as Secretary-General” (Claude, 1993: 25). The leadership style of distinct Secretary Generals does have influence, be it Dag Hammarskjöld as ‘the visionary’, Kurt Waldheim ‘the manager’ or Kofi Annan ‘the strategist’ (Kille, 2006: 5). Distinct leadership styles result in the Secretary General, at different points, being a ‘norm entrepreneur’ (Johnstone, 2007) or a ‘policy entrepreneur’ (Kennedy, 2007), suggesting both the importance of leadership in ‘the most impossible job in the world’, and how leaders might shape policy. As suggested in chapter two of the thesis, leaders play an important role in policymaking in international organisations.

Prominent members of the second UN, such as the Secretary General and the individual leader of the Programmes and Funds, often help bring about change to policy and practice in conjunction with other actors. An example of this influence can be seen in the case of the UN’s shift in approach to issues of sexuality and gender identity. From its founding until 2008, the UN did not address issues related to sexual and gender minorities. In December 2008, a statement (and later an opposing statement) in support of sexual and gender minority rights was read in the General Assembly. On 17 June 2011, the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), an intergovernmental body of forty-seven member states, was the first UN body to pass a resolution on human rights violations based on sexual orientation and gender identity (Human Rights Watch, 2014). The resolution, ‘Human Rights, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity’ (UNHRC, 2011), was followed by the 24 September 2014 passing of another resolution (UNHRC, 2014) by the same UN body condemning violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and sexual identity. In June 2016, UNHRC voted in favour of appointing an Independent Expert focused on discrimination and violence based on sexuality and gender identity (UNGA, 2016; UNHRC, 2016), the first time such a position had been created. UNHRC is made up of state-representatives and its role in bringing about a shift in approach to sexual and gender minority issues in part demonstrate the role of the first UN.

Policymaking in the United Nations on sexual and gender minority issues highlights the role of members of the second UN. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussain, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights since September 2014, made statements in favour of passing the resolution condemning violence and discrimination perpetrated on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. When voting on a resolution on sexual orientation and gender identity, states were divided, with twenty-five in favour, fourteen against, and seven abstaining. The leadership of UNHRC supported the passing of the resolution (Human Rights Watch, 2014). The previous United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, and the then current UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, also spoke in support of greater protection for sexual and gender minorities. On 26 July 2013, Pillay, then High Commissioner for Human Rights, launched the Free and Equal campaign, a yearlong public information effort to help address homophobic and transphobic violence and discrimination. Growing concerns for the protection of sexual and gender minorities, shows the ability of members of the second UN to advocate ideas and policies (Weiss et al., 2009: 128-129), and their attempts to influence policymaking when members of the first UN were divided.

The case of the UN's changing view on sexuality and gender identity issues also involved members of the third UN. The passing of the September 2014 resolution by the UNHRC came after pressure from NGOs. In June 2014, at the 26th Session of the Human Rights Council, a statement issued by International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA), with the co-sponsorship of 13 NGOs and the further endorsement of over 500 other organisations from over 100 countries, called on UNHRC to adopt a new strategy. Specifically, it called on UNHRC to "adopt a resolution that ensures regular reporting, constructive dialogue and sustained, systemic attention to the breadth of human rights violations" on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity (UNGA, 2014). The case discussed here shows the role members of the second UN, in particular those in leadership positions, can have in policymaking. Additionally, it demonstrates the way the

three UNs support each other, with the second and third in this case legitimating the ideas and policies supported by some members of the first.

Similar to the case of UNCTAD discussed previously in the chapter, other examples demonstrate the role of the second UN and the importance of leaders. One example of this can be seen in the case of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), which was launched in 1996 to strengthen the UN's response to HIV/AIDS and bring together the now eleven co-sponsoring organisations (Knight, 2008). Since this time, HIV/AIDS has received more attention than other global health issues, including tuberculosis and malaria. In contrast to HIV/AIDS, the global alliances challenging these other health issues have lacked "a clear institution and, more importantly, a clear leader" (Harman, 2011: 443). As such, "leadership is an integral component to the establishment and longevity of issue-specific coordinating agencies such as UNAIDS" (Harman, 2011: 443). The role of Peter Piot, UNAIDS's first Executive Director, demonstrates how this can be achieved through the balancing of 'quiet'/'soft' diplomacy with 'going loud', and establishing oneself as a leading authority figure (Harman, 2011: 443-444). Piot's leadership also relied on important relationships with key 'gatekeepers' to the global response to HIV/AIDS, including those both within and outside the UN system (Harman, 2011: 433). The gatekeepers, including those in senior positions of the World Bank, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM) and the United Nations, have "helped shape how states, intergovernmental organizations, and civil society react to HIV/AIDS" (Harman, 2011: 433). These gatekeepers demonstrate the important role members of the second UN, such as strong leaders, can play in shaping policy and retaining an issue on the global agenda. It is clear that leadership in the United Nations is important and extends beyond the role of the Secretary General. The importance of leaders will be revisited later in the chapter in relation to UNHCR's High Commissioner, as well as in the three following chapters on the Organisation's response to urban displacement. As will be seen, throughout its history leadership has played an important role in UNHCR's policymaking.

UNAIDS has benefited from strong leadership, but other agencies have not. One case being the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which might have been more effective at overseeing international development programmes if it had been led by a globally recognised development specialist (Browne, 2011: 19). Instead, the leader of UNDP has traditionally been chosen on the basis of their administrative skills, including their ability to raise funds from major donors. In a hierarchical system like the United Nations, UNDP “would have needed a development specialist of global renown as deputy Secretary-General for UNDP to have been regarded as the central “brain” of the development system” (Browne, 2011: 19). Despite attempts to create a “director general” for development, such plans have not materialised (Browne, 2011: 19). The case of UNDP’s leadership reflects the specific skills associated with successful leadership discussed in chapter two, including personal traits and ability to control and utilise information. As will be seen, the individuals chosen to be the High Commissioner for Refugees have varied throughout UNHCR’s history, but they were not chosen exclusively for being strong administrators. Chapter six will demonstrate that a shift in UNHCR’s policymaking on urban displacement corresponded with António Guterres becoming High Commissioner and ‘going loud’ on the issue. It will also demonstrate that while Guterres, similar to UNDP leaders, was not a displacement specialist prior to becoming High Commissioner, he developed a close working relationship with UNHCR’s research and evaluation unit, which possessed the expert knowledge he lacked. The relationship between Guterres and PDES is key to understanding the eventual change in UNHCR’s response to urban displacement, and the Organisation’s adoption of a new policy in 2009.

## 5. The Third UN

The third UN has been involved in policymaking within the United Nations system, although this has varied considerably between different parts of the UN. As the part of the United Nations most associated with ‘high politics’, state-centric theories to international organisations consider the actors within the third UN as having a limited impact on the Security Council’s policymaking.

There is no official role for such actors, although many in the third UN do provide information and build understanding among Security Council members. One way they do this is through the 'Arria formula', allowing for informal meetings between members and invited people or organisations considered beneficial to hear from (UNSC, 2006: 19). These meetings began in 1992 when Ambassador Diego Arria of Venezuela, then President of the Security Council, arranged for Security Council members to meet with a Bosnian priest in the Delegates Lounge, at the time the crisis in Yugoslavia was unfolding (James, 2003). The Arria formula involves, "a member of the [Security] Council... [inviting] the others to meet, outside the Council Chamber, with one or more independent experts for a candid exchange of views on a pressing issue before the Council" and allows for "more direct input from civil society and encourages Council members to reflect on the complexities of the choices facing them" (Luck, 2006: 123). In 2014, seven Arria formula meetings were held (Langmore and Farrell, 2016: 71), and these meetings have gone from being "considered to be quite innovative" to being "standard operating behavior" (Luck, 2006: 123). While the Arria formula demonstrates increased access to the Security Council for members of the third UN, the Security Council is still only opening "itself in a very limited way to the outside world" (Mertus, 2009: 117).

International humanitarian and development NGOs have played a role in expanding the scope of the UNSC into domestic restructuring or peace building. Among the strongest examples of the influence of NGOs on the Security Council was the passing of Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and Resolution 1314 on Children in Armed Conflict (Willetts, 2011: 61). Both, passed in 2000, were approved shortly following Arria formula meetings. Women, particularly activists from war-affected countries, played an important part in the unanimous adoption of Resolution 1325, by relaying their experiences of war to Security Council members (Muna and Watson, 2001: 11-13). Arria formula meetings have now become an "integral part of NGO-UN relations" (Martens, 2005: 48-49), and the adoption of Resolution 1325 provides a case of members of the third UN influencing states.

NGOs have played a part in shaping Security Council policy, with “agency heads, regional experts, and even field based NGOs” being “invited more frequently in recent years to address the Council” (Luck, 2006: 34-35), during both formal and informal sessions. However, the extent to which this has operational significance is questionable (Luck, 2006: 34-35), and ultimately, “the most influential actors in setting the Council’s agenda are policy-makers from the United States and its allies” (Graubart, 2009: 155). In 2004 the Secretary General’s Panel on Eminent Persons on United Nations Civil Society Relations, states that the Council had “greatly enhanced its informal relations with civil society” (UNGA, 2004: para. 95, 45). In the field, NGOs play an important role in development, monitoring human rights, and providing humanitarian assistance (Weiss, 1999), at headquarters, the Security Council “frequently consults informally with or hears from independent experts and NGOs that have experience, expertise, or analysis that could inform its deliberations” (Luck, 2006: 76). The influence of members of the third UN on the Security Council can be seen today, but in the early 1990s, the ‘marriage of convenience’ that existed between the United Nations and humanitarian NGOs, was largely limited to the Programmes and Funds (Natsios, 1995: 80). As will be discussed later in the chapter, Programmes and Funds including UNHCR have a long working relationship with NGOs, which flourished during the 1990s.

The third UN can be seen to play a more important role in the policymaking of the General Assembly than the Security Council. For example, since 1950 NGOs have had access to the General Assembly documents and seating arrangements, as set out in the NGO Statute (Willetts, 2011: 57). Despite this, NGOs still have no political rights in the General Assembly, such as formal participation rights within regular sessions. When this issue came up during the 1993-1996 review of the Statute, the United States delegation was strongly opposed to NGO participation within the General Assembly, despite the support of lower-income countries, as they saw it as providing an unwanted precedent for participation in the Security Council (Willetts, 2011: 57). The retention of the status quo in this case not only highlights a limitation to the policymaking impact of NGOs within the General Assembly, but also the continued dominance of powerful states,

including the United States (Willetts, 2000: 198-199). Considering influence in such terms is too narrow, as through their presence in the same building, NGOs are able to exercise influence (Willetts, 2011: 57), speaking with delegates in the corridor or in the restaurant, building up personal relationships and participating ad hoc in special sessions, allowing for a degree of informal influence on policymaking. NGOs also work with parts of the General Assembly in a more formal capacity, for example working closely with the Special Committee Against Apartheid, a subsidiary of the General Assembly, and in the drafting of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities. The Conference on Disarmament and UNHRC, subsidiaries of the General Assembly, have both engaged with NGOs on a permanent basis (Willetts, 2011: 58-59). In 2005, Renate Bloem, President of the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations, was the first NGO representative to address a plenary meeting of a regular session of the General Assembly. Bloem's work helped lead to the introduction of new language in the Outcome Document of the September summit, which points to the influence prominent members of the third UN can have on policymaking.

NGOs can "now reasonably expect to exercise influence on all policy-making in the General Assembly on sustainable development questions, women's issues and human rights" (Willetts, 2011: 60). The interaction between NGOs and the first and second UNs has "greatly expanded" since the mid-1990s and their role "in UN politics is now institutionalized" and they can increasingly act as a "catalyst for policy and change" (Weiss et al., 2016: 8). The case of indigenous rights also shows the role of members of the third UN with the policymaking process, as "NGOs advanced the UN Declaration on Minorities and the Declaration on Indigenous people" (Weiss et al., 2016: 227), with approximately one thousand NGOs attending the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights. At this event they conducted their own proceedings and engaged in "the specific criticisms that state delegates at the conference had agreed to avoid" (Weiss et al., 2016: 227). They also "teamed up with interested governments" (Weiss et al., 2016: 227), demonstrating the connection between the third and first UNs on issues such as indigenous rights.

Indigenous people represent another group within the third UN, including individuals, experts, and NGOs, who have “managed to secure a strong voice” within the UN (Xanthaki, 2007: 1). In 1977 over 150 indigenous representatives attended a UN conference on discrimination, and since then, have achieved significant success in placing indigenous rights on the UN agenda, establishing the Working Group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP) in 1982, and advocating for the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007. Not only the product of the work of NGOs, this change came about as a result of a global indigenous social movement (Barelli, 2016), achieved through “tight cooperation, intense lobbying and deep knowledge of the [United Nations] system”, which allowed them to create new participation opportunities and exercise “further influence of the decision-making processes” (Xanthaki, 2007: 2). Although the extent to which indigenous people have been able to shape policy is debateable, their voice has risen, and through involvement with other members of the third UN and by lobbying sympathetic members of the first UN, the position of indigenous rights has increased and policy to protect these rights have promulgated within the United Nations.

Members of the third UN exercise influence through their involvement in United Nations conferences or summits. In these venues members of the third UN can impact agenda setting and policymaking for the Programmes and Funds, as well as other parts of the UN system. Between the 1970s and 1990s, “the UN institutionalized the conference system as a transmission belt for ideas in order to respond to common, global concerns” (Weiss, 2005: x). NGOs involvement is associated with policymaking, as “probably the paramount benefit NGO participation provides is information about policy options” (Raustiala, 1997: 726). States are aware of the “biases” of major NGOs, but benefit from the information and evaluations they produce, allowing them to maximise the amount of policy information and research they receive, while minimising their own expenditures (Raustiala, 1997: 727). In international environmental conferences and institutions, “NGOs act as conduits for ideas and political pressures”, resembling “lobbyists in a domestic setting” (Raustiala, 1997: 728).



This highlights the ability of members of the third UN to influence policy, in part through their capacity to produce research and evaluation work. As will be seen in the following chapters, in the case of urban displacement a similar type of work was produced within UNHCR, albeit with the support of members of the third UN.

The influence of the third UN in United Nations conferences is issue and actor dependent. In the case of the United Nations World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), NGOs influence was “reduced to less relevant issues and how this influence turns out to be highly selective: while the views and demands of a few NGO actors are successful, more diverse views from the broader NGO community become neglected” (Dany, 2014: 419). When NGOs participate in international negotiations, many “adapt their strategies and professionalize in a way that does not necessarily enhance their influence”, or “change the substance of their demands” (Dany, 2014: 420). NGOs ability to influence policymaking at events such as the WSIS are affected by internal and external structures, including the agenda being set by the host organisation, varied access often based on states’ goodwill, and the fact that “certain NGO claims were disregarded while others prevailed” (Dany, 2014: 429). This case highlights that within members of the third UN, in particular NGOs, there is often a divide between those who are larger, wealthier, and more professionalised, and those who are not. In the case of the WSIS, it was “well-established, larger NGOs from the Global North” were “increasingly able to influence policy outcomes”, coming at the expense of the demands of “less organized or professional NGO representatives, often from the Global South” (Dany, 2014: 429-430). The involvement of members of the third UN in UNCED suggests they have an influence in shaping international discussions and decision-making, though their involvement may be on more peripheral issues. As the case of UNHCR and urban displacement will demonstrate, members of the third UN have had influence in shaping the Organisation’s policy. The level of impact between different members of the third UN is also present, with international refugee-focused NGOs often playing a more significant part than community-based organisations working in refugee-hosting countries. The most recognisable interaction between members of the third UN

and UNHCR is similarly through a conference: the UNHCR Annual Consultation with NGOs.

Members of the first, second, and third UN influence to varying extents and at different times all the distinct Programmes and Funds. The influence is complicated by the overlap that exists between separate parts of the UN, both in terms of operations and the people they support. It is not always clear where the mandate for one organisation ends and another begins. In the case of internal displacement, a number of actors have provided assistance, including the Representative of the Secretary-General on IDPs, The Internal Displacement Unit, UNCHR, WFP, UNDP, UN-Habitat, UNICEF, UNHCR, ICRC, IOM, national institutions, private institutions, international financial and development institutions, regional banks, and non-governmental organisations (Robinson, 2003). The example of internal displacement demonstrates the complex network of actors, including various Programmes and Funds, involved in governing a single-issue area. In the case of the displacement situation in 1991 when refugees fled from Iraq into Turkey, there were “complex and overlapping responsibilities which had already been granted to other UN agencies”, which “added to a confused decision-making structure and created additional tensions between UN agencies” (Long, 2010: 20). UNDP failed to challenge the Turkish Government when it did not meet the protection needs of Iraqi refugees, as UNDP had a traditionally close relationship with the Government, resulting in the Government bypassing UNHCR in favour of UNDP (Long, 2010). This instance in Turkey demonstrates not only multiple agencies working on the same issues, but the way in which their relationship with states can shape the actions of the Programmes and Funds. Each of the Programmes and Funds, including UNHCR, must consider not only states but also other Programmes and Funds, when conducting their work, expanding into new areas or deliberating over changing key policies.

Many of the overlaps in responsibility and operations that existed between the separate Programmes and Funds were supposed to have been addressed by the adoption of the Cluster Approach in 2006. The Cluster Approach was part of the

United Nations Humanitarian Reform process, which sought to give individual humanitarian protection responsibilities to different agencies (Betts, 2010: 22). The Cluster Approach resulted in an expansion of UNHCR's work, as they led three of the nine clusters (Bakewell, 2011: 16), in particular in humanitarian situations that led to internal displacement (Feller, 2006; Morris, 2006). UNHCR had a larger role in countries that had extensive internal displacement, including the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda, and where attention had previously been "almost exclusively focused on refugees" (McNamara, 2006: 10). This expansion of operations helps explain the more than doubling of UNHCR's staff during the early twenty-first century, as discussed in chapter one. Despite these efforts to improve interaction, "turf battles between UN agencies continue, indicating further resistance to integrated strategy, planning, and programming" (O'Neill, 2009: 154). One case of this can be found in global environmental governance, where "fragmentation is one of the fundamental problems of our current regime of global governance. Dozens of organizations have some degree of environmental responsibility... But these various entities do not 'play' well together" (Esty, 2009: 427). This situation has impacted UNEP which has not been a major player in addressing climate change and which suffers from "a vague mandate, severe budget constraints, limited analytic capacity, and other human resource challenges as well as a lack of political support" (Esty, 2009: 427). Such competition explains in part the desire for organisations to engage in mission creep, as they seek to maximise their work and perceived importance in relation to other organisations.

Such overlaps show that when considering policymaking within any one of the Programmes and Funds, it is important to remember they are responding not only to pressures from states and NGOs, but also with knowledge of what other organisations are doing. As highlighted earlier in the chapter, the illustration of the three UNs as a triptych "highlights the boundaries between the three UNs that make it possible to separate them" (Bode, 2015: 52). This view is mitigated by allowing for the overlaps that occur between these categories, as well as movement of actors between them, for instance when an NGO leader takes a role at the UN. As will be seen in the following three chapters, the overlap and

movement between the three UNs is essential to understanding UNHCR's response to urbanisation of displacement. In the case of UNHCR, its response to growing organisational competition has created both opportunities and problems (Betts, 2013a). UNHCR has been able to foster new partnerships, ensure that protection and solutions for refugees are considered the responsibility of UN system at large, and make the international response to refugee crises more effective (Betts, 2013a: 75). However, issues have been raised, as "regime complexity pushes much of the most relevant politics for the [refugee] regime into other regimes", which may mean important issues concerning refugees are no longer made in UNHCR-led forums but are "indirectly made in other forums that primarily address other issues" (Betts, 2013a: 75). Regime shifting or 'forum shopping' can be the result, with UNHCR being sidelined in favour of other organisations, including different Programmes and Funds or NGOs. A more critical perspective on UNHCR's development is that it is now a "part of a global police of populations" (Scheel and Ratfisch, 2014: 924), or has failed to respond adequately to recent displacement crises, including in the case of Syria (Ferris and Kirişci, 2016). The competition between UNHCR and other organisations should be considered, as it helps explain the Organisation's choice to engage in mission creep and desire to remain relevant to donor states. The following section will demonstrate that UNHCR often overlaps and competes with other actors, including other parts of the UN and members of the third UN. The following section will provide a basis for understanding the specific case of UNHCR's response to the challenge of urban displacement, which will be analysed using the three UNs framework in chapters four, five and six.

## 6. Policymaking in the United Nations' Refugee Agency (UNHCR)

In this section, UNHCR's policymaking will be studied through the framework of the three UNs, demonstrating the different influences the Organisation has come under and the way these three categories overlap and interact with one another. The framework will be used in the following chapters to analyse UNHCR's response to the challenge of the urbanisation of displacement, as it provides a means of bringing together the various actors that influence the Organisation's

policymaking. Throughout UNHCR's history members of each of the three UNs have influenced it, to varying degrees. Since its creation in the wake of the Second World War, UNHCR's "history has been one of change and adaption" (Betts, 2013a: 77), with donor states exercising a significant amount of influence over the Organisation during the Cold War (Loescher, 2001), though it has managed to undergo a "gradual emancipation" from the control of powerful powers (Elie, 2008: 89). With every major shift and policy change there has been debate as to whether UNHCR has brought these changes itself, or done so at the behest of external actors.

The origins and many of the issues surrounding forced displacement exist primarily in low- and middle-income countries, while much of the political and economic means to address them come from high-income countries.<sup>7</sup> The divergence relates to the 'North-South impasse' (Betts, 2009: 13-15; Betts, 2011: 56) that is claimed to exist, wherein states that produce and host displaced people accept what limited support is offered by states that fund assistance efforts, including UNHCR, or "disengage from negotiations entirely" (Betts, 2011: 61). The impasse is useful for understanding institutional change within UNHCR, as the Organisation's staff have to retain good relations with all states. UNHCR requires the support of governments of host states to be able to provide assistance, and, at the same time, depends on the voluntary financial contributions made by donor states (Roper and Barria, 2010). Voluntary contributions have not kept up with the growth in UNHCR's annual requirements (UNHCR, 2016i: 28), and by the third quarter of 2015, they stood at just forty per cent of the Organisation's budget for the year, while thirty-three UN appeals were only forty-two per cent funded (UNHCR, 2015: 10). Over three-quarters of these contributions were received from a small number of states, the so-called 'traditional donors' from Europe, North America, and Japan (UNHCR, 2011: 82). In 2015 over eighty per cent of contributions came from UNHCR's top ten

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<sup>7</sup> The World Bank categorises countries based on their Gross National Income (GNI) as 'low-income', 'lower-middle-income', 'upper-middle-income' or 'high-income'. Countries with a GNI above \$12,475 USD are considered to be high-income economies (World Bank Data Team, 2016).

donors<sup>8</sup> and over fifty per cent came from the top three<sup>9</sup> alone (UNHCR, 2016e: 26). UNHCR has sought to diversify its sources of income, with private sector contributions increasing “more than tenfold”, yet this still only represents around seven per cent of the Organisation’s voluntary contributions in 2016 (UNHCR, 2016i: 26). UNHCR remains heavily dependent on a relatively small number of high-income states, and as such, the Organisation must ensure its work has the support of these states. Funding is a core means through which states exert influence over UNHCR, and the Organisation’s dependence on voluntary contributions helps explain why it engages in mission creep and tries to ensure it is seen as ‘relevant’ to donor states.

Like other Programmes and Funds, UNHCR exists in a constant state of financial uncertainty affecting its ability to create long-term strategies and plans. Donor states are able to limit or direct the use of their contributions by ‘earmarking’ them<sup>10</sup>, with the majority of UNHCR’s funding now earmarked by donors, restricting how and where the Organisation can use these funds (UNHCR, 2017c). Earmarked contributions can be specified for use in a region (e.g. Africa), sub-region (e.g. East Africa), country (e.g. Kenya), or theme (e.g. education). In 2016 UNHCR received a total of \$3,943 million, of which \$3,381 million was earmarked (UNHCR, 2016g). This widespread earmarking of funds leads to an uneven distribution of efforts to address certain displacement situations over others, as dictated by stipulations of donor states. In 2011 only 24 per cent of UNHCR’s funds were unrestricted, which according to the Organisation is problematic as, “early and unrestricted contributions” allow it “to carry out its protection and assistance work for populations of concern in an uninterrupted and predictable manner” (UNHCR, 2012: 86). In 2015 only fifteen per cent of voluntary contributions were unrestricted (UNHCR, 2016b: 4), with UNHCR stating in recent years that, “securing unrestricted income remains an overarching priority” (UNHCR, 2012: 84). The confines placed on how and where

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<sup>8</sup> In order: United States, European Union, Germany, United Kingdom, Japan, Sweden, Norway, Canada, Denmark and the Netherlands.

<sup>9</sup> United States, European Union and Germany.

<sup>10</sup> Earmarked is defined as, “donor situation that limits or directs the purpose for which a contribution may be used.” (UNHCR, 2017b)

UNHCR assigns its funds shapes the way in which it can respond to global displacement. High-income donor states can “control the evolution and direction of UNHCR’s work through the tight control of the organization’s resources” (Loescher, Betts and Milner, 2008: 73).

UNHCR’s response to the crisis in South Sudan, which began in 2013 and has produced over one and a half million refugees as of February 2017 (Wachiaya, 2017), has been marred by “critical funding shortages” (Baidya, 2016). In 2016 UNHCR received \$89.8 million in contributions, thirty-three per cent of the required amount, leaving a funding gap of \$185.9 million (UNHCR, 2017a). The lack of financial support for the South Sudanese crisis is despite the Organisation receiving over \$3 billion in 2016 (UNHCR, 2016f), and highlights that, “the power of UNHCR’s voluntary contributors to earmark their funding means several displacement situations will receive more attention and thus more funding than others” (Kinchin, 2016: 40). Funding is often connected to countries physical proximity to refugee movements, as well as historical links and foreign policy interests. This explanation may help understand the decision of donor states, including those in Europe, to pledge more than \$6 billion to assist displaced Syrians (Mahecic, 2016), in contrast to the geographically more remote South Sudanese. UNHCR may seek to be perceived as being politically neutral, but its existence and ability to conduct its basic functions hinge year after year on whether or not it gains renewed funding from a small number of donor states. The dependence on voluntary contributions is “one of UNHCR’s most significant weaknesses” (Loescher, 1994: 367). As discussed previously in the chapter, Programmes and Funds including UNHCR are financially vulnerable, resulting in them acting to ensure they remain relevant to donor states.

UNHCR must retain close relations with states that host displaced populations. In order to work in a country UNHCR has to be invited to do so by the government, and in many locations this requires substantial military assistance to ensure the safety of its staff (Hammerstad, 2014: 269; Harris and Dombrowski, 2002: 159; UNHCR, 1995: 1). The relationship between UNHCR and host states is often fraught with tension (Bariagaber, 1999: 605) and UNHCR’s reliance on invitation

means it may be reluctant to criticise host governments for fear their access will be denied, restricted, or revoked. When UNHCR worked to support refugees from Afghanistan in the early 1980s, it has been claimed they were aware of abuses by the Government of Pakistan and the militarisation of Afghan refugee villages, but were unable to address this situation without endangering ‘minimum assistance and protection’ (Schöch, 2008). While UNHCR did not condone Pakistan’s actions, it “had little choice but to either do as the governments wanted, or to discontinue the entire operation” (Schöch, 2008: 57). In another case, the Government of Kenya has repeatedly threatened to close Dadaab refugee camp, leading UNHCR to participate in repatriation efforts for Somali refugees, despite claims that refugees are being returned to insecure parts of Somalia (Bader, 2016; Frelick, 2016). UNHCR is often faced with making “tough choices” (Whitaker, 2008: 243), between providing substandard protection, or providing no protection at all, and thus “often walks a tightrope” to maintain “a perilous balance between the protection of refugees and the sovereign prerogatives and interests of states” (Loescher, 2003: 4). Even “critical voices” explain UNHCR’s actions and failures on the basis of “insufficient room for manoeuvre, unprecedented challenges, and a retreat from its mandate to protect refugees in favour of emergency humanitarian relief” (Gatrell, 2013: 281). UNHCR occupies a difficult position in relation to host states, although occasions when it appears to contradict its mandate for refugee protection stem from strong pragmatic motivations within the Organisation. During the 1990s UNHCR staff became divided between ‘legalists’ and ‘pragmatists’, who disagreed over what were, and should be, the Organisation’s guiding principles (Hammerstad, 2014: 91). UNHCR’s experiences in northern Iraq in 1991 taught the Organisation that it could “achieve a lot in terms of refugee protection, assistance and solutions if it reacted swiftly and imaginatively to humanitarian crises, and if it was sensitive to the worries and needs of donor states and (potential) refugee host states” (Hammerstad, 2014: 187). The adoption of a ‘pragmatic’ approach to its work resulted in some situations which negatively affecting refugees, in part because UNHCR was put in a challenging position in order to protection relationships with host states.



The relationship between UNHCR and parts of the first UN, including states that fund and host displaced populations, is crucial for understanding why it creates new policies or expands into new areas. UNHCR is aware of the preferences and interests of donor states, allowing them to take these into consideration when deciding how to operate and how to present its actions. As UNHCR's involvement in Iraq in the early 1990s suggests, it chose to focus on internal displacement, a decision that was strongly supported by donor states (Krever, 2011: para. 47). Under High Commissioner António Guterres, UNHCR "recognized a need to expand the scope of its activities simply in order to retain its ongoing relevance to states" (Betts, 2013a: 77). The attempt to remain relevant to states often runs the risks of UNHCR appearing to play "handmaid to the interests of states" (Krever, 2011: para. 48), though it also places them in a stronger position when seeking funds for other projects. Partly this is done in an attempt to be seen to engage in new or future global trends that UNHCR believes are important to states, which may in turn involve operations beyond UNHCR's mandate, or contrary to the ethos of the Organisation and its humanitarian principles.

An example of UNHCR focusing on a new global trend with states in mind came in the 2000s when it prioritised climate-induced displacement. Addressing the Executive Committee in 2007, António Guterres claimed that, "For each centimetre that the sea level will rise, there will be one more million displaced... It is therefore important to examine the reasons, the scale and the trends of present-day forced displacement" (UNHCR, 2007). Guterres "sought to ensure his agency remained relevant in donors' eyes by linking its work to climate change, the international cause célèbre" (Hall, 2010: 9). In the lead up to the 2009 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, "the refugee agency momentarily jumped on the bandwagon of branding this new form of migration as a potentially devastating security threat" as it sought to position itself "centrally to the debate on climate change-related displacement" (Hammerstad, 2014: 302). Many states, including leading donors to UNHCR, had made clear they considered climate change-related migration a matter of security, as the Council of the European Union did in 2008 (Council of the European Union, 2008: 7). UNHCR was aware of the concerns states had at this

time regarding the affects of climate change, and sought to position its work as relevant to such fears. In contrast, many people in UNHCR worried that having a high profile on climate change might cause the division of resources and, more importantly, bring into question the core mandate of the Organisation to protect and advance the rights of those displaced by conflict.

UNHCR could be criticised for being opportunistic and influenced by state preferences, but its actions can be understood as acting to ensure it can continue to protect and assist displaced people. UNHCR's mandate, as set out in the 1950 Statute, is focused on two principles: that the Organisation will work with states to ensure access to protection for those outside of their country with a well-founded fear of persecution, and that it will peruse durable solutions for refugees (Loescher, Betts and Milner, 2008: 1-2). Beyond this, the Statute has left open the potential for UNHCR's scope to be expanded at the request of the General Assembly (Loescher, Betts and Milner, 2008: 2). UNHCR's mandate allows a broad remit for the Organisation to engage in new work, providing it is still presented as being in the pursuit of protection, durable solutions, or at the request of the General Assembly. The position UNHCR is in and how it might explain expansion, cast light on its tendency to increasingly focus on environmental displacement. The United Nations has long given significant attention to environmental issues, and has been the primary platform and leading voice for "the principles, programs of action, and treaty regime that constitute the main body of today's environmental governance at the international level" (Speth and Haas, 2006: 113). In 2006 Secretary General Kofi Annan labelled climate change a "threat to peace and security" (Annan, 2006), and around this time there was a "rash of high-level reports and statements" released by other parts of the United Nations, in addition to states and NGOs, that "asserted casual links between climate change, migration and conflict" (Hammerstad, 2014: 54). Given that UNHCR exists as part of the wider UN system, its increased focus on climate-induced displacement has been influenced not only by interests of states but by the other parts of the United Nations, or the second UN. When UNHCR is requested to expand its operations to provide assistance to the environmentally displaced by the General Assembly, this falls

within the scope of the Organisation's mandate. States have been opposed to any expansion of UNHCR's Statute or the 1951 Convention in response to climate change, as this would create legal obligations to do more than they are currently willing to do. However, UNHCR has been able to engage in mission creep by appealing to state concerns aligning itself with supportive states, such as Norway, and working closely with other organisations, including International Organization for Migration (Hall, 2016: 152).

UNHCR's prioritising of repatriation during the 1990s suggests the importance of state influence on the policy and practice of the Organisation. Between 1991 and 1996 alone, over nine million people were returned to their country of origin (UNHCR, 1997: 143). Ostensibly this was to be a voluntary decision, made by refugees on the basis of the situation in their home and host country (UNHCR, 1996: 2.3). In his 1955 Nobel Lecture, High Commissioner Gerrit Jan van Heuven Goedhart (1955) outlined clearly what voluntary return meant for UNHCR.

The United Nations is not called upon to influence the decision of any refugee. Freedom of decision is the inalienable right of the refugee himself. It is his wish that counts; and the United Nations, within the limits of the Statute, tries to fulfil that wish, no matter what it is - repatriation, resettlement, or integration.

Critics have argued that during the 1990s UNHCR sometimes played "fast and loose with the principle of voluntary repatriation" and was a "knowing party of involuntary repatriation" (Barnett, 2001: 2). By 1996, the 'doctrine of imposed return' became common knowledge when Dennis McNamara, the then Director of UNHCR's Division of International Protection, announced refugees could be made to return even if the situation they were being returned to was unsound (Chimni, 2004: 63). UNHCR has been criticised in this case for placing the interests of states above its own founding mandate to protect displaced people (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004). The popularity of repatriation during this time came as a "response to increasing numbers of refugees, relief budget constraints, and the growing antagonism of host countries" (McDowell and Eastmond, 2002: 22). In the cases of repatriation of Cambodians from Thailand in the early 1990s and East Timorese from West Timor between 1999 and 2002, returns were largely symbolic and orchestrated in time for elections (McDowell and

Eastmond, 2002: 22). In both cases political compromises overshadowed humanitarian standards, leading to the physical return of people to their country of origin far from an idealised 'coming home' (McDowell and Eastmond, 2002: 23-24). Both cases demonstrate UNHCR's 'repatriation turn', and the relevance of state interests to UNHCR's policy and practice, as the Organisation sought to ensure its work was seen favourably by states.

The main official forum for states to interact with UNHCR is through the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme (ExCom). In 1958 ECOSOC created ExCom, which operates as a subsidiary of the General Assembly. Each year ExCom holds one plenary session, where it reviews UNHCR's programmes and budget. The subsidiary body of ExCom, the Standing Committee, generally meets three times a year, while other informal meetings happen throughout the year. ExCom consists of one hundred and one members as of October 2016, all of who represent United Nations states. The Standing Committee is made up of ExCom members, observer states, and a range of other observers, including representatives from intergovernmental organisations, specialized agencies, other UN bodies, and NGOs. ExCom's main functions are to advise the High Commissioner, review existing funds and programmes, authorise new funding appeals and approve biennial budget targets suggested by UNHCR (Hammerstad, 2014; Loescher, 2001; Loescher, Betts and Milner, 2008).

ExCom's position is similar to that of the Board of Governors of the World Bank. These particular Governors are appointed by member states, meet annually, and appoint its Board of Directors (Marshall, 2008: 75-76). The Governors are "almost always officials from governments' finance departments" and historically focused on loan proposals, though turned to reviewing programmes, policies and special issues (Marshall, 2008: 76). The work of the Governors includes studies of individual countries, with "detailed and frequent discussions of each country's strategies and policies" being "the board's central fare" (Marshall, 2008: 76). ExCom is similarly concerned with UNHCR's financial matters, but unlike the situation with the World Bank's Board of Governors, ExCom does not involve itself to the same extent in UNHCR's work. ExCom

annually reviews and approves the budget and programmes that UNHCR have drafted, and advises the Organisation on international protection matters, with less day-to-day involvement in UNHCR's policies and operations.

The World Bank offers insight for understanding UNHCR as it is a comparatively sized global organisation, similarly required to work with a range of states, including donors and those hosting their programmes. There is a notable difference between the size of the World Bank's Board of Directors and UNHCR's Executive Committee. The Board of Directors is made up of the World Bank Group President and twenty-five Executive Directors, while ExCom's membership is much larger, rising from twenty-five in 1958 to one hundred and one in 2016, making ExCom comparatively larger and more cumbersome (Loescher, Betts and Milner, 2008: 77). By tradition the position of Chair of ExCom's Bureau is held by representatives of donor and non-donor countries in alternate years. The increase in size and diversity means that ExCom cannot involve itself in UNHCR's work to the same extent, as the Board of Directors will for the World Bank. ExCom, however, has been influential in shaping UNHCR's policies and the scope of its work. During the 42nd Session in 1991, ExCom members demonstrated a clear preference for repatriation and local integration, emphasising to UNHCR that it should pursue resettlement "only as a last resort" (UNGA, 1991). UNHCR would come to follow this focus on return to country of origin and the 1990s were termed the 'Decade of Repatriation' (Black and Koser, 1999: 13; Verdirame and Harrell-Bond, 2005: 335). The messages relayed through ExCom were heard by UNHCR and provided an important forum for the first UN to shape changes in policy and practice.

Though important, the influence of states alone does not explain UNHCR's policymaking. UNHCR has expanded its areas of concern to internal or environmental displacement, "on its own volition" (Betts, 2013a: 77). In these cases states have not explicitly called on UNHCR to address new issues, but staff of the Organisation have been driven in part by "the need to retain relevance in an increasingly competitive institutional environment" (Betts, 2013a: 77). Expansive moves by UNHCR are driven in part by an awareness of what states

want and what will stand in the Organisation's favour, but the way this is carried out is driven by internal forces. It is important at this stage to consider the role of the second UN, in particular the competing forces within UNHCR. Operating in 126 countries with a staff of over 9,700 people (as of December 2015), eighty-nine per cent of who work in the field, UNHCR has gone far beyond the small European organisation it was in the early 1950s (UNHCR, 2016d). A natural consequence of this expansion is that UNHCR is now a far less homogeneous Organisation, yet despite this "little attention has been paid to the complicated interaction between headquarters and field offices" (Øverland, 2005: 142). As noted previously in this chapter, existing work on the three UNs can be criticised for its portrayal of three distinct categories of actors, while Barnett and Finnemore's work "tends to focus on bureaucratic unity rather than highlighting internal competition" (Bode, 2015: 51). As the case of UNHCR suggests, international organisations like UNHCR often have significant internal contestations, which in turn impact on how changes in policy and practice come about.

Working in 'the field' has become increasingly dangerous (Duffield, 2010), and operations can only continue as long as UNHCR have the approval of the government of the host state. To be able to do their job effectively UNHCR field-staff must build and maintain a relationship with host governments, staff of other international organisations, numerous international and local NGOs, and refugee communities. This situation produces a delicate and complicated working environment, which may not be understood by headquarters staff, as they are disconnected from the realities, needs and conditions existing in the field (Loescher, Betts and Milner, 2008: 83), where, "officers sometimes complain of uncertainty as to whether their special views of particular situations have much bearing on decisions at headquarters" (Gordenker, 1981: 82). The involvement of different staff members in establishing new policies is important, as calls to expand into new areas can emerge from those in the field, who may see gaps in existing policy based on their closer interaction with displaced people. Some of these views are fed into headquarters by the Regional Bureaux, meaning the Africa or the Middle East and North Africa Bureau can have an

important role in shaping policies impacting on their geographic area and globally.

Tensions over the work and direction of UNHCR exist within headquarters. Focusing on internal tensions helps better understand the motivations behind UNHCR's instances of mission creep, as well as the following analysis of UNHCR's response to the challenge of urban displacement. Divisions can be seen in relation to the contestation between the Protection and Operation wings of UNHCR. The Protection wing has long occupied a more prominent position within UNHCR, but the Head of Protection was demoted in the mid-1980s and made equal in seniority to the heads of the individual regional bureaux, which are part of the Operations wing. In 2006 the balance shifted with the creation of the position of Assistant High Commissioner for Protection. The power between the two wings has implications for UNHCR's work, as they have tended to favour different views of the Organisation's work and mandate. One example of this occurred when Tanzania expelled Rwandan refugees in 1996. The Protection wing wished to denounce the Tanzanian Government for engaging in *refoulement*, although the Africa bureau (part of Operations) opposed it, believing it would jeopardise their ability to work with the Government. UNHCR's decision to assist Tanzania with the repatriation was rationalised later by High Commissioner Sadako Ogata (2005: 255): "We might have stood aside and condemned the rough handling by the military. We might have disassociated ourselves from the operation. Instead, what we did is compromise, to save what little there was to save". The elevation of Operations has been characterised as an effort to make UNHCR more responsive to the needs of donor states (Loescher, Betts and Milner, 2008: 80), at the same time the decision to support the Africa Bureau's position in this case has been criticised as UNHCR tacitly supporting forced return (Loescher, 2001: 311-312). Protection on the other hand has been more vocally critical of states. In 2012, during an address to ExCom, Assistant High Commissioner for Protection Erika Feller, argued that "political will is not consistently enough behind protection" and there is a prevalent attitude among states of "Yes, we sympathize with your plight, but resolve it please elsewhere" (Quoted in: Edwards, 2012). The Protection wing

has focused primarily on the need to uphold the fundamental rights of the 1951 Convention and the accessibility of all three durable solutions. In contrast, Operations has been more willing to engage in addressing 'complex emergencies' and maintaining close relationships with host governments. The relative position and influence of different parts of UNHCR have an impact upon its policies and response to displacement issues.

One sector of actors gaining increased focus in recent years is celebrities (Budabin, 2016; Kapoor, 2013; Mostafanezhad, 2013; Rasmussen, 2016). When they become involved in humanitarian situations, "money is pledged, individual and institutional networks are mobilized, and attention is drawn towards particular crises, and away from others" (Richey, 2016: 2-3). Celebrities do not fit into only one of the three UNs, and therefore challenge the potential boundaries between these categories. Their influence stems in part from their ability to focus attention on a given issue, reflecting that members of the three UNs can advocate and generate resources for specific ideas and policies (Weiss et al., 2009: 128-129). One of the most notable cases of an influential celebrity is filmmaker Angelina Jolie, who in 2001 became a Goodwill Ambassador for UNHCR, and in 2012 became a Special Envoy for Refugee Issues. In addition to advocating for UNHCR and its work, Jolie has represented the Organisation "at the diplomatic level" (UNHCR, 2016c), addressing the Security Council in 2015 (UNSC, 2015). Although Jolie's role may be considered to be "counter-productive" and "an overestimation of her powers to effect lasting change" (Wheeler, 2011: 59), she is nonetheless able to represent the views of refugees, speak to popular audiences, and "navigate the communicative circuits between the mundane and the elite spaces that collaboratively frame geopolitical discourses of North-South relations" (Mostafanezhad, 2016: 43). Such prominent individuals can play an important role in framing global issues, setting agendas, and lobbying for policy changes. When Jolie (2017) chose to contend that "refugee policy should be based on facts, not fear", she was able to do so in an op-ed in *The New York Times*, something unlikely to be afforded to many staff members of UNHCR. Celebrities most commonly act as part of the third UN, but as the case of Jolie and UNHCR suggests, they might also hold prominent



positions within the second UN, where their reach and power is amplified, providing them an increased role in the policymaking process. Celebrities' presence in both the second and third UN highlights the need to consider these categories as potentially overlapping and connecting with one another, rather than as distinct.

UNHCR has a longstanding relationship with various other actors constituting the third UN, including NGOs, independent experts, academics, consultants and individuals, who "influence UN thinking, policies, priorities, and actions" yet are "neither government officials nor international civil servants" (Weiss et al., 2009: 127). The relationship can be seen in the field when operational partners are used in protection and service delivery. There has been a long history of UNHCR relying on voluntary organisations, with 'voluntary societies' providing much needed support for European refugees following the Second World War and raising funds for UNHCR's work (UNHCR, 2004: 8). When addressing NGOs in 1968, High Commission Sadrudin Aga Khan said he was, "convinced that the cooperation between us will grow even closer and closer as we continue to work together" (UNHCR, 2002: 8). Khan's prediction was accurate, with the number of NGO partners rising sharply from less than 20 in the mid-1960s (UNHCR, 2011: 3) to more than 900 today, with around forty per cent of UNHCR's expenditure for programmes and projects entrusted to them (UNHCR, 2017d). Both national and international NGOs are involved in responding to displacement crises (Muriuki, 2005; Natsios, 1995: 410), with the relationship between UNHCR and NGOs being characterised as like "an architect with sub-contractors" (Berthiaume, 1994). UNHCR channels an increasingly large amount of money through NGOs, for instance \$3 billion between 1994 and 2003 (Loescher, Betts and Milner, 2008: 90). NGOs have greater flexibility and have not been bound by "geopolitical straitjacket[s]" (Chandler, 2001: 692) curtailing parts of the UN, including UNHCR. NGOs have advocated for UNHCR to address new humanitarian issues, such as internal or environmentally induced displacement (Christian Aid, 2007; Cohen, 2004; Weiss and Korn, 2006). Third UN members such as NGOs provide reminders to UNHCR that it "cannot remain static in how it interprets its mandate and role" (Betts, 2013a: 77).

NGOs play an important official role in UNHCR's policymaking process. Each year they participate in the Annual Consultation with NGOs in Geneva, which is "the major international forum for NGOs working with refugees, IDPs, and other persons of concern" (Pittaway and Thomson, 2008: 6). The Annual Consultation now attracts over five hundred NGO representatives (UNHCR 2016b: 5) and demonstrates a forum for NGOs to highlight specific issues and engage in agenda setting. At the 2016 Annual Consultation, High Commissioner Filippo Grandi stated NGOs play an important role at the "advocacy, opinion-shaping, policy-making and operational levels" (UNHCR, 2016a: 2). In addition to this, NGOs make addresses at the yearly meeting of ExCom, highlighting issues, and calling for changes in strategy. These addresses provide an instance of the third UN speaking to the first UN, with the potential impact of changing policies that impact the work of the second. At the 62nd ExCom meeting, for example, on the 50th anniversary of the 1961 Statelessness Convention, the NGO Statement for General Debate highlighted that statelessness was a key issue that needed to be better addressed. The NGO Statement claimed that statelessness had been "ignored for far too long" and called on states to "show leadership and deal with this eminently avoidable legal anomaly" (UNGA, 2011). They used this opportunity to highlight the plight of often-ignored "stateless IDPs" and urged UNHCR to "continue its work with host governments to highlight the seriousness of the issue and find adequate solutions" (UNGA, 2011). NGOs' efforts were similar to a 'boomerang pattern', wherein national activists seek international support to bring pressure upon their government (Keck and Sikkink, 1998: 12-13). Following a similar logic, NGOs are able to appeal directly to members of ExCom concerning matters of global displacement, helping elicit a change in UNHCR's policy and operations. This point shows another way in which the three UNs can influence each other and bring about policy change, though there are limitations to the extent in which members of the third UN can influence the second. NGOs might call on UNHCR to change its policies or address a neglected group of people or region, but their ability to do so is based on persuasion, rather than an ability to forcibly compel the Organisation to make changes.

