Forced migration in the 'First World'
Questioning the logics of a humanitarian concept

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1 Introduction: a look at the margins of forced migration[1]

> My daughter was 13 months old when I received the eviction notice. I was living in a hostel in Stratford, London E15. The letter said that we had two months to get out. We were homeless; that's why we were in the hostel in the first place. We didn't have anywhere else to go. There were 210 other young women living there. Now it's luxury flats. The council said they would rehouse us, but it turned out they were threatening to move us hundreds of miles away, to Manchester, Hastings and Birmingham. (Stone 2014)

In September 2014, a group of twenty-nine young mothers became the centre of a debate over social equality, housing rights, and development in London. The mothers were occupying a boarded-up hostel for young homeless people in Newham in protest of their eviction. Newham, a borough neighbouring the newly constructed Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, was undergoing a massive 'urban regeneration' effort following the 2012 Olympic games in East London, and the hostel was to be replaced by new, privatised real estate. This was not the first eviction as a result of the post-Olympic development efforts. But it became one of the most famous, as the 'Focus E-15' mothers loudly and vehemently argued that the development of East London represented what they termed 'social cleansing'—a pushing out of the poor from the urban spaces they called home.

The London Olympics and its related development initiatives have been criticised for displacing vulnerable populations (Baxter 2008; Ceasefire 2012; Clarke 2013). And this criticism has merit: an estimated 1,000 people from low-income communities were forcibly evicted from their homes in order to construct the park and host the games (COHRE 2007; Du Plessis 2007). Yet, processes of displacement reach beyond these immediate evictions. Often considered to be a centre of poverty, insecurity, and neglect, East London was said to be in need of the 'once in a lifetime' economic opportunity that the Olympics would provide (LLDC 2015a). In response to the changes from regeneration, wealthier London residents and students are rapidly moving to the boroughs surrounding the Olympic Park. Housing and rent costs in Newham have, as a result, experienced the highest increase in all of London, rising by 23% in 2014 alone (Bloomfield 2015). At the same time, evictions in the area have reached an unprecedented level: Newham now has the highest rate of mortgage and landlord evictions in the country, with 1 out of 34 homes at risk of repossession (Shelter 2014). Newham council and other councils in the area have even begun relocating evicted residents to council flats in other cities, claiming that it is no longer possible to provide affordable housing in the capital (Gentleman 2014; Khomami 2015; Ramesh 2012; Ramesh *et al.* 2012). Over 300 placements were made between July and September 2014 alone, transferring families and individuals from council-provided homes in Newham to outside of London (Douglas 2015).

Such high rates of eviction and relocation, if happening in the 'developing' world (say, as a result of slum clearance in Zimbabwe under Mugabe, or displacement in Beijing or Rio de Janeiro pre-Olympics), would likely have received attention from researchers and policymakers in the field of Forced Migration Studies. Motivating this paper is the following question: why would the eviction of low-income families in East London and their required relocation likely not be considered 'forced migration'? The bulk of scholarship on displacement focuses on countries classified as 'developing', with very few studies exploring displacement in countries classified as 'developed'.

This disparity points to more than just a gap in literature. The very fact that displacement and dispossession in so-called developed countries is rarely considered in the forced migration literature raises questions pertinent to the core of Forced Migration Studies and how scholars in the field construct, reinforce, and maintain the boundaries of what constitutes the forced migration category.

This paper thus uses the example of post-Olympics displacement in East London to challenge the boundaries of forced migration, and to question assumptions about where forced migration happens. The case of displacement in East London is helpful precisely because it lies on the *margins* of the forced migration concept. Testing forced migration at its limits allows for an interrogation of the assumptions that lie at its core: as Fassin has stated regarding the importance of thinking on the margins, 'it is through this work at the margins that we can grasp the logics and the assumptions, the ambiguities and the contradictions, the principles of justice and the practices of judgment' (Fassin 2012:13). The following questions guide this exploration at the margins: How might the ideological underpinnings of the current category of forced migration exclude displacement in wealthy, developed countries from analysis? What does the exclusion of displacement in such contexts say about the nature of the forced migration category, about its implicit power relations and dynamics? How does the case of development and displacement in East London challenge the forced migration concept, and call for an evaluation of its underlying logic?