UNHCR does not merely reject or comply with demands made by members of the third UN, and in fact they often have strong links and complementary goals. Should UNHCR wish to expand into new areas, they might do so by utilising vocal calls from third UN members as justification and when trying to convince states of the need to expand, the support of vocal members of the third UN can prove beneficial. UNHCR now operates in an increasingly competitive humanitarian market and is aware that if it is not willing to address certain issues, others can take its place, leading to UNHCR being overlooked in the future. UNHCR's changes in policies and practice are based on the influence of states, but also the desire to utilise agency slack for its own self-interest in expansion. When former High Commissioner António Guterres (2008) called for a 'global compact' on refugees to address mass displacement in the 21st century, it is clear UNHCR saw its own place at the heart of it.

## 7. Conclusion

The chapter has sought to better understand policymaking within the United Nations system, and has done so by adopting the framework of the three UNs. The framework has shown different ways in which various actors, including states, UN staff members, and NGO staff members, influence each other and instigate policy change. Each of the three UNs are involved in the eight key roles detailed earlier in the chapter (Weiss et al., 2009: 128-129), from providing a forum for debate to occasionally burying ideas and policies. In contrast to the description of the three UNs as a 'triptych', the chapter has suggested that each of the three be considered relative to each other, as they continually work with and influence one another. In the case of UNHCR, a part of the second UN, this interaction can be seen in formal settings, for instance its Annual Consultation with NGOs or ExCom's Annual Meeting. Interaction and influence happens continually, not only in annual events. It is through these interactions that ideas pass and promulgate, establishing networks of individuals and groups across the three UNs, facilitating changes in policy. Adopting a view of the three UNs that focuses less on the divisions between them, and more on the multiple issues and areas where they overlap, provides a clearer view and means of interpreting

situations leading to changes in policy. This understanding of the three UNs, stressing connections, often around specific issues, helps to comprehend the different links to be made between parts of each of the three UNs, namely, and of relevance to the analysis of UNHCR and the urbanisation of displacement, the interactions occurring between UNHCR's leader, research and evaluation unit, NGOs, and academics. The chapter demonstrates that members of the third UN play an important role in raising the priority status of different issues and this can be seen particularly within the Programmes and Funds.

In the case of UNHCR it can be seen that members of both the first and third UNs influence the Organisation, whether through controlling finances and access to displaced populations, critiquing existing policies, or participation in ExCom and the Annual Consultation with NGOs. Although some changes in policy have come in response to the demands of states, UNHCR tends to engage in mission creep with an awareness of state interests, desiring to remain relevant to said states, and thus ensuring its own financial security. It also operates in the belief that its expansion is in the best interest of displaced people. An understanding of how these motivations result in policy change in UNHCR is improved by utilising the framework of the three UNs. Influential actors within UNHCR, such as the research and evaluation unit, can lead the policymaking process, produce the rationale and justify a change in strategy, while being supported and legitimised by other members of the second and third UN. Donor states must support, or at least not actively oppose, a major change in UNHCR's policy and practice. The framework of the three UNs will be used in the following three chapters, showing the way in which the second UN can lead policymaking with the support of members of the third. Utilising it helps explain the pressure coming from 'within' UNHCR, but also 'above' and 'below' it, including from states and NGOs.

The following chapters will use the framework of the three UNs to examine UNHCR's response to the urbanisation of displacement. During the period studied, members of UNHCR led an epistemic community on urban displacement, with the support of members of the third UN, including NGOs and academics. The thesis utilises the three UNs framework, but instead of

presenting the three as a triptych, with clear demarcations and divisions between them, it focuses on points where they overlap, interacting with and relying on one another, and ways that actors move between the three UNs. The thesis will demonstrate that it is necessary to consider the individual actors within the broad categories of the three UNs, focusing in particular on the role of leaders, research and evaluation units, NGOs, researchers and academics, within the second and third UNs. To analyse the response of UNHCR to the urbanisation of displacement it is important to examine the role of specific actors within the Organisation, in addition to how they interact with and are supported by the third UN, while ensuring proposed changes are acceptable to members of the first.

## Chapter Four - Avoiding Dependency, 1994-1997

### 1. Introduction

During a speech in 1994, High Commissioner Sadako Ogata (1994) claimed that forced displacement had gone “beyond the humanitarian domain to become a major political, security and socio-economic issue, affecting regional and global security”. Under Ogata’s leadership between 1991 and 2000, UNHCR made an explicit link between matters of international security and its work with displaced people, leading to its transition from “decades of leading a relatively anonymous existence” as a “small and timid legal protection agency” to becoming “one of the world’s largest humanitarian relief organizations” playing “a central role in the international response to the many wars of the tumultuous last decade of the twentieth century” (Hammerstad, 2014: 1). The 1990s was a decade marked by UNHCR’s rapid expansion, as it engaged in mission creep, and its priorities increasingly focused on repatriation (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004), internal displacement (Weiss and Korn, 2006), and responding to the militarisation of refugee camps (Mogire, 2006; Mthembu-Salter, 2006; Muggah and Mogire, 2006; Nahm, 2006), while becoming a global security actor (Hammerstad, 2014). These issues have been addressed in the academic literature, and largely reflected the preferences of states, although UNHCR’s response to urban displacement during the 1990s has not. It was during this time UNHCR began to consider urban displacement seriously, formalising its strategy of working in urban areas, which had long been a policy gap.

In the same year as Ogata positioned displacement as a matter of global security, UNHCR released the ‘Community Services for Urban Refugees’ (‘1994 Guidelines’). The 1994 Guidelines, produced by UNHCR’s Programme and Technical Support Section (PTSS) and Community Services, were the first set of global guidelines developed by UNHCR on urban displacement. The Organisation had worked with individual displaced communities in towns and cities previously, but this was the first occasion it addressed the specific needs of the

urban displaced, acknowledging their numbers were growing, and calling for a new approach (UNHCR, 1994a). The 1994 Guidelines heralded a period in which UNHCR explored the challenge of urban displacement in ways it had never done before. Prior to the 1990s, refugees in urban areas were dealt with on an individual basis, but from the 1990s onwards, urban displacement was recognised as a growing issue requiring a global policy response. The change in approach culminated in the release of UNHCR's first official policy on urban displacement on 25 March 1997, namely the 'UNHCR Comprehensive Policy on Urban Refugees' (March 1997 Policy), and its replacement on 12 December 1997, the 'UNHCR Policy on Refugees in Urban Areas' (1997 Policy). The 1997 Policy would remain UNHCR's official position on urban refugees until 2009.

When considering how changes in policy and practice came about, it is worth explaining the role of research and evaluation units, as discussed in chapter two. UNHCR's Inspection and Evaluation Service (IES) was influential in ensuring the Organisation placed greater focus on the issue of urban displacement, suggesting the important role such a part of the second UN plays in policymaking. In October 1995 UNHCR published 'UNHCR's Policy and Practice regarding Urban Refugees: A Discussion Paper' (1995 Discussion Paper). The 1995 Discussion Paper argued that UNHCR should focus more attention on urban refugee issues. The document was instrumental in the creation of a working group, which would later draft the March 1997 Policy. Together with the experience of those working in UNHCR's field offices, the period saw the formative stages of what would become an epistemic community around the issue of urban displacement. The events of the period 1994 to 1997 demonstrate the important role research and evaluation units have in raising the importance of an issue and shaping the way it is understood within an international organisation. An analysis of the period shows an organisation, such as UNHCR, can begin to change its perception of a global challenge for example urban displacement, without the active participation of its leader. However, urban displacement did not become a priority issue for UNHCR, and would not become so until it was prioritised by High Commissioner António Guterres, over a decade later, in the period to be discussed in chapter six. The mid-1990s demonstrates new issues can emerge

and demand change in policy and practice, primarily as a result of actions of the second UN. External actors, for example, including both states and NGOs, had limited involvement in the creation of UNHCR's March 1997 Policy. Members of the third UN, primarily NGOs, played a more prominent role in critiquing the policy once released. Drawing from the theoretical framework set out in chapter two, UNHCR's response during the mid-1990s to urban displacement can be understood in the context of states' interest in limiting the movement of people, the existence of agency slack, and the Organisation's desire to engage in mission creep. Precisely how the change occurred, however, is best understood through focusing on the role of the second UN. The 1994 Guidelines were produced by the Programme and Technical Support Section (PTSS) and Community Services, while the 1997 policies came in response to pressure from IES, and were approved by UNHCR's Senior Management Committee (SMC), including the High Commissioner. A connection can be made between members of the second and third UNs, with the need to replace the March 1997 Policy arising, in part, from strong NGO criticism.

The chapter will analyse the period between UNHCR's first set of guidelines on urban displacement in 1994, through to the release of the revised global policy on urban refugees in December 1997. It will begin by providing a historical overview of UNHCR's approach to urban displacement from the Organisation's creation in 1950 until 1994. It will then present a brief account of events between 1994 and the release of the 1997 Policy. The three UNs framework detailed in chapter three is used to understand the different actors involved in pressuring for, and bringing about, change in policy during the mid-1990s. The force from within the second UN, in this case UNHCR, will be considered by analysing the work of IES, High Commissioner Sadako Ogata, and field offices around the world. The chapter will then consider the impact of actors 'above' UNHCR, including both members of the first and second UN, namely states and the broader UN system. Finally, the chapter will focus on the role of actors below UNHCR, members of the third UN, such as NGOs, and how they helped shape the Organisation's response to the challenge of urban displacement between 1994 and 1997.



Analysing the force that came from within, above, and below, UNHCR provides a comprehensive overview of the lack of cohesion in the Organisation's response during the mid-1990s. There was limited pressure from outside of UNHCR to change its existing policy and practice on urban displacement, providing agency slack, allowing the Organisation to decide ways of expanding to respond to the issue. This response reflected the tendency at the time to view displaced people as threatening and appealed to state preferences for encampment, demonstrating the continued influence of states upon UNHCR. The March 1997 Policy formalised many of the negative views existing within parts of UNHCR for decades. It reaffirmed UNHCR's priorities at the time, primarily placing the preferences of donor states above the needs of displaced people. However, the criticism and quick change in policy occurring between March and December 1997 showed the role of pressure from within and below UNHCR, in shaping UNHCR's still uncertain position. In contrast to later periods, the position of the research and evaluation unit, IES, was unclear, while High Commissioner Sadako Ogata was largely absent from discussions around urban displacement. The period studied in the chapter saw the lead up to the establishment of an epistemic community around urban displacement, but it was limited in how it viewed the issue, as well as its ability to enact a change in policy and practice. It was not until the coalescence of two internal actors, the research and evaluation unit and the High Commissioner, around the issue of urban displacement in the period examined in chapter six, that significant change occurred.

## 2. "This is an African Problem": UNHCR and Urban Displacement, 1950-1994

The story of urban displacement did not start in the final decade of the twentieth century. During the first four decades of its existence UNHCR acknowledged the presence of displaced people in urban areas. To understand the policymaking taking place between 1994 and 2009, it is important to consider how UNHCR saw the issue of urban displacement prior to the publication of the 1994 Guidelines. This section cannot offer comprehensive coverage of urban displacement during UNHCR's first four decades, but seeks to identify some

important themes arising at this time that would resurface during the 1990s. The section will emphasise ways in which several High Commissioners discussed the issue of urban displacement. In particular it will focus on how the issue was described by Sadruddin Aga Khan (High Commissioner from 1965 to 1977) and Poul Hartling (High Commissioner from 1978 to 1985), who together led UNHCR through twenty years of expansion. Aga Khan presented urban displacement as primarily an 'African problem', while Hartling highlighted possibilities afforded by local integration in urban areas. The strategy UNHCR adopted between 1994 and 1997 shared similarities with the views of both Aga Khan and Hartling. There were increased calls for a heightened role for UNHCR in urban areas, while displaced people in towns and cities were portrayed as a troublesome minority who would be better assisted in rural settings.

Prior to the founding of UNHCR in 1950, a significant portion of displaced people in Europe, where UNHCR primarily worked during its early years, were based in urban areas. During the Second World War, many Europeans fled their homes and took up residence in the towns and cities of neighbouring countries. The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency (UNRRA), the precursor to UNHCR, assisted some of these people during the 1940s. Within the first five months following the end of the Second World War in 1945, UNRRA and the Allied military had repatriated three-quarters of displaced people in Europe (Loescher, 2001a: 36). Later, the International Refugee Organization (IRO) which was founded in April 1946, was able to resettle more displaced people to Western European countries keen to alleviate labour shortages (Loescher, 2001a: 40). Despite these efforts, by UNHCR's founding in 1950, there were still a significant number of displaced people spread across Europe, living in and outside of camps. People living in camps, who proved difficult to resettle or repatriate, formed a "hard core" caseload, made up of sick, elderly, and disabled people deemed unemployable (Loescher, 2001a: 40). UNHCR's camp clearance programme was the "single most stubborn problem" during the 1950s and the Organisation's budget was "almost entirely concentrated on this protracted refugee problem" between 1954 and 1964 (Loescher, 2001a: 90). The focus and reduction of those in camps was driven in part by the priorities of its early

leaders, Gerrit Jan van Heuven Goedhart (High Commissioner from 1951 to 1956) and Auguste R. Lindt (High Commissioner from 1956 to 1960). In his actions and speeches to the United Nations, Goedhart “worked hard to convince the General Assembly of the seriousness of the European refugee problem”, drawing attention to the plight of those living in camps, and “hammered home the view that there was an urgent need to integrate” them (Loescher, 2001a: 62-63). Without this, UNHCR would simply “administer misery” (Loescher, 2001a: 62). Lindt attempted to harness refugee flows caused by the 1956 emergency in Hungary to address the ‘camps of misery’ that continued to exist across Europe (Loescher, 2001a: 90). Goedhart and Lindt played an important role in addressing the continued issues of those displaced during the Second World War, although Lindt’s focus was primarily upon refugees living in the visible camps. By 1961, the number of long-standing refugees living in camps was down to 13,800, while another 65,000 lived out of camps (Loescher, 2001a: 131). Those living outside of camps included displaced people residing in towns and cities across Europe.

In 1957, UNHCR began assisting those displaced by the Algerian War, its focus shifting to working primarily in Africa and Asia. With the expansion of UNHCR’s operations beyond Europe’s borders, the issue of those in urban areas became better acknowledged. During a statement to the General Assembly in 1963, Félix Schnyder (High Commissioner from 1960 to 1965) mentioned a small number of refugees in Togo living in urban areas. Rural refugees had been largely integrated into the local economy, although Schnyder (1963) noted the presence of a small number of urban refugees facing difficult circumstances. Other urban refugees in Africa were described during the 1960s as having problems similar to those in Europe during the 1940s and 1950s (Aga Khan, 1966b). These references were limited, however, and UNHCR was focused primarily on displaced people in rural areas.

Under Sadruddin Aga Khan (High Commissioner from 1966 to 1977) UNHCR became increasingly involved in humanitarian situations worldwide, particularly in Africa. Aga Khan was the first High Commissioner to speak about the urban

displaced as a discrete category of people. Through his speeches, urban areas were given greater attention as locations where displaced people could be found, although with the suggestion that urban refugees were challenging and problematic and UNHCR should avoid assisting them. While addressing UNHCR's Executive Committee (ExCom) in 1966, Aga Khan spoke of the "diversification in the categories of refugees" as a new feature of international protection in Africa (Aga Khan, 1966b). He then went on to describe "cases of individual or small groups, comprising students, intellectuals and manual workers, living in towns, concentrating, as indeed is the tendency everywhere, in urban areas" (Aga Khan, 1966b). He named a series of countries where such people could be found, including Ethiopia, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Nigeria, United Arab Republic (Egypt) and Zambia (Aga Khan, 1966b). In addition to students, these displaced people were described as "the élite of the African refugees" (Aga Khan, 1967a; Aga Khan, 1967b). At the beginning of his time as High Commissioner, Aga Khan suggested urban displacement was a reasonably new issue. Towards the end of his tenure, he argued that in Africa's "larger towns and urban centres... the number of individual refugees is growing" (Aga Khan, 1977), suggesting urbanisation of displacement was underway in the 1970s, and that UNHCR had been aware of it. Aga Khan was involved in raising the issue of urban displacement, although, primarily as a marginal but growing issue present mostly in Africa.

The presence of displaced people in urban areas was largely presented as a challenge for UNHCR's work, including urban refugees' difficulty in gaining employment. Aga Khan (1966a) asserted there were few legal reasons why refugees would be prevented from working in agriculture, but noted UNHCR had witnessed "an accumulation of refugees in urban centres where indeed there are legal obstacles and regulations designed to protect national labour". Although UNHCR had "no legal obstacles in settlement on land, which for the time being is the major part of our efforts, we may still face difficulties in cities where these legal obstacles exist" (Aga Khan, 1966a). The focus on employment was important with Aga Khan (1972) arguing in a speech to ExCom in 1972 that if a refugee is not in employment then they are a "burden not only to himself, but to

the Government which has welcomed him". In the same speech, Aga Khan (1972) referred to refugees in urban areas and the "problem of unemployment and under-employment" facing them. In similar terms, he had previously described the need to "relieve the burden on the main countries of asylum where the concentration of these [urban] refugees in principal towns could pose problems" (Aga Khan, 1967b). This suggestion contrasts with the previous characterisation of urban-based people as a well skilled 'refugee élite'. Rather, Aga Khan claimed those in urban areas were more of a burden than their rural counterparts.

Under Aga Khan, UNHCR sought to distance itself from the challenges of assisting displaced people in towns and cities. This distancing was evident in UNHCR's attitude to displacement in Africa, the primary location for those moving to urban areas, according to the High Commissioner. In October 1967, UNHCR participated in the 'Legal, Economic and Social Aspects of African Refugee Problems' conference in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, leading to the creation of the Organization of African Unity's Bureau for the Placement and Education of African Refugees (Aga Khan, 1967b). Instead of UNHCR, this Bureau would be assigned the task of "examining the possibilities of [refugee] settlement and employment in urban agglomerations" (Aga Khan, 1967b), leading "effort[s] to eliminate this accumulation of individual cases in the African urban centres" (Aga Khan, 1969a). The Bureau would be able to resettle skilled and educated urban refugees to other African countries, but with a programme to be "put into effect" for "the others who are not trained, who do not have a skill or a profession and who have no educational background" (Aga Khan, 1969a). Aga Khan did not explain what form such a programme would take, or who would manage it. A parallel can be seen between the case of urban refugees in Africa during the 1960s and the situation in Europe after the Second World War, where refugees who were deemed 'useful' being resettled, while the difficult 'hard core' caseload remained in camps. Statements about eliminating urban caseloads indicate the negative view of urban displacement at the time, both within UNHCR and the intergovernmental organisations with which they worked. Aga Khan made links between the presence of displaced people in African towns and cities and broader concerns over urbanisation on the continent. An example of this

occurred during Aga Khan's statement to the Forty-Seventh Session of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 1969:

What has very much developed in Africa Mr. President is a situation of accumulation of refugees in the urban centres. This problem of course simply adds to the already existing exodus from the rural areas to the capitals and urban centres of these developing countries and together with this exodus and the presence of a greater number of refugees in the cities come also unemployment, social and economic problems of all sorts and a certain amount of political tension (Aga Khan, 1969b).

In the same statement Aga Khan (1969b) warned that if resettlement of urban refugees is not successfully achieved, then "we may find ourselves in the position of having an ever increasing number of individual cases of refugees in the capitals and urban centres of Africa who could become a hard core not unlike the problem which we faced in Europe in the post-war years". The 'hard core' cases in the European context were those who "because of age, illness, or the wrong profession, were considered undesirable to resettlement countries" (Loescher, 2001a: 54). Under Aga Khan, UNHCR did not want to deal with another 'hard core' group, preferring instead for them to be managed by the Organization of African Unity's specialist Bureau. Addressing UNHCR staff in 1969, Aga Khan was clear about the Organisation's position towards urban displacement:

We must avoid becoming too deeply involved in this problem. If a non-operational agency such as UNHCR started a social assistance service for African refugees in the cities, the problem would be without end, and we would be creating other problems and political difficulties, with a growing number of refugees in the cities, and unwilling to leave them. This is an African problem and it must be solved according to African methods and African wishes. (Aga Khan, 1969c)

Aga Khan was aware of the "problem of these refugees who are concentrated in the urban centres" (Aga Khan, 1969c). Under his leadership, UNHCR wanted to minimise its involvement in towns and cities, and while it had success in settling hundreds of thousands of refugees in Africa, such settlement was in rural areas. Those living in urban areas were less fortunate, with Aga Khan (1969c) telling staff in Geneva he wished "we could be as satisfied about the cities, Dar-es-Salaam, Lusaka, Kampala, Nairobi, Dakar, where more and more refugees are facing serious problems". Although Aga Khan acknowledged this as an existing issue, it was something that would "have to be carefully studied in the future"

(Aga Khan, 1969c), and not a priority for the High Commissioner or UNHCR at the time. In contrast to Goedhart, who “repeatedly drew attention to the plight” of Europe’s ‘hard core’ group of “unwanted people” (Loescher, 2001a: 62), Aga Khan sought to avoid the emergence of a new ‘hard core’ group of people in African cities.

Aga Khan stepped down after more than a decade as High Commissioner and was replaced by Poul Hartling in 1978. During Hartling’s time as leader of UNHCR, he took the most progressive position on urban displacement of any High Commissioner in the twentieth century. Hartling made allusions to urban displacement as a burden, but he spoke of the benefits of urban-based local integration and the need for greater opportunities for self-reliance. During a speech in 1979, he stated that away from the glare of the international media, there existed groups of “forgotten refugees” (Hartling, 1979a). The urban displaced remained hidden in many cases, but under Hartling UNHCR did not advocate minimising support to those in urban areas, as it had under Aga Khan.

Upon becoming High Commissioner, Hartling (1979b) acknowledged “the welfare of urban refugees and their counselling” was a “major issue” for UNHCR, albeit repeating some of the tropes of Aga Khan, including claiming the urban displaced were a considerable strain on their hosts and existed as a small minority. In 1980, Hartling (1980a) commented that “while the vast majority of the refugees in Africa are of rural background”, there were also, “thousands who were living in towns in their home countries now congregate in urban centres such as Cairo, Djibouti and Khartoum, thus placing a severe strain on local resources”. The presence of refugees in the Sudanese capital of Khartoum was said to have “placed a severe strain on infrastructure and limited national resources” (Hartling, 1980b). However, as noted later in the decade, the “periodic roundups and removals of refugees from Khartoum to settlements” was sometimes motivated by “political reasons” as “urban refugees are the most politically articulate”, and could lead demonstrations against the Government (Harrell-Bond, 1986: 9). The same view was taken when refugee camps were located on the periphery of urban areas. In Djibouti, for example, refugees’

“presence somewhat disrupted public services while imposing a heavy strain on health facilities, water supplies and local transport”, and the refugee camps “imposed a heavy burden on an already overtaxed administration” (Hartling, 1980c). Displaced people in urban areas were still considered a strain on the limited resources of host states.

Hartling increased focus on the prospect of local integration for those in urban areas and the benefits refugees could offer to their host country. Integration, both rural and urban, was seen as the best option when voluntary repatriation was not feasible. Hartling (1985c) commented that a “relatively modest investment can pay big dividends in giving the refugees the wherewithal to become self-supporting as quickly as possible”. In most refugee-hosting states in the early 1980s, the majority of people still lived in rural areas and most refugees were of rural origin. Despite this, Hartling (1981a) argued UNHCR should not be limited to providing integration in rural parts of host countries, as there were “large numbers of refugees in urban areas in developing countries” requiring the Organisation’s assistance. However, Hartling (1981a) admitted UNHCR had “not been as successful as we would have wished in devising and implementing urban integration projects”.

During Hartling’s time as High Commissioner, UNHCR ran a number of programmes for urban refugees and began to study their effects. In December 1984 UNHCR’s Evaluation Unit published an internal report on assistance to urban refugees in Africa, and in March 1985 published a review of assistance to urban refugees in Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic, while in September 1985 it co-published a model for an integrated programme for urban refugees (UNHCR, 1995a: 33). One example of an urban programme in the early 1980s was the creation of a training centre in Djibouti aiming to improve the resettlement prospects of 500 young urban refugees (Hartling, 1980c). Another example being the case of Nicaraguans in Costa Rica in the mid-1980s, where most refugees resided in towns and cities. Speaking about this case at ExCom in 1985, Hartling (1985b) noted “the largest share of UNHCR’s budget in Costa Rica is devoted to care and maintenance of refugees in the reception centres and in



urban areas”, while at the same time UNHCR had difficulty finding a suitable site for rural refugee settlements. Despite this example, local integration in urban areas was often sought in tandem with rural options. In Sudan, for example, where the Government was dealing with around half a million refugees in the early 1980s, “major emphasis [was] laid on rural settlement projects or on integration of refugees in suburban areas” (Hartling, 1981b). Similarly in Somalia in the mid-1980s, in addition to large camps hosting Ethiopian refugees, “some 1,300 refugees of urban and semi-urban background... [were] registered with UNHCR in Mogadishu and Hargeisa” (Hartling, 1985d). These groups of urban displaced people were not treated only as a burden to their hosts, but were posited as being potentially beneficial.

In a statement to the Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly in 1985, Hartling spoke of the partnership being forged between UNHCR and the World Bank. The partnership was part of an effort to link displacement with development, and by so doing, highlighting the benefits displaced people could offer their host countries. Hartling (1985c) argued that “durable solutions for refugees, especially in low-income countries, can and should also be to the advantage of the host country – what we call forging the link between refugee aid and development assistance”. After calling on countries attending an Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) meeting in 1981 to propose new schemes for integrating urban refugees, Hartling referenced a popular UNHCR poster of the time, which featured the words “a bundle of belonging isn’t the only thing a refugee brings to his new country” above an image of the renowned physicist Albert Einstein, followed by the statement that “Einstein was a refugee” (Hartling, 1981a). The High Commissioner would go on to claim that “unwanted refugees of one nation can enrich the agriculture, industry, science, general economic output, culture and literature of another” (Hartling, 1981a). This suggestion points to a much more positive view of the urban displaced, which the High Commissioner would utilise as a means of creating further opportunities for local integration in the urban areas of host states.

Hartling's view of urban displacement, in contrast to Aga Khan, can be understood partly through his willingness to listen to more voices within UNHCR. Aga Khan had "relied extensively on one or two trusted staff members for advice" who were "accused of being arrogant and too powerful", with his style of leadership and governance "frequently criticized for being 'imperial'" (Loescher, 2001: 201). In contrast, Hartling was "unpretentious and had no exaggerated sense of self", and "established a cabinet style of management within the UNHCR" (Loescher, 2001: 201). Though Hartling may similarly have had a small group of people "for some of his closest advice" (Loescher, 2001: 201), his attitude to leadership allowed for other actors within UNHCR to inform his work and attitudes. As previously discussed, Hartling's speeches demonstrated his knowledge of field operations to assist urban refugees, while UNHCR's Evaluation Service produced reports on urban displacement. All the same, "UNHCR toed the American line during the Hartling era", with Hartling not maintaining "a healthy independence from the United States" (Loescher, 2001: 202), and reluctant to criticise US policy (Loescher, 2001: 231). Hartling was continually "fearful that he would upset... his biggest donor", which did prove fruitful, as his "most notable achievement was the rapid expansion of the Office's budget and resources" (Loescher, 2001: 202). Meanwhile, he was criticised by African leaders for focusing his attention on Afghanistan and Indo-China, neglecting the four million refugees in Africa (Loescher, 2001: 227). Given this, Hartling's increased attention to urban displacement, and connections to local integration, can be understood in light of a leadership approach involving increased attention to further actors within UNHCR, including the Evaluation Service. Equally, the focus on locally integrating urban refugees, previously established by Aga Khan as being mostly found in Africa, can be understood as part of Hartling's desire to maintain strong relations with donor states. This reflects the discussion in chapters two and three of the role states, particularly donor states, have in influencing the policies and operations of organisations such as UNHCR.

During Hartling's final months as High Commissioner he once again alluded to the 'forgotten refugees' of the world, contending that their "story is often untold.

But they are no less worth of attention and help” (Hartling, 1985a). Every refugee, “whether in a refugee camp in Africa or in an urban centre in Europe” was said to deserve UNHCR’s “sympathy and help” (Hartling, 1985a). In so doing, Hartling pre-empted a core theme of the ‘UNHCR Policy on Refugee Protection and Solutions in Urban Areas’ (2009 Policy), namely that protection is not contingent on location. Following Hartling, Jean-Pierre Hocké (High Commissioner from 1986 to 1989), spoke of “spontaneously-settled” (Hocké, 1988) or “self-settled” (Hocké, 1989) refugees in rural and urban areas needing assistance. Hocké was not as outspoken over the urban displaced, but promoted local integration for urban refugees in Ethiopia during a speech to ECOSOC in 1986 (Hocké, 1986). Thorvald Stoltenberg (High Commissioner during 1990) and Ogata spoke little about the issue of urban displacement during the early 1990s. Ogata warned a lack of reintegration options could lead to returnees moving to urban areas in large numbers (Ogata, 1992b), but her focus was on linking “security, stability and humanitarianism”, to which urban displacement did not play an important role (Ogata, 1992a). Following Hartling, these High Commissioners emerged after “donor governments had tired of funding massive resettlement programmes for the Indo-Chinese and expansive relief operations in the Third World” (Loescher, 2001: 240). The United States in particular felt that “UNHCR was too legalistic”, and sought for UNHCR to become more ‘operation-minded’, with a “High Commissioner who was more operational and able to handle refugee emergencies” (Loescher, 2001: 240). Urban displacement continued to be considered a marginal, non-emergency issue, not befitting the focus of an increasingly operational UNHCR, who during the late 1980s was “more valued by the US and many donor governments for its relief operations than for its protection of refugees” (Loescher, 2001: 247). Hocké, Stoltenberg and Ogata made limited references to urban displacement, but UNHCR’s Evaluation Unit and Programme and Technical Support Section (PTSS) produced a number of internal reports during this period including details of urban assistance programmes. Surveys of assistance programmes in Mexico in 1988, Guatemala in 1988, Turkey in 1992 and Brazil in 1993 focused specifically on urban refugees (UNHCR, 1995a: 32-33). The work on urban displacement by UNHCR’s Evaluation Service appears to have been motivated by its own

initiative, rather than as a response to calls for increased knowledge on the topic from the High Commissioner, or in response to operational priorities at the time.

### 3. Policy Creation: 1994-1997

Between 1994 and 1997 UNHCR underwent a shift in how it addressed the issue of urban displacement. At the beginning of this period UNHCR had never dedicated a public manual, set of guidelines, or policy to the issue of urban displacement. By the end of 1997, UNHCR released two global urban policies, committing itself to assisting refugees regardless of their location. The period began with the release of the ‘Community Services for Urban Refugees’ (1994 Guidelines), produced for UNHCR field offices as a tool to help develop greater community services for refugees (UNHCR, 1994a: ii). The 1994 Guidelines called for an overarching change in refugee assistance away from individual case management towards a community-based approach, regardless of location (UNHCR, 1994a). It spoke of the growing number of refugees in urban areas as a “natural phenomenon in situations where possibilities do not exist for establishing centres or camps” and contended these people would be “viewed as a burden to the host community and as a negative influence on society in general” (UNHCR, 1994a: i), setting out at length the urban context and the needs of urban refugees. At the same time it proposed UNHCR should work closely with its operational partners and host governments to be able to manoeuvre more effectively in towns and cities (UNHCR, 1994a).

The 1994 Guidelines made it clear repatriation was still the preferred solution (UNHCR, 1994a: 79), in keeping with UNHCR’s position at the time. However, they stated that when this was not available “local integration is the most reasonable solution” (UNHCR, 1994a: 80). At the time, within UNHCR, local integration in urban areas through the use of self-reliance, training, education, and greater involvement of the host community, was not a popularly supported position (UNHCR, 1994a: 80-81), yet it became central to UNHCR’s 2009 Policy fifteen years later. When the 1994 Guidelines were republished in May 1996 as ‘Urban Refugees: A Community-based Approach’ (1996 Guidelines), they

emphasised “refugees can be self-reliant, can contribute to the economy and, given the opportunity, can enrich the communities in which they live” (UNHCR, 1996c: 19). In the Foreword to the 1996 Guidelines, Nicholas Morris, the Director of the Division of Programmes and Operational Support, wrote of UNHCR’s focus on emergency response to displacement and asserted there was a need to “go beyond the provision of material relief” and pay more attention to refugees’ “social, human and emotional needs” (UNHCR, 1996c: iv). There were attempts to counter perceptions that urban refugees were a “burden to the host community” and a “negative influence on society in general” (UNHCR, 1996c: vii). Unlike in 2009, however, urban refugees in the mid-1990s were thought to “represent a very small proportion of the total refugee population” (UNHCR, 1994a: 4).

In between the release of the 1994 Guidelines and their republication as the 1996 Guidelines, the ‘UNHCR’s Policy and Practice Regarding Urban Refugees: A Discussion Paper’ (1995 Discussion Paper) was released. Published in October 1995 and written by Christine Mougue of UNHCR’s Inspection and Evaluation Service (IES), it was UNHCR’s clearest meditation on urban displacement prior to establishing a policy on the issue. The 1995 Discussion Paper addressed certain issues displaced people faced in towns and cities. Yet it also reaffirmed assumptions such as those Aga Khan had about urban refugees, namely that they were small in number and required a disproportionate amount of assistance. The 1995 Discussion Paper claimed urban refugees accounted for less than two per cent of UNHCR’s total refugee caseload, yet demanded between ten and fifteen per cent of its financial and human resources (UNHCR, 1995a: 2). It contended that, “urban refugees and asylum seekers tend to share a culture of expectation, which, if not satisfied, often leads to frustration and violence” (UNHCR, 1995a: 2). This description has been criticised for sending a contradictory message, as while urban refugees were portrayed as neglected, they were also portrayed as an “over-serviced minority that commanded resources beyond what could be justified by its size” (Pantuliano et al., 2012: 6). The 1995 Discussion Paper was concerned with lowering the number of refugees in urban areas by identifying

those with a “genuine need” and “break[ing] the vicious circle of assistance and dependence” it claimed existed (UNHCR, 1995a: 24).

The 1995 Discussion Paper was based on extensive interviews with UNHCR staff in headquarters (UNHCR, 1995a: ii), both reflecting and perpetuating often-negative views of urban refugees within the Organisation at the time. It noted concerns had been “growing during the past years over the dearth of policy guidelines regarding urban refugees” (UNHCR, 1995a: 6). The 1995 Discussion Paper highlighted previous work completed by the research and evaluation unit, including examples of existing urban caseloads and programmes, while noting UNHCR had not developed a specific urban policy nor adhered to the ad hoc guidelines already existing. The recommendations of the 1995 Discussion Paper focused on avoiding precedence-setting by field offices, lowering the number of urban refugees, limiting assistance in urban areas, and setting out specific ways to discourage future “irregular movers” from going into towns and cities (UNHCR, 1995a: 24-25). It called on UNHCR to establish a working group to develop policy guidelines and establish a comprehensive policy (UNHCR, 1995a: ii).

Less than a year and a half after the publication of the 1995 Discussion Paper, UNHCR’s first policy on urban refugees was released. In February 1996 a Working Group was established under the Assistant High Commissioner (UNHCR, 1997a: i) and on 25 March 1997 the ‘UNHCR Comprehensive Policy on Urban Refugees’ (March 1997 Policy) was published. The March 1997 Policy reflected the contents of the 1995 Discussion Paper and has been described as “probably one of the most controversial documents ever produced by the agency” (Marfleet, 2007: 40). The March 1997 Policy sought to establish a framework and outline leading principles that aimed to “underlie all UNHCR action with regards to urban refugees” (UNHCR, 1997a: i). It intended to shift assistance for urban refugees towards durable solutions away from long-term care and maintenance. Included within it was a definition of urban refugees, issues surrounding ‘irregular movers’, potential solutions for those currently residing in urban areas, a focus on self-reliance, and details of a proposed

training and information campaign. The March 1997 Policy focused on the implementation process, arguing, “no policy can stay at the level of a paper statement of intent” (UNHCR, 1997a: 23). When addressing implementation, the range of actors needed for the March 1997 Policy to be realised was highlighted:

Field Offices will need to implement the policy, tools will need to be developed and introduced, FO [Field Offices] and implementing partner staffs must be trained and equipped, and the implementation will need to be regularly evaluated and measures taken to address problems which arise. Besides promotional initiatives with host government and NGOs, at least three working instruments need to be put in place as soon as possible, a global IC [Individual Cases] database system, a needs assessment tool, and the adoption and resourcing of an income generation assistance policy. (UNHCR, 1997a: 23)

The March 1997 Policy lasted for less than nine months, and was replaced on 12 December 1997 by the ‘UNHCR Policy on Refugees in Urban Areas’ (1997 Policy), which would remain UNHCR’s official position on urban displacement until September 2009. The replacement of the March 1997 Policy came about, “in the light of experience and comments received from stakeholders” (Obi and Crisp, 2001: 1). The March 1997 Policy had been twenty-three pages long, while the 1997 Policy, released in December, was more concise, at only five pages. The 1997 Policy focused on freedom of movement, types of assistance, attaining solutions, and movement between countries (UNHCR, 1997b: 1-4). It gave particular attention to the issues around ‘irregular movement’, including the extent of assistance that should be available to people engaged in this type of movement (UNHCR, 1997b: 4). In particular it talked of “problems that may be created by unregulated movement to urban areas”, threatened to “limit the location where UNHCR assistance is provided” and warned of “foster[ing] long-term dependency” in those found in urban areas (UNHCR, 1997b: 1-2). Although softer in tone than the March 1997 Policy, the 1997 Policy portrayed urban refugees as having unrealistic expectations and being prone to violence (UNHCR, 1997b: 4-5). The release of the 1997 Policy was the culmination of UNHCR’s changing policy and practice on urban displacement in this period. The following sections will consider how this developed between 1994 and 1997, demonstrating the prominent role of actors within UNHCR, and the role played by pressure from below.

## 4. Pressure from Within

To understand the policymaking process that occurred between 1994 and 1997 it is important to consider pressures for change emerging from within UNHCR. This section will consider the role of three internal actors: the research and evaluation unit, the High Commissioner, and the field offices. It will show the important role some elements of UNHCR played in bringing about change in policy and practice, but in contrast to the period analysed in chapter six, not all of these actors were strong advocates for change, explaining in part the limitations of the March 1997 Policy and the 1997 Policy, and why a replacement was required.

### 4.1 Research and Evaluation Unit

During the mid-1990s UNHCR's research and evaluation processes underwent significant change. Previously, such work was split between different parts of UNHCR, including the Central Evaluation Section (CES) and various regional bureaux. Research and evaluation work had been performed centrally within UNHCR since 1973, when the first evaluation post was created. In March 1995, the newly established Inspection and Evaluation Service (IES) became operational, consolidating UNHCR's inspection and evaluation work (UNHCR, 1995j: 1). The creation of the post of Director of IES being approved at the forty-fifth session of Executive Committee in October 1994. The creation of IES occurred after a proposal was made to the Sub-Committee on Administrative and Financial Matters on 19 May 1993, with the following intention:

[To] provide the High Commissioner [Ogata] with an additional management tool which is flexible, independent, and directly responsible to her... [And supply] rigorous and comprehensive reviews of UNHCR's operational activities and their impact in given countries and regions, focusing particularly on those factors, both internal and external to the organization, deemed essential to the effective and efficient achievement of organizational objectives. (Quoted in: UNHCR, 1995k: 1)

From its creation, IES had a close relationship with the High Commissioner Sadako Ogata, though it was not simply a 'management tool' and was able to



utilise, to an extent, its independence and focus on issues it believed to be important. In order to “make a significant and ongoing contribution to decision making in UNHCR” (UNGA, 1997m), IES focused its research and evaluation work on specific thematic issues, one being urban refugees. IES’s work was intended “as a catalyst for change and means for improving operational activities”, although its work programme was decided on receipt of proposals from UNHCR’s regional bureaux and divisions, with final selection left to UNHCR’s Senior Management Committee (UNGA, 1997m).

In August 1998 a consultant and a private firm, PLAN:NET 2000, completed an external review of UNHCR’s research and evaluation capacity. PLAN:NET 2000 reported that UNHCR had only one evaluation officer position, notably less than the four employed by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the six working on central evaluations for the World Food Programme (WFP) at the time (PLAN:NET 2000, 1998). The report found that spending on research and evaluation work was smaller in UNHCR than UNDP or WFP, with only 0.05% of its budget assigned in 1997 (PLAN:NET 2000, 1998). The shortage of financial and staff resources impacted the “type of evaluation studies that can be reasonably undertaken, both in terms of subject area, scope and design” (PLAN:NET 2000, 1998). At the same time, the regional bureaux completed self-evaluations of their work albeit “very infrequent[ly]” (PLAN:NET 2000, 1998). IES was established in part to review the impact of UNHCR’s work in different countries around the world, but by 1998 it focused primarily on inspecting field offices, and providing “essentially, a management audit” (PLAN:NET 2000, 1998).

Although it was limited in its capacity in the mid-1990s, UNHCR’s research and evaluation unit played an important role in bringing about policy and practice changes regarding urban displacement. The 1995 Discussion Paper, written by IES, noted the lack of policy guidelines came despite “an impressive number of reports on urban refugees” being produced within UNHCR over the previous decade (UNHCR, 1995a: 3). It listed twenty-five internal reports published between 1984 and 1994 addressing urban refugee issues (UNHCR, 1995a: 32-

33). Eleven of these were produced by the Programme and Technical Support Service (PTSS), seven by the Evaluation Service or Central Evaluation Section (CES), one by PTSS and the Central Evaluation Section, with the remaining six produced by the Evaluation Service and the Regional Bureau for Africa (RBA), the Regional Bureau for Asia and Oceania (RBAO), the Regional Bureau for Europe and North America (RBENA), the Policy Planning Research Unit (PPRU) or Social Services. The majority of knowledge concerning urban displacement during this period was produced by a part of UNHCR's research and evaluation function, either centrally or by those based within regional bureaux. In the case of UNHCR's work on behalf of internally displaced people, the Organisation was said to have undergone a process of "institutional learning" between 2000 and 2003 (Weiss and Korn, 2006: 128). The same claim cannot be made of urban displacement during the mid-1990s, although UNHCR increased its knowledge of the issue steadily from the 1980s onwards, in large part due to its research and evaluation functions.

Between 1994 and 1997 UNHCR's research and evaluation unit continued to highlight issues of urban displacement, including reports on semi-urban displacement in Somalia (UNHCR, 1994d), the difficulty of providing assistance outside of urban areas during conflict in Yugoslavia (UNHCR, 1994b), the dangers faced by urban refugee children (UNHCR, 1997f), and the existence of urban caseloads in countries, such as Kenya, Mozambique and Uganda (UNHCR, 1996a; UNHCR, 1996b; UNHCR, 1997d). In a review of work with Afghan refugees in Pakistan, the issue of unregistered refugees "drifting towards major urban centres" was raised, wherein traditional safety nets were said to break down (UNHCR, 1994c). It described some of the issues arising from this situation, including lack of support leading to the movement to urban areas, the abandonment of vulnerable refugees and the exacerbation of resentment from the host population when competing for employment with urban refugees (UNHCR, 1994c). Meanwhile a 1997 review of UNHCR's implementing partners and procedures noted UNHCR had worked with urban refugees since the 1970s and UNHCR-created agencies continued to run programmes for urban refugees (UNHCR, 1997c). Reports issued during this time by UNHCR's research and

evaluation unit perpetuated negative views around urban refugees. For example, a 1997 report on staff stress and security argued office staff faced the risk of “violence threatened or perpetuated by urban refugees whose protests commonly target UNHCR and operational partner staff, as well as their premises or vehicles” (UNHCR, 1997e). The perception of urban refugees as threatening would feature in both the March 1997 Policy and 1997 Policy, showing a correlation between the UNHCR’s research and evaluation output and official global policies.

The 1995 Discussion Paper proved a key example of IES’s impact on UNHCR’s policymaking. It considered a range of issues surrounding urban refugees (including protection, assistance, and durable solutions), providing detailed recommendations on how UNHCR should adapt its approach. At the time this was the most detailed appraisal of UNHCR’s work in urban areas and gave specific policy recommendations. Produced by IES, it called on UNHCR to establish “a clear, rational and comprehensive policy, based on principles which are globally applicable and acceptable” (UNHCR, 1995a: 7). The 1995 Discussion Paper recommended the creation of a working group at headquarters to develop a policy on urban refugees and subsequently distribute this policy to field offices, partners, and refugees themselves. It focused on the need to involve host governments, identify ‘genuine’ urban refugees, the preference of camp-based assistance, and the need to discourage future ‘irregular movement’ (UNHCR, 1995a: 24-27).

In 2002 Human Rights Watch credited the 1995 Discussion Paper with playing an important role in encouraging UNHCR to develop the March 1997 Policy (Parker, 2002: 162). There are noticeable similarities between the recommendations of the 1995 Discussion Paper and both UNHCR policies released in 1997. In February 1996, a working group was created under the Assistant High Commissioner with the aim of defining UNHCR’s global policy on urban refugees (UNHCR, 1997a: i). The working group produced a report on its findings, delivered by the Assistant High Commissioner to UNHCR’s senior management on 15 August 1996. The Note accompanying the March 1997 Policy

mentioned the role of the working group and that comments received from those in the field had been significant in the policy's formation (UNHCR, 1997a: i). The 1995 Discussion Paper focused on the value of local integration, the need to move away from providing 'care and maintenance' programmes, the creation of harmony between strategies of different field offices, along with portrayals of urban refugees as a resource-hungry minority prone to violence (UNHCR, 1997a). These would all feature prominently in both the March 1997 Policy and the 1997 Policy (UNHCR, 1997a; UNHCR 1997b).

The 1995 Discussion Paper began with an important question: "Is there a moral obligation, within the framework of providing protection, to keep refugees from falling into destitution? This dilemma lies behind much of the discussion which follows" (UNHCR, 1995a: 1). IES contended that UNHCR had "no specific mandate to provide protection" in urban areas, but questioned, "how broadly the organization should interpret its mandate to provide protection" (UNHCR, 1995a: 1). Although it did not specifically answer its own question, the 1995 Discussion Paper implied UNHCR was morally bound to provide assistance regardless of location. This suggestion remained important until the release of the 2009 Policy, which made clear "UNHCR's mandated responsibilities towards them [refugees] are not affected by their location" (UNHCR, 2009b: 3).

The case of urban displacement reflects the 'clash of norms' said to have affected UNHCR and other international humanitarian organisations following the end of the Cold War (Weiner, 1998). Some people within UNHCR turned towards 'instrumental humanitarianism', adopting a pragmatic attitude to the 'new realities' of the world at the time, focusing on 'least worst' solutions, consideration of alternative courses of action without simply making "decisions on the basis of the international legal norms that had been the principal guides to the organization in the past" (Weiner, 1998: 442). Others sought a 'monistic humanitarianism' based on beliefs "the agency should always take a 'principled stand' derived from its mandate to uphold and interpret refugee law", and were concerned over a "slip into opportunism" as organisations like UNHCR simply followed the will of states (Weiner, 1998: 443-444). The division between these

two factors within UNHCR has been described as being between ‘fundamentalists’, those maintaining “a more legalistic approach to refugee matters, emphasizing law, the mandate”, and ‘pragmatists’, seeking a “more flexible interpretation of refugee law and UNHCR’s mandate... becoming involved in broader international peace and security issues” (Barnett, 2011: 209). As discussed earlier in the chapter, High Commissioner Hartling was criticised for being too ‘legalistic’, positioning him as a ‘fundamentalist’ or ‘monistic humanitarian’, in contrast to High Commissioners Hocké and Ogata, who were ‘pragmatists’ or ‘instrumental humanitarians’. In the 1995 Discussion Paper, IES recommended a way for UNHCR to address a ‘new reality’ and adhere to a moral duty to support displaced people, within its existing legal framework. In so doing IES utilised a form of moral authority, as discussed in chapter two, and one of the three types of authority employed by international organisations. IES’s use of a legal, rather than pragmatic, justification for increased attention to urban refugees stands in contrast to UNHCR’s dominant approach at the time, including that of High Commissioner Ogata. The 1995 Discussion Paper served to highlight the lack of cohesive strategy to urban displacement existing within UNHCR in the mid-1990s.