Through exploring these questions, this paper puts forward two primary arguments. First, I argue that the forced migration concept is founded on an implicit humanitarian logic. This humanitarian logic sets the boundaries of forced migration and defines the figure of the forced migrant—a figure that, as a consequence, 'only seems to be attached to certain kinds of people' (Ticktin 2011: 15). Those typically envisioned to be forced migrants experience existential threats to life, are the product of a failure of the 'state-citizen' bond, and inhabit a perceived geography of forced migration that primarily exists in the global South. A humanitarian logic helps to neutralise this implicit 'geography' of forced migration, as the logic's moralist undertones enable a glossing over of the inequalities that are embedded in its usage. The underlying humanitarianism thus makes it difficult to consider the power relations at play in the act of locating forced migration 'elsewhere'. Displacement as it happens in powerful, wealthy, and often liberal-democratic states is consequentially relegated to the margins of the forced migration concept.

Second, I argue that, if scholars are to truly consider the power implicit in locating forced migration elsewhere, it is necessary to both turn away from an apolitical humanitarian logic and to 'invert the gaze' by also examining displacement as it happens in the 'West'. East Londoners who have been evicted and resettled cannot be conceived of as humanitarian subjects given that their displacement is not assumed to result from existential threats to life. Instead of employing an apolitical humanitarian logic, conceptualisations of forced migration should be shifted so that alternative understandings of space, power, and displacement may be taken into consideration. The act of shaping space, such as regenerating urban areas, takes place within the larger economic and political structures propagating social inequalities—inequalities that are usually viewed as too political for invoking humanitarian compassion.

Instead of asking how a humanitarian logic can be perfected or made more inclusive, scholars in Forced Migration Studies must ask what 'other intellectual or political connections have been erased and rendered unthinkable' in the logic's mobilisation (Malkki 1995: 506). This paper thus serves as an initial call to critically reflect on forced migration's underlying humanitarian logic—to

consider, for instance, why displacement and dispossession are almost exclusively assumed to occur 'elsewhere' and the potential power implications this geography of forced migration might hold. Rather than seek definitive conclusions on causal links between development and displacement in East London, I conduct an exploratory and descriptive study that will raise questions for further research. Investigating displacement in East London makes apparent the need to critique forced migration's underlying humanitarian logic, and to lay bare this logic's effects.

Conceptual outline

This paper is divided into chapters as follows. Chapter two situates the processes of eviction and resettlement in East London within the context of urban regeneration and national welfare reforms throughout the United Kingdom. This chapter sets the stage for questioning why the East London case would not be considered within the rubric of forced migration.

Chapter three covers the evolution of a humanitarian logic within the Forced Migration Studies literature. I deconstruct academic and policy texts, tracing meanings given to the term 'forced migration' as they are produced and reinforced. Using these texts, I first look at how the forced migration concept emerged historically in connection with the refugee figure, and how the resulting humanitarian logic creates assumptions about where, how, and to whom displacement happens. In analysing 'who counts' as a forced migrant in academic and policy literature, the ways in which a humanitarian reason regulates the boundaries of forced migration become apparent.

Chapter four considers alternative ways of conceptualising displacement in East London by drawing on literature from urban geography related to 'gentrification-induced displacement'. I first examine how the discourse of the London Legacy Development Corporation (the corporation responsible for developing the boroughs surrounding the Olympic Park) and the local government makes it nearly impossible to imagine the connections between urban regeneration and displacement. I end by engaging the case study of East London with theories related to urban space, place, and power in order to help think beyond displacement in purely humanitarian terms.

The concluding chapter finalises the critique of forced migration's current ideological boundaries and raises further questions for the discipline of Forced Migration Studies. I argue that the logic through which scholars and practitioners think about forced migration should be shifted so that displacement in all of its forms, as it occurs in powerful and less powerful states alike, can be considered.

Before delving further into displacement in East London and the current Forced Migration Studies literature, the remainder of the introduction delineates the term 'humanitarian logic' and situates this paper within recent critiques on the forced migration concept.

A humanitarian logic

As it is commonly understood, humanitarianism involves a set of values—humanity, neutrality, and impartiality—that guide the work of those who seek to relieve the suffering of others (Slim 1997: 334). Humanitarianism, however, is much more than a simple set of values; it includes, 'among other things, an ethos, a cluster of sentiments, a set of laws, a moral imperative to intervene, and a form of government' (Ticktin 2014: 274). When discussing 'a humanitarian logic' throughout this paper I am specifically referring to a particular *ethos* of compassion that predominately focuses on exceptional figures worthy of attention. Humanitarianism serves as a logic to the extent that it guides analytical thinking and decision-making along a shared set of assumptions about who constitutes a legitimate subject of suffering. Exceptionality is an essential component to this ethos: although it is often argued that there are ever more sufferers 'in need' of humanitarian attention, humanitarianism tends to focus on those who exist in situations of

extreme and visible precariousness (Fassin 2012). Humanitarianism thus rarely deals with everyday forms of injustices or structural inequalities, such as the evictions of low-income households within wealthy cities.