UNHCR’s research and evaluation unit played an important role in setting the tone of discussions and fostering understanding about urban displacement at this time. IES’s suggestion of UNHCR having a moral obligation to assist those in towns and cities would become more broadly accepted in the Organisation, though not until the 2000s. UNHCR’s research and evaluation unit’s recommendations for a working group and the development of a global policy were both followed and acknowledged in the March 1997 Policy (UNHCR, 1997a: i). UNHCR’s policymaking during this period and the creation of its first global urban policy came about largely because of the efforts of the research and evaluation unit.

#### 4.2 High Commissioner

Between 1994 and 1997 High Commissioner Sadako Ogata led UNHCR. As discussed in chapter two, leaders of international organisations can play an important role in agenda setting and in steering their organisations on given issue. In her time as High Commissioner, Ogata was concerned with remaining relevant to powerful states and sought to reposition UNHCR so that it was not viewed as obsolete (Hammerstad, 2014: 7). To this end Ogata adopted specific language and concepts popular at the time. One example being her adoption of the idea of human security, claiming “for most people today, a feeling of insecurity arises more from worries about daily life than from the dread of a cataclysmic world event” (UNDP, 1994: 3). Human security sought to position the individual, rather than the state, as the referent object of security (Kaldor, 2007). Following the popularisation of human security by a UNDP report in 1994, Ogata employed the idea of human security in relation to forced displacement, and “rarely made a speech without relying on the concept” (Hammerstad, 2014: 44). In the 1997 edition of *The State of the World's Refugees* report, the concept featured prominently, with the first chapter entitled ‘Safeguarding Human Security’ (UNHCR, 1997g).

It was under Ogata that connections between refugees and security became most prominent. Throughout her time as High Commissioner, Ogata spoke of the threat refugees posed to host states and different populations (Ogata, 1993; Ogata, 1998b; Ogata, 1998c). Refugees were described as affecting “key state interests”, relevant for “matters of national, regional and even international peace and security” (Ogata, 1997a: 4). Under her leadership UNHCR “adopted a security language in order to spur decisive international political and military action... by appealing to the security interests of states and to mobilise resources” (Mogire, 2011: 25). Ogata became the first High Commissioner to address the United Nations Security Council and played an important part in raising UNHCR status as an international security actor (Hammerstad, 2014; Loescher, 2001a: 14). The use of national and human security served Ogata’s pragmatic attitude, as displaced people could be cast as a national security matter when it benefited UNHCR during their discussions with states. At other

times, displacement was described as a human security issue, justifying UNHCR's mission creep, including expansion into new countries and operational contexts.

In accordance with the leadership literature, Ogata played a decisive role in promoting certain ideas around refugees within UNHCR, consequently shaping the way in which external actors viewed the Organisation. As discussed in chapter two, the personal background of leaders is important in understanding their effectiveness and how they act. Ogata had "no direct experience with refugees" before becoming High Commissioner, having spent time as a diplomat and international relations academic, the latter making her "familiar with international political and security issues and the dynamics of political currents within the UN" (Loescher, 2001a: 273). Ogata's background has been credited with explaining her effectiveness as UNHCR's leader, particularly her ability to raise the prominence of displacement issues. This contrasts with claims that leaders are more effective if they have a strong background in their organisation's specialism. As discussed in chapter two, UNDP was traditionally led by someone chosen for administrative abilities, including fundraising, though it was claimed the Organisation would have been more effective if led by a 'development specialist' (Browne, 2011: 19). Prior to becoming High Commissioner, Ogata was not a 'refugee specialist', yet she was able to increase UNHCR's funding and visibility throughout the 1990s. Ogata was adept at using the media to improve public opinion of UNHCR's work. She wanted to ensure UNHCR had a "highly recognizable niche", so that people would associate it with humanitarian emergencies, much as UNICEF was identified with children (Loescher, 2001: 290). The leadership literature gives attention to the relationship between UN leaders and states, but it does not consider their interactions with international media outlets. And yet, this relationship significantly shapes how humanitarian and development organisations are perceived, and whether their work receives support from donor states' populations, which in turn might shape attitudes of governments. For Ogata, UNHCR "had to be perceived by the media as being more operational and effective", as she "realized the significance of the impact of media coverage on public opinion and the impact, in turn, on public opinion on political processes

and leaders” (Loescher, 2001: 290). To achieve this, Ogata hired Sylvana Foa as the new head of the Public Information Office, promoted a more engaged and outward-looking media strategy, at a time when UNHCR “took on greater operational responsibilities and its vehicles were seen delivering assistance on the front lines of conflicts around the world, its prestige and reputation soared” (Loescher, 2001: 290). UNHCR’s move from “being an obscure humanitarian agency” to a “well-known international humanitarian assistance agency” was in part a result of Ogata’s pursuit of a broader audience, and the fact that the “world’s press and media idolized her” (Loescher, 2001: 290-291). As will be discussed in chapter six, High Commissioner Guterres utilised a similar strategy in regard to the media, helping ensure a greater focus on urban displacement before the release of the 2009 Policy. Ways in which leaders of international organisations, particularly UN organisations, relate to the international media is not sufficiently explored in the leadership literature, but it is of importance to understanding the ability of leaders to enact policy change.

The issue of urban displacement did not receive similar attention from Ogata. In speeches given before the end of 1997, she discussed urban issues, albeit principally in relation to targeting of towns and cities during conflicts and instability caused by urban poverty (Ogata, 1992a; UNHCR, 1995). Ogata sought to align displacement with international security, although she believed threats to security came primarily from a lack of democracy, underdevelopment, and environmental changes (Ogata, 1992a). Throughout the 1990s UNHCR was focused on repatriation of refugees and Ogata (1992b) warned of “unduly encouraging returnees to flock to urban areas” for example individuals following the end of the Bosnian War in 1995 (Ogata, 1997c). One limited reference Ogata made to the issue of urban displacement during this period related to refugees in Southern Africa. On 25 March 1997, the same day as the release of the March 1997 Policy, Ogata addressed the Parliament of the Republic of South Africa. During this speech, she stated that “refugees finding their way into southern Africa are mostly urban and are from countries to which their repatriation is not foreseeable”, resulting in “some forms of local integration... [being] unavoidable” (Ogata, 1997b). Ogata did not specify where such integration should occur, but



urban areas were the environments most familiar to refugees in South Africa. Despite speaking on the day of its release, Ogata did not mention the March 1997 Policy during her address to the South African Parliament, nor in any other speech she made in 1997.

In her book, *The Turbulent Decade: Confronting the Refugee Crises of the 1990s*, Ogata made no specific reference to urban refugees as a category of people or the policymaking surrounding them. She talked of refugees leaving camps in Pakistan to find work, of individuals repatriating to urban areas in Bosnia, and stressed most Afghans in Iran lived in urban areas (Ogata, 2005: 124, 279, 292, 289), but these references were brief. Reflecting on a visit to the Pakistani city of Quetta, she observed “the appalling conditions under which the refugees lived side by side with the urban poor” (Ogata, 2005: 293). Ogata was aware of the presence of displaced people in urban areas and the difficult situations many of them faced, but made no reference to either the March 1997 Policy or the 1997 Policy, both of which were written and came into effect during her time as High Commissioner. During an interview conducted for the thesis with Jeff Crisp (2015), the former Head of the Policy Development and Evaluation Service, he stated Ogata was “influential in the areas she was interested in”. Issues Ogata was concerned with included repatriation and the security dimension of forced displacement, but not the presence of displaced people in urban areas. According to Crisp (2015), who worked on *The State of the World's Refugees* in 1995 and 1997, Ogata read and ‘signed off’ on both of these reports before they were published. Crisp (2015) stated that had there been something missing in either of the documents she wanted included, she would have ensured they were revised. The 1997 edition of *The State of the World's Refugees* discussed the issue of urban refugees directly, but the 1995 edition made only brief reference to the movement of people between rural and urban areas, or the safety some refugees found in cities and the urbanisation of returnees (UNHCR, 1995d). The leadership literature, as discussed in chapter two, demonstrates that leaders of organisations play an important role in framing and elevating an issue, as supported by Crisp’s claims over Ogata’s influence. While Ogata made few explicit references to urban refugees, her vision for UNHCR was expansionist,

bringing the Organisation into new areas and addressing new issues, in fitting with its increased role in urban areas.

There is no evidence that between 1994 and 1997 Ogata opposed UNHCR developing a policy on urban displacement. Increased involvement of UNHCR in urban areas was in line with the Organisation's direction under Ogata's leadership, including its work inside refugee producing countries and concerns, with addressing the 'root causes' of displacement. During the 1990s UNHCR's staffing levels and expenditure doubled (Hammerstad, 2014: 89). However, as discussed in chapter two, much of the power of leaders in international organisations, stems from their ability to frame issues, attract attention, set agendas, and propagate new norms. Ogata did this in relation to repatriation and displacement as a matter of human security, part of a broader strategy placing "UNHCR at the centre of the attempt in the early 1990s to create a post-Cold War 'new world order' of peace and stability" (Hammerstad, 2011: 243). Ogata's efforts did not extend to urban displacement, though she provided tacit consent. As a function of leaders, the ability to create context under which change occurs without actively framing or advocating for it, is not adequately explored in the existing literature, an omission the thesis helps to address. Ogata helped create an environment within UNHCR encouraging mandate expansion and did not oppose increased attention on the issue of urban displacement, but she did not advocate it or drive policymaking around it. Ogata's view of displacement during this period was associated with management through encampment (Verdirame and Pobjoy, 2013), not urban areas, reflecting the preferences of many donor and host states. In the Foreword to *The State of the World's Refugees in 1997: A Humanitarian Agenda*, Ogata's view on displacement during the mid-1990s was explained clearly:

The word 'refugee' tends to evoke the image of a sprawling camp, housing large numbers of distressed and impoverished people who have had to escape from their own country at short notice and with nothing but the clothes on their back. This perception is not an entirely false one; a majority of the 22 million people who are cared for by UNHCR come from the world's poorer countries. And many are obliged to live in large camps and settlements, waiting for the day when it is safe enough for them to go back to their homes and resume a more normal way of life. (UNHCR, 1997d)

### 4.3 Field Offices

A third important internal actor in the policymaking process during this period was UNHCR's staff in the field. The field is a collective term for those working for UNHCR outside its headquarters (Loescher, Betts and Milner, 2008: 82). Those in the field are responsible for implementing assistance, and protection strategies and policies. To do so they must interact with a range of different actors, including the governments of states that produce and host refugees, partners, and displaced people (Loescher, 2001: 177; Loescher, Betts and Milner, 2008: 82). As it is "problematic to speak of UNHCR exclusively as a single coherent actor without recognizing the complexity of relationships within the organisation" (Loescher, Betts and Milner, 2008: 79), it is useful to focus on connections between people based in UNHCR's headquarters (primarily Geneva, but also its Global Service Centres in Budapest and Copenhagen) and those in the field (made up of regional, country, and sub offices). The term 'the field' is used here to represent the impact of those working in field offices around the world as having the most direct involvement and interaction with displaced people. The term is however problematic, with what constitutes 'the field' being contested and often situational. For example, for "UNHCR employees posted in Nairobi, places like Dadaab [in Kenya] constituted the field. For UNHCR employees working at the agency's headquarters in Geneva, Nairobi was the field" (Hyndman, 2001: 270). This is complicated further when operations are increasingly found in cities like Nairobi, rather than remote camps such as Dadaab.

Before and during the period 1994 to 1997, members of UNHCR staff in various field offices assisted displaced people in urban areas. Their experiences and practices directly informed and shaped ways in which UNHCR saw issues of urban displacement and the policies it developed in response. Such experiences would influence the analysis and policy development work carried out by the research and evaluation unit, regional bureaux, and community services. Every field office is requested to draft a Country Operations Plan each year, for their respective regional bureau, at headquarters. It has been noted that "as UNHCR

programs have become more complex, and as reporting requirements have multiplied, field offices are spending an increasing portion of their time writing reports and answering questions from headquarters” (Loescher, Betts and Milner, 2008: 83). There is an explicit connection between what happens in the field and the policies developed in headquarters, as will be discussed in the chapter, allowing UNHCR staff in the field to shape the way in which the Organisation responded to urban displacement during the mid-1990s, including the development of the March 1997 Policy and 1997 Policy.

In 1991 UNHCR published *Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women*, addressing some of the difficulties faced by urban refugees, including resentment they encountered and implications of residing in towns and cities ‘illegally’ (UNHCR, 1991). Subsequent publications would address the need for urban refugees to have access to the same services as rural refugees or members of the host community (UNHCR, 1992; UNHCR, 1995b). Throughout this period urban displacement was discussed in relation to existing programmes, showing those in the field were already grappling with these issues prior to the emergence of a global policy. The 1995 Discussion Paper profiled six urban caseloads in Russia, India, Pakistan, Egypt, Brazil, and Greece (UNHCR, 1995a: 28-31). UNHCR’s work with such caseloads was relatively novel at the time. In Brazil, the Organisation began supporting urban caseloads in 1994, while comparable support had been in place in India and Pakistan since 1981 (UNHCR, 1995a: 28-30). Implementing these programmes involved various actors, including NGOs, international organisations and other UN agencies, such as UNDP. The type of assistance varied between different locations. In Greece the programme covered “subsistence allowance and emergency assistance”, while in Pakistan it covered “supplementary assistance towards living requirements and assistance towards self-reliance” and in Russia the “basic needs of food, shelter, health, skills training, education, legal protection and income-generation” (UNHCR, 1995a: 28-31). Other publications released during this time show a variety of support and assistance being offered by UNHCR’s field offices to displaced people in urban areas (Del Mundo, 1994; UNHCR and WHO, 1996).

Creating self-reliance was a central objective of many of the programmes provided by UNHCR's field offices during this time. UNHCR senior economist and planner, Larbi Mebtouche, noted the existence of local integration projects during this period aimed at encouraging independence. Most of these were found in Africa, beginning in the early 1980s and benefiting both rural and urban people (Del Mundo, 1994). In the 1993 edition of *The State of the World's Refugees* urban-based assistance programmes were mentioned, such as the Quick Impact Projects (QUIPs) assistance to refugees and returnees in better helping themselves. Various contemporary UNHCR operations in the field were designed to help refugees integrate into urban areas, and included providing "education, vocational training and counselling to help refugees gain access to employment and the means to become independent" (UNHCR, 1993b). Later when the 1997 Policy was released, Assistant High Commissioner Sérgio Vieira de Mello (1997: 1) described efforts to "promote self-reliance and avoid dependency" as the "central thrust" of UNHCR's global policymaking on urban refugees. Official policies UNHCR released in 1997 reflected what many field offices were already doing.

During the 1990s, UNHCR gained understanding of why displaced people moved to urban areas and the issues they faced there, shaped by the knowledge and expertise of those working in the Organisation who interacted with and assisted people in towns and cities around the world. In 1994, UNHCR published a report on their operational experiences with internally displaced people. Of this document, Leonard Franco, the Director of International Protection, noted, "millions of internally displaced persons throughout the world live scattered in the jungle, huddled in camps or hiding in the anonymity of urban slums. Their masses cover the dark side of the world refugee problem" (UNHCR, 1994e). In Guatemala, urban IDPs were said to "rely on their anonymous existence as their best protection mechanism" (UNHCR, 1994e). In the former Soviet Union, "[displaced] women had to gather their children and flee to urban centres where they could melt into the poverty-stricken anonymity of a shantytown" (Stavropoulou, 1996). Anonymity was an important issue during times of conflict, with major cities often seen as the safest places in a country. During civil

war, in countries such as Peru and Mozambique (UNHCR, 1993b), urban areas received large influxes of internally displaced people fleeing rural conflict. In his study of urban refugees living in Dar es Salaam in the 1990s, Marc Sommers (2001: 131) referred to anonymity as the most important asset the city afforded them. *The State of the World's Refugees: A Humanitarian Agenda* in 1997 discussed the myriad reasons displaced people moved to urban areas, including safety, economic factors, and access to public and relief agency programmes (UNHCR, 1997g). The fact these communities were often hidden made the work of UNHCR and its partners more difficult (UNHCR, 1993b; Ellis, 1994). These examples show an understanding of the lives and needs of the urban displaced, and the impact the creation of a formal urban policy would have to gaining access to such communities.

Through UNHCR's engagement with the urban displaced in the field, the Organisation was able to understand challenges people faced. These included medical issues, such as higher rates of HIV/AIDS than those in camps (UNHCR, WHO and UNAIDS, 1996: 3), as well as harassment and arbitrary detention (UNHCR, 1997g). In 1994, senior social services officer Marie Lobo argued, "urban refugees sometimes do not even know where other people from their country are living in the same city... Urban refugees lack the support of friends, family and community" (Quoted in: Ellis, 1994). In 1997, when UNHCR attempted to characterise the 'average' urban refugee they described "young, unaccompanied males" seeking employment or business opportunities while woman and children remained elsewhere to "benefit from the support systems which are usually to be found in a camp" (UNHCR, 1997g). This description echoed the 1995 Discussion Paper's suggestion that "urban caseloads tend to comprise predominantly young, single (or separated) males" (UNHCR, 1995a: 9). It reinforced the image of cities as socially isolated places, in which displaced people seek an income without necessarily establishing a home or broader life for themselves. In the case of Afghan refugees in New Delhi, the 1997 edition of *The State of the World's Refugees* reported "urban refugees are unable to develop the kind of community support structures which are often available in camps" (UNHCR, 1997g). Whatever level of community existed was undermined by the

difficulties of city life. This description supported the view that urban refugees required help, even though many were capable of being self-reliant with assistance, which would be reflected in UNHCR's policies in 1997.

The work of UNHCR's field staff helped influence the contents of, and necessity for, the guidelines and policies released between 1994 and 1997, which were more limited than those emerging in the period analysed in chapter five and six. The 1994 Guidelines were created specifically to provide a manual for "UNHCR Field Offices to develop community services for refugees" (UNHCR, 1994a: ii), though it was produced by the Programme and Technical Support Section and Community Services in Geneva, containing detailed recommendations for addressing management issues in the field and job descriptions of roles involving hands-on interaction with urban refugees, such as community officers, community workers, counsellors, and interpreters (UNHCR, 1994a: 91-94, 103-109). Two years later, these guidelines were revised to provide "practical guidance to those closest to the refugees" (UNHCR, 1996c: iv). The 1996 Guidelines included UNHCR field office staff and their partners, helping create a "spirit of solidarity" between urban refugees and those working with them (UNHCR, 1996c: 96), and also to "reflect the experiences and lessons learnt since the preparation of the original version" (UNHCR, 1996c: iv). The negative portrayal of urban refugees in the March 1997 Policy and 1997 Policy suggests the 'spirit of solidarity' was not extended to the policymaking process. The 1994 Guidelines demonstrate that while headquarters were conscious of the implications of working with urban refugees for those in the field, the fact the document was produced by staff in Geneva, suggests the existence of a top-down rather than bottom-up process.

The 1995 Discussion Paper did not benefit from any specific input from those working in the field, based instead on background literature and interviews with staff in Geneva (UNHCR, 1995a: ii). However, the March 1997 Policy was shaped by those working in the field. As discussed previously, a working group was established in February 1996 to develop a policy on urban refugees with its findings submitted to UNHCR's Senior Management Committee (SMC) on 15

August 1996 (UNHCR, 1997a: i). The discussion by the SMC produced two inputs. The first was the creation of a “high level decision sheet” distributed to SMC members on 19 September 1996 for their feedback (UNHCR, 1997a: i). The second was the distribution of the Working Groups report and proposed policy to selected field offices for their comments (UNHCR, 1997a: i). The March 1997 Policy notes “any comments subsequently received from SMC members and the consulted Field Offices, as well as Field Offices that have spontaneously offered their comments” were “incorporated in the final policy document” (UNHCR, 1997a: i). The one caveat to this was that these opinions were only incorporated “to the extent they were consistent with the 19 September summary of decisions” (UNHCR, 1997a: i). UNHCR’s field offices, both those selected to comment and those doing so of their own accord, were given opportunity to shape the Organisation’s first urban policy. This was tempered by preference being given to the opinions of senior management, with field office opinions more likely to be included when matching those of the SMC members. Given this process, the input field offices had in the contents of the March 1997 Policy remained limited.

Field offices held a more important role in the effective implementation of UNHCR’s new strategy regarding urban displacement. The March 1997 Policy stated that:

Field Offices will have to implement the policy, tools will need to be developed and introduced, FO [Field Office] and implementing partner staffs must be trained and equipped, and the implementation will need to be regularly evaluated and measures taken to address problems which arise. (UNHCR, 1997a: 23)

However, it was replaced less than nine months after its release. In a memorandum issued to UNHCR staff on 12 December 1997 by Assistant High Commissioner Sérgio Vieira de Mello, concerns expressed by some staff members towards the March 1997 Policy were acknowledged. He stated that “in light of these concerns” UNHCR had decided to “redraft and refocus the document” (Vieira de Mello, 1997: 1). As such, the 1997 Policy came into immediate effect, but with a view for it to be “further revised as necessary in light of comments and suggestions received from UNHCR Offices and partners”



(Vieira de Mello, 1997: 1). Vieira de Mello requested field offices distribute the new policy to their partners and collect their feedback. They were to return this feedback, along with their own, the Senior Community Services Officer within Programme and Technical Support Service (PTSS) by 31 March 1998 (Vieira de Mello, 1997: 1). As noted in chapter three, one of the roles of all of the three UNs is the ability to legitimate ideas and policies, as well as implement or test those in the field. UNHCR staff in the field exercised both of these roles in relation to the Organisation's policy on urban displacement, their ability to do so points to the direct influence UNHCR field staff had in the replacing of the March 1997 Policy, as well as planned continuation of this work on the 1997 Policy.

## 5. Pressure from Above

During the mid-1990s, members of the first UN, including states, influenced the way in which UNHCR responded to challenges of urban displacement. The section will consider the role of state-influence upon changes in UNHCR's policy and practice, through study of the contents of publications produced by UNHCR's Executive Committee (ExCom) in the period 1994 to 1997. The analysis provided here shows that while matters of urban displacement were raised in ExCom, it remained limited. The focus of ExCom was primarily on other issues and did not call on UNHCR to develop an urban policy. Once the process was underway, however, ExCom did not attempt to block the policymaking process, giving tacit support to UNHCR in producing its first urban policy in 1997.

In the early 1990s there was limited mention of urban displacement at ExCom. The Note on International Protection, presented annually by UNHCR to ExCom, made no mention of urban issues (UNGA, 1990; UNGA, 1991a; UNGA, 1992a; UNGA, 1993a), with other issues dominating in the period, such as internal displacement, sexual violence, refugee women, repatriation, burden-sharing, and displacement situations in Afghanistan, Central America, and the former Yugoslavia (UNGA, 1993a; UNGA, 1993b; UNGA, 1993c). ExCom did not call for more state assistance in addressing the challenges of urban displacement during this time, but it supported the increase in UNHCR's research and evaluation

work. In 1992 delegates “stressed the central importance of the evaluation function for the Office and the need for UNHCR constantly to review and reassess its activities” (UNGA, 1992b: 12). They also “reaffirmed the importance of creating a culture of evaluation within UNHCR”, as well as “integrating the lessons learned from evaluation in the decision-making, programming and planning process” (UNGA, 1992b: 12). The following year a similar point was made when ExCom delegates supported “efforts to strengthen the evaluation function” of UNHCR, highlighted the “importance of incorporating lessons learned from evaluation activities into policy development”, and requested that “future reports to the Executive Committee reflect how UNHCR is utilizing its evaluation findings to improve programming” (UNGA, 1993d: 9-10). UNHCR’s research and evaluation activities in 1993 did not focus on urban displacement (UNGA, 1993e), but by the time they did, ExCom was already showing support for UNHCR’s research and evaluation efforts. Importantly, while ExCom supported the increase in UNHCR’s research and evaluation work, it did so only after Lowell Martin, the Chief of UNHCR’s Central Evaluation Section, included it on the agenda and called on ExCom to lend more support (UNGA, 1992b: 12). It was Martin, a senior UNHCR staff member, who “expressed concern about the Central Evaluation Section’s capacity to act as a catalyst for change and provide the kind of analysis required for planning, decision-making and training activities” (UNGA, 1992b: 12). Increased attention to UNHCR’s research and evaluation unit by ExCom was encouraged by the Organisation itself, seeking to gain the support of states.

A similar pattern continued during 1994 and 1995. Urban displacement did not feature as part of important discussions at ExCom, or its various sub-committees (UNGA, 1994e; UNGA, 1994d; UNGA, 1994c; UNGA, 1994b; UNGA, 1994a; UNGA, 1995a; UNGA, 1995b; UNGA, 1995c; UNGA, 1995d; UNGA, 1995e). However, individual cases of urban displacement and UNHCR’s work in urban areas were reported to ExCom. Examples include planned repatriation of urban refugees in Algeria (UNGA, 1995g: 4), challenges of locally integrating in urban Burundi (UNGA, 1995f: 6), increased spending on urban refugees in Yemen (UNGA, 1995i: 4), and the work UNHCR’s Branch Office in Ankara was doing with urban

refugees throughout Turkey (UNGA, 1994f: 6). At the time, some countries had a large urban displaced population requiring assistance. One case was found in Egypt in 1995, where all refugees lived in urban areas and depended on subsistence allowances to survive (UNGA, 1995h: 3). States were aware urban displacement existed and that UNHCR was working with impacted communities. Reports of UNHCR's research and evaluation work presented to ExCom did not mention urban displacement in 1994, but the following year they noted, "a global assessment of the Office's policy and practice regarding urban refugees has also been initiated" (UNGA, 1995j: 2). The global assessment came in the wake of changes to the UNHCR's research and evaluation functions, previously discussed and approved by ExCom. IES had taken over from the Central Evaluation Section, becoming operational in March 1995, with the intention of informing UNHCR's policymaking and forming a close relationship with the High Commissioner (UNGA, 1995k: 1). In January 1996 the High Commissioner established the position of Assistant High Commissioner, who was to have "particular responsibility for policy planning and operations" (UNHCR, 1997d: 18).

During 1996 and 1997 urban displacement did not feature as part of ExCom's plenary meetings or during the meetings of its sub-committees (UNGA, 1996a; UNGA, 1996b; UNGA, 1996c; UNGA, 1996d; UNGA, 1996e; UNGA, 1996f; UNGA, 1996g; UNGA, 1996h; UNGA, 1996i; UNGA, 1997a; UNGA, 1997b; UNGA, 1997c; UNGA, 1997d; UNGA, 1997e; UNGA, 1997f; UNGA, 1997g; UNGA, 1997h; UNGA, 1997i; UNGA, 1997j; UNGA, 1997k; UNGA, 1997l). When urban displacement was addressed, it was in relation to UNHCR's research and evaluation work. The 1996 report to ExCom on UNHCR's evaluation and inspection activities noted a "recently completed evaluation of policy and practice regarding urban refugees", which was "expected to have a significant impact on UNHCR's approach to this complex issue" (UNGA, 1996j: 4). The report showed discrepancies existing in how UNHCR dealt with urban displacement in different locations and "exposed the absence of policy and organizational guidelines for handling this group" (UNGA, 1996j: 4). As discussed previously, the 1995 Discussion Paper had initiated the creation of a working group charged with reviewing UNHCR's work with people displaced in urban areas. By the time of the ExCom meeting in

October 1996, a new set of policy guidelines were expected for dissemination shortly (UNGA, 1996j: 4). The following year programmes for urban displaced people were described as “particularly resource-intensive” and IES had begun a review of assistance to elderly urban refugees (UNHCR, 1997k: 3, 6). The lack of discussion of urban displacement during ExCom meetings suggests the issue was not a priority for states at the time, although their limited influence can be felt in their raising of the capacity and importance of UNHCR’s research and evaluation work. The formalisation of UNHCR’s response to the challenge of urban displacement was made easier by the lack of state interest at the time, allowing the Organisation to create and change its own policy, without having to adhere to clearly set out state priorities or preferences.

Urban displacement received little attention at ExCom, although UNHCR’s approach was shaped from above in other ways. During the mid-1990s the issue of urbanisation received greater attention within the UN system, from members of both the first and second UN. On 5-13 September 1994 the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) addressed matters of internal and international migration, including how these were affected by urbanisation (UNFPA, 1995: 62-75). Two years later on 3-14 June 1996, the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) was held in Istanbul, Turkey. Habitat II came twenty years after Habitat I and had two themes: ‘Adequate shelter for all’ and ‘Sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world’ (UN-Habitat, 1996b: 12). With these major international conferences, widely attended by state representatives, the UN placed increasing focus on issues surrounding global urbanisation. At both of these conferences, states were involved in voting on future action in urban areas.

UNHCR was not the only part of the second UN working in urban areas. During the same period the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) published *An Urbanizing World: Global Report on Human Settlements 1996*. In the Foreword, the then UN Secretary General Boutros-Boutros Ghali spoke of the “rapid urban growth over the past decades” that had “literally transformed the face of our planet” and the impact this will have, including on

“the content and focus of national and international policy” (UN-Habitat, 1996a: v). The Global Reports on Human Settlements are the UN’s primary publication on cities and other human settlements. The 1996 Global Report was the first in ten years and outlined in detail the challenges and possibilities offered by global urbanisation. One of its key messages was the need to create “new institutional frameworks for urban authorities” noting that local governments and institutions have “most of the responsibilities for managing urban change” while lacking the authority and power to enact them (UN-Habitat, 1996a: xxix). The other key message of the 1996 Global Report for the governance of global urbanisation was that the “role of citizen groups, community organizations, and NGOs” should be enhanced (UN-Habitat, 1996a: xxx). The specific issue of refugees within the context of an urbanising world was however only mentioned briefly as part of a broader focus on all internal and international migration (UN-Habitat, 1996a: 22-24). Years later, however, UNHCR’s 2009 Policy would echo similar governance imperatives. The 2009 Policy argued that to effectively work in urban areas, it was vital to focus on the role of urban local authorities, community based groups and NGOs (UNHCR, 2009b). The UN system did not specifically address issues of urban displacement in depth, but it provided a broader context in which all parts of the UN, including UNHCR, increasingly focused on urban issues.

Through their membership of ExCom, states had a direct impact on the contents of UNHCR’s urban policies by establishing concepts later to be utilised in both the March 1997 Policy and 1997 Policy. One example of this was concern over ‘irregular’ movement. According to the 1997 Policy, UNHCR believed it did “not have an obligation to provide assistance to refugees after irregular movement on the same basis as it would had there been no irregular movement” (UNHCR, 1997b: 4). The March 1997 Policy had been even stricter, stating that material assistance “should legitimately be denied by UNHCR to irregular movers” (UNHCR, 1997a: 1). Similar to previous characterisations of the “spontaneously settled” or those “residing illegally” (UNHCR, 1991), references to the urban displaced as ‘irregular movers’ characterised them as deviating from the norm, and as warranting less assistance than those migrating ‘regularly’. The idea of

‘irregular movement’ would become one of the most contentious aspects of UNHCR’s attitude to urban displacement developed in the mid-1990s. In 2001, Naoko Obi and Jeff Crisp (2001: 6) criticised this approach for its “perverse and inequitable consequences, with UNHCR denying protection, assistance and resettlement opportunities to refugees because they are deemed to be ‘irregular movers’”.

The concept of ‘irregular movement’ was previously raised during ExCom meetings. In 1989 irregular movers were defined as “refugees, whether they have been formally identified as such or not (asylum-seekers), moving in an irregular manner from countries in which they have already found protection, in order to seek asylum or permanent resettlement elsewhere” (UNGA, 1989). ExCom was concerned that irregular movement would have “destabilizing effect[s]” and provided for the return of people to countries they had previously been granted protection (UNGA, 1989). They acknowledged these people may have felt compelled to move, and sought to address this challenge by “removing or mitigating the causes of such irregular movements through the granting and maintenance of asylum and the provision of necessary durable solutions or other appropriate assistance measures” (UNGA, 1989). They did not advocate restricting assistance nor did they link such migrants with illegality. Decision-making made previously by state representatives at ExCom helped shape aspects of UNHCR’s first urban policies, demonstrating the importance of state-influence on policy and practice changes within UNHCR. With the March 1997 Policy and 1997 Policy, UNHCR went further, suggesting the Organisation possessed independence and was able to shape the contents of its own policies. This indicates the need to pay attention to interactions between the three UNs, the example of irregular movement and UNHCR’s urban policies showing how a member of the second UN must use a concept from the first, extending it further to suit their own needs and objectives.

## 6. Pressure from Below

In contrast to later years, when academics, consultants and prominent individuals, all informed how UNHCR's policy and practice changed in response to the urbanisation of displacement, in the mid-1990s members of the third UN played a limited role in UNHCR's policymaking on the issue. Those having some impact were NGOs, who had played an important role in supporting UNHCR's operations since the founding of the Organisation. As discussed in chapter three, voluntary agencies helped fund and assist refugees in Europe during UNHCR's formative years. During the 1990s there was increased debate over NGOs' access within the United Nations system, which generally multiplied during this time (Willetts, 2011: 16), with NGOs and other members of the third UN playing an elevated role during UN conferences and special sessions<sup>11</sup> of the General Assembly (Schechter, 2005). UNHCR followed suit and increased its involvement with NGOs. A significant change came in June 1994 when UNHCR and NGOs met in Oslo, Norway, which was the "biggest and most comprehensive meeting of its kind" between the two at this point (Partnership in Action, 1994). The meeting was the culmination of a year of regional meetings and consultations, and led to the launch of the Partnership in Action Initiative (PARinAC) representing the "collective efforts of practitioners in organizations involved in refugee work" and reflecting "the changing roles of NGOs and UNHCR" (Partnership in Action, 1994). PARinAC provided one hundred and thirty-four recommendations covering refugee protection, internal displacement, emergency preparedness and response, the connection between relief, rehabilitation and development, and partnership between NGOs and UNHCR. These recommendations covered major themes of concern to NGOs at the time, with IDPs given "special attention" as the international community had "not yet acted in a concerted manner to respond to the needs of the internally displaced" (Partnership in Action, 1994). PARinAC, however, made only one reference to urban issues. Recommendation 102, focusing on the impact on local communities, stressed "the need for particular support for urban returnees" (Partnership in Action, 1994). This point

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<sup>11</sup> These events included the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992, the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993, the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States in 1994, the International Conference on Population and Development in 1994, the World Summit for Social Development in 1995, the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, and the United Nations Conference on Human Settlement in 1996.

was not elaborated, nor were specific issues relating to either urban refugees or urban IDPs. Three years later in 1997, NGOs became observers at UNHCR's Executive and Standing Committees, giving them greater access to all levels of the Organisation. With this new position they were able to intervene in proceedings alongside states and demonstrate their heightened position within UNHCR during the 1990s (Sanders, 2003).

Despite their growing presence within UNHCR during the 1990s, NGOs did not play a notable role in discussions around urban displacement in the years leading up to the release of the March 1997 Policy. In this period, issues including internal displacement and repatriation dominated the focus of NGOs. The Note accompanying the release of the March 1997 Policy detailed the involvement of IES, Senior Management Committee, field offices, and the internal working group (UNHCR, 1997a: i). There was no similar mention of the involvement of NGOs or other members of the third UN, their influence emerged once the March 1997 Policy had been issued. During a 2001 evaluation report, it was noted the 1997 Policy came about in part "in response to some NGO criticism of the [March 1997] policy" (Obi and Crisp, 2001: 1). Others have argued that 'some NGO criticism' does not accurately capture the level of disapproval at the time (Parker, 2002: 162). Given this, UNHCR noted the March 1997 Policy would be "revised as necessary in light of experience and comments received from stakeholders" (Obi and Crisp, 2001: 1). Assistant High Commissioner Sérgio Vieira de Mello wrote an internal memorandum, accompanying the release of the 1997 Policy within UNHCR. It demonstrated the impact external criticism had played in bringing about a quick change in approach.

While the central thrust of the policy – promote self-reliance and avoid dependency – has not been challenged, a number of colleagues and NGOs expressed concern at aspects of both the form and substance of other elements. In particular, it was felt that the policy was formulated in a manner that did not properly reflect its claim that refugee protection was the central consideration. (Vieira de Mello, 1997: 1)

UNHCR sought the views of NGOs following the release of the 1997 Policy, with possible further revisions to follow. Vieira de Mello's (1997: 1) memorandum



noted the 1997 Policy would be “further revised as necessary in light of comments and suggestions received” from partners and requested UNHCR field offices share the 1997 Policy with “relevant NGO[s] or other partners”. The memorandum noted the contribution of NGOs during an informal discussion held with UNHCR on 10 October 1997 in advance of ExCom’s annual session (Vieira de Mello, 1997: 1). These NGOs received a copy of the 1997 Policy and were invited to provide further feedback on it, demonstrating the involvement NGOs had in the policy revision process. As outlined in chapter three, legitimising ideas and policies is a key role of the three UNs, with members of the third UN, in this case, critiquing the contents of the March 1997 Policy. As they are important implementing partners of UNHCR’s policies in the field, NGOs’ criticism directly challenged the potential authority of the document, increasing the chances UNHCR would have to revise or replace it. The participation of NGOs, however, was less noticeable prior to this, despite their presence following PARinAC in 1994 and their ExCom observer status in 1997. Their earlier lack of participation suggests it took the contents of the March 1997 Policy to galvanise interest from those in the third UN to focus more directly on urban displacement and UNHCR’s policymaking around it, which they would increasingly do in the years to follow. Their role was not in placing the issue on the agenda, but refining how it was addressed. The fact the March 1997 Policy was “heavily criticized both internally and externally” (Parker, 2002: 162) played a role in forcing UNHCR to rethink its initial attempt and showed the influence NGOs had on the Organisation’s policymaking. This response to criticism highlights the important role the third UN can have on the actions of the second.

## 7. Conclusion

In the years discussed in this chapter, UNHCR changed its policy and practice on urban displacement, including releasing its first two global policies on the issue in 1997. UNHCR responded to the challenge of urban displacement directly through policy for the first time, raising the importance of issues facing refugees in towns and cities within the Organisation’s agenda and operations. The policy changes in 1997 followed a historical trend of portraying urban refugees in

negative terms, seeking to limit the number of people in urban areas and the extent to which UNHCR would support them. The concepts of state-influence, agency slack, and mission creep, help to analyse and understand why UNHCR responded to the challenge of urban displacement in this way during the mid-1990s. Though states made only limited comments on urban displacement in this period, their lack of engagement on the issue provided space for UNHCR to develop its view, which still reflected state-preferences towards limiting movement, encampment, and repatriation, rather than integration in urban areas. The concept of mission creep is useful in explaining UNHCR's expansionist tendencies during the 1990s under High Commissioner Ogata, with urban displacement becoming part of this broader trend. States' limited direct engagement with the issue of urban displacement provided agency slack, within which UNHCR was able to choose how it responded to the issue, while remaining conscious of the broader desires of states towards limiting movement. While UNHCR was aware of state preferences, particularly those of donor states, and sought to remain in line with these, the Organisation itself chose the specific manner of its response to urban displacement, as set out in the two 1997 policies.

To understand how the change in approach came about between 1994 and 1997, it is necessary to consider the role of the three UNs, including their interactions with one another. During this period, it was primarily members of the second UN driving the shift in how UNHCR understood and responded to challenge of urban displacement. The Programme and Technical Support Section and Community Services wrote the 1994 Guidelines, while IES produced the influential 1995 Discussion Paper. The 1995 Discussion Paper led to the creation of a working group within UNHCR that would bring about the March 1997 Policy and suggested UNHCR's moral responsibility to assist those residing in urban areas, which was also supported by evidence from the field. High Commissioner Ogata was not vocal on the issue of urban displacement, but she led the Senior Management Committee (SMC), which approved the findings of the working group leading to the creation of the March 1997 Policy. Under Ogata's leadership, UNHCR expanded and became the world's leading humanitarian organisation.

Mission creep into working in urban areas was in keeping with its broader expansionist strategy, which resulted from Ogata's leadership. Members of the first UN did not play an active part in UNHCR's strategy changing, although they supported the increase of UNHCR's research and evaluation services, while their lack of involvement provided space for the Organisation to make its own decisions. Criticism from the third UN meant the March 1997 Policy only remained UNHCR's official practice for nine months. As will be discussed in chapter six, the period between 2004 and 2009 saw the coming together of different motivations and actors necessary to bring about a radical change in UNHCR's policy and practice response to urban displacement. The mid-1990s, however, witnessed the necessary groundwork for UNHCR to bring about a shift in its understanding of urban displacement, in particular the important role of the Organisation's research and evaluation unit. In the years following, factors that explained why and how UNHCR responded to the challenge of urban displacement changed, as will be discussed in the next chapter. Agency slack, mission creep and state-influence remained, but the power of UNHCR's research and evaluation unit increased, while members of the third UN enhanced their focus on urban issues, allowing an epistemic community to form around the issue of urban displacement.

## Chapter Five - Decorating Our Bookshelves, 1998-2003

### 1. Introduction

In her book *The Economic Life of Refugees*, Karen Jacobsen (2005: 42) argued that in general, “neither host governments nor UNHCR want refugees in urban areas, because providing assistance and protection is more expensive and politically difficult than keeping them in camps”. The six years following the publication of the ‘UNHCR Policy on Refugees in Urban Areas’ (1997 Policy) in December 1997, demonstrate Jacobsen’s point was correct. During this period, however, a minority comprised primarily of UNHCR’s research and evaluation unit and NGOs, felt the 1997 Policy was not fit for purpose. Despite their efforts, there was insufficient support or political will to bring about a change in policy. On 21 November 2003 UNHCR’s Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit (EPAU) completed a draft of ‘Protection, Solutions and Assistance for Refugees in Urban Areas: Guiding Principles and Good Practices’ (2003 Guiding Principles). The 2003 Guiding Principles were intended to replace the 1997 Policy but would never see the light of day. It would be another six years before UNHCR would replace the 1997 Policy with the ‘UNHCR Policy on Refugee Protection and Solutions in Urban Areas’ (2009 Policy), despite EPAU’s clear recommendation that the 1997 Policy should be withdrawn, as it was having “negative consequences for the protection and welfare of refugees” (UNHCR, 2003b: 3).

The chapter seeks to understand why UNHCR came close to replacing its existing policy in 2003 but failed to enact a change in policy and practice. As in chapter four, UNHCR’s research and evaluation unit was influential in critiquing existing practices, calling for change and contending UNHCR had a duty to protect displaced people in urban areas. From the late 1990s, UNHCR gave more powers to its research and evaluation unit, affording EPAU a stronger position from which to lead an epistemic community on urban displacement. Field offices would again provide important information, case examples and empirical evidence, demonstrating the need to address urban displacement. Members of

the third UN, in particular some NGOs, would call for changes in UNHCR's strategy, together forming the basis of the urban displacement epistemic community as it existed at the time. States, the broader UN system, and UNHCR's two High Commissioners of the period, Sadako Ogata and Ruud Lubbers, remained focused on other issues. Pressure for change increased during this time, but it was not sufficient to enact a new official policy. UNHCR's failure to bring about a change in policy and practice would reflect state preferences at the time, which continued to be concerned with repatriation and limiting integration in urban areas. The chapter will analyse changes that did and did not occur, utilising the framework of the three UNs, examining pressures for change from within, above and below UNHCR. Change during this period emerged primarily from within the Organisation, though with growing participation of members of the third UN, highlighting how these actors interact and what this reveals about policymaking in international organisations.

## 2. A Period of Evaluation: 1998-2003

By 1998 UNHCR's official position on urban refugees was clearly stated in the 1997 Policy. UNHCR saw its obligation to refugees as being unaffected by their location or the nature of their movement, as their central priority was in ensuring protection (UNHCR, 1997b). The 1997 Policy was concerned with limiting assistance in urban areas, and gaining the approval of host governments when assistance outside of settlements and camps proved necessary. UNHCR aimed to encourage self-reliance and avoid dependency, with local integration following voluntary repatriation as the preferred durable solution for refugees in urban areas. UNHCR was concerned with unintentionally attracting displaced people to urban areas and the difficulties of 'irregular movement'. The 1997 Policy focused on the risk of protests and violence, and as such presented urban refugees as threatening and dangerous (UNHCR, 1997b). The 1997 Policy remained the official position of UNHCR until September 2009.

Attempts were made prior to 2009 to bring about a change in policy. The closest UNHCR came to replacing the 1997 Policy was the 2003 Guiding Principles. In

the years leading up to its release, there was “a wide range of concerns amongst UNHCR, its operational partners and the states concerned” (UNHCR, 2003b: 3) about the growing number of refugees in urban areas of low and middle-income countries. Such disquiet drove the need for a comprehensive review of the 1997 Policy, involving a desk-based global survey, in-depth case studies of several cities (Bangkok, Cairo, Moscow, Nairobi, and New Delhi) and a joint UNHCR-NGO workshop. On the basis of the review, the 2003 Guiding Principles concluded the 1997 Policy should be withdrawn and replaced. The decision to replace a policy with a set of guiding principles was “based on a consideration of the many different contexts in which urban refugees are to be found, and which demand a degree of flexibility from UNHCR” (UNHCR, 2003b: 3). The 2003 Guiding Principles came five years after the success of the 1998 Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, with EPAU conceivably attempting to imitate the success achieved with internally displaced people (IDPs). In the case of IDPs the decision to outline guiding principles, rather than a declaration or a convention, was based on beliefs that internal displacement was a sensitive issue for states and the pursuit of a legally binding treaty would either be fruitless or take too long (Cohen and Deng, 2008: 4). As will be discussed in the chapter, in contrast to IDPs, there was no clear support for a new urban policy for refugees. Unlike IDPs, urban displacement lacked sufficient support or drive to enact a new set of guiding principles, and UNHCR continued with the 1997 Policy, which EPAU believed to have negative consequences for refugee protection.

The 2003 Guiding Principles sought to resolve a number of issues with the 1997 Policy. It recommended defining ‘urban refugees’ as those refugees residing in urban areas, rather than refugees of an urban background (UNHCR, 2003b: 3-4). The 2003 Guiding Principles disregarded the means through which displaced people found their way to urban areas, undermining and actively challenging the contentious concept of ‘irregular movers’. Instead it talked of ‘onward movement’, as the term ‘irregular movement’ came with “pejorative overtones”, and was seen to reinforce the “generally negative perception of urban refugees within UNHCR” (UNHCR, 2003b: 17). This was a notable change in attitude from the March 1997 Policy and the 1997 Policy, both of which placed significant

emphasis on people moving ‘irregularly’ and the need to limit the assistance afforded them. By comparison, the 2003 Guiding Principles sought to understand the reasons behind onward movement and outline the circumstances under which moving on from the first country of asylum was acceptable, stressing that in all instances onward movers were “entitled to the protection of the organization, irrespective of their location and the means (including the legality) of their movement” (UNHCR, 2003b: 19-20).

The 2003 Guiding Principles promoted a more positive view of urban refugees while acknowledging the “tendency within UNHCR to perceive this group of people in somewhat negative terms” (UNHCR, 2003b: 5). The 1997 Policy presented refugees in urban areas as primarily young, male and seeking employment. The 2003 Guiding Principles challenged this assumption based on evidence gathered in the intervening years, highlighting different issues faced by women, children, adolescents and the elderly (Crisp and Mayne, 1998; UNGA, 2000d; UNHCR, 2001e). By spotlighting variety among refugee populations, the 2003 Guiding Principles presented a more rounded picture of urban displacement and were more understanding of the difficulties people faced. The 2003 Guiding Principles pointed to the need for UNHCR to do better in their interactions with urban refugees, including the need for its staff to go to neighbourhoods where refugees lived, engage with them and ensure all refugees could access the Organisation (UNHCR, 2003b: 6-7).