Such an ethos of care and compassion is problematic for several reasons. In focusing on 'exceptional' moments, the practices of displacement as they happen in what are considered to be very un-exceptional and un-newsworthy moments fade from the foreground. Humanitarianism also often serves as a form of *anti*-politics, as its basis on care and compassion does not allow for a questioning of the dominant order and instead 'engages with and reproduces a set of power relations' (Ticktin 2011: 19). It can thus be argued that humanitarianism—in determining which figures are worthy of saving—is inherently embedded in a relationship of inequality 'directed from above to below' (Fassin 2012: 4) in which 'there are those who are able to feel and act on their compassion, and those who can only be the subjects (or objects) of compassion' (Ticktin 2011: 224).

Although this understanding of humanitarian logic is primarily informed by the work of other academics—particularly the work of Fassin (2012) and Ticktin (2011)—I do not seek to impose their understanding of humanitarianism upon the research conducted here. Rather, I allow the unique logic framing the forced migration debate to emerge on its own in chapter two, and then place this analysis in conversation with other academic works.

The need for a new critique

Scholars who help to create the category of forced migration through research and scholarship hold a particular responsibility for critically reflecting on the term's humanitarian underpinnings and unintended consequences. This responsibility has been repeatedly recognised in the field: Chimni, for instance, stresses the responsibility of academia to not simply allow international organisations and states to shape Forced Migration Studies, but to instead be constantly 'self-conscious about the intimate relationship between knowledge and power' in the production of knowledge on forced migration (Chimni 2009: 24). In such a reflexive vein, many scholars have offered insightful critiques of the forced migration category and of the forced versus voluntary migration binary. Even these critiques, however, tend to take the concept's underlying humanitarian logic as a given. A brief overview of the critiques to date helps to illustrate this point.

Reflecting on the separation of forced and voluntary migration, scholars have been especially critical of equating voluntary migration with economic motivations and forced migration with political persecution (Zolberg *et al.* 1989). This 'false coupling' has been found to be most problematic when considering migrants' own lived experiences (Chatty 2010; Turton 2003). Examining the lived experiences of those classified as either forced or voluntary migrants has revealed that motivations for migrating on either side of the spectrum are often multiple, intersecting, and complex (Chatty 2010). The complexity of lived experiences has undermined claims that a binary distinction between forced and voluntary migration can even be empirically and sociologically based.

Various scholars have pointed to how the concept 'forced migration' is made meaningful not because it reflects the 'reality' of migrants' predicaments or agency, but rather because it provides a conceptual framework through which states can cleave migrant populations and determine who is 'worthy' (and conversely, not worthy) of assistance or legitimate pathways of migration. Binary categories of forced and voluntary migration have therefore been critiqued for reflecting policy concerns (Bakewell 2008; Turton 2003) and bureaucratic aims (Zetter 1991) rather than the actual

needs or experiences of migrants. In response to these critiques, various alternatives for conceptualizing forced migration have been offered. Van Hear (2009), for instance, has called for forced and voluntary migration to be conceived of as a continuum.

While such critical reflections have exposed several problems with the forced migration category, the critiques to date mostly leave untouched an underlying humanitarian logic. In fact, a consideration of how a humanitarian logic regulates the boundaries of forced migration has been essentially left out of the debates. Intrinsic to the critiques are particular humanitarian visions of suffering bodies and 'existential threats' forming the boundaries of the forced migration category. For instance, even while critiquing the aforementioned 'false coupling', Zolberg *et al.* (1989: 48) assert that forced migration is a result of 'life threatening conditions in the developing world'. Betts (2009: 1) similarly claims that 'existential threats' to physical life are the binding glue to the category of forced migrants. Such assertions are difficult to contest. Yet it is the very naturalness and seemingly unchallengeable nature of a humanitarian logic that makes a critical analysis even more necessary; consider the following quote from Fassin's analysis of humanitarian reason:

> Listening to excluded and marginalized individuals, assisting the poor and disadvantaged, granting recognition to sick immigrants and asylum seekers, showing compassion for AIDS orphans and disaster victims, testifying on behalf of populations afflicted by wars—these are all attitudes and actions that we automatically believe to be good, for causes that we deem just in and of themselves. In questioning this moral self-evidence, by taking it as an object of study rather than an object of judgments and emotions, we drive a wedge into what is generally the subject of consensus […] *It is thus particularly difficult to apply a critical reflection to these questions, which tend to be placed beyond debate. Humanitarian reason is morally untouchable.* (Fassin 2012: 244; my emphasis)

In many of the critiques on the 'forced migration' category most scholars have called for a need to be attentive to the 'non-humanitarian objectives, which are pursued…from time to time behind the façade of humanitarianism' (Chimni 2004: 58) when faced with the unequal power relations embedded in the deployment of the forced migration concept. The usual remedy of choice is thus to counteract these non-humanitarian objectives, so that humanitarianism can remain uncorrupted and reach its full potential. I suggest that the issue is much more complicated than simply uncovering non-humanitarian intentions, however. Intentionality cannot necessarily be identified—the 'unintended consequences' of a concept or intervention are often quite different from the objectives behind them (Ferguson 1994). The problem, then, is arguably inherent within a logic of humanitarianism itself, especially as its ethos of care and compassion 'always presupposes a relation of inequality' (Fassin 2012: 4).

This paper was written with the belief that there is a need to lay bare the ways in which 'legitimate' subjects of forced migration are determined before evaluating whether the underlying humanitarian logic can be justified. I am not arguing that the definition of forced migrant should be widened yet again, or that there is a need to simply expand the concept's boundaries to include displacement in 'Western' locales. Displaced residents of East London do not need to be recast as humanitarian subjects. Instead, this critique is meant to argue that it is imperative to question the ways in which any logic creates hierarchies of displacement in order to ensure that some are not unjustly marginalised.

2 Development and displacement in East London

Standing at the floor-to-ceiling windows in the tenth-floor office of the London Legacy Development Corporation provides a sweeping view of East London. One can simultaneously view the Thames waterfront, stretching from the City past the Docklands in the east, and observe construction of the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in the foreground. It is an image of East London's urban regeneration through one window.

Since 2005, when London committed to hosting the summer 2012 Olympics, a massive 'urban regeneration' effort has been underway in East London. After the games ended in 2012 the mayor of London, Boris Johnson, commissioned the London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC) to lead the regeneration effort and ensure that the Olympic project would leave a positive 'legacy' for the park's neighbouring communities. This chapter briefly examines the developments taking place in East London, and the subsequent displacement, as a way to set the stage for questioning the assumptions underlying a humanitarian conceptualisation of forced migration. I argue that the pushing out of low-income residents from the Olympic boroughs constitutes displacement: due to rising housing costs and the closing of council flats, residents are being evicted and required to leave the communities where they have deep social ties. The only 'option' is often to accept the local council's relocation offer to cities outside of London. Housing evictions and the dispersal of poor communities in East London, however, are not the result of existential threats as they are normally conceived. And the displaced are not envisaged as requiring protection from an international humanitarian community. But these processes nevertheless represent a form of displacement that results from a broader context of economic policies, social welfare reform, and structural inequalities outside of any individual's control.

This chapter draws primarily on newspaper articles, housing data, and other reports that have documented the trends of eviction from East London and the subsequent resettlement in other affordable cities. I begin with an overview of the urban regeneration projects following the Olympics, their effects on housing, and the resistance mounted against displacement on behalf of local residents. I then place these trends within a broader history of revitalisation, housing, and social welfare reforms, both locally in London and nationally.

The London Olympics: an exceptional moment

The revitalisation of East London has been central to the London Olympic project from the initial stages. A promise to use the Olympics as a transformative opportunity formed part of the city's bid to host the games, and is often attributed to the city's success in being selected over Paris and Madrid (Poynter 2009: 186). The boroughs surrounding the proposed site for the games were continuously characterised as 'poor' and 'deprived', and said to be in need of the 'unique development opportunity' that the Olympics would provide. These sentiments are perhaps best reflected in then Foreign Secretary Jack Straw's comments in parliament after announcing the successful bid:

> London's bid was built on a special Olympic vision. That vision of an Olympic games that would not only be a celebration of sport but a force for regeneration. The games will transform one of the poorest and most deprived areas of London. They will create thousands of jobs and homes. They will offer new opportunities for business in the immediate area and throughout London. (Poynter 2009: 185)

Regeneration initiatives have targeted the boroughs surrounding the newly built Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, which include Hackney, Waltham Forest, Newham, and Tower Hamlets. Since its founding, the LLDC has been 'transforming east London', and these boroughs in particular, into a place where people will 'choose' to live. As the corporation's website claims, 'It is our task to transform and integrate one of the most challenged areas in the UK into [a] world-class, sustainable and thriving neighbourhood' (LLDC 2015a). The corporation frames its work in progressive and liberal terms, claiming a development agenda that is sustainable, inclusive, and based on principles of equality, convergence, and community participation. Its 'legacy' to date has included a constellation of projects: a new park, public programing to promote active lifestyles, three new private housing developments to help fill London's constant shortage, the establishment of new business zones, and a soon to be built 'Olympicopolis' development which will provide new campuses for University College London and the V&A museum in the east of the city (LLDC 2015b). These projects are touted as symbols of 'renewal' and 'progress' brought by the exceptional opportunity of the Olympics (LLDC Board of Directors, observations by author, 19 May 2015).