Addressing the growing challenges urban displaced people posed, the 2003 Guiding Principles cautioned against the adoption of a new global policy. It warned against “any attempt to implement a global and uniform policy towards refugees in urban areas” (UNHCR, 2003b: 5), asserting responses must be driven by the local context. The 2003 Guiding Principles did not shy away from attributing blame to host states that had “essentially abdicated responsibility for the treatment and welfare” (UNHCR, 2003b: 5) of urban refugees, even though most were signatories to the 1951 Refugee Convention. The 2003 Guiding Principles maintained states must take responsibility and regional approaches should be developed to ensure consistent standards and “reduce the incentive

for refugees to move from one country to another” (UNHCR, 2003b: 10). By comparison, the 1997 Policy said that UNHCR should “encourage the [host] government to allow freedom of movement, and should promote the refugees’ right to work and access to national services, whenever possible” (UNHCR, 1997b: 1). However, services remained restricted. As host governments needed to approve urban-based assistance there was a need to “respect the policies of the government” with UNHCR working to “remove the incentive for and discourage irregular movement” (UNHCR, 1997b: 1-3). The tone of the two documents was markedly different, with the 2003 Guiding Principles more concerned with ensuring the rights of urban refugees and the 1997 Policy focused on appeasing states.

The 2003 Guiding Principles focused a significant amount of attention on the early promotion of self-reliance amongst urban refugees, acknowledging the numerous barriers existing for refugees and stating there should be a clear distinction between being self-reliant, and surviving without UNHCR. The 2003 Guiding Principles maintained that refugees should not be considered self-reliant if they lived in poverty, relied on remittance, or engaged in illegal activities to survive and stated that self-reliance must be “clearly distinguished from the solution of local integration” (UNHCR, 2003b: 12), as the former is a socio-economic process while the latter involves achieving recognition, protection and rights similar to that of a citizen. Urban refugees might learn to be self-reliant, without finding a lasting durable solution to their displacement, and thus requiring further assistance from UNHCR. The possibility of local integration received attention as part of a broader ‘diversified approach’ acknowledging the value of all three durable solutions for urban refugees. The 2003 Guiding Principles, similar to the 1997 Policy, warned of drawing refugees to urban areas with the prospect of resettlement, although it largely balanced the needs and desires of refugees well. Around this time encampment had begun to fall out of favour, with increased attention given to refugee ‘warehousing’ and a ‘decade of initiatives’ to tackle the problem of Protracted Refugee Situations (PRS) beginning in 2000 (Milner and Loescher, 2011). According to the 2003 Guiding Principles, “restrictions on refugees living in camps and settlements should be



the exception, and should take account of the need for people to move to a city” (UNHCR, 2003b: 16). The desire to understand the motivations leading refugees to move to urban areas is present throughout the document, with urban refugees understood as people of worth, rather than a burden to be managed. The views and proposals outlined in the 2003 Guiding Principles were not representative of how all UNHCR staff felt at the time. Three years after its creation, Sarah Dryden-Peterson (2006: 384) commented that the “draft document has never been made public and, as yet, languishes without adoption by UNHCR”. The 2003 Guiding Principles were only read or known about by those within UNHCR, or, those outside of the Organisation who were working closely with EPAU.

Between the release of the 1997 Policy and the authoring of the 2003 Guiding Principles, a number of important changes occurred, shaping UNHCR’s approach to the issue of urban displacement. In September 1999 creation of the Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit (EPAU) replaced the Inspection and Evaluation Service (IES), and at the start of 2001 Ruud Lubber took over from Sadako Ogata as High Commissioner. One of EPAU’S first tasks was to review the 1997 Policy, leading to the drafting of the 2003 Guiding Principles. EPAU was more transparent than its predecessor, resulting in greater interest in UNHCR’s policies and operations from outside of the Organisation, informed in turn the development of a new approach to urban displacement. Displacement in the 1990s had been characterised by focus on repatriation and expansion of encampment. In contrast, the 2000s would see UNHCR apply greater priority to the value of self-reliance and local integration, particularly by EPAU and the Policy Development and Evaluation Service (PDES), as well as the High Commissioner. The broader global context of the time shaped UNHCR’s response to urban displacement as the events of 11 September 2001 and the ensuing global ‘war on terror’ saw many countries take a stricter position on all forms of international migration. The invasion of Afghanistan in 2002 and Iraq in 2003 also triggered two of the largest displacement crises UNHCR had ever dealt with, with many people fleeing to towns and cities in neighbouring countries, contributing to a changing environment in which UNHCR worked, influencing the Organisation as it began to rethink its response to urbanisation of displacement.

### 3. Pressure from Within

When considering changes occurring in UNHCR's policymaking between 1998 and 2003, it is crucial to understand the Organization's internal dynamics at the time. This section expands on the argument made in chapter four that UNHCR's research and evaluation unit played an important part in forming an epistemic community around urban displacement, acting as a force for policy change. International organisations "often produce inefficient, self-defeating outcomes and turn their backs on those whom they are supposed to serve" (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004: 3). UNHCR remained focused on minimising protection and supporting preferences of states. Ogata maintained a focus on encampment and repatriation, while an "ongoing theme" of Lubber's period as High Commissioner was the UNHCR's efforts to prevent "secondary movement from refugee host states in the South to asylum destinations in the North" (Hammerstad, 2014: 153). In contrast, the growing urban displacement epistemic community attempted to make certain UNHCR uphold refugee rights and ensure it did not turn its back on those in urban areas. As discussed in chapter two, international organisations have the ability to "collect, publicize, and strategically deploy information in order to try to shape behavior" transforming this into knowledge "by giving it meaning, value, and purpose" (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004: 6-7). This section will explore the way in which UNHCR's research and evaluation unit and some field office staff used information and shaped knowledge regarding urban displacement, while the two High Commissioners of the period had limited engagement with the issue.

#### 3.1 Research and Evaluation Unit

As discussed in chapter four, in the 1990s there were calls for greater focus and spending on UNHCR's research and evaluation efforts. In 2000, a report on the effectiveness of UNHCR's research and evaluation function found the Organisation's spending on evaluation was "amongst the lowest as a percentage of operations of any UN, NGO or bilateral agency in humanitarian aid" (Lawry-

White, 2000: 3). UNHCR had attempted to 'revitalise' the Organisation's evaluation functions the previous year (UNGA, 2002c: 2), with the creation in September 1999 of the Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit (EPAU). The Central Evaluation Section had a reputation for being secretive and detached from others within the Organisation, its publications marked classified, and was reportedly regarded as "people sitting in Geneva who kind of tell everyone else how they got it wrong" (Crisp, 2015). The Inspection and Evaluation Service (IES) maintained similar working methods following its creation in 1994. The influential 1995 Discussion Paper, examined in chapter four, was not publicly released and internal copies were marked 'restricted' (UNHCR, 1995a). In contrast, EPAU established a greater degree of openness, with all of their reports made public, and they sought to engage the wider academic and policy community through the creation of the *New Issues in Refugee Research* working paper series. EPAU's publication of an early evaluation on Kosovo was seen "as a sign of UNHCR's commitment to transparency", gaining "good will from donors and NGOs" and "something of a PR [public relations] coup" (Lawry-White, 2000: 1). EPAU also developed a roster of consultants and consulting companies, who were given the opportunity to bid for contracts with UNHCR to complete evaluations (Relief and Rehabilitation Network, 1999: 11). EPAU made it clear it was an open and relatively autonomous part of UNHCR. Its work was based on four principles: consultation, independence, relevance, and transparency (Lawry-White, 2000: 1), as demonstrated by attaching the following statement to some of their publications:

All EPAU evaluation reports are placed in the public domain. Electronic versions are posted on the UNHCR website and hard copies can be obtained by contacting EPAU. They can be quoted, cited and copied, provided that the source is acknowledged. The views expressed in EPAU publications are not necessarily those of UNHCR. The designations and maps used do not imply the expression of any opinion or recognition on the part of UNHCR concerning the legal status of a territory or of its authorities. (EPAU, 2006)

Those in the third UN supported EPAU's transparency, described as a "welcome change from a tradition of commissioning evaluations after a crisis, which were kept confidential and on the shelf; a habit which angered donors and exasperated collaborators" (Relief and Rehabilitation Network, 1999: 11). As the

name suggests, EPAU was created with the aim of increasing connection between UNHCR's research and evaluation work and its policy. The Relief and Rehabilitation Network (1999: 11) hoped this would "facilitate organisational learning and policy development". According to staff and outsiders interviewed in 2000, UNHCR "paints itself as a learning organisation" but its "advances in this direction are modest", partly due to 'learning loss' caused by regular job rotation (Lawry-White, 2000: ii4). EPAU staff felt the same, as illustrated in a short paragraph included at the beginning of their publications:

UNHCR's Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit (EPAU) is committed to the systematic examination and assessment of UNHCR policies, programmes, projects and practices. EPAU also promotes rigorous research on issues related to the work of UNHCR and encourages an active exchange of ideas and information between humanitarian practitioners, policymakers and the research community. All of these activities are undertaken with the purpose of strengthening UNHCR's operational effectiveness, thereby enhancing the organization's capacity to fulfil its mandate on behalf of refugees and other displaced people. The work of the unit is guided by the principles of transparency, independence, consultation and relevance. (EPAU, 2006)

EPAU's self-description provides insight into how it saw itself and how this self-image impacted their ability to influence policy. International organisations seldom have a uniform culture, resulting in different strategies and actions emerging from different parts of the same organisation. Barnett and Finnemore (2004: 19) have noted individual divisions and subunits within international organisations often have their own subcultures, impacting how parts of organisations act or interpret rules. For EPAU this involved a culture based around openness and transparency, creating working relationships with a variety of different actors within UNHCR, as well as those within the third UN. This culture produced an environment permissibly critical of UNHCR's operations and policies, focusing on what was best for refugees rather than the Organisation or states. During a presentation to UNHCR's Standing Committee on 25 June 2002, Jeff Crisp, the Head of EPAU, outlined what he believed to be the purpose of evaluation and EPAU's role within UNHCR (Crisp, 2002). In addition to helping bring about 'organisational change', Crisp (2002) outlined a further seven purposes of evaluation: reinforcing accountability, facilitating institutional and individual learning, team-building, strengthening partnerships, promoting understanding, supporting advocacy efforts, and influencing organisational

culture. EPAU saw itself as not only designed to shape policy and operations, but that one of its primary purposes was to “influence the organizational culture of UNHCR” (Crisp, 2002). Such a cultural impact involved promoting among staff an “inquisitive, self-critical and transparent approach to the work of UNHCR”, as well as “operationalize that part of the UNHCR mission statement which says that beneficiaries have a right to be consulted about decisions that affect their lives” (Crisp, 2002).

As will be seen in the chapter, due to its existence as a specialist part of UNHCR with an in-depth knowledge of the Organisation’s operations and programmes, EPAU was able to leverage the information it gathered through its evaluation work and turn it into knowledge gaining increased traction within UNHCR. As discussed in chapter two, the role of specialist research and evaluation units has not received significant attention within the literature on international organisations, but the case of EPAU during the period covered by this chapter suggests this needs to be revisited. Thomas G. Weiss and David A. Korn (2006) contend that the Brookings Institute was influential in the creation of the Guiding Principles of Internal Displacement, but there has been no comparative attempt to understand the important role EPAU played in shaping global refugee policy. Following its creation, EPAU began analysing existing strategies, initiating a comprehensive review of the 1997 Policy. This involved a desk-based global survey, a series of case studies and a joint workshop with NGOs. By studying this review process it is possible to see where many of the elements emerging in the 2003 Guiding Principles came from. As EPAU was behind both this review and the drafting of the principles it is possible to draw direct links between the research and evaluation and policymaking processes. EPAU’s work on urban displacement and Protracted Refugee Situations (PRS), were debatably its two core focus areas at the time, diverging from past practice. Previously UNHCR’s research and evaluation work had primarily centred upon repatriation, reintegration and emergency response (UNHCR, 1993a).

The 2003 Guiding Principles sought to better understand who the urban displaced were, and would challenge the “widespread and longstanding

assumption within UNHCR" (Obi and Crisp, 2001: 2) that urban refugees were young, single and male. EPAU found there were often refugee women and children residing in urban areas. The 2003 Guiding Principles criticised the 1997 Policy's suggestion that male refugees were generally self-reliant and not in need of UNHCR's support. In 2001 Naoko Obi and Jeff Crisp (2001: 4) of EPAU published an evaluation of the implementation of the 1997 Policy and suggested that "even able-bodied young men find it difficult to establish livelihoods and attain self-reliance". Another supposition was that urban refugees were wealthy or part of a social elite. This belief has long existed within UNHCR, as chapter four demonstrated. In the 1960s there was an assumption urban refugees were the 'elite' of African refugees. EPAU's evaluation in 2000 of practices in New Delhi, India, noted that during the 1980s UNHCR regarded the Afghan refugees living in the city to be "frequently urban, educated and middle class [in] background" (Obi and Crisp, 2000: 10). However, by 2000 around sixty per cent of the Afghan refugees in New Delhi were found to be illiterate (Obi and Crisp, 2000: 9). These realisations would provide a better understanding of the profile of urban refugees in many cities, as EPAU accumulated information regarding urban displacement, and highlighted the need to re-examine existing programmes.

For example, EPAU's 2001 evaluation of Cairo, Egypt stressed the importance of maximising the earning potential of refugee women through self-reliance projects (Sperl, 2001: 9). It noted the 1997 Policy ran "contrary to the thrust of the UNHCR policies on children, women and the elderly" (Sperl, 2001: 4). In 2002, at the workshop on the implementation of the 1997 Policy in Eastern Europe, participants stressed UNHCR needed to focus more on women, children, and the elderly (Furley et al., 2002: 3). These critiques fed directly into the 2003 Guiding Principles, which echoed the point of urban refugees being not exclusively young, able-bodied men, and emphasised that even those who were young, male, and able-bodied were not necessarily capable of achieving self-reliance, contending UNHCR should assist all of those in need (UNHCR, 2003b: 10). It stressed the need for UNHCR to pay particular attention to the needs of women, children, adolescents and elderly refugee populations. Throughout the

period of information gathering leading up to the publication of the 2003 Guiding Principles, EPAU was able to reframe, in part, how urban displacement was presented within UNHCR. Its capacity to do so relied on its expert authority, as well as control of knowledge, ability to classify issues and people, and ability to affix meaning.

EPAU's evaluation work stressed the need for UNHCR to better understand the challenges faced by urban refugees and their decision-making processes. One issue was the "ambiguous position" the 1997 Policy had on refugees moving from camps to urban areas, resulting in urban refugees being seen as "unregulated", and, by implication, undesirable" (Obi and Crisp, 2001: 6). The review process uncovered a need to better understand reasons refugees moved, the ways they sustained themselves and what their background and security concerns were. These points came through strongly in the review of Eastern Europe, where one workshop participant commented urban refugees "exist but they do not live" (Quoted in: Furley et al., 2002: 7). The lack of access to social services, income generating activities and documentation were said to make "'self-reliance' a relative concept that for many can only be achieved by means of based on [sic] illegal and informal employment" (Furley et al., 2002: 3). These issues, along with discussions around xenophobia and racism in Eastern Europe (Furley et al., 2002: 7), made clear the myriad challenges urban refugees faced.

The 1997 Policy assumed urban refugees could gain self-reliance, but EPAU's review process showed reasons this could be hard to achieve, leading in turn to the need for greater participation from refugees. The "importance of refugee participation and consultation" (Obi and Crisp, 2001: 8) featured throughout the review process, whereas the 1997 Policy had given little guidance on refugee participation (Sperl, 2001: 38-39). The value of a community-based strategy emerged through the review process. The 1997 Policy did not address community participation, although it had been advocated in the 1996 Guidelines (Sperl, 2001: 38). In contrast to the March 1997 Policy and the 1997 Policy, both top-down in their attitudes to urban displacement, the 2003 Guiding Principles advocated for further refugee involvement, namely that UNHCR staff should be

encouraged to visit neighbourhoods where refugees congregate, visit with refugee associations and community-based groups, and support community activities in urban areas (UNHCR, 2003b).

Throughout the evaluation process there was a concerted effort to point out the negative implications of the 1997 Policy's focus on 'irregular movers'. This "preoccupation" with supposedly 'irregular movers' was argued to be pejorative, contributing to stigmatisation and presenting "refugees as being somehow deviant" (Sperl, 2001: 26). In fact urban refugees often travelled legally (Sperl, 2001: 6) and warranted UNHCR's assistance. The more neutral description of 'onward movers' was said to be "more descriptive and does not suggest that the refugees concerned are in breach of any law" (Obi and Crisp, 2001: 8). This description shows EPAU's willingness to learn about the challenges refugees faced. As EPAU's 2001 evaluation of the 1997 Policy's implementation questioned: "What is "irregular" about people who seek to leave a difficult and possibly dangerous situation in order to seek a better future through education, employment or resettlement?" (Obi and Crisp, 2001: 8). The criticism of this terminology throughout the review process fed directly into the 2003 Guiding Principles, which advocated abandoning the 'irregular mover' concept (UNHCR, 2003b: 17).

EPAU's review process challenged assumptions that camps or settlements were the preferred location for refugees to seek assistance. The New Delhi evaluation report highlighted that camps are not available in all countries (Obi and Crisp, 2000). It also questioned the double standard a focus on urban refugees becoming self-reliant had created. As one UNHCR staff member asks, "how is it acceptable to have refugees in camp settings remain dependent for years, yet by virtue of finding oneself in an urban environment, you have to become self-reliant?" (Quoted in: Obi and Crisp, 2000: 17). Any revision of existing strategy around urban displacement would need to consider differences between countries with camps and those without (Obi and Crisp, 2002: 1). In countries where camps existed, a prime way to decrease movement to urban areas was to improve services available in camps (Obi and Crisp, 2002: 3). The 2003 Guiding



Principles addressed these points and highlighted that in many countries camps were not an option. It focused on the importance of freedom of movement, contending that “restrictions of refugees living in camps and settlements should be the exception” (UNHCR, 2003b: 16) and that it was important to “take account of the need for people to move to the city” (UNHCR, 2003b: 16), a consideration absent in the 1997 Policy.

As noted before, the 2003 Guiding Principles were critical of host states and the lack of responsibility shown for refugees living in their towns and cities. This criticism stemmed from EPAU’s review process highlighting the problems refugees often faced gaining access to social services. It was noted that “much greater emphasis” (Obi and Crisp, 2002: 1) should be placed on responsibilities host states have towards refugees and asylum-seekers in their country. EPAU’s review found that in the Russian Federation, UNHCR struggled to “ensure that the government assumes its full responsibility” with a “perception that refugee problems belong to UNHCR and a few NGO[s], rather than the state” (Furley et al., 2002: 7). Although the 1997 Policy had not expressly called on states to ensure they were assisting urban refugees, the 2003 Guiding Principles noted, “UNHCR offices and staff members should lose no opportunity to underline the principle of state responsibility in its dealings with host governments and other stakeholders” (UNHCR, 2003b: 5).

The issue of self-reliance was raised throughout the review process. The 1997 Policy linked self-reliance with the need to minimise UNHCR’s assistance and ensure it did not “foster long-term dependency” (UNHCR, 1997b: 2). EPAU’s review process revealed that self-reliance had not been achieved. According to UNHCR staff members, there had been in India a “total breakdown in the implementation of the policy of self-reliance, which is embedded in the urban refugee policy” (Quoted in: Obi and Crisp, 2000: 14). Such failure to implement self-reliance was often linked to a lack of support from the governments of host states. In India, a UNHCR staff member reflected they “remain convinced that the urban refugee policy in certain country contexts, as presently formulated and implemented, simply cannot work unless government authorities provide real

protection" (Obi and Crisp, 2000: 16). Beyond the attitudes of host governments, self-reliance was negatively affected by lack of financial support. Despite being seen as a way for UNHCR to reduce its expenditure, to work effectively it required more upfront spending than general assistance programmes. In Cairo, UNHCR spending was found to be "geared towards subsidising the status quo and too little towards fostering the refugees' capacity to run their own lives" (Sperl, 2001: 35). Attempts to become self-reliant required the availability of programmes for education and vocational training, yet these projects were negatively impacted by UNHCR funding cuts. There was a need to think more about issues around self-reliance. The 2003 Guiding Principles considered obstacles to self-reliance, and stressed its achievement and survival without UNHCR's assistance were not synonymous, noting that, "unassisted refugees cannot be regarded as 'self-reliant' (and therefore in need of no assistance) if they are living in conditions of abject poverty, or if they are obliged to survive on remittance or illicit activities" (UNHCR, 2003b: 12).

The shift in thinking on self-reliance emerging after the 1997 Policy was driven by findings of EPAU's review process, which drew attention to parallels between self-reliance and development. As such it suggested the need to integrate displacement within broader development plans in host countries, as self-reliance was "essentially a developmental activity" (Sperl, 2001: 37). The 2003 Guiding Principles made only brief mention of drawing on the expertise of 'development-oriented agencies', suggesting any movement towards linking refugees with development was a step too far at this point, surprising given Ruud Lubbers was High Commissioner at the time and he had promised UNHCR would adopt a multilateral strategy in working with other development-focused actors. A year before the release of the 2003 Guiding Principles, Lubbers stated that "together with UNDP [UN Development Programme], the World Bank and other partners, we will continue to look into ways of gaining greater access to development funds for reintegration activities and programmes aimed at promoting self-reliance among refugees" (Quoted in: Tan, 2002).

The 1997 Policy was criticised by EPAU for confusing self-reliance with the durable solution of local integration. Self-reliance is concerned with socio-economic independence, while local integration has key legal significance, as “most refugee experts” believe “local integration is only attained when a refugee has been granted citizenship in his or her country of asylum” (Obi and Crisp, 2001: 5). Throughout EPAU’s review process there was a focus on local integration as a durable solution. In Eastern Europe, “local integration has been and continues to be the mainstay of UNHCR’s approach to durable solutions” (Furley et al., 2002: 5), regarded as “perhaps the most realistic solution for a majority of the population” (Furley et al., 2002: 5, 11). In Moscow, local integration was described as “not a ‘policy option’” but rather “a statement of reality” (Furley et al., 2002: 13). In New Delhi, from where resettlement had become more difficult, EPAU’s evaluation advocated UNHCR should “take up the matter of naturalization with renewed vigour” (Obi and Crisp, 2000: 25). The greater attention given to the ‘forgotten’ solution of local integration fed the 2003 Guiding Principles. Similar to the 1997 Policy, and in line with standard UNHCR practices at the time, repatriation remained the preferred durable solution. However, the 2003 Guiding Principles advocated a ‘diversified approach’, including all durable solutions depending on the situation, committing UNHCR to promoting increased local integration opportunities in host states. In countries where integration was difficult, the 2003 Guiding Principles suggested “UNHCR may have to engage in long-term advocacy efforts, in order to secure the necessary changes to national legislation, long term residence avenues and, ultimately, naturalization procedures” (UNHCR, 2003b: 15). This demonstrated EPAU’s efforts to move UNHCR away from the repatriation-focused strategy of the 1990s and the impact the review process had in shaping the contents of the 2003 Guiding Principles.

Throughout EPAU’s review process, the need to revise or replace the 1997 Policy was suggested. By adopting a more open position and establishing a working paper series containing criticism of UNHCR’s work, as well as publishing freely online the views of those from outside of the Organisation, including academics and independent consultants, EPAU proved central to “providing a forum for

debate” (Weiss et al., 2009: 128-129). EPAU’s evaluation period saw the “implementing or testing [of] ideas and policies in the field”, and additionally the “monitoring [of] progress in the march of ideas and the implementation of policies” (Weiss et al., 2009: 128-129). EPAU tested and monitored the 1997 Policy through in-depth studies of cities such as New Delhi, demonstrating the failings of the 1997 Policy in the field. Following the evaluation and with the creation of the 2003 Guiding Principles, EPAU was key in “generating” and “advocating [for] ideas and policies” (Weiss et al., 2009: 128-129) that would, if implemented, radically shift the ways in which UNHCR responded to the urbanisation of displacement. Most of the evaluations showed a need to be aware of local context, without specifying what should replace the 1997 Policy. As discussed previously, the 2003 Guiding Principles made it clear a uniform global policy was not the best way forward, contrasting recommendations made a year prior during the review process. On 14 June 2002 a joint UNHCR-NGO workshop was held in Geneva to consider the findings of the review process so far, specifically the evaluation report EPAU had issued in December 2001. During this workshop there emerged a “broad consensus on the need for UNHCR to have a global policy on refugees in urban areas” (Obi and Crisp, 2002: 1). A “simple revision” of the 1997 Policy, the participants suggested, would “not be adequate or appropriate” (Obi and Crisp, 2002: 1). The 1997 Policy had been “inconsistently applied” and was “not known or understood by many UNHCR staff in the field” (Obi and Crisp, 2002: 1) and as such should be replaced by another global policy staff would adhere to more consistently. Despite these recommendations following a workshop involving UNHCR staff and NGOs, the 2003 Guiding Principles, written by EPAU the follow year, would “caution against any attempt to implement a global and uniform policy towards refugees in urban areas” (UNHCR, 2003b: 5). Differences between recommendations emerging from the workshop and what materialised in the 2003 Guiding Principles suggests that while considering and utilising the views of other members of the epistemic community EPAU remained in charge, and would ultimately come to decide specific content of the proposed replacement to the 1997 Policy. Though there were a variety of actors involved in the urban displacement epistemic community, including NGOs, the policymaking decisions and recommendations

were not shared equally. EPAU was in a more powerful position than other members of the community, suggesting any study of epistemic communities must consider the role and influence of the different actors composing them.

### 3.2 High Commissioner

Chapter six will show António Guterres (High Commissioner from 2005 to 2015) was vocal on the topic of urban displacement, but the two leaders of UNHCR in the period 1998 to 2003 did not share this interest. During Ogata's final three years as High Commissioner, she continued to make only limited references to urban displacement. An exception being how urban displacement related to returnees, specifically the challenges faced by people returning to the towns and cities of the Balkans and Sierra Leone, after the end of conflicts (Ogata, 1998a; Ogata, 2000). Urban areas were only discussed in relation to repatriation, the preferred durable solution during Ogata's time as High Commissioner. Coupled with this commitment to repatriation, Ogata's tenure saw the Organisation focus on its relevance to states, particularly those funding it, as well as playing a significant part in global security politics. Individual High Commissioners, including Ogata, have played an important part in shaping the direction of UNHCR. As Anne Hammerstad (2014: 91) has noted, "the role of individual High Commissioners, especially when they are perceived as strong and competent in their external environment (the two often go together), may have a significant impact on the success or failure of their organization". Under Ogata, UNHCR shifted to addressing the causes of displacement, and came to be regarded as among the most efficient and successful parts of the UN, particularly during its operations in Bosnia in the 1990s (Hammerstad, 2014: 90-91).

As discussed in chapter two, leaders can play an integral role in shaping the direction and policy of international organisations. The role of leaders, in particular their relationship to epistemic communities, has been applied to the case of UNHCR and their response to the urbanisation of displacement. This assists in analysing the changes that occurred, but also the impact leaders can have when absent from epistemic communities and discussions around a given

global issue. The 1997 Policy reflected the priorities of UNHCR during Ogata's leadership. It provided for UNHCR's further expansion, possessed a strong security element, and adhered to the broader state-interests of the time. Further revisions, such as the refugee rights focus of the 2003 Guiding Principles, would have been at odds with the security and state-centric approach she cultivated throughout the 1990s. When Ruud Lubbers (High Commissioner from 2001 to 2005) took over the leadership of UNHCR he retained Ogata's interest in return to urban areas in the Balkans (Lubbers, 2001), as well as the urban displacement in Iraq in 2003 (Lubbers, 2003a). At the time there were "only a handful of refugees" (Lubbers, 2003b) leaving Iraq, with far more internal displacement out of urban areas into rural parts of the country, although Iraqi urban refugees would become a major issue for UNHCR, as chapter six will address. It was not until 2004 that Lubbers addressed the issue of urban displacement directly. In a speech in Mexico City, Lubbers asserted there were two major refugee challenges facing Latin America. The first was the protection needs of Colombian refugees and the second the struggles of urban refugees to achieve self-reliance (Lubbers, 2004).

Lubbers' term as High Commissioner would be marred by an increased hostility towards refugees and migrants following the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 (Loescher, Betts and Milner, 2008: 66), and with accusations of sexual harassment leading to his resignation in 2005 (Kille, 2007: 327). In late 2000 UNHCR commenced a major initiative seeking to gain a "convergence between the protection needs of refugees and the interests of states" (Loescher, Betts and Milner, 2008: 62). The Global Consultation on International Protection hoped to "shore up support for the international framework of protection" (Feller, 2002) by involving a mixture of donor and host states, NGOs, legal experts, and UNHCR. The Consultation led to a declaration to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the 1951 Refugee Convention, where states reaffirmed "the continuing relevance and resilience" (UNHCR, 2002g: 1) of international refugee rights and principles. The declaration was followed by the Agenda for Protection, setting out a number of activities and priorities, reaffirming support for the principles of the 1951 Refugee Convention, increasing burden sharing, and addressing the security

consequences of refugee movement. These initiatives were collectively termed the 'Convention Plus' process, so named because they were "meant to 'top up' existing protection and solution tools set out in the 1951 Convention" (Hammerstad, 2014: 156), but have been criticised for pandering to donor states (Loescher, Betts and Milner, 2008: 66). The "heavy emphasis" of the "Western-led" process was on language, concepts and approaches supported by donor states, restricting the movement of displaced people in regions of origin, including "'mixed flows', 'secondary movements', repatriation and local integration" (Hammerstad, 2014: 153-154). Although the process appeared to address each of the three durable solutions, in practice it focused on repatriation and local integration, ignoring resettlement (Betts and Durieux, 2007: 512; Hammerstad, 2014: 156). Upon becoming High Commissioner in 2005, Guterres "almost immediately – but diplomatically" wound-down the Convention Plus process (Hammerstad, 2014: 157), demonstrating the influence the High Commissioner had in directing UNHCR. When Lubbers had taken over as High Commissioner in 2001, UNHCR was "entering a period of downsizing and uncertainty" (Hammerstad, 2014: vii), which did not provide a conducive context in which to change the Organisation's strategy on urban displacement. As discussed in chapter four, UNHCR had described urban refugees on multiple occasions as resource intensive and requiring higher average spending than other categories of refugees. There was an increased focus on self-reliance during this time, a core element of the 2003 Guiding Principles, although host states were sceptical, with many seeing UNHCR's focus on self-reliance "as a backdoor effort to locally integrate refugees" (Loescher, Betts and Milner, 2008: 66).

Neither of the High Commissioners in the period 1998 to 2003 sought to address problems with the 1997 Policy. Ogata appeared to have little interest, Lubbers little power, both maintaining the status quo. Speaking at the University of Oxford in May 2015, Jeff Crisp argued that the presence of weak organisational leadership at this time was an obstacle to revising UNHCR's policy on urban refugees (Crisp and Morand, 2015). Crisp claimed that "[there was] a lot of humming and hawing, a lot of discussion but no one was willing to pin their flag

to the mast and say this is the draft, let's publish it" (Crisp and Morand, 2015). Chapter two discussed the important role leaders can have in the policymaking of international organisations, but equally their lack of action can help maintain the status quo. The silence of Ogata and Lubbers during this period contrasted sharply with António Guterres' focus on urban displacement shortly after becoming High Commissioner in 2005. As will be seen in chapter six, Guterres' interest in urban displacement and participation in a broader epistemic community around the issue would prove crucial in creating the 2009 Policy. Unlike Ogata and Lubbers, Guterres formed a close relationship with the research and evaluation unit, elevating their position within UNHCR.

### 3.3 Field Offices

As in the period discussed in chapter four, UNHCR's field offices helped shape the Organisation's approach to urban displacement between 1998 and 2003. As EPAU began to review the 1997 Policy, it established an epistemic community around itself, relying upon insight and support information from those working for UNHCR's field offices, as the cases of Cairo and New Delhi suggest earlier in this chapter. By studying operations occurring between 1998 and 2003 across the world, it is possible to identify notable differences in how urban displacement was seen and dealt with in different countries, demonstrating not only the lack of traction the 1997 Policy had with many UNHCR staff offices, but the influence differences between urban areas had on the desire to avoid the creation of a new global policy. Large international organisations are diverse and homogenising them can be detrimental to understanding the different actors influencing policymaking. As the following section will show, in countries like Sudan and Pakistan, UNHCR's field offices largely limited urban-based assistance, adhering to the strategy outlined in the 1997 Policy. In contrast, in countries like Zambia and Guinea, UNHCR's field offices provided urban-based assistance, despite the preferences of the host states. In countries such as Uganda, South Africa, and Mexico, UNHCR adopted a strategy placing greater attention on urban areas, rather than rural camps, possible because host states were supportive of urban refugees gaining self-reliance. The following section will outline some of



these cases, suggesting different ways in which the challenge of urban displacement was addressed by UNHCR's field offices, the impact of these differences on EPAU's understanding of the issue, and the role of host states in determining how UNHCR responded.

At the start of the twenty-first century, Sudan hosted one of the largest urban refugee populations in the world. According to UNHCR's Planning Figures, in January 2000 it was predicted to have a total refugee population of 404,634 people (UNHCR, 1999b: 74). Of these 232,000 were categorised as urban refugees (UNHCR, 1999b: 74). Refugees in camps received full assistance but in urban areas assistance was only provided on a case-by-case basis to "the particularly needy" (UNHCR, 1999b: 74), "some needy urban refugees" (UNHCR, 2001b: 91) or the "vulnerable urban refugees" (UNHCR, 2002a: 116). Most urban refugees in Sudan were considered to be self-reliant (UNHCR, 2002c: 180). In Pakistan, urban-based assistance was also limited with encampment being the preferred choice of UNHCR, the country having an even larger urban refugee population than Sudan. In 1999 the Government of Pakistan estimated there were up to two million Afghan urban refugees in the country (UNHCR, 2000b: 212). Urbanisation among displaced people was expected to continue and UNHCR's policy on urban refugees "may therefore need to be reviewed" (UNHCR, 2000b: 215). In Pakistan, UNHCR aimed to assist the local community along with refugees. An objective at the time was to "provide support to local institutions involved in the delivery of basic health, water/sanitation and education services for refugees in urban areas" (UNHCR, 2002b: 21). However, between March and December 2002 over one and a half million Afghan refugees repatriated, eighty-two per cent of who had been resident in Pakistan's towns and cities. The following year UNHCR's Global Appeal reported the Organisation's efforts in Pakistan were firmly focused on helping urban refugees repatriate. The Government of Pakistan wanted these refugees to either return to Afghanistan or be relocated to rural camps, with UNHCR "providing only very limited support to refugees in the urban centres [of Pakistan]" (UNHCR, 2002a: 192). In Sudan and Pakistan, encampment and repatriation were favoured over urban-based

assistance, reflecting the preferences of the host states and the aims of the 1997 Policy.

In contrast to Pakistan, UNHCR's activities in Zambia and Guinea focused on promoting self-reliance and local integration. Neither countries' government supported the movement of refugees to urban areas, suggesting the ability of UNHCR's field offices to offer assistance in urban areas when it chose to, albeit subject to change should the host state adopt a stricter approach. In Zambia, the number of registered urban refugees was much smaller than that found in Pakistan. In January 2003 there were only 6,289 urban refugees out of a total population of 126,289 (UNHCR, 2002a: 160). Despite economic barriers and the Government not favouring local integration, UNHCR aimed to help urban refugees "reach a threshold of sustainable subsistence" (UNHCR, 2000a: 130) through "indirect support measures aimed at facilitating self-reliance, such as access to micro-credit and skills training" (UNHCR, 2000b: 177). In Guinea, UNHCR similarly pursued a strategy focused on self-reliance and local integration. In 2000, UNHCR recorded 700 urban refugees in Guinea, at which time it was shifting its assistance from "subsistence for individuals to support for durable, preferably community-based solutions" (UNHCR, 1999b: 95). The Government's position was that refugees should be in camps. UNHCR tried to convince them otherwise, although by the following year it was working with the Guinean Government to relocate refugees to new sites, including out of urban areas. UNHCR hoped remaining urban refugees could look after themselves, and set about removing monthly allowances from a number of families as "part of the policy to facilitate local integration and self-sufficiency" (UNHCR, 2002c: 209). Despite this form of self-reliance 'promotion', 1,000 of the 1,500 urban refugees in Guinea in 2002 still received monthly allowances from UNHCR (UNHCR, 2003a: 105). Throughout this period the number of urban refugees in Guinea continued to increase, rising to 2,500 in 2003, during which time UNHCR continued to promote self-reliance, giving assistance to only the "most vulnerable" (UNHCR, 2002a: 131). The Zambian Government was opposed to the urbanisation of refugees, but they did not support encampment. Self-settled rural refugees "have often been left undisturbed but the government is always

concerned to prevent refugees from congregating in the urban areas of Lusaka or the Copperbelt” (Bakewell, 2002: 9-10). A small number of mostly well-educated refugees were given permission to reside in urban areas, while many more chose to stay clandestinely. As there were more than 100,000 estimated self-settled refugees never registered with the authorities (Bakewell, 2002: 10), and in light of hostility towards those in urban areas, it is understandable official figure of registered urban refugees should be so small. In both Zambia and Guinea, governments were opposed to refugees movement to urban areas, yet UNHCR provided assistance to urban refugees, albeit limitedly and subject to changes depending on the will of the host government.

In Uganda, UNHCR provided skills training for urban refugees as a means of promoting self-reliance, as well as providing an accommodation allowance for some urban refugees, seeking to provide “basic humanitarian assistance while solutions to their situation are being sought” (UNHCR, 2000a: 92). The Government of Uganda’s strategy on urban refugees was accepting compared to other countries, and was presented by UNHCR as a good example of how self-reliance could work. The Government and UNHCR developed the Self Reliance Strategy (SRS), which the Organisation claimed had “the seal of approval from refugees” (McKinsey, 2003). UNHCR noted that the SRS had saved them and the World Food Programme (WFP), \$13 million in 2001-2002, while boosting “refugees’ self-esteem and diminishing the dependency syndrome” (McKinsey, 2003). UNHCR offered some assistance to urban refugees, although they primarily focused on promoting self-reliance through farming the “often amazingly fertile land” (McKinsey, 2003) allocated to refugees by the Government. The tactic adopted by UNHCR in Uganda during this period matched the 1997 Policy, but the continued use of settlements had been criticised. As Tania Kaiser (2006: 619) writes:

Conceivably, UNHCR may itself take the courage one day, to move right away from its reliance on settlements, and play a much stronger protection and assistance role by encouraging host states such as Uganda to reconsider their insistence on the incarceration of refugees in what might be labelled anti-development settlements.

In 1999 South Africa had 31,000 urban refugees, the largest in Southern Africa, and no camps (UNHCR, 1999b: 105). UNHCR promoted self-reliance, including limited educational assistance, with the aim of a "gradual reduction of assistance" for those refugees who had been in the country for over three years (UNHCR, 2002a: 149). It was involved in other measures that benefited urban refugees and helped their attempts to gain self-reliance, one example being an anti-xenophobia campaign, Roll Back Xenophobia (UNHCR, 1999b: 109). Despite attempts in the region to stem the movement of refugees to urban areas (UNHCR, 2002c: 232), South Africa did not establish refugee camps. Operations in South Africa at this time generally adhered to the 1997 Policy of focusing on self-reliance and limiting assistance, although in a context without camps.

In Mexico, UNHCR sought self-reliance for all urban refugees and local integration for a portion of them. For long-term refugees, mostly originating from Central America, UNHCR pursued naturalisation as a way of increasing access to local services and employment opportunities. As in other countries, reducing access to support was seen as a way of promoting self-reliance, although in the case of Mexico there was an increase in other types of support to help foster such self-reliance. According to UNHCR's 2001 Global Appeal, the Organisation had "started to reduce direct material assistance to urban refugees, endeavouring instead to increase their economic independence by providing training and credit" (UNHCR, 2000a: 248). Financial support for medical assistance was given to new arrivals and those "found to be in extremely vulnerable situations" (UNHCR, 2002c: 431). The work of UNHCR in Mexico was supportive of urban refugees, actively promoting local integration for some, but mirrored the 1997 Policy's focus on limiting assistance for those not deemed to be 'extremely vulnerable'.

In countries such Sudan and Pakistan the majority of refugees lived in urban areas, while in others, the number of urban refugees was much smaller. UNHCR's 2000 Global Appeal outlined the number of urban refugees in several countries,

demonstrating those in urban areas were often in the minority.<sup>12</sup> In Guinea, for example, less than one per cent of nearly half a million refugees in the country were in urban areas (UNHCR, 1999b). This figure represents the number of urban refugees registered with UNHCR, and is problematic because many urban refugees were unregistered. It nonetheless demonstrates why the issue of urban displacement received little attention in many countries, with the number of urban refugees believed to be negligible. Experiences in Sudan, Pakistan, and Guinea, contextualise separate responses to urban displacement from distinct field offices. The different tactics adopted suggests the autonomy of field offices within UNHCR, underscoring the need to avoid viewing international organisations as unitary actors, and pay attention instead to the divergent ways various parts of organisations might respond to the same issue. Urban displacement was a minor issue in many places, with some countries having less than a hundred registered urban refugees. The extent of urban displacement in the late 1990s and early 2000s raises questions over EPAU's work, as they arguably based their policy recommendations and understandings of urban displacement on a select number of evaluations of cities, all with sizeable refugee populations. Had they conducted an evaluation in a country with a very small urban refugee population, it is likely they would have made different findings to those arising from Cairo and New Delhi. In line with theorising around epistemic communities, the example of EPAU during this period suggests that they were able to establish their own agenda and prioritise urban displacement, though in many cases, it was not a priority for UNHCR. EPAU did this through the use of information and its expert position within UNHCR.

Tension existed at this time between UNHCR in headquarters and the field. Those working in UNHCR's field offices sometimes felt staff in Geneva were disconnected from the everyday reality of refugee operations (Loescher, Betts and Milner, 2008: 83). Jeff Crisp (2015) has commented that the 1997 Policy's

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<sup>12</sup> Algeria - 100 of 165,100 refugees were in urban areas, Cambodia - 130 of 47,000 refugees were in urban areas, Ethiopia - 485 of 243,785 refugees were in urban areas, Guinea - 700 of 479,400 refugees were in urban areas, Liberia - 30 of 425,030 refugees were in urban areas, Rwanda - between 1,500 and 1,600 of between 2,833,740 and 2,838,540 refugees were in urban areas (UNHCR, 1999b).

assumption that cities were harder places for refugees was “dreamt up in Geneva”. In New Delhi, EPAU’s evaluation found the relations between the office in the Indian capital and Geneva had “come under strain” as a result of the country office “seeking additional resources to assist the urban refugee population” (Obi and Crisp, 2000: 4-5). UNHCR’s staff in India sought to increase support, whereas their colleagues in Geneva were concerned with “trying to control expenditure so as to limit the organization’s global funding shortfall” (Obi and Crisp, 2000: 5). In this case the Geneva-based Regional Bureau for Asia and Oceania was unsympathetic to complaints from the field office in India, claiming “budget reductions were necessary as a result of UNHCR’s overall financial constraints” and that “in comparison with many other country programmes, the reduction for India was small” (Quoted in: Obi and Crisp, 2000: 15). The 1997 Policy was said to contain a “strong message” that “UNHCR assistance should be reduced to a minimum” (Sperl, 2001: 4). However, the financial reductions imposed on field offices often impacted programmes that would have allowed urban refugees to become self-reliant. These programmes were seen to be costly and difficult to measure, and yet for those working in the field restricting them seemed counterproductive. As Stefan Sperl (2001: 12) writes in his evaluation: “From the perspective of the Cairo programme it is ironic that the promulgation of the UNHCR policy on refugees in urban areas took place at the very time when education and training ceased to be its major programme activity”. One example was the seven per cent decline in education spending in Egypt between 1996 and 1999 (Sperl, 2001: 12). Similarly, the UNHCR office in Cairo noted in its 1999 Protection Report that due to “shrinking resources and prioritisation exercises being implemented every year” they had “no possibility to encourage self-reliance or to reduce dependency on UNHCR’s already limited assistance” (UNHCR RO-Cairo, 1999: 13). The restrictions on UNHCR’s overall funding, with the implications it had in certain cases, such as the Organisation’s work in Cairo, points to the continued importance donor states had on UNHCR’s work in urban areas. The influence of states during this period will be discussed further in the following section.

The cases of India and Egypt demonstrate some of the tensions occurring at the time between those in UNHCR's headquarters and those in the field, with the resulting need for EPAU to frame the challenge of urban displacement in terms necessitating increased support from the Organisation as a whole. EPAU was able to draw on experience in India and Egypt, with insight they gained from UNHCR's staff in these countries illustrating why the 1997 Policy needed to be replaced, despite the preferences of states and other parts of UNHCR. The efforts of some field offices to expand assistance to those in urban areas were hampered by financial reductions imposed from Geneva. In Pakistan, UNHCR's country office sought increased financial support from headquarters to further its work in urban areas, but its urban programmes were often "the first victim of budget cuts" (Valid International, 2002: 30). Decisions made in Geneva would often be reached without consultation. A 2002 independent evaluation of UNHCR's activities with refugee children highlighted the lack of communication within UNHCR and the impact this had on the work of those in the field.

[I]t was reported that some activities planned by the field, and their associated budgets, were cut without consultation by the Bureau. For example, in our field mission to Pakistan, field staff report that 'the desk' at headquarters cut additions for work with urban refugees... In an example reported to be a common occurrence, in one field mission, the second tranche of funds for work with refugee children and adolescents was suddenly cut by half without prior notice or discussion with the implementing partner. (Valid International, 2002: 42-43)

Despite such reductions, some field offices went beyond the limited assistance intended for urban refugees in the 1997 Policy. In Yemen, where camps existed, many refugees preferred to move to urban areas and had the support of the Organisation in doing so, as from "UNHCR's point of view, the refugees' negative attitude to the camp is only to be welcomed" (UNHCR, 1998b)", despite the clear preference for camps in the 1997 Policy. Support for urbanisation from UNHCR in Yemen contrasts with situations in other countries at the time, such as Guinea, where refugees were encouraged to leave towns and cities in favour of camps, and experienced cuts to their food rations in 1999 (Kaiser, 2001: 7). Here urban refugees felt wronged: "The urban refugee group, meanwhile, feels cheated by UNHCR on the grounds that they were allowed to settle in town, and were supported there, and have only now been told to leave if they want continued

assistance" (Kaiser, 2001: 24). Such examples suggest the lack of uniformity in UNHCR's approach to urban displacement at the time, not only between countries, but also within them, the disparity due to the varying impact urban displacement had between states. Differences in the size of displaced populations in urban areas meant it was more pressing concern in some countries than others. For countries with relatively small populations, it was easier to pay for urban programmes. The differences in approach found during this period and the limited references to UNHCR's global policy, suggest the 1997 Policy did not have sufficient clout across the Organisation, and had not been effectively implemented. Lack of common application of the 1997 Policy between countries and interest in the issue of urban displacement by members of UNHCR, including the High Commissioner, provided the 'agency slack' necessary for EPAU to begin to advocate a change in policy. EPAU's evaluation work, including the gathering of information and framing of urban displacement as a neglected issue, allowed the experiences of those working in UNHCR's field offices to help shape the contents of the 2003 Guiding Principles. The variety of tactics taken by UNHCR field offices evidences the need to resist treating international organisations as homogenised entities responding to global challenges in the same way.