But what is less talked about in the LLDC brochures and by the local government are the ways in which the changes—direct and indirect—might be making it difficult for low-income residents to remain in these revitalised boroughs. Rent costs and housing prices are rising rapidly (Bloomfield 2015; Robb 2012); flat rents in Newham have risen 23% in the past year and the average price of a home in Hackney is now over £500,000—a much greater increase than in the wealthier areas of the city where real estate costs have been relatively stable (Bloomfield 2015; Gentleman 2014). Council flats, labelled as 'not viable', are being boarded up and marked for demolition to allow for the construction of private real estate developments; residents of over 600 council housing flats were evicted after part of the Carpenters Estate was closed in Newham (Williams 2014). Although contracts for the new housing developments require that at least a portion of the units be sold or rented at an 'affordable' rate, the definition of 'affordable' is arguable: pricing can reach up to 80% of the market rate (LLDC Real Estate Team, interview with author, May 2015). Local borough councils have begun offering housing to evicted council flat residents in accommodation outside London, in more affordable cities such as Birmingham and Manchester, and are encouraging those who can no longer afford rent to relocate as well (Butler 2013; Gentleman 2013; Khomami 2015; Ramesh 2013; Ramesh and Walker 2012; *Guardian* 2012).

Many of the borough residents are protesting the changes, particularly those affected by the closing of the Carpenters Estate. A language of displacement, resettlement, and 'right to return'—terms familiar to forced migration scholars—have also emerged, and are being mobilised by residents to lay claim to housing rights (e.g. Hill 2012; Ramesh and Walker 2012). Development has not only physically required that low-income families relocate, as in the case of the Carpenters Estate, but is also transforming the social landscape of local communities as their demographic and class characteristics rapidly begin to transform.

It is important to place the increase in housing prices, the real estate developments, the work of the LLDC, and the London government's general regeneration efforts within a broader political and historical perspective. The formation of the LLDC and its on-going development of East London after the Olympics was only made legally possible by the Localism Act of 2011—a piece of national legislation designed to decentralise government by providing local authorities with more power and allowing London's city government to establish new forms of governance called 'Mayoral Development Corporations' (Alexei 2013). The LLDC was the first of these development corporations. As a mayoral development corporation, the LLDC is permitted, within limits, to override the authority of the local borough councils in the neighbourhoods it seeks to revitalise. The urban revitalisation efforts also come at the same time as other sweeping social welfare reforms. These reforms include a national 'bedroom tax' and a benefits cap introduced by the 2012

Welfare Reform Act[2]—changes which have, many claim, compounded the negative effects of the development efforts by reducing the resources individuals and local councils have at their disposal to cope with increasing rental prices (BBC 2014b; Butler 2014; Butler 2015; Osborne 2014). This context indicates that displacement and other effects of gentrification cannot simply be placed as a matter of local governance. Displacement also takes place within broader national—and perhaps even international—legal, political, and economic forces. Nor are the trends of regeneration and displacement ahistorical. The LLDC's efforts are part of a long history of economic development policies that, although most prominently associated with the Thatcher government (Jacobs 1996; Ramesh 2012; White 2012), have long been a part of the fabric of life in London for the city's working-class and poor (e.g. Glass *et al.* 1960).

The limits of humanitarianism

This chapter has only provided a cursory glance at how urban regeneration policies have begun to push poor and working class residents out of East London, depriving people of the 'communities in which they have created livelihoods, social structures, and meaningful lives' (Koenig 2009: 123). Low-income East Londoners dependent on council assistance and welfare benefits have had little influence over how their communities are being transformed. Regardless of the positions that local borough councils may hold on the LLDC board, or other 'democratic' pathways of resistance, urban revitalisation policies and welfare reforms are being made by authorities in higher circles. Many residents have publically expressed their desire to stay in London, and their concern over being removed from social support networks (e.g. the case of the Focus E15 mothers). Why, then, are these evicted and forcibly relocated individuals not considered to be forced migrants?