#### 4. Pressure from Above

Between 1998 and 2003 states did not call on UNHCR to revise or replace the 1997 Policy, but the Organisation internalised and reflected state preferences for restrictions on the movement of displaced people, maintaining the 1997 Policy, and failing to enact the 2003 Guiding Principles. The case of urbanisation of displacement highlights that UNHCR is not "just a mechanism through which states act" (Loescher, 2012: 34), but the Organisation will reflect states' desires even without explicit instruction. As discussed in chapter two, international organisations can be instructed to act in a certain way by states, but might equally choose to follow a course of action believing it to reflect states' wishes. EPAU, amongst the most critical voices within UNHCR of state actions, has been described as "a way of reassuring donors that the UNHCR is making its best



efforts to exercise its authority with care” and “in that sense, it is an institutional tool, rather than a device to facilitate refugee participation” (Pallis, 2006: 899). It is important to consider the position of states and the broader UN system during this period, including members of both the first and second UNs, to understand UNHCR’s approach to urban displacement. As in chapter four, the output of UNHCR’s Executive Committee (ExCom) will be analysed in depth, as the main forum for interaction between states and the Organisation. As UNHCR’s Volker Türk (1999: 153) noted in 1999, ExCom plays a vital role in standard setting within UNHCR. However, “individual donor governments and some key host states – not ExCom – establish the priorities that guide the UNHCR’s programme direction” (Loescher, 2001a: 376). The section will consider other pressures placed upon UNHCR by states and the broader UN system.

At the ExCom Standing Committee meeting in June 1998, the Director for Operations in Southern Africa addressed the increasing number of urban refugees in the region, describing Southern Africa as being different from other parts of the continent, where refugee populations were largely rural, as it was seeing an increase in refugees moving to urban areas (UNGA, 1998b: 9). In response to their address, one delegate expressed support for UNHCR’s promotion of self-reliance among urban refugees in Southern Africa. The case of Southern Africa demonstrates urban displacement was growing and being discussed by UNHCR staff in their interactions with states. Nevertheless, at the Annual ExCom meeting in October 1998, there was no mention of urban displacement, and the issue did not feature in the decisions or conclusions reached (UNGA, 1998c). The Organisation faced no direct pressure to adapt its response to urban displacement. The case demonstrates that during the late 1990s, in Africa at least, refugees were believed to be primarily located in rural areas. It was the issue of resettlement that drew the most attention, with “several delegations” urging “other members of the Executive Committee to offer resettlement places” (UNGA, 1998b: 4). During the ExCom Standing Committees in 1998, the presence of urban refugees across a number of different regions was raised, with focus on self-reliance and local integration. In Latin America and the Caribbean there was said to be a small urban caseload and a need to harmonise

the approach to urban refugees across the region (UNHCR, 1998c). Discussions focused upon the seemingly complementary issues of local integration and self-reliance. In Mexico, UNHCR sought “modest but tangible benefits” (UNHCR, 1998c), by reducing ‘dependency’ and increasing self-reliance among the El Salvadoran and Guatemalan urban refugees. At this point urban refugees were considered to be a small minority. The ‘Demographic Characteristics of the UNHCR-assisted refugee populations in urban areas, end-1997’ showed there were a total of 264,660 registered urban refugees globally (UNHCR, 1998a). This figure excluded many countries, including Pakistan and Sudan, both having amongst the largest urban refugee populations globally. This document showed the majority of registered refugees were female (UNHCR, 1998a), contrasting the 1997 Policy’s assumption that most refugees in urban areas were male.

At the 50th ExCom Plenary Session in 1999, urban refugees were once again discussed in terms of being a burden to their hosts (UNHCR, 1999c: 8), recalling the tone of the March 1997 Policy and the 1997 Policy. When ExCom addressed the refugee situation in Zambia in 1999 as part of budgeting for the following year, there was a focus on local integration in urban areas, the value of self-reliance, and the promotion of naturalisation for some refugees (UNHCR, 1999a: 23-24). Urban refugees were presented more positively in Zambia, although there was still said to be a need to limit the extent of integration. The number of urban refugees in Zambia receiving subsistence was to be monitored, owing to concerns over the strain these “massive refugee populations” could pose to local and international support mechanisms, if allowed to freely settle in the country’s towns and cities (UNHCR, 1999a: 23-24). In 1999, ExCom’s Standing Committee did not discuss urban displacement and when it was raised during the Plenary Session the views expressed conformed to the perspective outlined in the 1997 Policy.

The issue of urban displacement received limited attention from the broader United Nations, which focused primarily on the potential ‘burden’ such refugees placed upon their hosts and the need to address this in a ‘sustainable way’. In 1998 and 1999, the General Assembly addressed the issue of emergency and

disaster relief in Africa, arguing assistance should be granted to all displaced people, “including refugees in urban areas” (UNGA, 1998a: 4; UNGA, 1999a: 5). In its Annual Reports to the General Assembly, UNHCR gave limited attention to urban displacement issues, noting in 1998 that it had promoted self-reliance for around 17,000 urban refugees, mostly from Afghanistan (UNGA, 1999c: 16). In 1999 the ‘Report of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees’ suggested that “increased attention should be paid to alleviate this negative impact” (UNGA, 1999c: 3). The views of states at the end of the twentieth century were more attune to those expressed in the 1997 Policy than those presented in the 2003 Guiding Principles.

In 2000 the amount of attention afforded to urban displacement at ExCom grew, although it remained less than the amount given by EPAU. In its Annual Report to the General Assembly, UNHCR described its assistance to urban refugees in the Central African Republic, South Africa, India, and the Middle East (UNGA, 2001e). This assistance included attempts to promote local integration in South Africa, ‘dependency’ reduction through self-reliance in India, and income generation strategies targeted especially at refugee women. UNHCR reported on the creation of EPAU in 1999 and noted they would focus on evaluating the 1997 Policy (UNGA, 2000b: 4), ensuring states were aware the Organisation was continuing its work on urban displacement. States demonstrated their support for self-reliance. At ExCom Standing Committee, the Indian Government expressed its desire for UNHCR to promote self-reliance among urban refugees. The Standing Committee highlighted cases of IDPs urbanising, due in Azerbaijan to the lack of camps and in Liberia to the Government’s dismantling of camps (UNGA, 2000a: 12, 22).

During the 52nd ExCom Plenary sessions in 2001 host states expressed their concern over the failure to resolve long-standing displacement issues, including urban refugees (UNGA, 2001c: 4). UNHCR’s 2001 ‘Note on International Protection’ claimed freedom of movement was better available to those in urban areas, noting, “governments in most countries have continued to provide for or to tolerate freedom of movement in urban situations and to allow refugees to

choose their place of residence... For refugees living in camps, however, the situation is often more constrained” (UNGA, 2001c: 12). Freedom of movement in urban areas was connected to UNHCR’s attempts to promote self-reliance and local integration through a variety of programmes, including credit schemes, vocational training, skill-development activities, and assistance with naturalisation (UNGA, 2001c: 27-28). Encouragement of self-reliance, local integration, and pressure from host states to resolve urban refugee issues suggests there was state support for UNHCR increasing its work in urban areas. In the early 2000s UNHCR focused on the Convention Plus process, by which donor states sought to focus efforts on repatriation and local integration, rather than resettlement. Efforts to support urban-based self-reliance and integration fitted these goals, although there was more willingness to accept self-reliance than to encourage local integration amongst host states. Self-reliance was a means of relieving strain on national resources, while local integration came with a sense of permanence. Self-reliance struck a balance acceptable to a broad range of state interests at the time, demonstrating the role of state interests in UNHCR’s gradual change in its response to the challenges of urban displacement. Donor states wanted to ensure displaced people were kept far from their borders, localising them in their regions of origin, while host states were able to access the development assistance included in the Convention Plus process (Hammerstad, 2014: 156), without giving permanent legal status to refugees, allowing such states to utilise the threat of expulsion, and permitting onward movement, during future negotiations.

During the Standing Committee in 2001, the Indian Government once again expressed its support for self-reliance among urban refugees. As a country with a large urban refugee population and with New Delhi being the first field site for EPAU’s evaluation process, this gave weight to EPAU’s claim the 1997 Policy should be replaced. India’s position can be understood in terms of self-interest and a long-standing desire to minimise formal local integration, but it provided further evidence that could be used by the EPAU-led epistemic community, justifying a change in policy. Local integration was discussed at the Standing Committee as a positive way to provide solutions for refugees, particularly in

Africa, with its “cross border ethnic communities and porous borders” (UNGA, 2001d: 4). UNHCR’s work in urban areas lent itself well to community-based activities, such as the creation of community centres benefiting both refugees and host populations (UNHCR, 2001c: 3). Reports to ExCom show states were aware of EPAU’s work on a ‘revised policy statement’ (UNGA, 2001h: 4), but there was little appetite for it to be released. States were not engaged on the issue of urban displacement, although their interests were reflected in the new approach, particularly those of donor states favouring tools halting potential onward movement. UNHCR’s inaction demonstrated a lack of accountability, both in its work and policymaking. UNHCR talked about revising its policy on urban displacement without actually doing so, in part because states did not pursue the promises the Organisation made (Crisp, 2017: 91; Crisp and Morand, 2015). A consultant’s report of UNHCR’s evaluation function released in 2000 found the Organisation had a “weak accountability climate” (Lawry-White, 2000: 3). UNHCR retained the 1997 Policy despite criticism coming from both within and below it. It was able to do so because of a lack of interest or pressure from states, which highlights the important part state influence, has in bringing about changes in policy and practice. As will be analysed in chapter six, UNHCR often spoke of replacing the 1997 Policy, but continually missed its own deadlines.

In 2001 UNHCR released a report focused on displacement in Africa, highlighting the on-going issue of large numbers of urban refugees in Sudan and repatriation of Cameroonian refugees from urban areas in Chad (UNGA, 2001a: 6). The same year UNHCR presented a report to the General Assembly on the investigation by the Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services into allegations of smuggling at UNHCR’s office in Nairobi, Kenya. In addition to focusing on widespread corruption, the report portrayed urban refugees in Kenya’s capital as being ‘better resourced’ than those in the countries camps, drawing attention to reasons refugees chose to move to urban areas in Kenya, such as lack of security in the country’s camps, better services, more employment opportunities, and perception resettlement opportunities were stronger in Nairobi (UNGA, 2001b). The report referred to broader concerns over protracted refugee situations, another issue addressed by EPAU at this time. Refugees chose

to move to cities like Nairobi and Mombasa, “if they [did] not want to put their lives on hold indefinitely in the camps” (UNGA, 2001b: 7). The Internal Oversight Services supports the United Nations Secretariat, including the Secretary General. Although not part of UNHCR, it shows another part of the UN system engaging with urban refugee issues and providing better understanding of the reasons refugees choose urban areas over camps.

The disparity in assistance provided to urban refugee communities in different locations was raised at the 53rd ExCom Plenary meeting in 2002. The variation between UNHCR offices led to differing levels of protection for refugees from the same country of origin. The Inspector General’s Office (IGO), UNHCR’s internal review service, raised the issue during ExCom’s Standing Committee meetings in 2002. Their comments were based on observations recorded during 1999 and 2000, where it was noticed different strategies regarding urban refugees existed in varying countries (UNGA, 2002d: 1). Zambia was highlighted as a good practice example, with its computerised record system and practice of issuing identity cards to help avoid documentation fraud and wrongful arrest or deportation. EPAU’s evaluation work on urban displacement was raised during the ExCom Plenary and Standing Committee meetings, showing states were aware of EPAU’s focus on the issue. However, the possible revision of the 1997 Policy was not addressed and implementation of the policy was listed among ‘other themes’ of UNHCR’s evaluation work (UNGA, 2002c: 6), rather than the five issues covered in detail, indicating it was not a central priority for UNHCR at the time, certainly not in respect of the presentation of EPAU’s work at ExCom.<sup>13</sup> In 2002, local integration and self-reliance played prominent parts in all ExCom discussions. The focus on these issues reflected beliefs among many states, particularly donor states, that they were the more appropriate means of pursuing long-term solutions for displacement. In 2002 there were references to health challenges faced by urban refugees in West Africa (UNGA, 2002b) and planned improvement of NGOs’ urban refugee work (UNGA, 2002a: 23), though

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<sup>13</sup> The five issues covered in detail in the Report on Oversight Activities were: refugee children, durable solutions for refugees, internally displaced populations, emergency preparedness and response capacity, and refugee women. Four additional issues were listed, but not discussed, one of which was the implementation of the 1997 Policy (UNGA, 2002c: 4-6).

the Annual Report by UNHCR to the General Assembly (UNGA, 2003e) made no mention of urban displacement. The lack of legal stability existing for refugees was addressed, a pertinent issue for those in urban areas. Although most urban refugees in Central Asia, South West Asia, North Africa and the Middle East (CASWANAME) were self-reliant, they lacked security and a permanent legal position within their host countries. Their presence was based on hospitality and 'de facto asylum', which could end at any point (UNGA, 2002e: 2). This lack of legal security made lasting self-reliance and integration hard to achieve.

By the time the 54th ExCom Plenary Sessions began in late September 2003, a change in UNHCR's approach to urban displacement was being discussed (UNGA, 2003c: 6). There were reports that in some cases urban refugees were considered an "invading force" (UNGA, 2003a: 6), although there was increased knowledge and discussion around urban displacement. Most of this stemmed from EPAU, who had by this time conducted field-based evaluations and surveys, and hosted workshops as part of its review of the 1997 Policy. It was noted at ExCom that EPAU was working on a new document "ultimately intended to replace UNHCR'S 1997 policy statement on refugees in urban areas" (UNGA, 2003d: 6). Discussion of urban displacement featured within ExCom's Standing Committee meetings in 2003, showing growing appreciation that refugees were often found not in rural camps but elsewhere (UNGA, 2003b: 6). There was discussion concerning the need for durable solutions for Somali urban refugees and the pursuit of local integration in urban areas in the Americas. With the invasion of Afghanistan in 2002 and the invasion of Iraq in 2003, displacement in the Middle East received increased attention. It was believed to be primarily urban and in need of a regionally consistent response, best addressed by supporting host communities. The 'Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' similarly noted the need for supporting refugees and local populations together in North Africa and the Middle East (UNGA, 2003e: 6). The Report shows urban displacement was increasingly addressed during ExCom's meetings, but only to a limited extent. As with the period 1994 to 1997, urban displacement appeared most notably at ExCom in relation to the work of UNHCR's research and evaluation unit. EPAU was constructing urban

displacement as an issue needing to be addressed, framing the 1997 Policy as not fit for purpose, meaning its replacement was regarded as an eventuality by ExCom, rather than mere possibility. A member of the second UN, such as EPAU, was therefore able to influence ways in which members of the first UN understood a marginal global displacement issue, facilitating their reconsideration of UNHCR's strategy on urban displacement, and preparing them for an imminent official update.

During this time there was a gradual increase in interest for self-reliance and local integration, stemming from growing criticism of the repatriation efforts of the 1990s and concern over the 'warehousing' of refugees in camps. In 2001, EPAU began a major study funded by the US State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration on the topic of Protracted Refugee Situations (PRS). The study highlighted the popular 'repatriation rather than integration' approach led to problems in terms of protracted encampment (Crisp, 2003). Increased concern among states over international migration following the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 prompted greater support for local solutions to displacement, as donor states in particular sought to maintain distance from displaced people. Support for local solutions, particularly local integration, bolstered EPAU's work on urban displacement, with donor states increasingly interested in tactics for stemming the movement of people, such as better urban-based assistance in host states. This was not yet reflected in funding efforts, however. In the case of the United States, local integration received far less support than either repatriation or resettlement. Karen Jacobsen (2001: 25) has contested that "donor countries like the U.S., despite a history of commitment to the principles of linking refugee aid and development, [have] shown little real commitment to promoting local integration in host countries". To illustrate this, Jacobsen (2001: 25) analysed the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration funding from January to May 2001, finding "most refugee assistance was for basic services for refugees, resettlement, UNRWA, IDPs, and repatriation and reintegration activities. Only four programmes were associated with local integration, and they were in Europe (Azerbaijan and Armenia) or West Asia (Tajikistan and



Kazakhstan)” (Jacobsen, 2001: 25). Limited financial assistance for local integration was a common theme at this time.

Local integration received the least funding of the three durable solutions. In 2003, the U.S. State Department spent \$101 million on repatriation or reintegration, \$126 million on resettlement and \$0.48 million on local integration (Smith, 2004: 49). In Africa, until 1978, 75% of programme money went to local integration; after 1979, it fell to 25% (Smith, 2004: 44). The decrease in funding reflects a broader trend since the 1970s, with only 23% of UNHCR’s spending between 1976 and 2002 labelled as ‘local settlement’ (Smith, 2004: 48). Between 1998 and 2002 UNHCR’s spending on local settlement was consistently less than 20% of its expenditure (Smith, 2004: 48). Even what is meant by the term ‘local settlement’ can be problematic. As Merrill Smith (2004: 48) has claimed, much of the \$62 million spent in 2002 on local settlement in Africa, Asia and the Middle East “supported warehousing”. With the vast majority of UNHCR’s funding coming from a select number of donor states and the majority of it being restricted to certain uses, the attitude of donors to local integration is important. The Convention Plus process, with its focus on local integration and repatriation in favour of resettlement, was tied to “European interests” (Hammerstad, 2014: 157). As the “European policy-making agenda” was dominated by “exclusion and deterrence” (Betts and Durieux, 2007: 526), donor states supported local integration, as keeping displaced people at a distance. Although self-reliance and local integration received support from members of ExCom, it did not translate into increased funding. Based on EPAU’s research and evaluation work and the subsequent contents of the 2003 Guiding Principles, a new tactic to urban displacement would require increased spending on self-reliance and local integration. Discussing displacement in Asia, UNHCR’s 2002 Global Report suggested there was a lack of donor support at this time for operations with a large urban dimension:

UNHCR's operations in South Asia, particularly in Myanmar and Sri Lanka, were well funded in 2002 by earmarked contributions from several donors. UNHCR's activities in India, on the other hand, received less donor support, despite the fact that they came under its core mandate and concerned a relatively large number of urban refugees. (UNHCR, 2003a: 32)

The funding situation between 1998 and 2003 indicates the preferences of donor states at this time, and the impact they had on UNHCR's response to urban displacement. Donor states supported self-reliance and local integration, but were unwilling to make sufficient financial contributions. As discussed previously, host states were sceptical of self-reliance, as a means of providing 'backdoor' local integration. Policymaking on urban displacement was caught up in the broader contestation between donor and host states taking place throughout the Convention Plus process in the early 2000s. The interests of donor states supported UNHCR's consideration of a new approach, but lack of clear, sustained interest from either donor or host states, allowed UNHCR to shape its own response. Host states continued to be concerned with 'burden shifting' (Betts and Durieux, 2007: 527), with efforts to increase self-reliance or local integration in urban areas seen as party to this. Concerns over increased use of self-reliance and local integration formed part of the broader north-south impasse (Betts, 2011) between the states primarily funding humanitarianism and those hosting the majority of displaced people. The Convention Plus process, which came to an end in 2005, was largely a victim of the "polarization of positions between Northern and Southern states" (Loescher, Betts and Milner, 2008: 64). Host states were unhappy with the reluctance of donors to offer additional assistance, while donor states were "left disillusioned by the apparent unwillingness of Southern host states to countenance local integration or self-sufficiency opportunities for refugees on their territories" (Loescher, Betts and Milner, 2008: 64). With broader disputes between donor and host states ongoing, maintaining the status quo in terms of urban displacement policy was the easiest option. Donor states were unwilling to invest financially in a costly developmental approach, while host states were wary of accepting increased 'backdoor' integration without addressing fundamental issues inherent in burden sharing. The tacit support for a new strategy from states, combined with their lack of clear direction on the issue and broader contestation between donor and host states, provided space for EPAU to frame its response to urban displacement itself. As such, EPAU drafted the 2003 Guiding Principles, which, if enacted, would have required more of states in both the north and south than

they were willing to give at this time. UNHCR's failure to replace the 1997 Policy at this time reflected the Organisation's unwillingness to introduce a policy requiring greater support from both donor and host states.

## 5. Pressure from Below

As discussed in chapter four, NGOs began playing a role in the policymaking process surrounding urban displacement following the release of the March 1997 Policy, continuing in the years leading up to the 2003 Guiding Principles. With Partnership in Action following the end of the Cold War, UNHCR had joined the rest of the UN system in opening up more to NGOs. The period has been characterised in the literature as the 'Second Generation' of UN-Civil Society relations, involving national NGOs engaged in advocacy and mobilisation work during intergovernmental deliberations, helping to shape their outcomes (Hill, 2004). The 'First Generation' of international NGOs existed throughout the Cold War, but pre-dated the 'Third Generation' of the 2000s, which included coalitions of governments and NGOs, as well as business-related organisations (Hill, 2004). The involvement of NGOs increased when Kofi Annan became the seventh Secretary General of the United Nations in 1997. Writing about NGOs in 2014, Annan (2014: 5) noted he was "convinced that the UN would achieve little in the twenty-first century unless it reached out to such people and convinced them that it was a useful ally, able and willing to work with them to achieve their ends". There had been a notable growth from the 1990s in the number of NGOs worldwide, their involvement in the UN's 'corridors of power' resulting in "a qualitatively different debate than would take place without their inputs" (Weiss et al., 2009: 4, 129). In the case of internal displacement, NGOs were influential in advocating for change in global policy and framing how the issue was understood by both states and members of the United Nations (Weiss and Korn, 2006). Along with other members of the third UN, including academics and independent consultants, some NGOs came to join the growing epistemic community around issues of urban displacement, helping shape the contents of the 2003 Guiding Principles.

Changes occurring in UNHCR's attitude towards urban displacement between 1997 and 2003 cannot be accredited to NGOs. Throughout these years the attention of many NGOs was focused on issues such as detention, internal displacement and sexual violence, rather than the need to revise the 1997 Policy. It is possible to trace NGOs' interest in urban displacement by examining discussions occurring at UNHCR's Annual Consultation with NGOs. The Annual Consultation is the main meeting point for UNHCR and NGOs, attracting hundreds of organisations ranging from large international implementing partners to small community based organisations (CBOs). It serves as the principal forum for many NGOs to lobby UNHCR and occurs in advance of ExCom's Plenary Session. Meetings of this sort "have become a prominent fixture of deliberations and have been an important force in pressing for more forward-looking policies" (Weiss et al., 2009: 127). The Annual Consultations do not capture the interests of all NGOs or community-based organisations, some of which may not attend, but includes those closest to UNHCR, and by extension, those most able to influence the Organisation's policymaking process. As discussed in chapter three, there are varying levels of influence upon policymaking displayed by different members of the third UN, with wealthier, more professional NGOs based in donor states having greater influence than counterparts in host states.

Immediately following the release of the 1997 Policy, the attention of NGOs was broadly focused on other displacement issues. In the plenary session of the 2000 Annual Consultation many protection issues were raised, but the plight of those in urban areas was not amongst them. The plenary session was indicative of NGOs' concerns at this time, largely focused on a range of issues other than urban displacement.

[A]mong the many questions raised on protection were the relationship between UNHCR's consultations on protection and human rights instruments; interdiction and the broader question of access to asylum procedures; internally displaced persons; difficulties in implementation of the right to asylum; relations between UNHCR and regional bodies; current protection issues in Guinea; detention of asylum-seekers; and the need for UNHCR field offices to become more supportive of NGO work in the field of protection. (UNHCR, 2000c: 1)

Regional sessions at the Annual Consultation in 2000 focused on the need to address the root causes of displacement and find durable solutions, along with security issues in West Timor, and repatriation issues in Bhutan, Colombia, Afghanistan, and the Western Balkans (UNHCR, 2000c: 2). The following year topics ranged from IDPs, women and children and the implementation of the 1951 Convention to issues of protection, so-called 'forgotten' crises, such as that in Sierra Leone, and the crisis in Afghanistan and its neighbours (UNHCR, 2001d). In a guest speech on UNHCR's partnership with NGOs, High Commissioner Ruud Lubbers raised the lack of available durable solutions and the resulting 'non-solutions' (protracted stays in refugee camps and people smuggling), but the potential for integration in urban areas was never mentioned (UNHCR, 2001d: 2).

In 2002, NGOs issued a joint statement focused on a range of issues, many identical to the previous year: funding, protection, IDPs, women and children, sexual violence, onward movement, detention, resettlement, prevention, the effects of the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, access to information from UNHCR, and NGOs' relationships with the Organisation (UNHCR, 2002e). Though NGOs' contribution to the General Debate did not focus specifically on urban displacement, they noted refugees move around and are "entitled to protection whatever their location: in a refugee camp, in an urban area, in a neighbouring State, or in another country of asylum" (UNHCR, 2002e). The importance of protection being available regardless of location featured in both the 2003 Guiding Principles and 2009 Policy, a shift from the restrictive attitude of the March 1997 Policy and 1997 Policy. As the 2003 Guiding Principles state, UNHCR's obligations "are not affected by the location of the refugees, the nature of their movement to that location or their status in national legislation" (UNHCR, 2003b: 6). The Regional Bureau for Africa's session at the 2002 Annual Consultation featured discussion of urban refugees, who were said to "often have protection and social problems" and require "significant resources", as well as being "labour intensive" (UNHCR, 2002f: 23). The reason for the number of urban refugees expanding was believed to be because of the increasing reluctance of host states to give land to refugees (UNHCR, 2002f: 23). The

discussion at the Regional Bureau for Africa's session demonstrated some of the assumptions the 1997 Policy was based upon, namely refugees being primarily rural with those in urban areas costly and difficult. It also reflects states' concerns at this time; donor states' desire to reduce expenditure and host states' concerns with having to support 'labour intensive' refugee populations.

During the 2003 Annual Consultation matters of insecurity in refugee camps and self-reliance in relation to durable solutions, featured prominently on the agenda (UNHCR, 2003d). These issues played a part in shifting perceptions on urban displacement. Acknowledging displaced people often spent extended periods of time in camps and that this could place them in danger, prompted the need for alternative locations for providing assistance, including urban areas. Providing this assistance in urban areas would require refugees to be more self-reliant, as UNHCR would be unable to provide the same type of assistance in towns and cities as it did in camps. Both the 1997 Policy and the 2003 Guiding Principles espoused self-reliance as a central theme. NGO focus at the Annual Consultation remained fixed on other issues. In 2003, a series of special ad hoc meetings were organised by participants known as the 'Meeting at the Margins of Pre-ExCom and ExCom', focusing on a range of topics, including IDPs, security, interception, HIV/AIDS, gender-based violence, and the Protection Surge Capacity Project (UNHCR, 2003d: Annex VI). The 2003 NGO collaborative submissions to the General Debate on International Protection focused on issues such as IDPs, refugee women and children, sexual exploitation, partnerships, gaining information from UNHCR, Convention Plus, detention, education, statelessness, migrant workers, and the current context for refugee protection (UNHCR, 2003d: Annex VIII, Annex IX). Although addressing management of migration and changing humanitarian context, neither focused on urban issues.

In 2003 NGOs continued to favour third-country resettlement, in preference to local integration in urban areas. NGOs' Submission to the General Debate at ExCom's Annual Meeting on 1 October 2003, argued that "in light of the dramatically falling numbers of arrivals of asylum-seekers in many industrialised countries and the turnover of camps from UNHCR to national

governments in some places, now would seem an appropriate time to vigorously pursue resettlement as a durable solution” (UNHCR, 2003d: Annex VIII). When addressing UNHCR’s research and evaluation work, NGOs drew attention to the need to focus on cases of interception, forced repatriation and internal displacement, stressing the need for evaluations on refugee children, women, and community services (UNHCR, 2003d: Annex XI). None of this drew special attention to the plight of refugees in urban areas. On 2 October 2003, NGOs’ Submission on Oversight Activities to ExCom, focused on resettlement, describing the ‘changing humanitarian context’ without any mention of urbanisation (UNHCR, 2003d: Annex XI). Although NGOs claimed “too much important work has been done to be wasted” by not effectively implementing the “many excellent guidelines that UNHCR has produced” (UNHCR, 2003d: Annex XI), they made no mention of policymaking around urban displacement. NGOs warning that UNHCR’s “valuable guidelines” could “just decorate our bookshelves” (UNHCR, 2003d: Annex XI) inadvertently summed up much of the work done on urban displacement at this time. Despite several years of evaluations, consultations, meetings, and field visits, by the end of 2003 UNHCR’s proposed new strategy on urban displacement remained an internal draft document ‘languishing’ in EPAU’s office. By the end of the period analysed in this chapter, the urban displacement epistemic community was able to collect information on the issue and shape how it was framed within UNHCR, but was not strong enough to bring about a change in policy. As will be discussed in chapter six, it would take the UNHCR’s leader becoming a part of the epistemic community for a change in approach and policy to be realised.

Consideration of occurrences at Annual Consultation and the Submission to ExCom gives an indication of NGOs’ interests during the period 1998 to 2003, but does not tell the full story. As chapter four outlined, NGOs were quick to criticise the March 1997 Policy and consequently influenced how UNHCR perceived the policy, who in turn “hurriedly issued a revised version” (Crisp, 2017: 90) nine months later, following meetings and pressure from NGOs, as acknowledged by the Organisation itself (Vieira de Mello, 1997: 1). The impact of NGOs in replacing the March 1997 Policy reflects the influence members of the third UN

can have, in particular its ability to legitimate and advocate ideas and policies (Weiss et al., 2009: 128-129). Such criticism is often informal and not publicly recorded. One important meeting, as recalled by Jeff Crisp, took place at UNHCR Headquarters in 1999 between NGO staff and Søren Jessen-Petersen, the Assistant High Commissioner for Operations (Crisp and Morand, 2015). According to Crisp, NGO staff informed Jessen-Petersen they would not support the 1997 Policy. Jessen-Petersen responded that a review of the policy was already underway, “thinking on his feet” in response to NGOs demanding “to know what the organization’s intentions were on its urban refugee policy” (Crisp, 2017: 90). He promptly went to EPAU’s office and told staff there to begin work on evaluating the 1997 Policy (Crisp, 2017; Crisp and Morand, 2015). Here is an informal instance of NGOs influencing a review of UNHCR’s existing approach, helping to ensure a review of the 1997 Policy was carried out. The following section considers an instance of more public pressure being brought upon UNHCR regarding the 1997 Policy, this time through the release of a highly critical report.

As records from the Annual Consultations suggest, most NGOs at the time did not focus on the issue of urban displacement. Human Rights Watch, however, proved an important exception when they released a report in 2002 on the protection challenges faced by urban refugees in Kampala, Uganda and Nairobi, Kenya. In it, they directly criticised the 1997 Policy and called for its revision. The report, *Hidden in Plain View: Refugees Living Without Protection In Nairobi And Kampala*, highlighted two ‘misguided assumptions’ existing about urban refugees in the 1997 Policy (Parker, 2002). The first was that urban refugees were heavily reliant on UNHCR for assistance, the second that many of them should not be in urban areas (Parker, 2002: 161). The 1997 Policy was said to run “counter to UNHCR’s core mandate to provide protection to refugees wherever they are living” with distinguishing between refugees based on their location not supported by either the 1951 Convention or UNHCR’s Statute (Parker, 2002: 163). The report said UNHCR should pressure host states to accept refugees’ right to freedom of movement and increase, rather than limit, assistance to urban refugees. Finally, the claim urban refugees were ‘irregular movers’ was



criticised for not being “substantiated anywhere in the policy” (Parker, 2002: 165). “Antagonistic reactions”, such as the *Hidden in Plain View* report, influenced UNHCR and led the Organisation to rethink how it responded to urban displacement (Crisp, 2017: 90). In July 2009, when UNHCR produced a draft version of what would become the 2009 Policy, the *Hidden in Plain View* report was one of the few included sources not produced by UNHCR (UNHCR, 2009k), demonstrating the lasting impact of Human Rights Watch’s criticism.

On account of numerous issues arising from the 1997 Policy, the *Hidden in Plain View* report referred to the presence of refugees in urban areas as a “policy blind-spot” (Parker, 2002: 166), arguing that urban refugees are not only “consistently ignored”, but that existing policy “sometimes contradict UNHCR’s other policies and guidelines” (Parker, 2002: 166). It pointed to UNHCR’s ‘Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women’, ‘Guidelines on Prevention and Responses to Sexual Violence Against Refugees’, ‘Guidelines on the Protection and Care of Refugee Children’ and the ‘Guidelines on Policies and Procedures in Dealing with Unaccompanied Children Seeking Asylum’, all contradicting the 1997 Policy. The result being that “UNHCR’s misguided urban refugee policy” had contributed to a situation wherein “human rights abuses against urban refugees are in plain view, but remain “hidden” to those who have responsibility to take corrective action” (Parker, 2002: 190).

Such vocal criticism of the 1997 Policy was not commonplace at this time. The *Hidden in Plain View* report acknowledged the opinion held by Human Rights Watch was shared by EPAU, but UNHCR was yet to enact a change in policy.

UNHCR’s own Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit (EPAU) has already come to this same conclusion [that the 1997 Policy should be revised] on several occasions in thorough evaluations of UNHCR’s urban refugee program in New Delhi and Cairo, in an evaluation of the implementation of the Urban Refugee Policy, and in a report from UNHCR/NGO workshop on this same subject. Unfortunately, the EPAU’s recommendations have not yet been implemented by UNHCR. (Parker, 2002: 161)

The report cited an October 2001 Discussion Paper from UNHCR’s Regional Bureau for Africa (UNHCR, 2001a) as evidence the Organisation is “clearly looking for solutions for refugees groups” (Parker, 2002: 190) who have “been in

exile for a long time with no durable solution in sight” (UNHCR, 2001a: 1). According to Human Rights Watch, UNHCR was doing this with new focus on protracted refugee situations and renewed “emphasis on the out-of-favor solution of local integration for long term refugee populations” (Parker, 2002: 191). In their recommendations, Human Rights Watch called on UNHCR to “adopt the Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit’s clear recommendations to re-write and re-issue its 1997 Policy on Refugee in Urban Areas” (Parker, 2002: 11). Although Human Rights Watch were calling for an immediate revision of UNHCR’s existing policy, they echoed recommendations already made by EPAU, drawing extensively from EPAU’s various evaluations throughout their report. This illustrates a clear connection between members of the second and third UNs, but also EPAU’s leading position in the growing epistemic community on urban displacement. Human Rights Watch played a role in “legitimising” and “advocating for ideas and policies” (Weiss et al., 2009: 128-129), notably criticising UNHCR in general, while supporting EPAU. In addition to regular contact between EPAU and NGOs during this time (Crisp, 2015; Crisp, 2016), Human Rights Watch utilised EPAU’s existing evaluations, added their own empirical material, and advocated for policy change. In turn, the *Hidden in Plain View* report, and the clear message it contained, gave greater importance to EPAU’s efforts to create a replacement document for the 1997 Policy. This case shows clear links between members of the second and third UNs, with both parties drawing on the other’s work, and cooperating as part of an epistemic community on the issue of urban displacement.

In addition to NGOs, independent researchers and academics supported change in UNHCR’s attitude to urban displacement. Academics and consultants, along with think tanks, constitute an important part of the third UN and can “frame debate on a particular issue, provide justification for alternatives, and catalyze national or international coalitions to support chosen policies and advocate change” (Weiss et al., 2009: 131). During this period a number of researchers focused on issues informing the need for change in UNHCR’s view on urban displacement, including issues of encampment and local integration. These were often published through EPAU’s *New Issues in Refugee Research* series, linking

independent researchers, consultants and academics with UNHCR. EPAU hired independent consultants and academics to produce their evaluations, such as Stefan Sperl, who wrote EPAU's 2001 evaluation report on refugees in Cairo. The *New Issues in Refugee Research* series was more akin to an academic journal, producing independent work, focusing on different aspects of displacement and publishing articles critical of UNHCR's operations. Between the launch of the *New Issues in Refugee Research* series in May 1999 and the end of 2016, 283 papers were published (UNHCR, 2017e). The authors of these papers derived authority from their expert knowledge and roles largely outside of UNHCR, affording them a strong position from which to critique its work, free of the pressures of those employed by the Organisation.

At this time, the *New Issues in Refugee Research* series published several pieces on encampment, written by academics. These articles supported seeking alternatives to camps, placing increased focus on urban areas. In 2000, Barbara Harrell-Bond, the founder of the Refugee Studies Centre at the University of Oxford and at the time a Professor of Forced Migration and Refugee Studies at the American University in Cairo, criticised the authoritarian, highly organised and depersonalised nature of refugee camps. Harrell-Bond (2000: 1) claimed that evidence showed "refugee camps are not good for anyone" and that most refugees in fact live outside of camps among local populations, where they contribute valuably to the host economy. However, Harrell-Bond (2000: 11) noted "powerful bureaucratic and institutional interests" had developed around "keeping refugees in camps and dependent on relief". Such interests, as discussed in chapter two, include the preferences of donor and host states, often wishing for displaced people to be kept at a distance, in remote rural camps. Within UNHCR, there was support and preference for encampment, impeding implementation of the 2003 Guiding Principles, as "internal discussions [have] revealed that the approach it proposed was too radical and rights-based for some managers and staff members", who preferred the 'efficiency' of camp-based assistance (Crisp, 2017: 70). Simon Turner (1999), an academic then based at Roskilde University, criticised encampment in an article in the *New Issues in Refugee Research*. Turner discussed the hopelessness and dependency

emerging amongst some Burundian refugees in camps in Tanzania. According to one refugee interviewed by Turner, “people are not taking care of their own life. They are just like babies in UNHCR’s arms” (Quoted in: Turner, 1999: 6). These articles were strongly critical of camps as sites of protection, adding to growing concerns around protracted displacement and giving weight to suggestions assistance should be offered in different locations.

In 2001, Karen Jacobsen (2001: 3), an academic based at Tufts University, published an article through the *New Issues in Refugee Research* series asserting that “the old and neglected durable solution of local integration can and should be revitalized” as an “alternative to camps and the warehousing model”. Criticising the focus on repatriation and encampment, this article focused on urban refugees and the need for integration to be supported by host governments, local populations, and refugees. Soon after, the Head of EPAU, Jeff Crisp (2003: 3), highlighted the potential of local integration and the false belief that repatriation was “the only viable solution to refugee problems in Africa and other low-income regions”. Sarah Dryden-Peterson, an academic at Harvard University, and Lucy Hovil, a researcher at the Refugee Law Project within Makerere University, similarly challenged the negativity and ‘connotations of permanence’ surrounding local integration by studying the strengths of Uganda’s self-reliance strategy and the benefits local integration played to the country (Dryden-Peterson and Hovil, 2003). Also writing with reference to Uganda, University of Oxford-based Michela Macchiavello (2003a: 29) reasoned host countries could benefit from the economic contribution of refugees and that “urban self-settlement with government support creates less pressure on the economic and political landscape than forced settlement in agricultural camps”. Macchiavello (2003a: 27) noted it was UNHCR rather than the Ugandan Government who preferred to keep refugees away from urban areas:

In comparison with the GoU [Government of Uganda], the UNHCR tends to be stricter on the issue of refugees living in urban areas. It supports the idea that refugees should live in refugee settlements, where administrative tasks are easier to carry out, assistance can be distributed efficiently and quickly, and potential disorders can be supervised.

Karen Jacobsen and Loren Landau, of the University of Witwatersrand, wrote of the lack of data existing on urban refugees and the need to devote more attention to their 'hidden lives' (Jacobsen and Landau, 2003). Several researchers at this time stressed that people often became urbanised during displacement, either through moving to urban areas or camps, with camps involving a "super-compressed urbanisation process" (Turner, 2001: 67) or existing as 'virtual cities' (Perouse de Montclos and Kagwanja, 2000: 206). These various opinions, published by UNHCR's research and evaluation unit, contributed directly and indirectly to the contents of the 2003 Guiding Principles. Academics and researchers did not advocate in the same way as Human Rights Watch, but they provided strong support for local integration and alternatives to encampment. Thomas G. Weiss, Tatiana Carayannis and Richard Jolly (2009: 129) have observed that "intellectual energies among the three UNs blend" and "there is often synergy". This was not entirely evident in the case of urban displacement in the period 1998 to 2003, when increased synergy existed between parts of the second and third UNs, but the first showed only limited interest. Small numbers of academics, researchers, and NGOs joined some UNHCR field office staff as part of a growing epistemic community centred on urban displacement, led by EPAU, pointing again to the need to consider the three UNs in relation to one another, particularly in terms of their mutual support and influence, as when EPAU utilised voices from outside of UNHCR to support its own work on urban displacement, with the desire to enact a change in policy.

## 6. Conclusion

Between 1998 and 2003 the drive for UNHCR to change its view on urban displacement was led by EPAU, continuing the efforts of IES but going much further. Following its formation in 1999, EPAU began an extensive evaluation of the 1997 Policy, providing evidence a new policy was necessary and authoring a document intended to replace the 1997 Policy. Evaluation of the implementation of the 1997 Policy highlighted a number of core issues, including problems with the term 'irregular movers' and misrepresentations of who urban refugees were, which would directly influence not only the 2003 Guiding Principles but the

2009 Policy. EPAU not only produced more work on urban displacement than its predecessor, but also engaged with a wider range of actors, becoming the driving force in the expansion of the urban displacement epistemic community. Indeed, they were the central point between various UNHCR staff spread across the world, NGOs, researchers, and academics, all concerned with the urbanisation of displacement. Through its work, EPAU utilised expert knowledge to frame urban displacement as a pertinent problem, and provided a means of addressing it through the replacement of the 1997 Policy. The urban displacement epistemic community took on a number of key roles outlined by Thomas G. Weiss, Tatiana Carayannis and Richard Jolly (2009: 128-129), including “providing a forum for debate”, “generating ideas and policies”, “advocating for ideas and policies”, “implementing or testing ideas and policies in the field”, and “monitoring progress in the march of ideas and the implementation of policies”. Rather than ‘legitimizing policy’ (Weiss et al., 2009: 128), however, the urban displacement epistemic community served to delegitimise the 1997 Policy.

Efforts to bring about a change in policy and practice did not come to fruition during this period and it was only later the epistemic community would be strong enough to bring about the replacement of the 1997 Policy. The 2003 Guiding Principles would never be enacted and it would take a further six years for UNHCR to replace the 1997 Policy. Jeff Crisp (2015) has contended that when they were written the 2003 Guiding Principles were “perceived to be too radical a departure from the 1997 Policy, too liberal”. Although the urban displacement epistemic community had grown by 2003, it was unable to bring about change at this time. As will be discussed in chapter six, it would take the presence of the next High Commissioner within the epistemic community to produce enough clout to enable the release of the 2009 Policy and allow UNHCR to undergo a radical shift in its response to the urbanisation of displacement. This points to the important role of leadership in policymaking in international organisations. The failure to enact the 2003 Guiding Principles stemmed in part from “weak organisational leadership”, as High Commissioner Ruud Lubbers “did not prioritize the question of urban refugees and did not take a clear stand on the direction of UNHCR’s urban refugee policy” (Crisp, 2017: 91). State preferences

continued to play a part, with UNHCR's response to urban displacement largely reflecting donor states focus on repatriation and concern for limiting migration, as well as host states concern that self-reliance was a 'backdoor' to local integration. UNHCR's response to the challenge of the urbanisation of displacement demonstrate that bringing about a major shift within a UN organisation like UNHCR, requires the participation of an organisation's leader. The 2003 Guiding Principles would resurface as the basis for the 2009 Policy, and by the time Jeff Crisp (2015) "took it out the drawer in 2009... the world had changed". By this time, Karen Jacobsen's (2005: 42) comment, quoted at the start of the chapter, that neither UNHCR nor host governments wanted refugees in urban areas, no longer held true.

## Chapter Six - Beyond Sprawling Camps, 2004-2009

### 1. Introduction

In 2009 High Commissioner António Guterres called on UNHCR to “abandon the outmoded image that most refugees live in sprawling camps of UNHCR tents” (UNHCR, 2009g). With the most influential person in UNHCR accepting the new urban reality of global displacement, joining the Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit (EPAU) and the Policy Development and Evaluation Service (PDES), which had already arrived at the same conclusion, the maligned ‘UNHCR policy on refugees in urban areas’ (1997 Policy) was replaced with the ‘UNHCR policy on refugee protection and solutions in urban areas’ (2009 Policy) in September 2009. The 2009 Policy formed the central part of a new approach for UNHCR focused on ensuring the rights of refugees and providing more comprehensive development assistance in urban areas. The 1997 Policy had been concerned with limiting assistance and ensuring the interests of states were maintained, while the 2009 Policy made refugee protection its central concern. The change in how the challenge of urban displacement was perceived and responded to was driven by an epistemic community, based around UNHCR’s research and evaluation unit, who held a more influential position within the Organisation from 2005 when EPAU was replaced with PDES. The urban displacement epistemic community created knowledge, framed the issue, and developed the contents of the new document. The epistemic community was based around UNHCR’s research and evaluation unit, also involving members of the Organisation’s field offices and members of the third UN. In contrast to the period of time discussed in chapters four and five, the High Commissioner was part of the epistemic community, providing the necessary collective influence to bring about a change in policy in 2009.

The period discussed in the chapter demonstrates that a significant change in approach by an international organisation can be attributed to the work of an epistemic community. This claim is in contrast to traditional theories of



international organisations, which assert that powerful forces above organisations drive changes in policy and practice, including those that acknowledge the important role international organisations can have in shaping their own direction (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004). However, these can fail to acknowledge the importance of internal competition (Bode, 2015: 51), and do “not conceive of them [international organisations] as embedded in a wider environment” (Koch, 2015: 283). The chapter seeks to understand how UNHCR was finally able to bring about a change in its official policy, following its failure to enact the 2003 Guiding Principles. It discusses this with reference to pressure for change in policy and practice from within the Organisation, as well as from above and below it. As shown in chapters four and five, UNHCR’s research and evaluation unit played a central role in elevating the issue of urban displacement since 1994. Between 2004 and 2009 the Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit (EPAU) and its replacement the Policy Development and Evaluation Service (PDES) played a key role, but did so from a more senior position within UNHCR, giving their calls for change more weight and greater access to other influential parts of the Organisation. The replacement of the High Commissioner in 2005 would signal the first time a UNHCR’s leader had been engaged in the issue of urban displacement and this proved crucial to the change that occurred in 2009. Members of the third UN continued to support moves for change and states gave their tacit support, allowing for a sharp shift in policy in 2009.

The chapter shows that UNHCR’s change in strategy to urban displacement came about following the Organisation’s creation, involvement, and steering of an epistemic community, which relied on those within and outside of it. The thesis expands on existing work on epistemic communities by demonstrating the influential role research and evaluation units have in steering broader policy. As the chapter will show, individuals in research-focused positions are able to open new avenues to underexplored issues (Dethier, 2007: 473). In contrast to chapters four and five, the High Commissioner made urban displacement a priority. The influence of states remained, and was noticeably seen when the United States limited UNHCR’s mission creep on the issue of urban IDPs.

## 2. Policy Change Realised: 2004-2009

With the 2003 Guiding Principles, UNHCR had produced a document that could have replaced the 1997 Policy, coming as close to making a significant change in how the Organisation responded to the urbanisation of displacement and challenged the “generally negative” (UNHCR, 2003b: 17) view of many of its own employees. However, it would not be until the 2009 Policy that there was “the beginning of a new approach” (UNHCR, 2009b: 3). The 2009 Policy criticised the 1997 Policy’s preoccupation with the cost of providing assistance in urban areas, its focus on irregularity and for having a poor balance between the Organisation’s security concerns and the dissatisfaction of some refugees (UNHCR, 2009b: 2). UNHCR planned a shift to address urban refugees in a “more positive, constructive and proactive” (UNHCR, 2009b: 24-25) manner.

This section details changes that took place between 2004 and 2009. It sets out the contents of the 2009 Policy and how this differed from the Organisation’s previous policy. It also provides context for what was occurring within the United Nations and global politics at the time, with the aim of showing how this impacted UNHCR’s shift in approach to urban displacement. The 2009 Policy was designed to outline UNHCR’s shifting principles in working with urban refugees, rather than provide in-depth operational guidelines (UNHCR, 2009b: 3). It was focused on refugees in low and middle-income states and excluded the Organisation’s “engagement with internally displaced persons or returnees in urban areas” (UNHCR, 2009b: 3). As discussed in chapter five, there was opposition to making the 2003 Guiding Principles a global policy. However the 2009 Policy was a global policy, but recommended adapting to individual local contexts when being operationalized in the field (UNHCR, 2009b: 3). The ability to do this being dependent on the support and cooperation of host states and local authorities (UNHCR, 2009b: 3).

The central concept of the 2009 Policy was that of ‘protection space’. Protection space did not have a legal definition, but was described as an attempt by UNHCR to “denote the extent to which a conducive environment exists for the

internationally recognized rights of refugees to be respected and their needs to be met” (UNHCR, 2009b: 4). The growth or shrinkage of protection space was judged upon there being threat of *refoulement*, freedom of movement, harmonious relationships with other groups and access to livelihoods, shelter, public services, documentation, and durable solutions (UNHCR, 2009b: 4-5). The need to expand the ‘protection space’ was based on the belief that “the rights of refugees and UNHCR’s mandated responsibilities towards them are not affected by their location, the location whereby they arrived in an urban area or their status (or lack thereof) in national legislation” (UNHCR, 2009b: 3). With this, UNHCR clearly established that it believed towns and cities to be “legitimate place[s] for refugees to enjoy their rights” (UNHCR, 2009b: 3). These included the right to life, family unity, adequate resources, livelihoods, and freedom from cruel treatment and torture. UNHCR had previously been concerned with the consequence of urban displacement for host states, whereas the 2009 Policy made clear that refugee rights took priority. It also clarified that UNHCR would seek to help refugees whether or not the authorities had approved their residence in an urban area (UNHCR, 2009b: 4). This stronger position followed calls from NGOs for UNHCR to adopt a rights-based approach in its policy on urban refugees (AMERA and Frontiers Ruwad Association, 2005), and as will be discussed later in the chapter, the use of the ‘protection space’ concept by UNHCR’s field offices.

The expansion of available protection space was one of the two core objectives of the 2009 Policy. The other was ensuring that urban areas were regarded as ‘legitimate’ places for refugees to reside and exercise their rights (UNHCR, 2009b: 5). These objectives were to be achieved through adherence to nine principles<sup>14</sup>. In addition to these points, UNHCR also stressed its work with urban refugees was based on the same standards as with any other category of refugees (UNHCR, 2009b: 5). This approach contrasts with the view found in both the March 1997 Policy and the 1997 Policy, which had established

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<sup>14</sup> These were: refugee rights, state responsibility, partnerships, needs assessment, age, gender and diversity, equity mainstreaming, community orientation, interaction with refugees, and self-reliance (UNHCR, 2009b: 5-8).

displaced people in urban areas as being different and requiring less assistance than those in camps.

The issues of refugee rights, refugees with different needs and working with actors other than its 'traditional' partners were all prominent in the 2009 Policy. In particular it highlighted the involvement of mayors and municipal authorities as having a key role in increasing protection space (UNHCR, 2009b: 6). It also noted the need for UNHCR to "reach out to urban refugees in their communities" to ensure they knew the rights and services available to them (UNHCR, 2009b: 8). This contrasts with the Organisation's past attitude, which primarily saw urban refugees as a security risk and sought to keep them at a distance. On this point the 2009 Policy acknowledged that this would be a significant change for some staff:

UNHCR staff, especially those who have worked for many years with camp-based refugees, may lack the skills required to undertake outreach activities in urban areas. They may also be unfamiliar with the task of working with municipal authorities and local government institutions. To address these issues, UNHCR will review and revise as necessary the training and tools provided to its personnel. (UNHCR, 2009b: 8)

These principles were joined by twelve key objectives and protection strategies of the 2009 Policy<sup>15</sup>. Some of these were primarily practical, such as the provision of improved reception facilities, signalling a different attitude towards urban refugees by UNHCR. The idea of who an urban refugee was and what they were entitled to had shifted, demonstrating the creation of a new norm related to urban displacement. Norms, as discussed in chapter two, include the prescription and regularity of 'proper' behaviour, by relevant actors (Thomas, 2000: 106). The 2009 Policy sought to establish clear rules of how the challenge of urban displacement should be understood and responded to. The 1997 Policy was concerned with increasing the security around UNHCR's offices, whereas the 2009 Policy stressed facilities should be convenient, accessible, child-friendly,

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<sup>15</sup> These were: providing reception facilities, undertaking registration and data collection, ensuring that refugees are documented, determining refugee status, reaching out to the community, fostering constructive relations with urban refugees, maintaining security, promoting livelihoods and self-reliance, ensuring access to healthcare, education and other services, meeting material needs, promoting durable solutions, and addressing the issue of movement (UNHCR, 2009b: 8-24).

and that people of concern should be able to access staff (UNHCR, 2009b: 8-9). UNHCR sought to increase its outreach and understanding of urban refugee communities. The 2009 Policy stated that UNHCR staff should make regular visits to urban neighbourhoods where refugees were based (UNHCR, 2009b: 13). UNHCR's efforts to be more approachable were based on an awareness that its relationship with urban refugees had "on occasion been a tense one" and "characterized by a degree of mutual suspicion", often compounded by "the negative attitude of some UNHCR staff" (UNHCR, 2009b: 14). The 2009 Policy still discussed security issues, but these included risks faced by refugees, such as the threats posed by the police or security guards employed by UNHCR (UNHCR, 2009b: 15-16). This understanding of security challenges faced by refugees contrasts with UNHCR's earlier approach, which suggested "closing down the Branch Office and calling in the local police" as a way of sending "clear messages" when refugees protested (UNHCR, 1997a: 20). Taken together this signalled a significant change in official attitude by UNHCR towards the presence of displaced people in urban areas.

The 2009 Policy repeated the 1997 Policy's claim that self-reliance was necessary. This was discussed alongside access to livelihoods, stressing self-reliance did not mean refugees were able to survive without any assistance (UNHCR, 2009b: 17). There was greater understanding of the difficulties faced by urban refugees and the need to offer appropriate levels of assistance to them (UNHCR, 2009b: 19). To allow greater self-reliance, the 2009 Policy opposed the creation of parallel and separate services for refugees, stating refugees should have access to existing public services, and to ensure this, UNHCR might need to "augment the capacity of existing public and private services" (UNHCR, 2009b: 18). This is in contrast to the perspective often favoured by humanitarian organisations, including UNHCR, to establish new services exclusively for their beneficiaries (Harrell-Bond, 1986). The 2009 Policy suggested UNHCR might become increasingly involved in urban development projects, which would traditionally have been the remit of other agencies, for example the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) or the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

When discussing how to meet material needs the 2009 Policy drew from UNHCR's experiences with urban Iraqi refugees, focusing on the use of cash payments and automated teller machines. The use of such methods and tools in the provision of assistance was intended to help assuage refugee concerns about being 'policed' by UNHCR, or not given sufficient independence to decide what forms of assistance they required, which had in the past damaged the relationship between the Organisation and refugee populations (UNHCR, 2009b: 20). This section of the 2009 Policy cited three other UN agencies (WFP, UN-Habitat, and UNICEF) as important partners in providing assistance and gaining expertise (UNHCR, 2009b: 20). Similar to the discussion of mayors and municipal governments addressed previously, UNHCR focused on the importance of various partnerships necessary for it to work effectively in urban areas. Although the opportunity to move to camps would be available to refugees in some countries, the 2009 Policy stressed this was "not an obligation" and those who chose to remain in urban areas would "not forfeit the protection of UNHCR" (UNHCR, 2009b: 21). Refugees were entitled to freedom of movement, and while 'onward movement' was not encouraged, it was accepted (UNHCR, 2009b: 24). In contrast, the 1997 Policy had sought to "remove the incentive for refugees to move to urban areas" (UNHCR, 1997b: 3). The change between the two policies demonstrates a greater acceptance of refugees' personal choices and a willingness to provide largely the same levels of assistance regardless of where refugees decided to reside. Only two years before the publication of the 2009 Policy, Philip Marfleet had described the "widespread belief among agency officials that "real" refugees were people of rural origin properly encamped in rural locations" (Marfleet, 2007: 40). The 2009 Policy represented a sharp departure from what had been the dominant opinion within UNHCR only two years before, and what arguably remained the attitude of a large portion of staff in 2009.

In the period between 2004 and 2009 a number of important changes occurred impacting policymaking around urban displacement. Within UNHCR, there was a change in leadership when Ruud Lubbers resigned due to an internal

investigation into allegations of sexual harassment (Left, 2005). Between February and June 2005 Wendy Chamberlin served as interim High Commissioner until the appointment of António Guterres on 15 June 2005. Guterres (High Commissioner from 2005 until 2015) played an important role in promoting the issue of urban displacement within UNHCR's agenda, as will be discussed later in the chapter. Following Guterres' selection as High Commissioner there was a change in UNHCR's research and evaluation process. In 2006 PDES replaced EPAU. PDES continued EPAU's work on evaluating the 1997 Policy, but did so from a more senior position within UNHCR. Broader changes also took place within the UN system, 2006 saw the UN's Humanitarian Reform process introduce the 'cluster approach' to improve the coordination of responses to humanitarian situations. The cluster approach saw UNHCR working more closely with other UN agencies, leading the protection cluster and co-leading the camp coordination and management cluster with the International Organization for Migration (IOM). In the same year, Kofi Annan stepped down as UN Secretary General and was replaced by Ban Ki-moon, who took over at the beginning of 2007. The 2003 invasion of Iraq triggered large-scale displacement in the country. This was followed by sectarian violence in 2006 and 2007, contributing to unprecedented numbers of Iraqis who fled to the towns and cities of neighbouring countries. The displacement of Iraqis would come to be regarded as the largest caseload of urban refugees that UNHCR had ever dealt with (UNHCR, 2008m: 310). At the same time the focus on encampment and protracted refugee situations (PRS), discussed in chapter five continued to grow and would become a priority issue for UNHCR during this period. In 2007 the Global Financial Crisis began, having a lasting impact on the funding of development and humanitarian work around the world (Koddenbrock, 2016: 84) and increasing competition between organisations. This collection of issues, both internal and external to UNHCR, shaped how the Organisation responded to the urbanisation of displacement between 2004 and 2009. To analyse effectively UNHCR's response to the challenge of urban displacement, it is important to study not only what occurred within the Organisation, but also the wider environment they were operating in.

### 3. Pressure from Within

Between 2004 and 2009 there was increased pressure for a change in UNHCR's method of responding to urban displacement. Chapters four and five have shown that UNHCR's research and evaluation unit and field offices had already played an important role in gathering information, creating knowledge, and establishing a persuasive case for giving increased focus to urban displacement. They formed the basis for the urban displacement epistemic community that emerged during this period. Epistemic communities play an important role in disseminating and popularising new ideas (Caballero Santos, 2015: 57), such as refugees having the 'right' to access assistance regardless of where they were based. The radical new strategy that was adopted with the 2009 Policy stemmed from the epistemic community, which during the period discussed in the chapter, expanded and incorporated the High Commissioner. It was with the inclusion and support of the High Commissioner that these new ideas, which had emerged primarily from within the second UN, were able to form the basis of the 2009 Policy.

#### 3.1 Research and Evaluation Unit

From its creation in September 1999, EPAU spearheaded efforts to critique and replace the 1997 Policy. The 2003 Guiding Principles were never enacted, but in 2004 and 2005 EPAU continued to work on the issue of urban displacement. The replacement of EPAU in 2006 with the newly formed PDES proved critical in the creation of the 2009 Policy. The replacement of EPAU with PDES came after a UN-wide effort to reconsider how evaluation work was done. At ExCom's Annual Meeting in 2005, it was noted that EPAU was due to "professionalize its team" (UNGA, 2005d: 3). The broader UN system influenced the move from EPAU to PDES, but the shift also reflected the desires of the then new High Commissioner. The change occurred the year following the appointment of Guterres, who at the time was not an expert on displacement issues. Guterres benefited from the establishment of a new team, led by an "experienced generalist" (UNGA, 2005d: 3), as they were tasked with advising the High Commissioner on global policy issues (UNGA, 2006c: 2). Although the names of the two bodies were similar,



PDES was “given an enhanced role in the formulation, articulation and dissemination of UNHCR policy” (Crisp, 2006: 2). It also occupied a more senior position within UNHCR, as it was part of the Executive Office, headed by a staff member at D-1 level and reported directly to the High Commissioner (UNGA, 2006c: 1). The Executive Office, which sits on the top floor of UNHCR’s headquarters in Geneva, is composed of the most senior people within the Organisation, including the High Commissioner, Deputy High Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner for Operations, Assistant High Commissioner for Protection and Chef de Cabinet. UNHCR has described the Executive Office in the following way:

The Executive Office formulates policies, ensures effective management and accountability, and oversees UNHCR’s activities worldwide. Its main role is to craft a clear and consistent corporate vision, operational priorities and strategies in consultation with senior management. It engages directly with donors and States at a high level to secure political and financial support for UNHCR. (UNHCR, 2014b: 1)

Within this highly ranked part of the Organisation, PDES “report[s] directly to the High Commissioner and work[s] in close consultation with the Chef de Cabinet” (UNHCR, 2014b: 1) and is “represented on UNHCR’s Senior Management Committee” (UNHCR, 2014b: 2). It works specifically to integrate its “findings and recommendations into UNHCR’s policy-making, planning and programming” by advising “the Executive Office and other senior managers on global policy issues” (UNHCR, 2014b: 2). As such, there was an important link between PDES and the policymaking process within UNHCR. Upon the creation of PDES, urban refugees were listed as one of their on-going and future projects (UNGA, 2006c: 3). At ExCom in 2006 it was noted that PDES was “finalizing” EPAU’s work on a replacement to the 1997 Policy and this was expected to be “endorsed and disseminated in the final quarter of 2006” (UNGA, 2006c: 3). Although a new policy was not released for another three years, PDES was focused on the issue of urban displacement from its inception, and occupied a more senior position within the Organisation from which to bring about policy change.

Between 2004 and 2009 UNHCR's research and evaluation unit continued the work discussed in chapter five and increased the Organisation's knowledge of urban displacement. Similar to the early years of EPAU, there was a growing understanding of why refugees chose to move to urban areas. This understanding was often present in UNHCR's research paper series, *New Issues in Refugee Research*, which mostly published articles by people who were not UNHCR staff members. The involvement of academics and other members of the third UN demonstrate the way in which EPAU was assisted by pressure from below. Susan Banki (2004: 16) of Tufts University noted that "almost without exception" those refugees who were more financially or educationally better off preferred to move to urban areas. Later Cindy Horst (2006: 9) of the International Peace Research Institute highlighted the strong draw of an urban setting to displaced Somalis and Petter Hojem (2009: 19) of UNHCR discussed access to specific communities and services lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) asylum-seekers could not reach in rural areas. In a 2006 EPAU report on refugee livelihoods, Machtelt De Vriese (2006: 17) of UNHCR talked of the way in which refugees were "drawn to the city" due to a number of factors, including the opportunity to trade, utilise their skills, seek accommodation, access medical care, schooling and training, the ability to transfer money, access the internet, recreational and intellectual activities, and pursue business opportunities. De Vriese (2006: 17) noted that some refugees came from rural areas, some from urban areas, while others became 'urbanised' during their time living in camps (Hammond, 2004). A refugee's background influences their choices and why some may see urban areas as "havens of modernity and democratic and economic prosperity" (De Vriese, 2006: 17). This reflects a greater understanding of urban refugees and their decision-making, beyond the 1997 Policy's belief that movement to urban areas is often driven by the assumption of greater resettlement opportunities (UNHCR, 1997b: 3).

There was a greater comprehension of the lives of refugees in towns and cities, in particular the hardships they faced. A number of research papers and evaluation reports published by EPAU and PDES between 2004 and 2009 discussed cases of homelessness (Druke, 2006: 159), alienation (Al-Sharmani,

2004: 2), fear of host populations (Betts and Kaytaz, 2009), insecurity (Al-Sharmani, 2004: 2), harassment by the police (Banki, 2004: 9), heightened risks of sexual and gender based violence (Rothkegel et al., 2008: 16), human trafficking (Riiskjær and Gallagher, 2008: 44) and the difficulties around having to fend for themselves in “economically depleted and politically corrupt metropolises” (Al-Sharmani, 2004: 2). In The Gambia, Carrie Conway (2004: 10), an Independent Consultant, noted the limited assistance afforded to urban refugees and resultant “negative or destructive” coping mechanisms. Machtelt De Vriese (2006: 17) claimed urban refugees’ livelihoods are “inextricably interdependent upon local relationships and processes”, problematic as a common picture was that of contestation between refugees and their hosts. Competition was not always the case, and Conway (2004: 14) quotes a member of the host community in The Gambia saying, “one day I may be a refugee, and would hope the same welcome was extended to me in another man’s country”. The issue of access to livelihoods was an important point, with De Vriese (2006: 16) stating, “humanitarian agencies should also realise that not every refugee is a farmer and that a large number of refugees could have better opportunities to improve their livelihoods in urban areas”. There were calls for UNHCR’s urban policy to “place greater emphasis on the means whereby UNHCR can encourage and assist urban refugees to establish sustainable livelihoods” (De Vriese, 2006: 18). De Vriese (2006: 16) argued that not enough attention was afforded to urban refugee livelihoods, explaining why this was the case at the time:

Host governments and the international community are hardly addressing the issue of urban displacement arguing that this is opening Pandora’s box: substantial additional resources would be required and assisting displaced populations in urban settings could act as a pull-factor and thus attract hordes of refugees to the cities, an environment that is more difficult to control and manage compared with rural areas. Urban refugees can be difficult to identify and/or reach. They are living amongst locals and other foreigners and very often in hiding.

The lack of knowledge around urban refugees was noted in EPAU and PDES’s publications. Identifying and understanding urban refugees was more challenging than the ‘captive populations’ found in camps (Lindley, 2007: 3), as they often felt it necessary to remain hidden from public view (Banki, 2004: 13; Al-Sharmani, 2004: 2; Betts and Kaytaz, 2009: 16), while some host governments

downplayed their existence (Lindley, 2007: 3). A 2004 report published by EPAU, noted that urban areas proved challenging for UNHCR's monitoring facilities and that "data on urban refugees and returnees is consistently poorly reported" (Kelley et al., 2004: 28). In Ecuador, participatory assessments showed how little knowledge UNHCR had of the urban displaced population there (Groves, 2005a: 7-8). Conducting these types of assessments with urban refugees could be hard, although examples from Colombia, Greece, India, and Syria, suggested it was possible (Groves, 2005b: 20). Such assessments in urban areas involved going into refugee communities and the neighbourhoods' refugees lived in, which were unlike the ordered nature of camps. This process of expanding knowledge and gradual engagement did not solve the root problems faced by urban refugees, but it did mean they could no longer be considered 'what the eye refuses to see' (Kibreab, 1996).

Between 2004 and 2009 EPAU and PDES focused on the urban-rural division and the way people moved. As discussed in chapter five, EPAU had already begun addressing some of the problems associated with refugee camps, protracted refugee situations (PRS) and 'warehousing'. Throughout the 1990s UNHCR utilised camps to help 'contain' refugees (McConnachie, 2016), partly in response to donor states desire to "maintain "space and distance" from the massive numbers of displaced persons" (Hyndman, 2000: 3). The use of encampment was reflected in UNHCR's first attempts to codify an approach to urban refugees, as the 1997 Policy would reveal "the close link between urban policy and encampment" (Verdirame and Pobjoy, 2013: 474). Along with improved knowledge of the motivations behind people's movement to urban areas, EPAU's publications also challenged the existing distinction used by UNHCR of what constituted 'rural' and 'urban' areas. However, there were "definitional problems" with this binary, as the Organisation's "classifications for camps and settlements... blend rather seamlessly into its categories of "Rural" and "Urban"" (Banki, 2004: 4). As such, "refugee centers in urban areas, for example, and rural settlements with some measure of dispersion are likely to avoid easy classification" (Banki, 2004: 4). UNHCR's attempt to categorise refugees based on

location and the challenges this posed was highlighted in an internal document instructing field staff on gaining demographic data:

“Urban” refers to asylum-seekers and refugees living in urban areas.... “Camps” refers to populations living in camps or refugee centres, whereas “Rural/dispersed/other” concerns populations who are living in rural areas, and not in camps or centres, often dispersed amongst the local population. Refugee populations that cannot be classified by camp, urban or rural areas should also be reported in this category. (Quoted in: Banki, 2004: 4)

During this period, work published by EPAU and PDES critiqued the rigid urban-rural division. In many host states, displaced people “live on two feet” (Wiig, 2005: 6), keeping residencies in both rural and urban areas. Similarly it was noted in Uganda that some refugees had “dual settlement[s]” (Sebba, 2006: 7), with people living between an urban area and one of the country’s refugee settlements (camps), sometimes only returning to the settlements when food was being distributed or there was a census (Sebba, 2006: 7). This understanding differs from earlier ideas of refugees either being based in rural locations (and often encamped) or urban areas (and deviant from the norm). Rather, refugees’ location was understood as being more fluid, with the same people moving back and forth between different settings. In Guinea, a similar situation was described, with refugee households spreading themselves between camps and urban areas in order to access different sets of resources (De Vriese, 2006: 11). In some cases urban areas provided ‘escape possibilities’ for people fearing political violence (Wiig, 2005: 6), while in others, movement to urban areas was driven by poor security and lack of prospects in camps (Fielden, 2008b: 4). In contrast, Baruti Bahati Amisi (2006: 45) of University of KwaZulu-Natal suggests that hardship faced in urban South Africa actually drove people to choose to live in camps. It is possible that some of these opinions and understandings of movement between locations influenced the 2014 Policy, discussed in chapter one, explicitly concerned with refugees living outside of camps, including, but not limited to, in urban areas. The 2014 Policy built on the 2009 Policy, but a policy proposing an alternative to camps may have been too radical a step in 2009, given how difficult it had been to replace the 1997 Policy. The 2009 Policy did help enable UNHCR to work effectively in urban areas, and allowed the Organisation’s staff to increasingly imagine working in non-camp

settings. During an interview with a senior UNHCR staff member conducted in September 2013, ten months prior to the 2014 Policy, they commented that the “general position inside the house [UNHCR], bearing in mind it took twelve years to get the last version of the policy out” was that there was no “active consideration for revising the [2009] urban refugee policy” (Anonymous, B., 2013). They described the 2009 Policy as “a good policy” and “solid”, but said it needed “to be elaborated” (Anonymous, B., 2013), which the 2014 Policy would do.

These accounts published by EPAU and PDES recognised the degree of movement between different spaces, while other articles demonstrated that both short and long periods might be spent in urban areas. Nairobi, for example, existed as “crossroads for displaced people from Somalia”, but only a minority of these people “actually made a conscious decision to settle there” (Lindley, 2007: 14). Long periods spent in Kenya’s capital were not planned, but “a few months turns into a few years, passing the time working, strategizing, or simply waiting” (Lindley, 2007: 14). These intersections where displaced people meet exist not only in the confines of cities like Nairobi, but in transnational networks existing between those in camps, urban areas and those who have been resettled around the world (De Vriese, 2006: 18). In such networks, refugees in host states are in regular contact with relatives and friends living in camps and other countries, with remittance taking place between them. This reflected broader understandings of growing ‘transnationalism’ and the complex way, in which communities move and are interconnected internationally (Basch et al., 1994; Van Hear, 2003; Van Hear, 2006). Focus on transnational networks challenges the notion of urban refugees being isolated.

As discussed in chapter two, an important power possessed by international organisations is their “ability to transform information into knowledge, that is, to construct information in ways that give it meaning” (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004: 29). The new way of thinking about urban displacement provided a more comprehensive view of the way in which people move and interact between different locations. It required a response, as international organisations “can fix

meaning in ways that orient action” (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004: 32). The appreciation of the movement of people emerging from EPAU and PDES between 2004 and 2009 was in contrast to that found in the 1997 Policy, which specifically set out to limit the movement of displaced people. The March 1997 Policy talked of the “containment of future irregular movement” (UNHCR, 1997a: I), while the 1997 Policy sought to “limit the location where UNHCR assistance is provided” (UNHCR, 1997b: 1) with a clear preference for refugees remaining in camps. In contrast, the 2009 Policy stressed the importance of freedom of movement as a principle of international human rights law and something all states should respect (UNHCR, 2009b: 23). The movement of large numbers of refugees from a camp to an urban area may prove challenging, yet as the 2009 Policy acknowledged “there may also be good reasons for them to do so” (UNHCR, 2009b: 23). There was a growing attempt to better comprehend refugees lives, for example, with a focus upon understanding why ‘onward movement’ might be justified, rather than condemning and restricting ‘irregular movement’ (UNHCR, 2009b: 24). The shift to seeing urban areas as ‘legitimate places’ (UNHCR, 2009b: 3) for refugees to exercise their rights stems in part from growing appreciation in the period concerning the complicated way in which displaced people move and the need for UNHCR to distance itself from a model based on restricting people’s movement. Parts of UNHCR increasingly embraced an approach based on the freedom of displaced people to choose their own location and shape their own lives.

In the years before the release of the 2009 Policy, UNHCR’s research and evaluation unit helped push the Organisation beyond its traditional position as a provider of emergency relief. The 1990s saw UNHCR evolve and define “humanitarian assistance to include prevention... and the attempt to foster respect for human rights in order to curtail refugee flows” (Barnett, 2011: 209). With subsequent criticism of mass repatriation and long-term encampment, both by UNHCR’s research and evaluation unit and an NGO-led anti-warehousing campaign, the problems arising from dealing with displacement through emergency assistance came to the forefront. Camp-based responses not only became increasingly unpopular but also unfeasible when operating in an urban

setting. The work coming from UNHCR's research and evaluation unit in this period encouraged the Organisation's increased shift from the provision of emergency humanitarianism, to the "provision of relief to those in immediate peril" (Barnett, 2011: 37). The shift resulted in greater interest among humanitarian organisations, including UNHCR, to "addressing the root causes of suffering" (Barnett, 2011: 39). This form of humanitarianism often has more in common with development work than immediate relief operations. As will be seen throughout the chapter, UNHCR's changing view on urban displacement was representative of a broader shift within the Organisation towards a more expansive form of humanitarianism.

The emphasis on development, rather than emergency response, is not without precedent in UNHCR's history. From the 1970s, UNHCR made efforts to "promote a developmental and solutions-orientated approach" (Slaughter and Crisp, 2009: 7). These were limited by host governments' preference for segregated, non-permanent camps and donor states maintenance of a "clear separation" between emergency assistance and development aid (Slaughter and Crisp, 2009: 7). As discussed in chapter two, the actions of international organisations are regularly impacted by state preferences. Even if states do not give clear directives, international organisations may follow a course of action that is, at least in part, intended to ensure states are satisfied with their work. There was some desire for a more development-focused approach within UNHCR, but it was easier to retain the status quo supported by states. The preferences of states, resistance to change among UNHCR staff (Weiss, 2016: 28), and the 'easy sell' of emergencies to humanitarian donors (Barnett, 2011: 42), help to explain UNHCR retaining a camp-based approach. The mixture of influences demonstrates the use of the three UNs framework, as actors from each of the three categories influenced UNHCR's decision-making. The predisposition for encampment present within the March 1999 Policy and the 1997 Policy reflected UNHCR's broader approach at the time they were released, as well as the influence state-preference had on the Organisation's policymaking, in spite of efforts within UNHCR to steer it in a different direction.



In the 2000s attempts to move away from the emergency humanitarianism that had helped spawn “a network of huge camps that can never meet any plausible ‘humanitarian’ standard” (Stevens, 2006) and revisit more developmental themes. During this period EPAU and PDES produced a growing body of work promoting self-reliance, local integration, access to livelihoods, support to host populations, and avoidance of the kind of parallel structures that characterised camp-based relief. It was acknowledged that lack of local integration or prospects for self-reliance were a driver for refugees moving to urban areas (Crisp, 2004: 7), although the ability to achieve this was mixed. For example, in Costa Rica integration opportunities were limited for Nicaraguan refugees, but accessible to Salvadoran urban refugees because they were smaller in number and “perceived to be ‘hard working’” (Betts, 2006: 13). Similarly the insistence on rural encampment in countries like Kenya made progress challenging, leaving many refugees living in urban areas reliant on remittance as a “livelihood strategy” (Lindley, 2007: 15). EPAU led the Refugee Livelihoods Project, which aimed to examine opportunities for “sustainable livelihoods in those situations where refugees have been dependent on humanitarian assistance” (Conway, 2004). In 2006, an EPAU report contended that “insufficient attention is being paid to urban refugee livelihoods” (De Vriese, 2006: 16) and that existing programmes in urban areas did not consider the best interest of refugees.

UNHCR’s research and evaluation work focused on the need to avoid the creation of separate or parallel structures, such as those the Organisation would have traditionally supported when establishing refugee camps. In a 2004 EPAU evaluation of refugee resettlement in developing countries, it was argued that ‘Convention Plus’ provision to extend development assistance to host countries should be widened to refugee-hosting communities in urban areas (Sperl and Brădişteanu, 2004: 44). The evaluation reasoned against the creation of parallel structures in towns and cities, noting, “development projects targeted specifically at urban refugees are neither feasible nor desirable” (Sperl and Brădişteanu, 2004: 44). There was a need instead for schemes that not only “facilitate refugee integration but also... channel benefits to the hosting state in such a way as to bring it and its population tangible rewards for a generous

asylum policy” (Sperl and Brădișteanu, 2004: 45). One specific point in the evaluation is that UNHCR’s Development through Local Integration Framework “should be made applicable also to urban refugees” (Sperl and Brădișteanu, 2004: 47). Similarly, the ability of urban refugees to gain livelihoods was “inextricably interdependent upon local relationships and processes” and called on UNHCR’s urban policy to “place greater emphasis” on encouraging sustainable livelihoods (De Vriese, 2006: 18). In January 2009, Amy Slaughter and Jeff Crisp (2009: 10-14) advocated in *New Issues in Refugee Research* the need to move beyond the “care and maintenance model”, “avoid the establishment of separate and parallel systems”, promote interaction between refugees and local populations, and support the role of host states while stressing their responsibilities to refugees. They called on UNHCR to give greater assistance to those seeking their own livelihoods and host governments to enable greater freedom of movement and access to the local economy (Slaughter and Crisp, 2009: 12-13). This shows the role of EPAU and PDES in advocating a number of the core principles that would be present in the 2009 Policy, as well as UNHCR’s broader shift towards a more expansive, development-focused humanitarianism.

To achieve this shift in scope, there was acknowledgement that UNHCR needed more help. International organisations working with other actors can be challenging, as they tend to “define problems and appropriate solutions in ways that favor more technocratic impartial action, which, of course, they are uniquely able to supply” (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004: 9). International organisations frame issues in terms that ensure they are charged with addressing them, rather than another organisation. As noted in chapter three in relation to development and humanitarian organisations, donors can engage in ‘forum shopping’ and fund an alternate organisation. UNHCR reflects such an approach, as it has developed “a distinctive ‘go it alone’ culture” (Crisp et al., 2009: 48) and acted as a “surrogate state” (Slaughter and Crisp, 2009: 8). Under High Commissioner Ogata, in particular, UNHCR sought to ‘remain relevant’ to state-interests by expanding and taking on more responsibilities, especially in repatriation and in countries experiencing displacement (Hammerstad, 2014: 4-7). The use of refugee camps can be understood as part of UNHCR’s framing of solutions in a

way that centres on their own expertise. In urban areas UNHCR did not, and could not, have the same dominant role it had possessed in camp settings. Instead, the 2009 Policy stated responsibility as a “cornerstone” (UNHCR, 2009b: 6), while the necessity of other actors including mayors, municipal governments, the police, judiciary, and others were highlighted. The case of urban displacement challenges the existence of a ‘go it alone’ attitude in UNHCR, as well as suggestion international organisations will primarily focus on solutions benefiting themselves. Operating in urban areas would enable UNHCR to expand, and still be in a central position, while having to negotiate more and work with a larger range of actors than necessary when operating in rural camps, where it was regularly in charge. UNHCR’s decision to expand in urban areas can be understood as emerging from its desire to engage in mission creep and the belief of some staff that it should assist displaced people wherever they resided, against the relative power the Organisation lost by operating in locations where it was the sole or primary actor, as in camps.

In the years before the release of the 2009 Policy, PDES published work that called on UNHCR to involve other actors and ensure it was not ‘going it alone’. Senior staff at UNHCR were encouraged to take up a greater advocacy role with host governments on behalf of urban refugees (Bloch and Wigley, 2005: 3). In a 2006 article in *New Left Review*, Jacob Stevens (2006) strongly criticised encampment and UNHCR’s role as “a patron of these prisons of the stateless”. In response, Amy Slaughter and Jeff Crisp (2009: 2) argued in an article in *New Issues in Refugee Research* that the notion of state responsibility was “weak in its application” and that this led to UNHCR and other humanitarian organisations assuming a “progressively wider range of long-term refugee responsibilities”. Slaughter and Crisp (2009: 14) also argued that states should be given greater support and that UNHCR should not “act in isolation from the rest of the UN system and humanitarian community”. Tim Morris (2007: 1), a former UNHCR Special Envoy in the 1990s, similarly defended UNHCR from Steven’s criticism in *New Issue in Refugee Research*, drawing attention to the fact that “UNHCR is not a specialized agency, and reports to the General Assembly as well as the Executive Committee of member states”. Although not specifically about UNHCR’s work in

urban areas, such critiques were part of the pressure placed upon the Organisation to work more with other actors, which would contribute to the 2009 Policy, while the responses highlighted the influence of states on UNHCR's activities. UNHCR's shift in approach was partly in response to criticism, both within and external to the Organisation, to how it had worked in the past and acted to ensure different practice in the future, by encouraging it through new items of global policy.

UNHCR's research and evaluation unit believed that states should be encouraged as much as possible to take on more responsibility for refugees and that the Organisation should increasingly seek out new partnerships. Refugees were presented as offering economic benefits to host countries, contrasting the depiction of urban refugees as resource-intensive, as discussed in chapter four. In an EPAU evaluation, De Vriese (2006: 18) argued there was a need to stress "the positive effects for the country of asylum" and that "urban refugees should not be regarded as helpless people or as people with needs for others to fill but as people with a number of assets for the refugee communities as well as the host community". This evaluation pre-dated the research on 'refugee economics', which likewise sought to examine ways in which refugees can be recognised as economic benefits to their hosts, dispelling the myth they are an economic burden (Betts, Bloom, Kaplan and Omata, 2014: 16). The 2009 Policy went to considerable length to stress that host states should not impede urban refugees' ability to access livelihoods and become self-reliant. Urban refugees' ability to do so would prove valuable in their attempts to find durable solutions and UNHCR would "consider the rationale for providing material support to urban refugees who are unwilling to take up the livelihoods opportunities that are appropriate and available to them" (UNHCR, 2009b: 17).

The move to involve states and other actors emerged during the evaluation process and came through strongly in the 2009 Policy. It showed that UNHCR had moved beyond the 2003 Guiding Principles, which made reference "only in passing to the input of 'development-oriented agencies'" (Sperl and Brădişteanu, 2004: 44). In contrast, the 2009 Policy stated the importance of working with

development agencies and highlighted the various UN initiatives UNHCR was involved in, including the UN Development Assistance Framework. Specifically, it called for “close partnership with the authorities, development agencies, microfinance organizations”, “encouraging the engagement of bilateral donors, development agencies and other agencies” and the inclusion of “refugees in municipal development and poverty-reduction programmes” (UNHCR, 2009b: 18). As discussed in chapter two, principal-agent theory demonstrates that international organisations often engage in mission creep, when they are able to do so. The case of urban displacement suggests UNHCR was willing to increase its work with other actors, though this decision can be understood partly as an effort to engage in mission creep and expand the scope of the Organisation’s work. Although it has been noted international organisations frame ‘appropriate solutions’ as something they can uniquely provide, they may suggest the need for partnerships involving other actors as a means through which to ensure their expansion. By considering UNHCR’s approach in these terms, it is possible to understand why the Organisation went from having limited engagement with other actors and in 2005 “successfully insisted” refugee situations be excluded from the Cluster Approach (Slaughter and Crisp, 2009: 14), to advocating working in partnership in urban areas with individuals and organisations from the first, second, and third UN (UNHCR, 2009b: 6).

Chapter five discussed the importance of EPAU’s research and evaluation work, but it was PDES’s field experience with Iraqi refugees that proved to be the most crucial in shaping UNHCR’s changing response to the urbanisation of displacement. The 2003 invasion of Iraq began an exodus of people from the country, escalating in 2006 with the increase in sectarian violence. UNHCR’s budget for its operations to assist Iraqi refugees grew from \$40 million in 2005 to \$271 million in 2008, with the Organisation appealing for over \$300 million in 2009 (Crisp et al., 2009: 3). The Iraqi refugees mostly took refuge in the towns and cities of neighbouring countries, which led UNHCR to refer to them as the ‘largest urban caseload’ it had ever dealt with (UNHCR, 2008m: 310). PDES planned its review of UNHCR’s operations with Iraqi refugees in the third-quarter of 2008, visiting four cities (Aleppo, Amman, Beirut, and Damascus) in

April and May 2009, and published its findings in July 2009 (Crisp et al., 2009: 3-5). Two months later, in September, the 2009 Policy was published.

The need to create and extend available ‘protection space’ was a key component of PDES’s evaluation. As discussed earlier in this chapter, this was central to the 2009 Policy. UNHCR’s new global approach shared other similarities with PDES’s findings from the Middle East. PDES’s evaluation highlighted the need to increase the involvement of refugee communities, avoid the creation of parallel structures, support existing services, improve access to self-reliance, improve the host population’s view of refugees and increase partnerships between UNHCR and other actors (Crisp et al., 2009). These points were all reflected in the 2009 Policy, with its focus on reaching out to refugee communities, supporting public services, encouraging ‘harmonious relationships’ between refugees and their hosts, address xenophobia and move beyond “its traditional thinking of “bringing in the international NGOs”” (Crisp et al., 2009: 46).

PDES’s review of the Iraqi refugee situation acknowledged assisting refugees in urban areas had caused “longstanding policy debates within UNHCR” (Crisp et al., 2009: 35) and that the 1997 Policy had a “long and somewhat troubled history” (Crisp et al., 2009: 7). It noted the promise to assess the implementation of the 1997 Policy after two years and that this began “when reminded of this commitment at the October 1999 meeting of the Executive Committee” (Crisp et al., 2009: 7). The subsequent review “produced three entirely different internal drafts of a new policy statement” and that in June and July 2009 “the latest of these drafts had been set aside and an entirely new policy paper was under consideration” (Crisp et al., 2009: 7). The delay in the policymaking process and release of a new policy was accounted for in the following way:

While the delay in the completion of a new policy statement is partly a result of organizational difficulties, such as the regular rotation of staff and redistribution of Headquarters responsibilities, it is also symptomatic of the inherently complex nature of the urban refugee issue and the questions that it raises. (Crisp et al., 2009: 7)

During a 2015 presentation on the evolution of UNHCR’s response to urban refugees, at the University of Oxford, the former Head of PDES Jeff Crisp and then

current PDES employee MaryBeth Morand noted that one of the drivers for policy change between 1997 and 2009 was UNHCR's work in locations where camps were not an option. The starting point for this was UNHCR's work with Iraqi refugees in the early 2000s (Crisp and Morand, 2015). In an interview conducted with Jeff Crisp in 2015, the importance of the Iraqi refugee situation in the subsequent drafting of the 2009 Policy was made explicit:

Just before I drafted the Urban Refugee Policy... In 2008 I'd done a big evaluation of UNHCR's response to the Iraqi refugee situation... One of the things I was a little bit nervous about was taking too much from that particular experience and making it a global policy, but there are certain things, if I reread the policy now I can say... I can pick out bits which certainly came from the Iraqi refugee experience... So there is a direct lineage between the Iraqi refugee situation, recognising that was primarily an urban situation and then developing a new urban refugee policy. (Crisp, 2015)

Epistemic communities can influence the selection and persistence of specific policies (Lee and Chan, 2014). PDES used its experiences working with Iraqi refugees to influence the 2009 Policy, but the need to replace the 1997 Policy emerged before this work in the Middle East. At ExCom in 2004, 2005 and 2006 the planned change in UNHCR's policy on urban displacement was mentioned and said to be due imminently (UNGA, 2004a: 5; UNGA, 2005d: 2; UNGA, 2006c: 3). EPAU and PDES was not the only part of UNHCR that was directly involved in the writing of a new urban policy. In 2004 Jeff Crisp was seconded from UNHCR to another agency, returning to become Head of PDES in 2006, during which time "the person chosen to replace him was the main author of the 1997 urban refugee policy" (Crisp, 2017: 91). In 2005 UNHCR's Department of International Protection was leading efforts to revise the 1997 Policy (UNHCR, 2005f: 4). In 2007 and 2008, PDES was said to be assisting International Protection (UNGA, 2007b: 3; UNGA, 2008b: 3), and a new policy was expected in August 2008 (UNGA, 2008g: 3). In contrast to the 2003 Guiding Principles, which had been drafted by Jeff Crisp and Naoko Obi of EPAU (Conway, 2004: 23), more parts of UNHCR worked on what would become the 2009 Policy. The period demonstrates the importance of individuals within the second UN and in epistemic communities, with Jeff Crisp's important role in the formulation of the 2009 Policy made evident by events occurring between 2004 and 2009. Crisp was one of the drafters of the 2003 Guiding Principles, and during his absence

from UNHCR, little progress was made in furthering efforts to replace the 1997 Policy. The Department of International Protection led the drafting of a new policy between 2005 and 2009, though the 2009 Policy was eventually written by PDES, and was closer in content to the 2003 Guiding Principles than to a draft version written by International Protection in July 2009 (UNHCR, 2003b; UNHCR, 2009b; UNHCR, 2009k). For example, the draft version only had two brief references to 'protection space', the central concept of the 2009 Policy. In contrast to theories that conceptualised international organisations as single actors, the response to the urbanisation of displacement by UNHCR, suggests the vital role played by individuals within the second UN.

In 2006, PDES and the post of Assistant High Commissioner for Protection were created and joined UNHCR's Executive Office. This was done to give greater prominence to international protection efforts within UNHCR (Loescher, Betts and Milner, 2008: 80). Erika Feller, who had been Head of UNHCR's Department of International Protection since 1999, became the Assistant High Commissioner for Protection from 2006 until 2015. Feller made only limited reference to urban displacement during much of this time (Feller, 2003; Feller, 2006a; Feller, 2007a; Feller, 2007b). In 2008 she began to refer to urban refugees as a growing issue of concern to UNHCR (Feller, 2009b: 3) and claimed that a policy was due soon (Feller, 2008a; Feller, 2009b: 3; Feller, 2008b). As will be discussed later in the chapter, High Commissioner Guterres began to address the connection between urbanisation and displacement from 2007, while in the same year UNHCR noted the extent of Iraqi refugees moving to urban areas. At ExCom's Standing Committee meetings in March and June 2009, Feller repeated her previous claim that a new urban policy was being finalised and would be released that year (UNGA, 2009l: 6; UNGA, 2009j: 4), also acknowledging the extensive work PDES had done on urban displacement (UNGA, 2009h: 3). The increased attention afforded to urban displacement by Feller during 2008 and 2009, can be understood as a response to the increased attention the issue was receiving by that time from elsewhere within UNHCR. International Protection, under Feller, was in charge of developing a replacement policy from 2005, although urban



displacement only appears to have become a priority in 2008, after it had already attracted the attention of other prominent parts of UNHCR.

A new draft urban policy was under consideration in June and July 2009, and had been written by International Protection, with PDES's assistance (Crisp et al., 2009: 7). By July 2009 a replacement to the 1997 Policy was not available, and Feller regarded the latest version prepared by International Protection as not 'fit for purpose' (Crisp, 2017: 93). The High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges was announced as being focused on urban displacement and would take place in December 2009. Jeff Crisp, who was Head of PDES at the time, has stated that concern about this impending event was a significant driver in the creation of the 2009 Policy (Crisp, 2017: 93). During a talk at the University of Oxford in 2015, he recounted that in the summer of 2009 Erika Feller came to PDES's office and asked if Crisp could write a new urban policy in six weeks (Crisp and Morand, 2015). According to Crisp, the panic surrounding the impending High Commissioner's Dialogue and the need to have a replacement for the 1997 Policy in advance of this event provided the necessary push for the 2009 Policy to be released (Crisp and Morand, 2015). The creation of a new policy became PDES's immediate priority. This shows that an organisation like UNHCR can work on an issue for over a decade, drafting multiple versions of a new policy, but it is the emergence of a sudden impending deadline that allows for the rapid creation and publication of an agreeable document. The sudden work to ensure a new policy was released suggests the important role of leaders within international organisations.

As discussed previously, on numerous occasions between 2004 and 2009 UNHCR stated a new policy was due to be released. When the 2009 Policy was published, Feller (2009a: 4) acknowledged it was "long awaited, I appreciate!". The repeated previous failure to release a replacement to the 1997 Policy raises questions about the Organisation's accountability and its implications for policy change. UNHCR is in a position where is it able to make promises without acting upon them, as it is not answerable to many of the actors it works with. Members of the third UN, displaced people, other organisations and parts of the UN, can all

pressure UNHCR to varying degrees, but this is based on persuasion. States, particularly donors, have more influence over UNHCR, but did not hold the Organisation liable for not releasing a new policy when it said it would, despite the matter arising at ExCom. During the period covered in the chapter, UNHCR's activities were monitored by the Inspector General's Office (IGO) and the United Nations' Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), both of which "have complementary terms of reference" (IGO, 2005). In 2005 and 2006 UNHCR's overdue replacement urban policy was listed as one of the Organisation's long-standing, unresolved issues (UNGA, 2005h: 6; UNGA, 2007d: 9). In 2011 an Independent Audit and Oversight Committee was established (UNHCR, 2011), in part to improve supervision of UNHCR's policymaking process. The case of urban displacement shows this had been inadequate, and stems from the lack of accountability the Organisation had to those it supported and worked with. In the years before the 2009 Policy was released, NGOs "periodically complained" about the lack of a replacement policy, yet brought "little real pressure to bear on the organization's leadership", while ExCom "chose to stand back from the impasse that had emerged" (Crisp, 2017: 91). Without effective external accountability to bring about a change in policy, UNHCR's 'mission creep' on urban displacement was gradual, and required sufficient internal support to bring about a formal shift in policy, including from the Organisation's new leader.

### 3.2 High Commissioner

As chapters four and five have shown, High Commissioners Ogata and Lubbers had limited engagement with the issue of urban displacement. After becoming High Commissioner in 2005, Guterres would become a part of the epistemic community on urban displacement, and consequently, the issue of urban displacement would come to occupy a more significant place on UNHCR's agenda. The findings of the thesis support claims made in the literature on leadership, discussed in chapter two, which argue that the head of an organisation can be vital in bringing about changes in policy and practice. Between 2005 and 2009, Guterres demonstrated what Robert W. Cox (1996: 340) has termed "sailor's skills" and utilised the "winds and currents" of the time

to shape the way urban displacement was understood and responded to. The High Commissioner can often have such influence, for example with internal displacement, when the High Commissioner was the “most significant actor” and possessed a “catalytic role” in growing UNHCR’s involvement with IDPs (Mattar and White, 2005: 1). Although Guterres referred to the challenges faced by those displaced in urban areas during his first year as High Commissioner (Verney, 2005; UNHCR, 2005h), it was from 2007 that he set about establishing urban displacement as a priority and one that necessitated a change in policy. Contextual factors, including when the global population became primarily urban and the urbanised nature of Iraqi refugees, influenced Guterres’ position, but he was primarily affected by his relationship with PDES, established in 2006 to inform and advise the High Commissioner. Guterres, who sought to expand UNHCR’s work, saw urban displacement as an area where he could achieve this, given the available agency slack resulting from the lack of state interest.