My preliminary response to this question relates to how poor and working-class individuals in wealthy states cannot be conceived as forced migrants under a humanitarian logic. Only displacement that occurs 'elsewhere', primarily in the global South, can be constructed as an apolitical humanitarian concern. The need to respond to 'exceptional' flows of human bodies is viewed as morally imperative by scholars and policymakers alike. But when confronted with the everyday, non-exceptional displacement of low-income residents in East London as a result of economic development, the same apolitical, moral humanitarian language fails. Assumptions are made about the role of economic forces in migration, the nature of poverty, and the relationship between citizen and the state in such wealthy, and typically democratic, countries. The displacement of poor East Londoners does not fit well within the imagined apolitical domain of humanitarianism—and in fact, when raised as an issue, such displacement becomes deeply political.

The following chapter substantiates this claim by examining how the academic and policy literature constructs the forced migration concept within the limits of humanitarianism.

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[2] For a comprehensive overview of the 'bedroom tax' or under-occupancy penalty see GOV.UK (2005) and National Housing Federation (2013); for an overview of the social welfare caps see BBC (2014a) and GOV.UK (2014).

3 Forced migration's humanitarian logic and geography

What is forced migration and, more importantly, what is it not? This chapter takes this question as its starting point and seeks to explore not what forced migration *should be*, but rather what it is conceptualised *as being*.

It is important first to recognise that the term 'forced migration' not only serves as a descriptive term to illustrate a sociological reality, but is also a normative concept underlain with implicit logics, and moral valuations (Gibney 2013). This chapter traces the historical evolution of the concept and conducts a textual analysis in order to uncover these implicit logics and moral valuations. By tracing definitions of forced migration, a particular narrative emerges in which displacement is primarily portrayed as a humanitarian issue. This humanitarian logic in turn helps to determine who 'counts' as a legitimate forced migrant and creates what I term the *geography* of forced migration: displacement is assumed to primarily occur in countries that are perceived as fragile, and thus unable to uphold basic human rights or the 'citizen-state' relationship. Displacement that occurs in 'stable' and 'wealthy' countries is consequentially placed at the margins of the forced migration concept.

In putting forward this argument I will not present forced migration as a concept solely bound by a singular humanitarian logic. There is, after all, no singular humanitarian logic. The term 'humanitarianism', the ethics of care that it implies, and the moral valuations it elicits are continuously debated and redefined. Humanitarian logics have also been mobilised by several different actors for very different ends—from organisations providing life-saving medical assistance in emergency situations to the United States government justifying the invasion of Iraq (Calhoun 2010). I thus describe *a* humanitarian logic rather than *the* humanitarian logic. Nor is the term 'forced migration' bound by just *one* logic. Every concept is characterised by competing logics and created through a continuous contestation of boundaries. Humanitarianism is thus not the only logic mobilised to define the boundaries of forced migration. For instance, in a thoughtful analysis of why deportation is generally excluded from studies on forced migration, Gibney (2013) has argued that a liberal-statist logic also defines the concept's limits by differentiating between 'legitimate' and 'illegitimate' forms of displacement within the international state system. The interpretation presented here is thus just one of many logics that can be identified when examining the forced migration discourse. Despite the existence of competing logics, a humanitarian logic is especially dominant and thus deserves particular scrutiny, as will be illustrated throughout this chapter.

The critique presented in this chapter is broadly divided into three sections. I first trace the historical shift from Refugee Studies to Forced Migration Studies in order to demonstrate how the concept 'forced migration' developed from the figure of the refugee. I then undertake a careful textual analysis of recent reports, books, articles, and other texts that attempt to navigate the nebulous nature of forced migration. Combined, these first two sections illustrate how a humanitarian logic is brought to life: through describing forced migrants as being in 'refugee-like' situations; mapping a geography of displacement with 'objective' statistics; mobilising a humanitarian lexicon that limits discussion on forced migration; and justifying research on forced migration with a stated desire to relieve suffering. Finally, I consider the implications that a humanitarian logic holds by highlighting the margins of the forced migration category.

This analysis does not comprise an exhaustive overview of all academic, policy-based, or other relevant literature on forced migration. Nevertheless, by looking at those sources that are salient in

the discipline, I believe it is possible to observe a dominant trend. The texts also derive from 'academic' and 'non-academic' policy sources—from articles published in influential academic journals to reports published by humanitarian organisations. Although often assumed to be different domains of discourse, there is much overlap between the two. For instance, several individuals rotate between the two domains, with academics writing in non-academic publications and practitioners publishing in academic journals. Recognising this cross-fertilisation does not indicate that the two domains of discourse should be conflated: they remain somewhat separate in their valuations, networks, and discourses. Despite this separateness, it is in the very circulation of the concept 'forced migration', within and across domains, which allows for it to pick up meaning and influence practices.