UNHCR’s assistance to Iraqi refugees in the Middle East played an important role in shaping the content of the 2009 Policy. UNHCR’s experiences here were also a major turning point for the High Commissioner. In 2007 Guterres made a number of references to the urban nature of those fleeing Iraq. At the time, four million Iraqis had been forcibly displaced, making them “the biggest single group of displaced people” at the time and importantly the “largest ever population of urban refugees” (Dobbs, 2007). Guterres repeated the claim that Iraqi refugees represented the largest urban caseload in UNHCR’s history in a number of prominent speeches throughout 2007, including to ExCom and the United Nations General Assembly (Guterres, 2007b; Guterres, 2007d; Guterres, 2007e). With this, Guterres raised the profile and importance of urban displacement both within UNHCR and in the eyes of others.

The High Commissioner’s focus on the urban nature of most Iraqi refugees continued during 2008. Leaders can be influenced by events occurring in the world around them, but effective leadership stems from leaders choosing to frame events at an opportune time (Bode, 2014). Guterres was able to utilise the international attention on the Middle East and frame what was occurring in the

region as part of a global issue that UNHCR had to respond to. At the Annual Consultation with NGOs that year, Guterres noted that addressing urban refugees “will be our key priority... in the near future” and that “this trend [of moving to urban areas] will be bigger and bigger” (Pouilly, 2008). Guterres specifically mentioned the cases of Damascus and Amman, where “the huge numbers of Iraqi refugees had been an eye-opener for UNHCR” (Pouilly, 2008). During a keynote address to mark the tenth anniversary of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement in October 2008, Guterres (2008d) acknowledged, “we still do not know exactly how to handle the problems in the urban context”. However, Guterres (2008d) also noted the “recent experience of Iraqis in Amman and Damascus has been very important for us”, as representing “a completely new and different challenge in relation to our usual activities in encampment situations” and that “we need to draw many relevant lessons for our future work” from these cases. The need to learn from these cases was highlighted again during Guterres’ (2008b) Opening Statement at the High Commissioner’s Dialogue in December 2008, when he noted the “constructive response of Syria and Jordan”, while simultaneously acknowledging, “both UNHCR and the international community have still much to learn about providing protection and assistance in urban settings”. Immediately after this Guterres informed those in attendance that UNHCR was “presently revising its guidance on urban refugees” and that the following year’s High Commissioner’s Dialogue would be devoted to urban displacement (Guterres, 2008b). The case of Guterres and urban displacement enforces the claim in the literature that leaders are important actors in bringing about change, in particular through their ability to frame events in a way necessitating an expansion in the work of their organisation.

In 2009, Guterres again showed the importance of the Iraqi refugee situation to UNHCR’s changing strategy to urban displacement. Guterres noted that “almost all” of the 1.6 million Iraqi refugees in Jordan and Syria were in urban areas (Guterres, 2009c), claiming this was the “most dramatic” example of “large-scale displaced populations in urban areas” (Guterres, 2010: 8). When Guterres opened the High Commissioner’s Dialogue in December 2009, the importance of

the Organisation's experiences with Iraqi urban refugees in the formulation of the recently released 2009 Policy was acknowledged. Guterres also cited PDES's report on the situation of Iraqi urban refugees and noted its importance on the formation of the 2009 Policy:

The massive outflux of Iraqis to cities in neighbouring countries, notably Damascus and Amman which between them received more than a million people, underscored the scope and speed of the phenomenon. Observations on the generous response to Iraqis in Aleppo, Amman, Beirut and Damascus, and lessons learned for similar displacements in the future are set out in the evaluation report completed by UNHCR in August of this year. The report was a true eye-opener and crucial to UNHCR's elaboration of its new urban refugee policy. (Guterres, 2009a)

UNHCR's experiences in the Middle East were important, but equally so was Guterres' understanding of the situation arising in part from how it was interpreted and relayed by PDES. The example mentioned demonstrates the connection between research and evaluation units and organisational leaders, and the way in which the former can 'open the eyes' of the latter. The 2009 Policy drew "much from the agency's experience helping Iraqi refugees" (Dobbs, 2009a), while PDES described UNHCR's work in the Middle East as unique, due to the amount of attention the situation received from states and international media outlets (Crisp et al., 2009: 5). UNHCR is impacted by global events, which in turn shape the Organisation's policies. In the case of IDPs, there was "no consistency" within UNHCR on how to approach the issue, but they were encouraged to adapt as a result of "significant political change, the level of public and political interest and the timing and intensity of media coverage" (Mattar and White, 2005: 1). PDES, in particular, was influenced by what it observed during its evaluation work in Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria, but events "do not have an objective meaning", and are rather "made meaningful by actors" who wish to create "boundaries of acceptable action" (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004: 33). PDES was able to use the Iraqi situation to advocate new ideas and policies (Weiss et al., 2009: 128), which influenced the position of the High Commissioner. In the lead up to the release of the 2009 Policy, Guterres was influenced by PDES's work with Iraqi refugees and was able to use it to help justify UNHCR's mission creep, as urban displacement was framed as 'dramatic' and getting 'bigger and bigger'. Through such framing, Guterres was able to

adapt to the ‘winds and currents’ of the time, and ensure the expansion of UNHCR’s mandate.

Speaking at ExCom in 2007, Guterres called for new strategies to tackle the complex challenges of the twenty-first century and their relation to displacement.

The present century is a time of human displacement... Many people move simply to avoid dying of hunger, when leaving is not an option but a necessity, this is more than poverty. On the other hand, natural disasters occur more frequently and are of greater magnitude and devastating impact. (Dobbs, 2007)

Statements such as this became emblematic of a discourse that appeared from within UNHCR and centred on High Commissioner Guterres, who, beginning in 2007, spoke of the emergence of ‘global mega-trends’. According to Guterres, these trends contributed to large-scale movements of people and impacted the way in which UNHCR provided solutions, assistance, and protection (UNHCR, 2010c: 17). The five mega-trends were: population growth, global migration, resource (water, food, and energy) insecurity, climate change, and urbanisation (Guterres, 2009b; Guterres, 2009d; Guterres, 2009f). Guterres framed the issue of global urbanisation in a specific way, necessitating further action by UNHCR, and ‘went loud’ on the issue of urban displacement (Harman, 2011). During his Opening Statement at ExCom in September 2009, Guterres (2009b) outlined to attendees the “adverse impact of the world’s mega-trends” which were, “more and more interlinked, reinforcing each other and driving insecurity and displacement”. Combined with the global recession, which was on going at the time, Guterres (2009b) said these were “causing crises to multiply and deepen”. In 2009, Guterres discussed these pertinent trends at the Annual Meeting of ExCom and at the UN General Assembly (Guterres, 2009b; Guterres, 2009d), ensuring states were aware that urbanisation was connected to displacement, and had an affect on UNHCR’s work.

The framing of urbanisation as a global mega-trend with major implications for millions of people would prove a useful tool for the urban displacement epistemic community in justifying an increased role for UNHCR in urban areas,

and a shift in the Organisation's policy to allow for this. As Barnett and Finnemore (2004: 33) have discussed, international organisations frame global issues in certain ways. They use "specific metaphors, symbolic representations, and cognitive cues" to "render or cast behavior and events in an evaluation mode and to suggest alternative modes of action" (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004: 33). The mega-trends were said to have "caused crises to multiply and deepen" (UNHCR, 2010c: 5), and as such were drivers of insecurity necessitating a change in action by UNHCR. The 2009 Policy spoke of rapid urbanisation as "one of the most significant 'mega-trends' confronting our planet today" (UNHCR, 2009b: 24). At the Annual Consultation with NGOs, Guterres discussed, "demographic pressure; urbanization; climate change and related environmental degradation and the devastating impact of the global economic crisis on the developing world" (Dobbs, 2009b). Not only was the increased movement of people to towns and cities fraught with potential problems, it was described as something that was only going to increase in years to come. According to the High Commissioner, "urbanisation is an irreversible trend" (Guterres, 2010: 8) and "will intensify in the future" (Guterres, 2009a), while, "more and more people of concern to UNHCR... will live in cities" (UNHCR, 2010a: 1). Despite the problems and irreversibility of urbanisation, according to UNHCR, "not much attention has been paid to the refugee and forced displacement dimension [of it]" (UNHCR, 2009h: 1). To address this overlooked issue and with the "appreciation that increasingly cities will be the main site of humanitarian response", Guterres (2009a) said it was necessary to "improve our performance in urban settings and recalibrate our approach".

Guterres would portray UNHCR's need to change as a response to real-world situations, rather than a desire of the Organisation itself to expand its work, an example of leaders' ability to effectively 'affix meaning' to events, and frame them in a certain way. This allows them to "situate events and to interpret problems, to fashion a shared understanding of the world, to galvanize sentiments as a way to mobilize and guide social action, and to suggest possible resolutions to current plights" (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004: 33). When there is available agency slack, and a matter is framed effectively as requiring increased

action, an organisation's mandate can expand. Guterres framed UNHCR's work in urban areas "not an endorsement for all refugees to move to cities" but "rather a response to the fact that people, including refugees, are moving and will continue to move to cities and we need to be able to respond to their needs" (Guterres, 2009a). Importantly, by casting the situation in this way, UNHCR's increased involvement in urban areas was something it 'had' to do, rather than 'chose' to. Guterres' use of the mega-trend discourse framed the urbanisation of displacement as inevitable, and as necessitating an expansion of UNHCR's humanitarian work and "protection capacity" (Guterres, 2009f). The mass urbanisation of displaced people was a global phenomenon for which UNHCR was the most ideally suited organisation to lead the response. Guterres steered UNHCR on the 'winds and currents' that were present at the time; reflecting the argument made in the leadership literature, that leaders play an important role in explaining and encouraging others to follow them on a given issue (Thakur, 2006). As discussed in chapter four, the UN had a growing interest in global urbanisation from the end of the twentieth century. As will be seen later in the chapter, UN interest in urbanisation increased at the start of the twenty-first century, which Guterres sought to link to displacement, through his speeches on mega-trends. With these speeches, Guterres framed urban displacement as a matter requiring the expansion of UNHCR's work.

The 'recalibrated' approach and belief that urban areas were the new principal location of humanitarian action meant UNHCR would focus less on its work in camps. The shift away from a camp-centred approach was made clear by Guterres in 2009 when he argued there had been a tendency to give preference to displaced people in camps, stressing a need to "consider afresh the wisdom of encampment as a policy" (Quoted in: Dobbs, 2009a). The previous year, the High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges had focused on protracted refugee situations. At this event Guterres (2008a) described refugees in protracted situations as being "packed into overcrowded settlements, deprived of an income and with little to occupy their time". Privately, Guterres went further, claiming UNHCR could "no longer collude with states in confining refugees to camps and denying them the right to exercise freedom of movement"



(Quoted in: Crisp, 2017: 93). Given the conditions faced by refugees, Guterres was unsurprised that many of those “trapped in the camps” were seeking to move to urban areas (Guterres, 2008a). The High Commissioner’s Dialogue in 2009 saw calls for displaced people to be “treated more holistically than simply as a ‘humanitarian issue’” and for the humanitarian community to “re-visit long-standing “camp” and “rural” paradigms” (UNHCR, 2009a). The fixation with camps, including by donor states, was criticised for ignoring urban refugees and leaving them to be effectively “warehoused in the city” (Pittaway, 2009: 4). Speaking in 2008, Guterres argued for the need to rethink camp-focused models of assistance in light of rapid urbanisation. He claimed that “traditional models” of assistance, protection, and solutions “based on the establishment of camps are less and less relevant in this context” (Guterres, 2008d). With the launch of the 2009 Policy, Guterres (2009a) made it clear that UNHCR was not abandoning refugees in camps, but, stated that “neither UNHCR’s nor a State’s obligations towards refugees and internally displaced people ought to be conditioned [sic] on their residing in camps”.

The choice of displaced people to reside in urban areas was presented as a right. The decision to adopt rights-based language by Guterres can partly be explained as an effective way to frame UNHCR’s response as beneficial to refugees, and not as justification for the Organisation’s further expansion. It was an effort to reorient UNHCR to a ‘legalist’ position, which, as discussed in chapter three, had been replaced by a ‘pragmatic’ approach under Ogata. Guterres described the 2009 Policy as “more clearly rights-based” and emphasised “the fact that UNHCR’s mandated responsibilities towards refugees are not affected by their location” (Quoted in: Dobbs, 2009a). Guterres recognised that “cities and towns are legitimate places for refugees and displaced populations to reside and to enjoy their basic human rights” (Quoted in: Dobbs, 2009a). At the High Commissioner’s Dialogue in December 2009 Guterres stressed the rights-based nature of the 2009 Policy, and stated that access to rights was unaffected by location. In contrast to the 1997 Policy and its preference for encampment, UNHCR focused upon the ‘legitimacy’ of urban areas (UNHCR, 2009c: 1; UNHCR, 2010b), also present in the 2009 Policy (UNHCR, 2009b: 3). At the Roundtable of

Mayors at the High Commissioner's Third Dialogue in December 2009, participants noted the need to ensure the rights of all urban populations, suggesting that UNHCR's focus had gained traction with some national actors, who would be key to implementing the 2009 Policy (UNHCR, 2010a: 3). Guterres' focus on refugee rights reflects the importance of how leaders choose to frame issues. It also highlights the relationship between leaders and the values of their organisations (Hochschild, 2010: 30), with leaders more successful when able to make links between existing organisational values and their chosen course of action. Upholding refugee rights is fundamental to UNHCR's purpose, thus Guterres' connection between the issue of urban displacement and the broader mission of UNHCR allowed for policy change to occur. Guterres' belief that "UNHCR's activities had to be more firmly based on fundamental human rights principles" (Crisp, 2017: 92) reflected a 'legalistic' position, and repeated the arguments and publications previously offered by EPAU and PDES.

In addition to being more rights-focused, UNHCR's new approach embodied in the 2009 Policy was also concerned with increasing national development. Many of the more development-orientated themes advocated by EPAU and PDES, and discussed in the previous section of the chapter, also became common themes of Guterres' speeches. Guterres argued against creating parallel structures, stressing the need to benefit the host population, increase livelihood opportunities, and view refugees as an economic benefit. Speaking in 2009, Guterres stated it was important not to deal with displaced people in urban areas in isolation and instead focus on the broader situation faced by the urban poor. Stating that UNHCR did "not wish to encroach upon the work of development actors", Guterres said the Organisation should be involved in similar work, as "poverty alleviation, disaster-risk reduction, slum-clearance and similar initiatives must respond to the needs of all marginalized urban populations, including those of concern to UNHCR" (Guterres, 2009a). Addressing the issues faced by the urban displaced could not be dealt with through the "traditional response" of "establishing parallel structures in shelter, education and health" (Guterres, 2009a), as any response "cannot be undertaken in isolation from the broader context of marginalized and poor populations" and UNHCR must "give

particular attention to protecting the rights of poor and disadvantaged communities” (Guterres, 2009a). UNHCR’s work in towns and cities, according to Guterres (2009a), would have to be “both developmental and relief-based” and address “long-term as well as immediate needs”, while supporting “the broader process of urban planning and poverty reduction”. During the Annual Lecture of the International Rescue Committee UK in June 2008, Guterres (2008c) had insisted that “the situation of [the] urban poor” must be addressed before “hunger triggers social unrest and conflict”. Writing in *Forced Migration Review*, Guterres (2010: 8) reasoned that, “we cannot see these [urban displaced] populations in isolation from local communities. We will only succeed if we adopt a comprehensive approach taking into account the rights of both the displaced and their hosts”. The need to improve existing services rather than create new ones for displaced people was repeated as UNHCR focused on services such as education and healthcare (UNHCR, 2010b; UNHCR, 2009c), echoing themes from the Organisation’s work in the Middle East. Working to improve national services saw UNHCR stray further from its traditional focus of providing emergency response and care and maintenance, into helping host communities through poverty-reduction efforts. Adopting a ‘comprehensive approach’ is an example of UNHCR responding to the wishes of its principals. The principals, host states, have an interest in ensuring they receive greater international assistance, in exchange for continuing to host refugees.

As discussed in chapter four, urban refugees were often portrayed in negative terms by UNHCR. During this period, Guterres presented refugees in urban areas in a more positive manner. During Guterres’ Opening Statement at the High Commissioner’s First Dialogue in December 2007, he said there was a “growing recognition of the need to maximize the contribution that migration can make to poverty reduction and economic growth” (Guterres, 2007c). He stated the following year that “the urbanization of refugees may present opportunities as well as obstacles” (Guterres, 2008b). Although Guterres did not elaborate on what these opportunities might be, it reflected his more positive tone and saw him frame refugees in urban areas as deserving of UNHCR’s help.

In casting displaced people in a different light, the High Commissioner also stressed the value of access to livelihoods and self-reliance. UNHCR sought to “foster an enabling environment for the economic empowerment and self-reliance of displaced populations” through its urban operations (UNHCR, 2009c: 20). UNHCR’s efforts had to counter the still common assumption that refugees were an “enormous pressure” on the economic sector of the host state (Mikdad, 2009: 2). During 2008 Guterres (2008a) addressed the importance of access to self-reliance, education and training in his speeches (Etefa, 2008). Self-reliance and livelihoods were specifically addressed in the discussion paper released before the High Commissioner’s Dialogue in 2008 and in a breakout session during the 2009 Dialogue (UNHCR, 2008h: 15; UNHCR, 2009e: 1). Chapter five detailed EPAU’s focus on self-reliance and livelihoods, also featured in the 2003 Guiding Principles, and Guterres would emphasise the same issues later. There was a clear connection between EPAU and PDES and the High Commissioner, with the research and evaluation unit able to influence which matters that Guterres considered and gave attention to, including urban displacement.

Camps were criticised as sites where UNHCR worked largely alone and unchallenged, becoming a ‘surrogate state’ (Slaughter and Crisp, 2009; Kagan, 2011). In contrast, urban areas were presented as locations involving a large selection of actors (UNHCR, 2009d: 18). In advance of the Dialogue, UNHCR “engaged extensively with a range of organizations” (UNHCR, 2009a: 3), including, NGOs at the Annual Consultation, Cities Alliance, and World Association of Major Metropolises. Work was conducted with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Task Force on Meeting Humanitarian Challenges in Urban Areas, also with the UN’s ‘Shelter Cluster’ and The Hague Process on Refugees and Migration. A workshop on urban capacity building for NGOs was hosted in Nairobi (UNHCR, 2009a: 3-4). During the High Commissioner’s Dialogue in 2009, Guterres (2009a) contended UNHCR must work with other parts of the UN, municipal authorities, city mayors, and a range of local and international non-governmental organisations (Dobbs, 2009a; Guterres, 2009e). UNHCR’s traditional approach to a camp was to involve a number of international NGOs, but it was acknowledged they “cannot ‘be’ the solution in

cities” (UNHCR, 2010a: 12). Speaking in 2009, Guterres (2009a) addressed the difference for UNHCR of working in urban areas compared to camps:

The traditional approach to large-scale population displacement by establishing parallel structures in shelter, education and health is not viable in urban settings. It is essential to adopt a new approach... [This] approach much be inclusive. It cannot be UNHCR alone. It requires establishing and strengthening partnerships with central governments, municipal and local authorities, NGOs, the private sector and especially the marginalized populations themselves.

Guterres played a crucial role in establishing urban displacement as an important issue, supporting key themes of UNHCR’s new strategy. The approach, outlined in the 2009 Policy, would involve a growing number of actors and occur in locations less dominated by UNHCR, though the Organisation remained central to these disparate actors working effectively together. The shift can be understood both as part of UNHCR’s broader historical expansion and in line with ideas of how international organisations grow. As Michael Barnett and Martha Finnemore (2004: 9) have maintained, as international organisations “go about their business of defining tasks and implementing mandates, they tend to do so in ways that permit, or even require, more intervention by international organizations”. This can be seen in the case of urban displacement, for example, through the actions of Guterres and his framing of ‘mega-trends’, after which UNHCR was ideally positioned to respond. Traditional theories of international organisations suggest that changes, such as UNHCR’s response to the urbanisation of displacement, come about as the result of pressure from states. However, states had limited engagement with this particular issue, as will be discussed later in the chapter, and UNHCR planned to “place particular emphasis on its relationship” with state actors (UNHCR, 2009b: 6), including municipal authorities and mayors, contributing to national development. The 2009 Policy was crafted with state-interests in mind, including those of host states. The lack of active involvement of states and accountability of UNHCR provided sufficient agency slack, affording the Organisation the opportunity to determine how to respond to the challenge of urban displacement, expanding its mandate as a result.

### 3.3 Field Offices

During the period 2004 to 2009, the activities of UNHCR's field offices changed with respect to urban displacement. UNHCR's field offices, a part of the second UN, have the ability to implement and test ideas and policies in the world, as well as "occasionally burying ideas and policies" (Weiss et al., 2009: 128-129). Despite the 1997 Policy being the official approach of UNHCR until September 2009, in an increased number of countries field offices did not adhere to it, making it operationally obsolete. During this period a number of new manuals and guidelines that had been influenced by experiences in the field were released. These documents had similar content to what would be found in the 2009 Policy, and this section explains key themes of the manuals and guidelines, along with what was being enacted by UNHCR's field offices in the years leading up to the release of the 2009 Policy. The chapter will focus on the work of UNHCR's field office in Nairobi, Kenya during this period, demonstrating a considerable amount of the strategy advocated in the 2009 Policy had occurred previously, with existing practice in cities such as Nairobi proving informative for UNHCR's shifting approach in addressing urban displacement globally.

Between 2004 and 2009 UNHCR released a series of guidelines, containing points that would later be found in the 2009 Policy. 'The Handbook for Self-Reliance' and 'UNHCR's Strategic Plan for Refugees, HIV and AIDS' both advocated for refugees use of existing national services (UNHCR, 2005g: 9; UNHCR, 2005i: 9). In 2006, 'The UNHCR Tool for Participatory Assessment in Operations' advocated UNHCR go into areas where refugees live and increase its work with existing community organisations (UNHCR, 2006o). In 2008 'A Community-based Approach in UNHCR Operations' was released. This document recommended the adoption of a "rights- and community-based approach" (UNHCR, 2008a: 5), as well as support for host populations alongside displaced people.

In some countries during the period, UNHCR's operations reflected the approach outlined in the 1997 Policy. There was a focus on minimising urban-based

protection, promoting the use of camps and avoiding opportunities for local integration. In Rwanda refugees were “encouraged to transfer to camps” (UNHCR, 2006d: 13), while others were later stripped of their refugee status (UNHCR, 2010c: 37). In Chad, assistance was limited in urban areas (UNHCR, 2004i: 105) and although there was an increase in vocational training (UNHCR, 2008e: 129), assistance was restricted to those “willing to relocate to a camp” (UNHCR, 2006r). In Sierra Leone those who “opted to live in urban areas without assistant” had less access to UNHCR than those in camps (UNHCR, 2006e: 3). Meanwhile UNHCR went from focusing on local integration to resettlement (UNHCR, 2003c: 136; UNHCR, 2006e: 5), claiming this was the preference of urban refugees (UNHCR, 2008m: 267) before reverting to promoting integration, as resettlement opportunities were limited (UNHCR, 2008e: 183). In Israel, UNHCR’s approach was consistently on repatriation and resettlement (UNHCR, 2005b; UNHCR, 2006b: 2; UNHCR, 2007f: 2), while in the Republic of Korea, with its “very short and recent history of hosting only a small population of urban refugees” (UNHCR, 2004d: 2), UNHCR stressed these refugees would receive only minimal assistance (UNHCR, 2006c: 1; UNHCR, 2007b: 2).

In other countries, UNHCR mixed the tactic advocated in the 1997 Policy with what would later come in the 2009 Policy. In Zambia UNHCR attempted to be more inclusive of urban refugees (UNHCR, 2006h: 4), though funding shortages, poor economic conditions, and the belief that integration was easier in rural areas hampered their efforts (UNHCR, 2003c: 153; UNHCR, 2004i: 198; UNHCR, 2005k: 304). In the Arabian Gulf, UNHCR focused on providing documentation, relaxing the use of encampment, and ensuring host states assisted refugees in accessing protection. The expansion of UNHCR’s Regional Office in Riyadh (which covers the Organisation’s work in Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates) increased to cover urban refugees and asylum seekers (UNHCR, 2004f: 2), despite inadequate resources (UNHCR, 2005d: 1). UNHCR’s efforts received growing support from host states with the Organisation reporting in 2007 that Saudi Arabia had begun to allow Iraqi refugees to settle in urban areas (UNHCR, 2007h: 3). In 2004 in Sudan UNHCR provided primary healthcare to “some needy urban-based refugees” (UNHCR,

2003c: 109), and at a later date, UNHCR's office in Khartoum developed a "revised policy on urban assistance to refugees", bringing about an increased focus on self-reliance, livelihoods and urban IDPs in the country (UNHCR, 2007c: 8; UNHCR, 2008e: 135). The Government of Thailand focused on encampment of refugees from Myanmar (UNHCR, 2003c: 208-209; UNHCR, 2004i: 259), but from early 2006 UNHCR increased its focus on urban areas, including a comprehensive assessment to increase its knowledge of the challenges that existed (UNHCR, 2007d: 3). In Egypt urban refugees faced difficulty accessing public services, forcing UNHCR to establish separate services specifically for them (UNHCR, 2008b: 1-2). Despite the "serious obstacles to a successful self-reliance strategy in Egypt and the urban environment in Cairo" (UNHCR, 2008b: 3), UNHCR had some success in assisting urban refugees. This included providing legal protection, capacity building and training, health care, education, self-reliance, community services and outreach, public information, and support for people with special needs (UNHCR, 2008b: 6-7). UNHCR also attempted to "strengthen local partnerships in protection and durable solutions, and persuade development actors to include persons of concern to UNHCR in their programmes in urban areas" (UNHCR, 2008e: 206).

In other countries, UNHCR's operations went beyond the scope of the 1997 Policy. In Yemen, UNHCR acknowledged the hardship of encampment and peoples' tendency to move location, and attempted to include refugees in broader poverty alleviation efforts, working with development actors, and focusing on self-reliance, and integration of refugees into existing national services (UNHCR, 2003c: 165; UNHCR, 2004g; UNHCR, 2005e: 5; UNHCR, 2006g: 7-8; UNHCR, 2007g). Similarly, in Ethiopia, UNHCR acknowledged the movement of refugees to urban areas and the challenges of camps, focusing on training and income generation, with the support of the Government, which began an "out of camp policy" in 2009 (UNHCR, 2007l: 8; UNHCR, 2003c: 95; UNHCR, 2009f: 171). In Guinea, UNHCR sought to offer refugees the opportunity to choose where they wished to integrate and provided them with a range of assistance (UNHCR, 2004i: 166, 231). UNHCR in Uganda increased its profiling efforts of urban refugees and did not advocate encampment, providing refugees were self-reliant



(UNHCR, 2006f: 1; UNHCR, 2005k: 233). The approach in countries like Uganda was facilitated by the attitude of the host government, reflecting the continued role of state preferences, and how these influence UNHCR's actions. The importance of state preferences can be seen in the case of Algeria, where UNHCR had been focused on local capacity building, seeking in 2006 to expand the available 'protection space', but its work in urban areas was halted amidst growing security concerns (UNHCR, 2004b: 1-3; UNHCR, 2007e: 4; UNHCR, 2007j: 321). In Jordan in 2004, UNHCR decreased its urban work and increased its focus on camps (UNHCR, 2004c: 2), but as the number of Iraqi urban refugees dramatically increased from 699 in December 2006 to 225,000 in December 2009 (UNHCR, 2008d: 5), the Organisation renewed its efforts to provide urban-based protection. UNHCR's work in Jordanian towns and cities involved creating partnerships with local actors, as well as improving and promoting access to national services and institutions (UNHCR, 2005c: 2-3). The ability to do so, however, rested with the state itself. Countries such as Jordan and Syria had a more welcoming approach to refugees (Barnes, 2009: 19; UNHCR, 2008e: 203), reflecting the significance of state preferences in UNHCR's ability to work in urban areas. The value of the work underway by UNHCR's field offices was noted in the 2008/2009 Global Appeal: "The operations in Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic will provide valuable experience in the urban context, as will the work of the office in Nairobi. The lessons learned will improve guidance to the field in 2007 and 2008" (UNHCR, 2008e).

In the mid-2000s, UNHCR's Branch Office in Nairobi, Kenya (UNHCR Nairobi) began to re-examine its approach to urban refugees, following a period of strained relations with refugees and NGOs. Over a two-year period, UNHCR reshaped the way it operated in Nairobi, which served as "a real turning point" for an organisation that had "previously had a negative and distrustful relationship with both NGOs and refugees" (Campbell, 2015: 102). The new approach, beginning in 2005, became known as the Nairobi Project<sup>16</sup> and

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<sup>16</sup> The Nairobi Project is sometimes referred to as The Nairobi Initiative, though the latter was a series of lectures and workshops that comprised a part of the broader Nairobi Project (UNHCR Kenya, 2007: 2).

provided a number of key lessons for UNHCR in working with urban refugees. It can be understood as an important precursor to UNHCR's new global strategy on urban displacement, showing the way field offices formed part of an epistemic community, providing comments and expertise on existing policy (Williams and Bellamy, 2012), and offering alternative opportunities on how to respond to a given problem.

The Nairobi Project was "a concrete attempt to examine, understand and respond to the needs of refugees living in the Kenyan capital" (Campbell, et al., 2011: 8). Before it began in 2005, UNHCR had poor relations with other refugee-focused organisations in the city. UNHCR Kenya described their interaction with NGOs as "strained and characterized by mistrust", while UNHCR's reputation for "corruption and insularity" made urban refugees regard them unfavourably (UNHCR Kenya, 2007: 2). A corruption scandal in the late 1990s and early 2000s played a role in discrediting UNHCR in Kenya, with staff labelling the Nairobi office "anarchical" and "riddled with corruption" (Quoted in: UNGA, 2001b: 18). In 2001, news broke of corrupt practices and the role UNHCR staff had played in selling third country resettlement places to refugees (Campbell, 2015: 102). The subsequent investigation found there had been a "systematic breakdown and failure to protect urban refugees" (Wagacha and Guiney, 2008: 95). In addition to the immediate protection challenges this created, the scandal led to the slowing down of casework due to concerns over 'tainted' files (Parker, 2002: 179-181) and a focus on reworking internal procedures (UNHCR Kenya, 2007: 2).

To try to rebuild its damaged image, UNHCR Kenya sought to increase its interaction with others, in particular NGOs and the urban refugee community. These partnerships would become the "cornerstone of UNHCR's urban program" (UNHCR, 2009n: 14), beginning with a survey of NGOs working with refugees in the city, and an informal survey of the refugee population (Campbell et al., 2011: 8). The surveys were followed by a series of workshops and meetings, known as the Nairobi Initiative, and three further participatory assessments. The assessments focused on age, gender, and diversity mainstreaming (AGDM), refugees with specific needs, and urban refugee community structures (Campbell

et al., 2011: 8-9). These efforts marked the “beginning of stronger relationships among UNHCR, NGOs, and refugee communities” (UNHCR Kenya, 2007: 2), further extended during 2006 and 2007. At this point UNHCR Kenya focused on several strategies to identify those at need in Nairobi.<sup>17</sup> Attempts to improve collaboration with others brought about the establishment of two working groups on legal assistance and community services, joint advocacy work, open days at UNHCR’s office and an inter-agency newsletter (UNHCR Kenya, 2007: 2). Greater inclusion of urban refugees saw UNHCR focus on community organisations and self-help groups rather than leaders who were believed to often “hold strong political agendas and be factionalized” (UNHCR Kenya, 2007: 3).

UNHCR Kenya aimed to gain additional information on urban refugees from a variety of sources by hosting regular inter-agency meetings, beginning participatory assessments in 2006 and focusing on refugees with specific needs. The additional information highlighted a number of key issues, such as the persistence of female genital mutilation (FGM) among some urban refugee communities, even though no cases had been reported to UNHCR. As a result of these findings, UNHCR began working with a partner organisation to “research FGM prevalence and practices within the urban refugee community” (UNHCR Kenya, 2007: 3), demonstrating a ‘concrete result’ to participatory findings. The adoption of the ProGres registration software improved UNHCR’s knowledge of the urban refugee population, prevented identity fraud and helped locate those at the greater risk (UNHCR Kenya, 2007: 3). The use of geographic information system (GIS) technology allowed the organisation to digitally map Nairobi, showing where refugees lived, where public services were available, what parts of the city presented particular protection risks and where specific groups (for example female-headed households) were located (UNHCR Kenya, 2007: 4).

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<sup>17</sup> This included: strengthening inter-agency collaboration, involving refugee communities in planning and implementation of programmes, increasing their knowledge of the cities various urban refugee communities, using the ProGres program to improve case management and utilising geographic information system (GIS) technology to better understand where refugees were located (UNHCR Kenya, 2007: 2-4).

UNHCR significantly improved its knowledge of the refugee population in Nairobi, without following the approach outlined in the 1997 Policy.

After improving its knowledge of refugees in Kenya's capital, UNHCR set out a number of protection responses<sup>18</sup>. These covered a wide-range of actions, all of which focused on encouraging integration, self-reliance and collaboration with other actors. Together they showed UNHCR Kenya seeking to challenge the 'benign neglect' (Verdirame and Harrell-Bond, 2005), 'humanitarian containment' (Betts, 2013b) and restrictive encampment (Hyndman, 2000) long dominant in the country, with a broader view on humanitarianism. Achieving the new strategy of assisting refugees required a number of conditions<sup>19</sup> and "a willingness to take risks and to revise assumptions and projects as lessons are learned" (UNHCR Kenya, 2007: 7). Within the first year UNHCR made "significant progress", including a fifty per cent reduction in reports of detention in 2005-2006, increased access to public services for refugees, and funding for the work of twelve community groups (UNHCR Kenya, 2007: 7). In 2010, UNHCR reported that since 2007 more refugees had registered, gained documentation and accessed public education and healthcare than in the previous 15 years combined (Campbell, 2015: 103). UNHCR Kenya believed this new strategy had improved its reputation and relationship with NGOs and refugees (UNHCR Kenya, 2007: 7), though some refugees in Nairobi remained sceptical of the Organisation's willingness to receive criticism (Kassa, 2013: 154).

The 2009 Policy shared a number of similarities with the Nairobi Project, challenging assumptions about who urban refugees were, focusing on improving relations between refugees and UNHCR staff, highlighting the presence of refugee women, children and older people, advocating for refugees' ability to access public services, stressing state responsibility, and noting the role of other

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<sup>18</sup> These cover six themes: community-based protection responses, community outreach, improved delivery of protection information to refugees, promotion of refugees' access to public services, training of government officials, and support for the development of refugee communities (UNHCR Kenya, 2007: 4-5).

<sup>19</sup> UNHCR Kenya listed six conditions necessary for change: accessibility and transparency vis-à-vis operational partners and refugee communities, the use of ProGres, inter-unit collaboration and the vision of senior management, a commitment to the use of participatory assessments, additional financial support, and an openness to change (UNHCR Kenya, 2007: 6-7).

actors, including the police and local authorities. Although the final version of the 2009 Policy did not refer to experiences in Kenya specifically, a draft version from 11 July 2009 did refer to the Nairobi Project in relation to partnerships and protection interventions:

In one country [Kenya], in addition to enhanced access to public services, for instance education, detention rates were halved. Appropriate training and assistance to community groups can assist persons of concern to establish livelihoods. When previously uncoordinated charitable activities start to work in concert new and hitherto untapped synergies emerge. (UNHCR, 2009k: 9)

The lessons of the Nairobi Project were apparent when UNHCR was formulating the 2009 Policy, as the Organisation sought to capitalise on partnerships with different groups and enable similar ‘untapped synergies’. The 2009 Policy focused on improving data collection, using ProGres, visiting areas of cities where refugees lived, addressing suspicion between UNHCR staff and urban refugees, helping establish refugee-led groups and improving access to public education and healthcare services by working with local authorities, all of which were part of the strategy adopted previously in Nairobi. The Nairobi Project did not, however, exist separately from other programmes and policies adopted by UNHCR during this period. In 2001 UNHCR released a new community development approach (UNGA, 2001f) intended to place people of concern at the “centre of operational decision-making” (UNHCR, 2008a: 5), while “The UNHCR Tool for Participatory Assessment in Operations” focused on involving refugees more and working within existing structures (UNHCR, 2006o: 9-10). The Nairobi Project was cited as part of UNHCR’s age, gender, and diversity mainstreaming (AGDM) efforts in the period before the release of the 2009 Policy (Thomas and Beck, 2010: 147). AGDM would become a key principle of the 2009 Policy, suggesting an indirect influence UNHCR Kenya had on the Organisation’s policymaking.

UNHCR staff in Kenya recognised much of the 2009 Policy when it was launched. During a January 2014 interview conducted with a senior UNHCR Kenya staff member, who worked in the Nairobi office throughout the 2000s, the Nairobi

Project was described as a “local initiative” which had “no link directly with headquarters” (Anonymous, A., 2014). The choice of Nairobi as one of the cities to be evaluated by PDES prior to the release of the 2009 Policy was believed to be a sign of the importance of the Nairobi Project:

Being picked as a good practice, I believe that influenced the thinking in the policy developers, in that they would see, “Yes, this is working, it has been made to work, people have put some thought into this.” So if it is replicated globally then it can work. Some of the anecdotes I think were helpful in shaping the thinking in the [2009 urban] policy development. (Anonymous, A., 2014)

When asked how many of the practices from the Nairobi Project they saw present in the 2009 Policy, the same senior UNHCR staff member in Nairobi responded:

So much. I think almost eighty per cent. I would confidently tell you. By the way, when we’re talking implementing the [2009] urban policy in Nairobi we talk of ‘scaling up’. Scaling up the urban refugee policy because we believe we’ve already implemented that... We were implementing the policy without knowing that it is policy. (Anonymous, A., 2014)

They describe how prior to the 2009 Policy, UNHCR Kenya was already working to reach out to refugees in urban areas outside of the capital, carrying out urban registration, working on urban livelihoods, conducting participatory assessments and promoting the use of local public services for urban refugees, including integrating refugee children into Kenyan schools (Anonymous, A., 2014). When the 2009 Policy was released, the only parts felt to be notably different from existing practice in Kenya, were the use of cash transfers and technology (Anonymous, A., 2014). These two points were mentioned prominently in UNHCR’s experience with Iraqi urban refugees in the Middle East (Crisp et al., 2009).

Other accounts corroborate the extent to which the Nairobi Project was reflected in the 2009 Policy, suggesting the influence UNHCR’s experience in Kenya’s capital had on the Organisation’s changing approach to the challenge of urban displacement. One senior UNHCR protection officer interviewed in September 2011 noted the 2009 Policy allowed “UNHCR Kenya to be more assertive in its

efforts to reach out to urban-based refugees in Nairobi. In many ways, it served as a way to confirm what was already being done in practice” (Quoted in: Lambo, 2012: 6). After the release of the 2009 Policy, staff in Nairobi were said to be “gratified to see that it validated the approach they were pursuing” (Campbell et al., 2011: 9). According to one senior staff member in Kenya, “our first reaction to the policy was one of relief. We finally had some official justification for what we were doing and we were strengthened in our ability to advocate on behalf of urban refugees with other stakeholders” (Quoted in: Campbell et al., 2011: 9). Elizabeth Campbell (2015: 103) has similarly argued that the 2009 Policy “solidified and supported” what UNHCR Kenya was already doing, additionally providing, for those in Nairobi advocating greater protection in the city, a “strong foundation on which to base their arguments and recommendations”.

UNHCR field offices ‘legitimated ideas and policies’ by enacting global policies locally and demonstrating their value, with the case of the Nairobi Project showing they can also play a significant part in “generating ideas and policies” (Weiss et al., 2009: 128-129). In 2011 PDES published a review of the implementation of the 2009 Policy in Nairobi. It noted the Nairobi Project “anticipated many elements of the new urban refugee policy that UNHCR was to introduce four years later in 2009” (Campbell et al., 2011: 9). It specifically mentioned UNHCR Kenya’s work with new partners, engagement with urban refugee populations, and recognition of refugees right to reside and access protection in urban areas (Campbell et al., 2011: 9). According to an internal document from UNHCR Kenya, the release of the 2009 Policy “yielded great hope and expectations for enhanced political and financial support to the urban programme” (Quoted in: Campbell et al., 2011: 9). Idil Lambo (2012: 6) has argued that the Nairobi Project “compliments [sic] UNHCR’s relatively new urban policy”, but in fact the 2009 Policy is better described as complementing and legitimising the work the UNHCR field office in Nairobi was already doing, highlighting the need to consider relationships between members of the second UN based in headquarters and those in the field, particularly the way in which a field office in one country might influence shifts in global policy.

Many specific aspects of the Nairobi Project are reflected in the 2009 Policy, from the need to interact more directly with urban refugees to the importance of using existing public services. Officials within international organisations “often insist that part of their mission is to spread, inculcate, and enforce global values and norms” (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004: 33), which to an extent UNHCR’s staff in Nairobi were involved in doing. The work in Nairobi challenged existing negative attitudes of some UNHCR staff members about working in urban areas (UNHCR, 2009b: 14) and the preference for encampment (Verdirame and Pobjoy, 2013). The experiences in Kenya’s capital indirectly shaped the view of urban displacement within UNHCR. By 2009, not all UNHCR staff supported working in urban areas, but the Organisation adopted a new policy casting urban displacement as a common feature of global displacement in the twenty-first century. UNHCR increasingly asserted that, to achieve its mandate, it had to work in towns and cities.

The change in how urban displacement was viewed by UNHCR Kenya was addressed in one of its own internal documents, which noted, “a slow change of mindset is being observed, towards some form of acceptance of a growing urban refugee population as the phenomenon has become a reality” (Quoted in: Campbell et al., 2011: 10). This would contribute to a broader shift in position by UNHCR as a whole, both in the lead up to and in the years following the release of the 2009 Policy. Some of UNHCR’s field offices contributed to the growing epistemic community around urban displacement at this time. Their work showed the 1997 Policy was not being enacted and that a change in policy was needed. When formalising the content of the 2009 Policy, PDES drew on experiences of various field offices during this period to shape the contents of the new approach, highlighting the need to consider the work of different parts of UNHCR and how they interact with one another as part of the policymaking process.

#### 4. Pressure from Above



Chapters four and five have shown members of the first UN had a limited engagement with urban displacement, but between 2004 and 2009 states increased their focus on the issue. The change followed continual mention of urban displacement by parts of UNHCR, most notably EPAU and PDES, and the High Commissioner, while donor and host states saw the extension of urban-based protection as being in their interest. As discussed in chapter five, local integration in towns and cities in host states suited donor states increasingly concerned with security and the movement of displaced people towards their borders. In some cases, for instance in Latin America, host states increasingly perceived urban-based assistance as being in their interests, as well as those of refugees. States did not directly dictate to UNHCR how it should respond to urban displacement, but their influence was felt in general guidance and the placing of boundaries on UNHCR's mission creep. As will be shown in the chapter, UNHCR's largest single donor, the United States, was influential in curtailing the Organisation's attempts to expand the scope of its work. The analysis in the chapter challenges claims that states set preferences for organisations, and also demonstrates states continue to restrict organisational expansion. In contrast the chapter suggests, as Barnett and Finnemore (2004: 27-28) have argued, there exist different types of relationships between states and international organisations, with epistemic communities able to shape how states understand a global issue. The epistemic community was successful in framing urban displacement, ensuring states viewed the issue as a pertinent one. However, when UNHCR sought to expand its work in urban areas to include internally displaced people it chose a narrower focus, following criticism from the United States. UNHCR's attempt to expand in response to the urbanisation of displacement reflects the claim discussed in chapter two that where agency slack exists, organisations seek to maximise their powers and engage in mission creep. But it also demonstrates that states can and do limit the slack available to agents, which in turn prevents further mission creep. The case of UNHCR's response to urban displacement reflects the need to consider ways in which the first and second UN interact with one another, and how this impacts the policymaking of international organisations.

The following section studies pressures coming from above UNHCR during this time, including from states through ExCom, as there is “arguably no forum that is more important in terms of international refugee protection than the annual ExCom sessions” (Barutciski, 2012: 133). In 2004 state interests during ExCom were focused on security following the beginning of the global ‘war on terror’ and the increased humanitarian needs that followed. In a review of its security policy, UNHCR noted the “United Nations, ICRC and other humanitarian actors have unequivocally been targeted by terrorist groups” (UNHCR, 2004a: 3). These security concerns were linked with urban refugee populations described as “increasingly restive”, including protests, threats to staff, and acts of self-harm (UNHCR, 2004a: 9). Working with urban refugees caused the most apprehension and “in theory heighten the risk to UNHCR staff members” (UNHCR, 2004a: 21-22). This attitude not only echoed themes found in the 1997 Policy, namely that urban refugees were a security risk, but was representative of broader concern within United Nations at the time over safety in urban areas, increasing after the bombing of the UNs’ office in Baghdad in August 2005.

During 2004, 2005 and 2006, urban displacement was addressed at ExCom but UNHCR was not instructed to change its policy. During meetings and addresses at this time, good practices and difficulties existing in urban areas around the world were mentioned (UNGA, 2004d; UNGA, 2004e: 15; UNGA, 2004b: 4; UNGA, 2004f: 52-53, 57; UNGA, 2005g: 3; UNGA, 2005m; UNGA, 2005l: 1; UNGA, 2005b: 15; UNGA, 2005a: 5-10; UNGA, 2005f: 26; UNHCR, 2006p; UNHCR, 2006k: 3; UNGA, 2006b: 14; UNGA, 2006d). These discussions addressed not only refugees, but also IDPs and returnees in urban areas. It was repeatedly noted that changes in existing policy were underway. In 2004 EPAU was said to be reviewing existing practices (UNGA, 2004a: 5) and it was noted a structured dialogue with NGOs had occurred to improve protection in urban areas (UNHCR, 2004c: 2). The following year, the revision of UNHCR’s policy was described as an EPAU project due for completion by late 2005 or early 2006 (UNGA, 2005d: 2). Similarly the ExCom Standing Committee in September 2005 noted that “NGOs were heavily involved in the review and drafting of a policy on refugees in urban settings in collaboration with several UNHCR Headquarters units” (UNGA, 2005k: 12). The

creation of PDES in 2006 promoted a review of UNHCR's existing research and evaluation work and a new urban policy was expected during the last quarter of 2006 (UNGA, 2006c: 3). The planned replacement for the 1997 Policy was expected to acknowledge the growing presence of refugees in urban areas, clarify UNHCR's responsibilities, and integrate the Organisation's revised strategy on stated issues, including community-involvement and age, gender, and diversity mainstreaming (UNGA, 2006c: 3).

Despite the expected release of a new policy in late 2006, by the time of the Fifty-Eighth ExCom in October 2007, a replacement to the 1997 Policy had not been released. The United Nations' Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) released a report to ExCom members covering the period 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007. During this year, OIOS released 25 audit reports that included a total of 225 recommendations. OIOS reported that:

There are a number of recommendations which have been outstanding for three or more years, and which need to be addressed to strengthen internal control and to improve the effectiveness of UNHCR's activities. These include: the revision of UNHCR's Policy on Refugees in Urban Areas; the deployment of staff on emergency operations; and the management and reporting on central and regional stockpiles (UNGA, 2007d).