'Like a refugee'

The humanitarian logic shaping the boundaries of forced migration can be traced to the formation of tools for managing displacement and the emergence of the modern refugee figure after the Second World War. As Malkki has argued: 'it is in the Europe emerging from World War II that certain key techniques for managing mass displacement of people first became standardized and then globalized' (Malkki 1995: 497). These tools included camps for managing refugee populations as well as a specific legal category engendered in the United Nation's 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugee and its 1967 Protocol (henceforth CSR). As contextually specific, the CSR and its legal refugee category responded to a particular social, political, and historical problem that emerged in relation to the rise of the nation-state idea and the tying of identities to bounded territories: those who had been physically 'pushed out' of the imagined system of nation-states (or as Malkki puts it, placed outside 'the national order of things') represented a threat to this system (Haddad 2008; Turton 2002). Refugee status not only created a legal category that allowed for the reincorporation of those who fell 'between the cracks' of the solidifying world order (Haddad 2008), but also created a new moral figure that would become the 'prototypical face' of humanitarian interventions in emergency situations (Calhoun 2010: 33).

The refugee figure and tools for dealing with 'the refugee', however, have changed significantly since the refugee's emergence. Scholars have discussed how a significant shift in the international refugee regime was brought about during the 1980s and 1990s (e.g. Bloch and Schuster 2005; Chimni 2004; Gibney 2003; Loescher and Scanlan 1986). The 1990s also witnessed significant changes to the study of refugees due to a more emphatic call to recognise people living in 'refugee-like situations' within their own countries. Such 'forced migrants', it was noted, experienced displacement from a multiplicity of drivers beyond persecution, but did not receive assistance or protection either because they had not crossed an international border or because they did not fit the narrow refugee definition (Weiss and Korn 2006). The international border came to be seen as an arbitrary line separating those worthy of assistance from those unworthy. Activists argued that crossing an international border did not necessarily matter in people's lived experiences of displacement—their vulnerabilities and needs came to be viewed as very similar (e.g. Cohen and Deng 1998). The concept of 'responsibility to protect' was developed to authorise and legitimise assistance for people displaced within the confines of their own nation-states (Martin 2010). The more inclusive term 'forced migrant' and its associated sub-categories (such as the internally displaced person, or 'IDP') were seen as a way to fill the protection gaps left behind by the narrow refugee regime (Helton and Jacobs 2006). As an expanded concept, the term 'forced migration' has had concrete effects on the ways in which international organisations operate including, for instance, the creation of a humanitarian 'cluster approach' to address internal displacement in the early 2000s (McDowell and Morrell 2010: 12).

The expansion of the term 'forced migration' over the past several decades has thus worked outwards from the refugee figure. Calls to address the suffering of forced migrants are justified by claiming that they are *essentially* like refugees, with similar—or at least equally pressing—motives for flight. Displacement now gains attention if and when it can be seen through a similar humanitarian lens. This working outwards from the refugee figure is easily observed in texts that call upon academics and humanitarians to pay attention to other typologies of forced migrants. Roberta Cohen and Francis Deng, two of the first advocates for the recognition of IDPs, made frequent connections with refugees in their work. They state, for instance, that 'large numbers of persons are regularly turned into "refugees" within their national borders, dispossessed by their own governments and other controlling authorities, and forced into a life of destitution and indignity' (Cohen and Deng 1998: 1). Calling attention to displacement in relation to the refugee figure is also evident in discussions of displacement in 'non-conflict' situations, such as development-induced displacement. McDowell and Morrell, for instance, state that 'Effectively people [in non-conflict situations] find themselves in a refugee-like situation experiencing similar human rights violations – but which are not being adequately acknowledged or addressed' (2010: 2).[3] New typologies of forced migration continue to be set in relation to the refugee. Betts (2013), for instance, coined a new term to label cross-border migration from human rights deprivations: 'survival migration'. Survival migration does not focus on any specific cause of flight, but instead refers to those who should be allowed to seek protection internationally when a threshold of fundamental rights is not met in their country of origin. Betts characterises the trend of relating forced migration to refugees in the following quote:

> The consequence is that many people who are forced or who feel forced to cross international borders today do not fit the categories built in 1951[the CSR]. Many people fleeing human rights deprivations in fragile or failed states such as Zimbabwe, Somalia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo in Africa—or Haiti, Afghanistan, and Libya elsewhere in the world—look very much like refugees and yet fall outside the definition of refugee, often being denied protection. (Betts 2013: 3)

While recognising the protection gaps left behind by the legal refugee category might be considered beneficial—and this paper does not set out to contest this—it remains important to consider what forms of displacement are rendered unintelligible by always placing forced migration in relation to the refugee. Reframed as a question: how do only specific *forms* of displacement come under the category of forced migration?