OIOS's work made it clear to state representatives composing ExCom that the replacement of the 1997 Policy was an outstanding issue. OIOS partly excused the lack of a revision, by stating work of UNHCR's Structural and Management Change project had "led in some cases to a pause in the implementation of many of OIOS' critical recommendations, mainly in Headquarters" (UNGA, 2007d: 8). Nevertheless, at this point it was a decade since the 1997 Policy had been issued and states remained largely silent on the issue. The failure of states to highlight the lack of a replacement for the 1997 Policy indicates their limited interest in the matter, but equally the failure of UNHCR's accountability mechanism. ExCom's meetings were meant in part to allow states to question UNHCR and make the Organisation answerable for its actions, in the presence of both donor and host states. However, neither sought to clarify why UNHCR was still to release a new urban policy as promised. The disinterest of states was despite discussion of urban displacement during meetings of ExCom (UNGA, 2007a: 67;

UNGA, 2007c) and the clear reference to Iraqi refugees as the largest urban caseload ever assisted by UNHCR (UNGA, 2007a: 3).

A change occurred in 2008 when states began to ask questions over the new urban policy promised previously. This followed efforts by the epistemic community to ensure urban displacement was of increased concern to states. In the previous year, urbanisation had begun to be framed as a 'mega-trend' with serious consequences for displacement. At the Standing Committee meeting in March 2008, "one [delegate] recalled that a policy on urban refugees also needed to be finalized" (UNGA, 2008f: 4). There were a number of points requiring follow-up action, including a "request for information on policies on urban refugees" (UNGA, 2008f: 14). Later in the year the Director of the Division of External Relations presented the Global Report on activities in 2007, to which delegates put forth a number of suggestions of "areas for improvement", one of which was "policies and programmes, notably in urban environments" (UNGA, 2008g: 10). Similarly following the presentation to the Standing Committee of the Note on International Protection by the Director of the Division on International Protection Services, "several delegations asked about progress [made] on [the] urban refugee policy" (UNGA, 2008g: 3). In response to these queries, the Director said a new policy was due to be made available in August 2008 (UNGA, 2008g: 3). Although this date was not met, 2008 saw increased pressure placed on UNHCR by state representatives to address this outstanding issue. At ExCom's Annual Meeting in 2008, the Regional Bureau for Africa highlighted the problem of protracted refugee situations in camps and urban areas (UNHCR, 2008k: 1), while Guterres noted that PDES had completed an initial study of urban IDPs and was "assisting the Division of Protection Services in the finalization of a new UNHCR policy on refugees in urban areas" (UNGA, 2008b: 3). The challenges faced by displaced people were clear to states and the broader United Nations system, but there were still only limited calls for UNHCR to introduce a replacement to the 1997 Policy.

During 2009 calls from states for UNHCR to address the outstanding issue of its new urban policy continued. These occurred at meetings of the Standing

Committee in March and June 2009 (UNGA, 2009c: 5; UNGA, 2009j: 3; UNGA, 2009k: 14), to which the Director of International Protection Services (DIPS) stated a new policy was being finalised and would be issued before the High Commissioner's Dialogue in December 2009 (UNGA, 2009c: 6; UNGA, 2009j: 4). On 29 July 2009, OIOS published its internal audit for 2008-2009. The audit explained the slow movement of change, stressing a new urban policy was imminent, and attempted to shift the responsibility for the lack of policy change elsewhere. It noted that in 2001 OIOS had "recommended that the UNHCR Division of Operational Support review the UNHCR policy on Refugees in Urban Areas and provide clearer guidance and criteria for the continual payment of financial assistance, as well as for assistance to vulnerable irregular movers" (UNGA, 2009e: 15) and also that in 2008 "an extensive consultation on the draft was conducted with all stakeholders", followed by a "thorough re-drafting of the policy that was presented to the UNHCR field policy reference group in the third quarter of 2008" while in March 2009 the new "policy was brought to the attention of the Senior Management Committee" (UNGA, 2009e: 15-16). The Committee provided more guidance and "it was agreed that the policy would be further fine-tuned in order to be finalised for provisional release by the 2009 session of the Executive Committee" (UNGA, 2009e: 16). The involvement of OIOS, an independent office of the United Nations Secretariat, added to increased calls from states during 2008 and 2009 for UNHCR to address.

States were supportive of the High Commissioner's decision to focus the Third Dialogue on Protection Challenges in December 2009, on urban displacement (UNGA, 2009i: 10; UNGA, 2009m: 12). States hoped this would "shed light on the implications for mounting humanitarian operations to protect and assist populations in urban settings" (UNGA, 2009l: 9). Meanwhile there were no resolutions by either the General Assembly or the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) discussing issues surrounding urban displacement between 2004 and 2009. The limited though sustained pressure placed on UNHCR by states from 2008 onwards was important in helping bring about the release of the 2009 Policy, although it demonstrates the lack of accountability of UNHCR during this

period. Requests for the release of a new policy were answered by UNHCR, but the deadlines they set passed without explanation.

The case of urban IDPs provides an interesting example of the influence members of the first UN had on UNHCR's policymaking. It supports principal-agent theories' understanding of organisations expanding within available agency slack, though albeit ultimately curtailed by state preferences. During the 1990s and 2000s, in part due to external pressure, UNHCR "extended major efforts on assisting IDPs" (Weiss and Korn, 2006: xv). It was not until later in this period that the situation faced by urban IDPs gained specific attention. During 2009, urban IDPs were mentioned throughout ExCom's various meetings (UNGA, 2009f: 2, 11; UNHCR, 2009l: 3), often alongside other categories of displaced people in urban areas, though there was also a "scaling down of the IDP advisory team" (UNGA, 2009c: 7). Prior to this, PDES's reports and evaluations and the *New Issues in Refugee Research* series, had discussed urban IDP issues around the world (Altai Consulting, 2009: 50; Crisp et al., 2008: 12-15; Duffield et al., 2008: 4; Savage et al., 2007; Wright et al., 2007).

By 2009, PDES had increased its focus on the issue of urban IDPs (PDES, 2009), and their work was expected to inform the High Commissioner's Dialogue at the end of the year (UNHCR, 2009l: 3). In 2009 the *New Issues in Refugee Research* series published two research papers specifically focused on urban IDPs, the authors of which both worked for PDES. One paper highlighted that "IDP movements to urban areas remained largely neglected until recently", despite the fact "approximately half of the global IDP and refugees are living in cities" (Lyytinen (2009: 1). The other paper claimed that urban IDPs had been overlooked and experienced extreme hardship as a result, noting that while there had been a review of the 1997 Policy, there was no comparable initiative to review existing policies for urban IDPs, creating "real opportunity for UNHCR to take the lead in the protection of urban IDPs" (Fielden (2008a: 17). This opportunity, however, had been hampered "by political and physical capacities" (Fielden, 2008a: 17), suggesting a lack of support from those above UNHCR. Similar judgements had been made during a study of Sudan in 2002, which had

claimed ignorance of urban displacement in Khartoum by the United Nations and foreign voluntary agencies amounted to an “international injustice” (Eldin and Bannaga, 2002: 71).

UNHCR was criticised for having “generally ignored urban IDPs” (Fielden, 2008a: 17), when they were specifically excluded from the 2009 Policy (UNHCR, 2009b: 3) without a comparable policy being developed for IDPs in towns and cities. In May 2007, UNHCR’s IDP Operations recognised that many urban IDPs may not wish to return to their homes (UNHCR, 2007k: 2). Despite the attention given to urban IDPs, it was made clear at ExCom that UNHCR should not overstretch itself. The ‘Chairman’s Summary of the General Debate’ at the Fifty-Eighth ExCom Session in October 2007 noted that “UNHCR is not the “IDP agency”, and several delegates commented that the Organisation’s work with IDPs should not come at the “expense of its protection of refugees” (UNGA, 2007e: 21). As noted previously, there were insufficient “political and physical capacities” for UNHCR to formally assist urban IDPs (Fielden, 2008a: 17).

The influence of states upon UNHCR occurred through less public means. One important example being the pressure applied by the United States, UNHCR’s single largest donor state, upon the Organisation over the inclusion of urban IDPs in the 2009 Policy. On 8 January 2010, following the urban-focused High Commissioner’s Dialogue in December 2009, the U.S. Mission in Switzerland, which is the United States’ diplomatic mission to the United Nations in Geneva, sent a cable to the U.S. Secretary of State. The cable, not made public and later leaked to the whistle-blower website Wikileaks, was entitled ‘UNHCR Highlights Displaced Persons in Urban Settings’. It provided an overview of what had been discussed at the Dialogue and made clear the United States’ preference for UNHCR’s work to remain focused on refugee assistance, rather than further expansion into development work or internal displacement. The cable stated that the “USG [United States Government] urged UNHCR to focus on its core mandate, refugees and stateless persons (rather than IDPs and urban development)” (U.S. Mission in Switzerland, 2010).

The cable provides a clear example of the preferences of a key donor state in the period and the impact this had on UNHCR's policymaking. The cable reported that NGOs had "pressed for... a UNHCR policy on urban IDPs" and that UNHCR planned for an "ambitious agenda to be rolled out over time" (U.S. Mission to Switzerland, 2010). UNHCR planned to "harness the momentum of this event", by "slightly modifying UNHCR's urban refugee policy to incorporate views expressed at the Dialogue" (U.S. Mission to Switzerland, 2010). The United States' delegation made their position clear, namely that UNHCR should limit its ambitions, and following this, the Organisation "subsequently withdrew from its list of follow-up actions the creation of an urban IDP policy" (U.S. Mission to Switzerland, 2010). Although there were reservations within UNHCR about expanding to assist urban IDPs, this example demonstrates the direct influence one key donor state had on the Organisation's response to the urbanisation of displacement, and the ability of states to limit mission creep. Although the 2009 Policy would benefit refugees, urban IDPs would remain in policy-terms as "ignored displaced persons" (Fielden, 2008a), as a direct result of the influence of states.

Another example of states' roles in urban displacement during this period emerged in Latin America. In 2004 government officials met in Mexico City on the twentieth anniversary of the Cartagena Declaration on Refugees to discuss refugee protection in the region. The meeting found that the region's most significant migratory challenge arose from the situation of Colombians living around their country's border and the growing number of urban refugees (Regional Refugee Instruments & Related, 2004). The resulting Mexico Declaration and Plan of Action proposed three programmes to respond to these issues: *Ciudades Solidarias* (Cities of Solidarity), *Fronteras Solidarias* (Borders of Solidarity) and *Reasentamiento Solidario* (Solidarity Resettlement). If the Nairobi Project demonstrated the important role a UNHCR field office could have on influencing the way the Organisation responded to working in urban areas, the Cities of Solidarity programme showed the role of members of the first UN.



The Cities of Solidarity programme sought to mitigate possible ‘irregular’ migration and “provide effective protection which encompasses enjoyment of social, economic and cultural rights and observance of the obligations of refugees” (Regional Refugee Instruments & Related, 2004). It aimed to promote both self-reliance and local integration, achieved through increased access to sources of employment, micro-credit systems, and documentation for both UNHCR and NGOs. The programme was discussed at a number of ExCom meetings throughout the 2004 to 2009 period, particularly in 2009, when the programme was commended for its success (UNGA, 2009f: 12, 17; UNHCR, 2009o: 2) and for serving as the blueprint for UNHCR’s strategy in Latin America (UNHCR, 2009o: 2). The Cities of Solidarity programme is an example of the influence host states had on UNHCR’s response to the urbanisation of displacement.

Prior to the High Commissioner’s Dialogue in December 2009, UNHCR described the plan adopted in Latin America as “a visionary, strategic model for a better future” (UNHCR, 2009i), “a giant step forward in extending protection to refugee populations” (UNHCR, 2009q), and “a powerful model to the [urban] challenge” (UNHCR, 2009q). It praised the work the state-led Cities of Solidarity programme had done in improving the registration process, regional cooperation, and integration and self-reliance in urban areas (UNHCR, 2009i). The focus of the 2009 Policy on issues such as the need for documentation, promotion of livelihoods and self-reliance, and improving registration had all previously been part of the programme operating in Latin America. Similarly, the 2009 Policy placed great importance on the need to better involve new actors in urban areas, including mayors and local authorities, something that had been done in Latin America. Mayors and other local actors were important in the programme, and would later feature prominently in the 2009 Policy (UNHCR, 2009b: 6). Roberto Chahuan, the Mayor of La Calera in Chile, noted his city’s involvement in the programme had come about after they were approached by UNHCR (Varoli, 2010: 46). Although the Cities of Solidarity programme was initiated by states, UNHCR was deeply involved in its implementation.

The Cities of Solidarity programme and reactions to the issue of urban IDPs demonstrate that members of the first UN helped shape UNHCR's policymaking on urban displacement. In the first case states focused on issues including self-reliance and livelihoods, though, as has been discussed previously, these were already of concern to EPAU and PDES. The case of urban IDPs suggests states do more than "establish the priorities and pay the bills" (Weiss et al., 2009: 125). The United States was able to curtail UNHCR's expansion when the Organisation sought to move its policymaking in a direction they did not support. As principal-agent theories suggest, organisations expand within the agency slack afforded to them, but this can be halted by states, demonstrating the continued importance of members of the first UN, but consistent with the different types of relationships existing between organisations and states outlined by Barnett and Finnemore (2004: 27-28). UNHCR sought to shape the states' perception of urban displacement, but did not ultimately "challenge the core interests of dominant states directly" (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004: 28). Although pressure for policy change from above was limited during this period, the first UN helped shape the extent of UNHCR's engagement in urban areas at the time in which the 2009 Policy was released.

## 5. Pressure from Below

As discussed in chapters four and five, there had long been pressure from the third UN for a change in UNHCR's response to urban displacement. The pressure from below grew as part of the critique of the March 1997 Policy and expanded during EPAU's evaluation of the 1997 Policy. NGOs, academics, and independent consultants formed part of the growing epistemic community focused on urban displacement during this period. Their involvement continued between 2004 and 2009, as the focus of academics and prominent individuals helped ensure the issue continued to receive attention, and that UNHCR was held accountable for its failure to replace the 1997 Policy. As Géraldine Chatelard and Tim Morris (2011: 4) have asserted, "the urban turn in refugee studies, but also in advocacy, has had a strong impact on policy". There was thus a clear connection between the focus of members of the third UN and UNHCR's policymaking. Their calls for

change would support those already coming from within the Organisation, reflecting claims, that epistemic communities often have a strong advocacy component (Williams and Bellamy, 2012).

During the Annual Consultation with NGOs between 2004 and 2008, NGOs intensified the attention to urban displacement, discussed related issues, and called on UNHCR to replace the 1997 Policy. At the 2004 Annual Consultation, UNHCR noted two working groups had been established to review the Organisation's practices (UNHCR, 2004h: 6). NGOs also described urban refugees as a 'protection gap' (UNHCR, 2004h: Annex V; UNHCR, 2005j: Annex VIII) and detailed the "myriad of challenges and protection risks" faced in urban areas around the world (UNHCR, 2008l: 23). NGOs highlighted difficulties arising from implementing the 1997 Policy (UNHCR, 2004h: 18), called on host states to do more (UNHCR, 2005j: Annex VIII; UNGA, 2006a: 3) and sought to address the protection imbalance between refugees in urban areas and other locations (UNHCR, 2008l: 11). However, urban displacement was not always a central issue. For example, in 2006 it was not mentioned during the NGO's Statement to the General Debate (UNHCR, 2006l: Annex VII), nor did subsequent evaluations completed by participants highlight it as an issue needing more attention (UNHCR, 2006m).

NGOs addressed the failure of UNHCR to release a replacement to the 1997 Policy, criticising UNHCR for not publicly releasing and enacting a new policy (UNHCR, 2004h: Annex V, Annex VIII; UNHCR, 2005j: Annex III; UNGA, 2006a: 4; UNHCR, 2006l: 10). In 2006, NGOs stressed the "immediate need for these guidelines in the field" and called on UNHCR to "issue its urban refugee policy and share it with NGOs as soon as possible" (UNHCR, 2006l: 9-10). The criticism was targeted generally at UNHCR, while NGOs commended EPAU for involving them in their work (UNHCR, 2004h: Annex VIII; UNGA, 2006e: 5), including EPAU's review of the 1997 Policy and their creation of the 2003 Guiding Principles, which NGOs felt would "help UNHCR more consistently, coherently, and effectively address" urban displacement (UNHCR, 2004h: Annex VIII). In 2008, when the "long-awaited draft urban refugee policy" (UNHCR, 2008l: 11)

had been circulated, NGOs called on UNHCR to conduct “either a pilot or field testing of the policy in different settings” and provide “a guide to implementation” (UNHCR, 2008l: 11).

NGOs focused on a number of other issues between 2004 and 2009. These included detention, the Cluster Approach, repatriation, gender, resettlement, children, human rights, host government responsibilities, sexual and gender based violence, and the asylum-migration nexus (UNHCR, 2004h: Annex IX; UNHCR, 2005j: Annex VI, Annex VII; UNHCR, 2006l: 13-24; UNHCR, 2008l: 5-15; Dayal, 2008). In particular, the focus of NGOs on encampment, local integration, and IDPs influenced UNHCR’s shifting strategy on urban displacement. In 2004 the United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI) began a campaign to end refugee warehousing, focusing on ending refugee segregation through encampment and promotion of freedom of movement. Through Annual Consultations, NGOs would similarly call on UNHCR to focus on ‘hidden’ refugee populations (UNHCR, 2006l: 1). Gil Loescher’s Keynote Speech at the 2005 Annual Consultation addressed the “virtual states of limbo” (UNHCR, 2005j: Annex IV) many displaced people lived in. Loescher’s speech drew a comparison between the protracted situations that existed around the world in 2005 and the challenges in Europe after the Second World War (UNHCR, 2005j: Annex IV). The ‘Statement to the General Debate’, ‘Statement of NGOs on International Protection’, and ‘Rapporteur’s Report’ at the 2007 Annual Consultation did not focus on urban displacement (UNHCR, 2007i: Annex VI, Annex VIII; UNHCR, 2007m), but attention was given to the ‘forgotten refugees’ living in “appalling camps and urban ghettos for up to 20 years” (UNHCR, 2007i: Annex III). However, it was Guterres who, during his speech at the 2007 Annual Consultation, declared all organisations must “go beyond a commitment to improve life in the camps” (UNHCR, 2007i: Annex V). In September 2009 USCRI issued a statement, signed by over 150 organisations and ‘notable individuals’, calling on UNHCR to focus on finding solutions to end refugee warehousing (USCRI, 2009). The anti-warehousing campaign was primarily focused on stemming the protracted time people spent in camps, although it also encouraged exploration of other locations for displaced people to receive

assistance. The point suggests the interaction and support offered between the second and third UN.

NGOs focused their attention on local integration during the period discussed in the chapter. During the 2005 Annual Consultation plenary session, Oswald Kasaizi of the Tanzanian Relief to Development Society insisted that local integration should not be forgotten as a valuable durable solution (UNHCR, 2005j: 25). Representing UNHCR on the panel, Erika Feller of the Department of International Protection cited the 2005 'Conclusion on Local Integration', and stressed the value of integration as part of each of the three durable solutions (UNHCR, 2005j: 25). The 'Conclusion on Local Integration' stressed the "important place that local integration can have" and urged "states and UNHCR to continue working proactively on local integration" (UNHCR, 2005a). This document signalled an important move towards embracing the 'forgotten solution' (Jacobsen, 2001) of local integration, discussed in chapter five. Only three years earlier, in 2002, as part of an NGO Statement on Local Integration during the Global Consultation on International Protection, NGOs had argued that, "although local integration is always listed among the durable solutions, in fact it is rarely used in cases of mass influx and has, in that context, almost become a 'non-solution'" (Quoted in: Fielden, 2008b: 1). As discussed earlier in this chapter, the possibility for local integration would form part of the 2009 Policy.

Assistance to IDPs was a prominent theme of the 2008 Annual Consultation with NGOs, where it was noted that around the world a large number of IDPs seek shelter in urban areas and with host communities (UNHCR, 2008l: 19). The Rapporteur's Report mentioned problems existing in aiding IDPs, including NGO's penchant for assisting those "in the media spotlight more than those hidden from view" and the "tendency to deliver assistance according to the status of a group rather than on the basis of equality of need" (UNHCR, 2008j). As a result of these and other issues, there was a "tendency for UNHCR to overlook urban IDPs in finding durable solutions" and a resulting need to explore how to utilise the 1998 Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement to assist those in

urban areas (UNHCR, 2008l: 6). There were also calls for a double session on urban refugees and IDPs to take place at the 2009 Annual Consultation. At the time, NGOs hoped to assist urban IDPs by using the 1998 Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, rather than a revised urban policy or separate urban IDP policy. At ExCom in 2007, UNHCR was reminded that it was not the “IDP agency” and that its work with IDPs should not come at the expense of its protection of refugees (UNGA, 2007e). As discussed earlier in the chapter, it was PDES that focused on the exclusion of urban IDPs and the possible need for an urban IDP policy during 2008 and 2009 (Barnes, 2009; Lyytinen, 2009).

The most attention afforded to urban displacement at any Annual Consultation during this period was in 2009. The panels for the Asia and Pacific, Americas, and the Middle East North Africa bureaux all discussed urban displacement. During the Asia and Pacific Bureau panel it was noted that nearly ninety per cent of the 12.2 million people of concern to UNHCR in the region lived in urban areas (UNHCR, 2009p: 6). The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) panel stressed that the region was the largest host to refugees globally and the majority of displaced people lived in urban areas (UNHCR, 2009p: 7-8). During the side meetings, the presence of a substantial number of ‘forgotten refugees’ in Latin America was acknowledged, with the majority of these refugees ‘forgotten’ in urban areas (UNHCR, 2009p: 36). Latin America was similarly noted as a region of substantial urban displacement with over seventy per cent of displaced people living in towns and cities (UNHCR, 2009p: 36). In addition to the frequent recognition of the substantial number of urban displaced globally, the 2009 Annual Consultation was the first time a double panel was devoted specifically to urban displacement. In 2008 only one partner profile specifically mentioned working in urban areas, although a number of participants referred to working in urban areas as part of their profiles. UN-Habitat, listed as one of the partners, stressed its long involvement in urban issues. It was described as being established in the late 1970s when “urbanisation and its impacts were less significant on the agenda of [the] United Nations”, inferring urbanisation now received significantly more attention than it did in the past (UNHCR, 2009m: 91). The 2009 Annual Consultation saw greater attention devoted to urban

displacement than before with an increased number of NGOs claiming it as part of their work.

In the 'Rapporteur's Report' of the 2009 Annual Consultation, Elizabeth Campbell articulated the volume of discussion centred on urban displacement, including the new upcoming policy and need for a more rights and community-based approach (UNHCR, 2009p: 4-11). The Report noted the need to produce a best practices handbook, run a pilot implementation of the new policy and address issues not covered sufficiently during the urban sessions, including urban IDPs. At the Closing Plenary Session, Guterres reiterated his previous references to 'mega trends', including urbanisation (UNHCR, 2009p: 11). The 2009 Annual Consultation had more discussion concerning displaced people in towns and cities than any Consultation in the past, but it often remained representatives of UNHCR, such as Guterres, who spoke the loudest on the subject.

As shown in chapter five, NGOs often makeup the largest part of the third UN, though they were not alone in influencing UNHCR's response to the urbanisation of displacement. One section of the third UN that played a part during this period was 'eminent persons' who often provide "some of the loudest and most challenging voices" (Weiss et al., 2009: 132). These people possess a certain type of expertise, "combining knowledge with political punch and access to decision makers", and are "influential in nourishing ideas" (Weiss et al., 2009: 133). When these people are part of epistemic communities, they add to its ability to advocate for change. In similar terms, temporary international civil servants have played an important role in "generating and circulating ideas, thereby imitating process of legal and institutional change in the UN system" (Bode, 2015: 1). These "empowered individuals", including second UN members such as Francis Deng and Mahbub ul Haq, the creator of the *Human Development Reports* and the Human Development Index (HDI), are key to understanding "the emergence and initial spread of ideas" (Bode, 2015: 1). However, the concept can be extended to those who are exclusively or primarily within the third UN. Deng, for example, was a part of both the second and third UN, as an employee of the

Brookings Institute and the UN's first Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons. Haq, meanwhile, was at various stages the Finance Minister of Pakistan, Governor of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Director of Policy Planning at the World Bank, a Special Advisor at the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and an academic in the United States, thus moving between each of the three UNs. Individuals in the third UN, like those in the first or second, play an important role in forming opinions, spreading ideas, and shaping policy. It is important to acknowledge that individuals often move between these categories or exist in more than one at the same time, challenging attempts to highlight the boundaries between the three UNs (Bode, 2015: 52).

One eminent person who focused on urban displacement during this period was Noor Al-Hussein (Queen Noor of Jordan). Noor addressed the 2008 Annual Consultation with NGOs and articulated the impact of urban displacement in the Middle East. In Noor's speech she argued the Iraqi refugees found in cities including Amman, Damascus, and Cairo reflected a global trend of displaced people moving to urban areas. These refugees struggled to "survive among the underclass in cities in the developing world" (UNHCR, 2008l). Noor stressed the "pressing need for the international community, for UNHCR and its partners, to creatively address this particularly challenging, developing phenomenon" (UNHCR, 2008l). According to Noor, working in urban areas requires "us to rethink traditional approaches" (UNHCR, 2008l); the 'us' here referring to those attending the 2008 Annual Consultation, particularly NGO and UNHCR staff. In addition to representing a clear example of a prominent person calling for greater action on urban displacement, Noor demonstrates the overlapping nature of the three UN categories. Noor constitutes a part of the third UN as an eminent person, but she has also been employed by NGOs. During Noor's Address to the 2008 Annual Consultation, she referred to the work of the Noor Al Hussain Foundation, an NGO she founded, and Refugees International, an NGO on which she sat on the Board of Directors. As discussed in chapter three, conceptualising the three UNs as a 'triptych' stresses division, when in fact fluidity exists between the categories, which is key to understanding the



influence of certain individuals. In this instance, Noor's influential position comes from her role within the Jordanian state, a part of the first UN, though she draws legitimacy from her direct involvement with NGOs, a part of the third. In the case of Noor, her position within both the first and third UNs were not in opposition to one another, but in other cases an individual may support whomever they hold greater allegiance to, or the more powerful actor. Noor provided an important voice in calls to better address urban displacement, though she did not directly call on UNHCR to change its existing policy, nor were her points different from those already coming from within the organisation.

As discussed in chapter five, pressure for change came from academics and independent consultants. These individuals would sometimes take on positions within each of the three UNs. For example, Elizabeth Campbell has at different points been an academic, NGO staff member, UNHCR consultant and employee of the U.S. State Department. Campbell demonstrates existence of a "revolving door" between the three UNs (Weiss et al., 2009: 129), demonstrating the fluidity between the three, rather than the boundaries between them, categorised as a 'triptych' (Jolly et al., 2009: 5). Critiques of UNHCR's approach to urban displacement had often been channelled through the *New Research in Refugee Studies* series, but in this period a growing amount of literature on the issue was published elsewhere. Géraldine Chatelard and Tim Morris (2011: 4) have claimed that academic interest on "self-settled refugees" emerged in the early 2000s as a direct result of UNHCR's policy concerns and the release of the 1997 Policy. However, it was not until the mid-2000s that scholarly publications belatedly recognised the large number of urban refugees (Chatelard and Morris, 2011: 4). This overdue acknowledgement suggests much of the academic interest and output followed UNHCR's policymaking, rather than helped to drive it.

In 2006, the *Journal of Refugee Studies* released a special issue on the topic of urban refugees. This issue included articles on urban refugees in Cairo, Tokyo, Kampala, Nairobi, Vancouver, London, and Toronto. These articles covered a range of issues, but in general the pieces made either limited or no mention of

UNHCR's policy on urban refugees (Grabska, 2006; Hopkins, 2006; Landau, 2006; Hyndman and McLean, 2006; Banki, 2006). Karen Jacobsen's (2006) introductory article noted EPAU's attempts to "clarify the old [urban] policy" and "develop a new one underpinned by guiding principles". This article benefited from "input on UNHCR's urban policy review process by Bob White" (Jacobsen, 2006: 286), which may have led to the belief that a replacement to the 1997 Policy was imminent. Noting that EPAU's review process was still underway, Jacobsen's references to "the revised policy" (Jacobsen, 2006: 277) and "the new UNHCR policy" (Jacobsen, 2006: 278) did not suggest concern at the 1997 Policy still not being formally replaced. In her article on urban refugees in Nairobi, Elizabeth Campbell (2006: 400) outlined the "legal limbo" refugees in Kenya's capital faced and argued for the "creation of a written urban refugee policy" (Campbell, 2006: 376). Campbell made a convincing case for a new policy in Kenya, although her article does not address the need for a new global policy from UNHCR. Sarah Dryden-Peterson (2006: 383) made the most direct criticism of UNHCR's failure to replace the 1997 Policy, which she described as being "obsolete before it was made public". Dryden-Peterson (2006: 384) noted the 2003 Guiding Principles had "never been made public and, as yet, languishes without adoption by UNHCR" and that "a more effective policy has yet to supersede" the 1997 Policy.

In 2007, the academic journal *Refuge* also released a special issue on the topic of urban refugees. These two special issues, released close together, highlighted the mounting academic interest in urban displacement. The *Refuge* special issue included articles on urban refugees in Cairo, Kampala, Canada and South Africa. However, like the *Journal of Refugee Studies*, the majority of articles made either limited or no reference to UNHCR's urban policy (Al-Sharmani, 2007; Bernstein and Okello, 2007; Currie, 2007; D'Addario et al., 2007; Fábos and Kibreab, 2007; Kagan, 2007; Kibreab, 2007; Lammers, 2007). In her article on Sudanese refugees in Cairo, Lorraine Currie (2007: 72) argued that the 1997 Policy made the situation worse for urban refugees. Currie (2007: 73) contended the March 1997 Policy resulted in refugees becoming "even more marginalized and impoverished". In the introductory article, Anita Fábos and Gaim Kibreab (2007: 9) described the 1997 Policy as "a welcome indication of the growing concern

with the discriminatory treatment of refugees in urban areas of the South”, and while this piece did not criticise the 1997 Policy, two other articles in the special issue did. M. Florencia Belvedere (2007: 64) stated the “driving forces for the urban policy have been containment and the concomitant rationalization of financial resources balanced against a commitment to ensure the protection of refugees, regardless of location”. Belvedere (2007: 65) also criticised the implementation of the 1997 Policy in South Africa, pointing to the discrepancy between UNHCR’s projection of “an image of caring” and what lay “lurking below UNHCR’s public face”, namely a “culture of suspicion”, seeing refugees and asylum seekers as “chancers”, “bogus”, and “guilty until proven innocent” (Belvedere, 2007: 65). In his article, Philip Marfleet (2007: 40, 44) argued that the 1997 Policy was highly controversial and claimed its authors were “either in ignorance of earlier research or chose to ignore it”. The two special issues, later joined by urban displacement focused editions of *Forced Migration Review* in 2010 and *Disasters* in 2012, displayed an increased interest among academics. They also demonstrated that academics and consultants formed part of the epistemic community around urban displacement, and held similar views on the issue as EPAU, PDES, and NGOs. Academics and consultants, however, occupied a less direct advocacy role than NGOs.

As “parts of the UN have drawn on academic or professional expertise located outside the system” (Weiss et al., 2009: 124), it is significant that during this period the academic community came to engage more directly in the issues surrounding urban displacement. Their engagement provided further evidence and support for change to those within UNHCR already pursuing a replacement to the 1997 Policy. However, given that there were few specific calls for policy change within academic articles, it is impossible to argue convincingly that academics played a significant role in initiating policy change. Chatelard and Morris’ (2011) suggestion that scholarly work was following, rather than driving, UNHCR’s work on urban displacement stands true. Academic work increased after 2009, when the “growing attention to the phenomenon of displacement to urban areas” was in part “fuelled by the decision of the High Commissioner to

focus on the subject for the annual dialogue convened by UNHCR in 2009” (Chatelard and Morris, 2011: 4).

The scholarly ‘urban turn’ lagged behind UNHCR’s own policymaking process, although according to Jeff Crisp (2015), PDES always kept itself aware of academic output. NGOs influence on the policymaking process was limited, as throughout the majority of this period their priorities during the Annual Consultations were on other issues. Noor Al-Hussein provides an example of a member of the third UN who was influential during this period, such influence stemming in part from her holding positions within the first and second UNs. These various parts of the third UN were important, as part of a broader epistemic community around the issue of urban displacement, providing supporting arguments and advocating in ways UNHCR could not.

## 6. Conclusion

The release of the 2009 Policy was the culmination of a sixteen-year shift in how UNHCR viewed urban displacement. With this new document, towns and cities were established in the eyes of UNHCR as legitimate places for refugees to exercise their rights. This change, particularly in the years following the 1997 Policy, had been slow in coming and occurred in the years immediately before publication of the 2009 Policy. A variety of different events and actors played a role in the creation of the 2009 Policy and the shift that occurred after the failure to enact the 2003 Guiding Principles. The most important of the actors were within UNHCR. In particular, EPAU and PDES, not only maintaining a focus on urban displacement throughout the period but also making substantial contributions to the drafting of the 2009 Policy. EPAU and PDES were the centre of the urban displacement epistemic community, driving change in UNHCR’s policy. UNHCR’s experiences in the field, in particular with Iraqi refugees, would help the Organisation better understand urban displacement was an issue that could no longer be ignored. These experiences, channelled through the work of EPAU and PDES, would prove influential to UNHCR’s new High Commissioner.

Although not initially active on urban displacement, Guterres' interest in the issue from 2007 onwards would prove crucial to the release of the 2009 Policy.

The change that occurred in UNHCR's approach during this period supports the argument of Barnett and Finnemore (2004) that change in policy and practice often stems from within. However, rather than the role of bureaucratic culture, the chapter has shown the importance of UNHCR's desire to expand, the influence of states, and the work of certain actors within the Organisation. The urban displacement epistemic community discussed in chapters four and five expanded, and for the first time involved the High Commissioner. As Robert W. Cox (1996) has argued, leaders can be the most important determinant in shaping an organisation's growth. Guterres became a part of the urban displacement epistemic community and would prove influential in raising the status of urban displacement and enabling the release of the 2009 Policy. Further, members of the third UN, including NGOs and academics, formed part of this community. Together they produced research and drew attention to the issue of urban displacement and the shortcomings of the 1997 Policy. Their involvement shows ways in which members of the second UN draw on the work of members of the third to support and legitimise their efforts. Although states halted UNHCR's expansion when they felt it had gone too far, they did not determine nor actively push for a specific approach to urban displacement. UNHCR's response to the challenge of urban displacement during the period covered in the chapter can be understood through principal-agent claims concerning the availability of agency slack, as the Organisation utilised states' lack of interest to ensure a significant expansion in their operations. In addition, the response can be understood as part of a broader expansion in the Organisation's approach and the belief that UNHCR was duty bound to assist those in urban areas under its commitment to refugee rights. Actors within UNHCR primarily drove the change occurring between 2004 and 2009 and the broader community formed around the issue of urban displacement.

## Chapter Seven - Conclusion

### 1. Introduction

The thesis has studied UNHCR's response to the urbanisation of displacement between 1994 and 2009. During this period, the Organisation's policy and practice on urban displacement changed significantly. The change was driven in large part by pressures from within UNHCR. The thesis has detailed *why* and *how* UNHCR responded in the way it did, and what its response reveals about policymaking in international organisations generally. This final chapter will restate the key empirical and conceptual contributions the thesis has made to existing knowledge, and the relevance they have for the study of international organisations. The final conclusion will highlight potential avenues for departure for further research.

### 2. UNHCR's Response to the Urbanisation of Displacement

In chapters four, five and six, the thesis traced UNHCR's changes in policy and practice regarding urban displacement between 1994 and 2009. The period 1994 to 1997, contained UNHCR's early attempts to respond to the urbanisation of displacement, leading to the release of two policies in 1997, both of which portrayed urban displacement in negative terms. The study of the period 1998 to 2003 explored internally led pressures to replace UNHCR's official policy on urban refugees, particularly following the establishment of EPAU in 1999. Finally, consideration of the period 2004 to 2009 detailed the growth in recorded numbers of displaced people in urban areas, increased work in urban areas in countries such as Kenya, the growing concerns of a range of actors, including the new High Commissioner, over the issue, and the eventual release of the 2009 Policy.

The thesis has contributed to existing knowledge on urban displacement, which has thus far been primarily focused on individual case study of urban refugee

populations. As detailed in chapter one, a limited amount of academic literature was produced on urban displacement from the 1970s. These pieces focused primarily on cities in Africa and the difficulty faced by small communities of urban refugees, such as in Marc Sommers' (2001) book on Burundian refugees in Dar es Salaam. This trend towards case studies of specific refugee communities in cities continued during the first decade of the twentieth century, when academic research on urban displacement increased. The urban refugee focused Special Issues of the *Journal of Refugee Studies* in 2006 and *Refuge* in 2007 are key examples, with included articles detailing the experiences of urban refugees in cities like Kampala (Dryden-Peterson, 2006; Bernstein and Okello, 2007) and Cairo (Grabska, 2006; Currie, 2007; Al-Sharmani, 2007). Recent doctoral theses have followed a similar pattern by centring on single urban case studies (O'Loughlen, 2016; Mahmoud, 2009; Lyytinen, 2013; McQuald, 2014; Frischkorn, 2013; Campbell, 2005a; Kassa, 2013; Lowe, 2015), as has the first edited book exclusively addressing urban refugees (Hoffstaedter, 2015b). All such literature has provided a broad understanding of the lives and experiences of the urban displaced, but very little of it has addressed UNHCR's policymaking in response to the urbanisation of displacement. Those that have, have done so in articles with regional rather than global focus (Ward, 2014), or from the perspective of a former UNHCR employee (Crisp, 2017). The thesis has contributed to these efforts by providing a comprehensive and in depth study of how and why UNHCR responded to the challenge of urban displacement in the way that it did. Unlike the majority of existing work on urban displacement, which has relied primarily on interviews with urban refugees, the thesis is based on extensive archival work and offers a historical analysis. The thesis has also provided historical insight on the emergence of the category of the 'urban displaced' or 'urban refugees', which has up until now been missing from the literature.

The thesis has contributed to the study of global refugee policy. While a considerable body of work exists on the development of regional and national level policymaking related to displacement (Guild, 2006; Jacobsen, 1996), there has been only limited focus on global policymaking and its consequences for refugees (Milner, 2014: 478). The 2009 'Understanding Global Refugee Policy' at

the University of Oxford and the 2014 Special Issue of the *Journal of Refugee Studies* devoted to global refugee policy were valuable attempts to address this gap. The Special Issue provided insight on a range of issues, but not the issue of urban displacement. The thesis shares its understanding of global refugee policy as both a *process* and a *product* (Milner, 2014: 477), examining the creation of various urban policies, albeit as a process through which urban displacement “competed for prominence on the agenda of the global refugee regime’s decision-making bodies, where the interests of different actors affect decisions on responses to these issues, and where a range of factors condition efforts to implement these decisions in various regional, national and local contexts” (Milner, 2014: 477-478). The thesis adds to this by demonstrating the role pressures from within UNHCR had in bringing about a change in policy. The work on global refugee policy has noted the role of epistemic communities (Fresia, 2014b), particularly the role of academics. It has been argued that “it is important to explore more frequent and possibly informal opportunities for researchers engaged with global refugee policy to inform the policy formulation process” (Milner, 2014: 484). The thesis has provided further insight on this point, demonstrating ways in which researchers contribute to the urban displacement epistemic community, and highlighting the important relationship they share with UNHCR’s policy and evaluation unit. It has shown that academics and independent researchers inform policymaking, and serve to support efforts to bring about changes in policy and practice from within UNHCR.

Studying the urbanisation of displacement has provided a means of reconsidering UNHCR as an organisation. Although states rarely gave specific instructions to UNHCR regarding urban displacement, their influence over the Organisation was clear throughout the period 1994 to 2009. Efforts in the 1990s to limit the movement of people to urban areas reflected the preferences of both donor and host states for encampment and rural responses to displacement. UNHCR’s increased presence in urban areas in the 2000s most notably occurred in states such as Jordan and Syria, who favoured urban assistance, and did not advocate for a strict encampment policy. When UNHCR attempted to expand further, it experienced opposition from key donor states, including, when the



United States objected to the extension of the 2009 Policy to include urban IDPs, the Organisation followed state preferences. Other studies of UNHCR have focused on the influence of the Organisation's culture (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004), although the thesis has demonstrated the continued relevance of state influence in understanding why changes in policy and practice occur. It has argued the importance of studying how UNHCR enacts a change in policy and practice, stressing the influence of specific actors within the Organisation. Recent studies have discussed the importance of the High Commissioner in the growth of UNHCR's work (Hall, 2016), although the thesis contends further study should be done on the particular role of the Organisation's research and evaluation unit. As demonstrated in the thesis, High Commissioner Guterres was highly influential in the Organisation's response to the urbanisation of displacement, but he relied upon the expertise offered by EPAU and PDES.

### 3. Conceptual Implications

In addition to expanding knowledge on UNHCR and urban displacement, the thesis offers a number of theoretical contributions to the study of international organisations. This section stresses three interventions: UNHCR responded to available agency slack by expanding, although the influence of states was felt throughout the period studied; changes in policy and practice within international organisations can arise in response to pressure from within; and the three UNs should be considered as fluid and interactive categories.

Between 1994 and 2009, UNHCR was afforded notable agency slack from states regarding the issue of urban displacement. The principal-agent literature has been criticised for providing insufficient explanation of what occurs when agency slack exists (Oestreich, 2012: 7), an issue the thesis has helped to address. The thesis has shown UNHCR responded by engaging in mission creep, but this process was gradual. In the 1994 to 1997 period, UNHCR sought to curtail the urbanisation of displacement. Between 1997 and 2003 there was insufficient will within UNHCR to enact a change in policy, although a number of field offices working in urban areas meant an effective change in practice was

already underway. In the final period covered by the thesis, 2004 to 2009, there was change in both policy and practice, with UNHCR expanding further and establishing urban areas, as sites the Organisation would increasingly work. This gradual expansion took place as state preferences continued to influence UNHCR. During the 1990s, both donor and host states supported the use of encampment, while later, pressure from the United States would ensure that UNHCR did not incorporate urban IDPs into its policymaking. Future use of principal-agent theory should consider what agents do when agency slack exists, as well as the part principals can have in continuing to shape the behaviours of agents. In particular, it should consider how agents respond to a direct challenge to their mission creep. As the example of UNHCR's attempt to incorporate urban IDPs into its policymaking suggests, principals may quickly halt the expansion of agents, demonstrating the ease with which mission creep can be stopped.

The thesis has demonstrated the important role of internal actors in bringing about changes in the policy and practice of international organisations. Throughout the sixteen years studied herein, UNHCR's research and evaluation unit was key to the Organisation's understanding of urban displacement. IES, EPAU and PDES drafted key documents and policies on urban refugees, including the 1995 Discussion Paper, 2003 Guiding Principles and 2009 Policy. They were central to the urban displacement epistemic community that emerged, producing knowledge on the issue, and advocating for a shift in policy and practice. High Commissioner Guterres was instrumental in elevating the issue of urban displacement and framing it as a 'mega-trend' that required attention, while Ogata and Lubbers were primarily concerned with other issues. A number of UNHCR's field offices meanwhile provided case examples of responses to the urbanisation of displacement, such as to Iraqi refugees in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, which helped inform those drafting the 2009 Policy and provided examples of how the Organisation could work effectively in urban areas. The role of actors within UNHCR was identified as important in understanding how the Organisation brought about a change in policy and practice, suggesting the need for studies of specific internal actors, in particular leaders and research and evaluation units. This contention contrasts with work that has stressed

“bureaucratic unity” (Bode, 2015: 51) or approached organisations as a single entity, as has often been the case. Change from within is a “common, if relatively unexplored, phenomena” (Chwieroth, 2008: 482), and the thesis contends that to begin to explore how changes in policy and practice come about, it is vital to study the role of internal actors such as leaders and research and evaluation units.

The thesis has argued that the ‘three UNs’ represent fluid and overlapping categories of actors. This is in contrast to existing work, which classifies the three as a ‘trptych’ (Weiss et al., 2009: 5), highlighting how they are distinct from each other. The thesis has suggested a number of examples of actors moving between these categories, or existing in two or more at the same time, with the impact this has had upon policymaking. For example, as discussed in chapter six, when Noor Al-Hussein (Queen Noor of Jordan) drew attention to the plight of urban refugees at the 2008 Annual Consultation with NGOs, she did so as a senior member of an NGO and a representative of a refugee hosting state. EPAU and PDES meanwhile would regularly work with, or employ on specific projects, members of the third UN, including academics and independent consultants. The ability of parts of UNHCR to enact change in the Organisation’s policy and practice depended on their relationship with, and utilisation of, members of the third UN, through which EPAU and PDES were able to create knowledge about urban displacement and provide justification for UNHCR’s response. Focusing on similar interactions and overlaps, as opposed to the three UNs as separate categories of actors, provides a clearer understanding of the way actors interact and how this shapes changes in policy and practice. The impact of similar interactions between actors should be explored further in a similar manner.

#### 4. Conclusion

The thesis has made three contributions to the refugee and forced migration literature. Firstly, it has examined the policymaking surrounding the urbanisation of displacement, providing an addition to numerous existing

empirical studies of the experiences of living in specific cities. Secondly, it has contributed to the recent literature on global refugee policy (Milner, 2014), discussing why and how change in policy occurred in the case of urban displacement. Thirdly, it has contributed to the study of the role of UNHCR in global politics, highlighting the influence states have upon the Organisation's work, as well as the importance of pressure from within and below in shaping how change in policy and practice came about. In addition, the thesis has made three conceptual contributions to the study of international organisations. Firstly, it examined a case of an agent's behaviour when sufficient agency slack exists, demonstrating engagement in gradual mission creep while ensuring the interests of their principals are largely maintained. Secondly, it has argued that change in policy and practice can often be attributed to the role of pressure from within organisations, in particular from the work of research and evaluation units and leaders. Thirdly, it has contended that the three UNs are better conceptualised as fluid and overlapping categories of actors, rather than as distinct from one another.

The thesis has focused on state influence, the existence of agency slack and mission creep, and the utility of the three UNs framework. It has detailed the interaction of actors and pressure for change in policy and practice from within, above and below organisations. In doing so, it has answered the central research question: *How should we understand UNCHR's response to the challenge of urban displacement and what does the response reveal about policymaking in international organisations?* Although the thesis has explained *why* and *how* change in policy and practice emerged in response to the urbanisation of displacement, there are areas for potential future research. The release of the 2014 Policy provides a natural continuation of the research included in this thesis, such as which factors led to the creation and release of this document five years after the 2009 Policy. The 2014 Policy raises questions over the responsibility of UNHCR to not only refugees in urban areas, but to all of those residing outside of camps. The implementation of both the 2009 Policy and the 2014 Policy has been reviewed primarily by UNHCR and would benefit from further critical scholarly studies. Empirically, focus on urban displacement has

largely been on refugees in large urban areas, particularly capital cities such as Cairo, Kuala Lumpur and Nairobi. Greater attention should be given to other forms of displaced people and the implications of urban displacement on smaller towns and cities, as well as peri-urban areas. Though the 2009 Policy is intended for developing and middle-income countries, in the period since its release, urban areas in donor states, particularly in Europe, have increasingly come to host new groups of refugees. This raises new research areas and questions regarding what these states can learn from existing knowledge gained from urban areas in host states throughout Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

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