In considering this question, it is important to critically consider the context in which the expansion from refugee to forced migration has occurred. It is not coincidental that the shift accompanied the rapid expansion of the humanitarian sector and increasingly restrictive nature of asylum regimes in Western liberal-democracies. Several prominent scholars have critically interpreted the broadening of forced migration within this context. Hathaway (2007) and Chimni (2009) represent two of the strongest, and dissonant, critiques. Hathaway contends that shifting focus is dangerous as it 'fails to take into account the unique situation of refugees' and ultimately undermines refugee protection (Hathaway 2007: 350). For Chimni, the shift is problematic not because it corrupts the pureness or importance of the refugee category. Rather, it is problematic because the creation of the term 'forced migration' is complicit in the reinforcement of a 'new humanitarian agenda' in which Western states seek to restrict access to asylum and contain humanitarian problems at their origins. According to Chimni, this system of governance has an interest in and requires knowledge of 'all types of displaced persons' in order to create a 'new frame of rules and institutions, and a set of strategies and practices, that will allow the west to control or

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[3] For other examples see Oliver-Smith (2009: 4) and Turton (2006: 14).

manipulate all forms of displacement, including voluntary migration, from the south to the north' (Chimni 2009: 18).

My argument here expands on those presented thus far. While it may be true that the movement from Refugee to Forced Migration Studies is related to the containment of refugee flows at their origins, the 'international community' (consisting primarily of powerful Western states) has not sought to understand displacement in *all* its forms. Only those forms of displacement that are perceived as being *similar* to the refugee—and hence a concern for international governance—have come to be incorporated into the more expansive forced migration concept. The international community has not been concerned with those processes of displacement that occur within the borders of powerful nation-states, because such displacement does not present a threat to any government's ability to control immigration. A humanitarian logic also prevents displacement as it occurs within wealthy Western states from being labelled as a concern: the humanitarian ethos of care is sometimes used domestically *within* these states, but never *between* them. It would not be likely for France, for instance, to consider displacement within the UK as a matter of humanitarian concern.

Tracing the conceptual history of forced migration throughout this section has proved central to understanding why a humanitarian logic does exist and to lay bare its effects. Forced migration continues to be set in relation to the refugee, and an underlying humanitarian logic remains in place as a way to draw boundaries around what counts as unacceptable forms of displacement in need of improved governance. The next section seeks to illustrate how these boundaries continue to be drawn through the reinforcement of a geographically specific population of forced migrants.

A population of forced migrants

Every year, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) releases its *World Disasters Report,* with each issue focusing on a particularly pressing humanitarian concern. In 2012 the chosen focus was forced migration and displacement. The report begins with an introduction from Bekele Geleta, the Secretary General of IFRC, who frames the enormity of the forced migration problem with a statistic: 'Over 70 million people are forced migrants – more than one in every 100 of the world's citizens' (IFRC 2012: 9). This statistic positions the issue of forced migration as a pressing humanitarian problem in need of an immediate and improved response. Forced migration is presented as increasingly urgent through an emphasis on the rising numbers of displaced persons, incredible human suffering, and the seemingly impossible obstacles facing the humanitarian community.

Although forced migration is initially put forth as a morally straightforward and imperative concern in Geleta's introduction, the authors of the report do not treat the term as a black box or take it as a given. The first chapter titled 'Forced Migration: the dynamics of displacement and response' recognises the concept's complexity. An interesting shift takes place in the report, however, wherein the nebulous nature of forced migration is positioned as contrary to and less important than the need for a humanitarian response. The complexity is in one moment recognised, but in the next dismissed in the name of humanitarian concern: forced migration is portrayed as too big an issue to be undermined by ambiguity. The following excerpt demonstrates the movement between recognising forced migration's illusive quality and portraying it as an incontrovertible phenomenon in need of immediate attention.

How many forced migrants are there? […] Determining an accurate answer is fraught with difficulties. Firstly, as this chapter shows, the term 'forced migrant' involves many, sometimes overlapping, categories and labels, which make things more complicated, not less […]. Secondly, most statistics probably underreport the numbers […]. *And yet, while individual stories tell a lot about the experience of displacement, numbers tell a broader story, giving an overview of major trends.* Indeed, the facts and figures of displacement on a global scale can serve as one reference point for understanding displacement's patterns and processes and responding accordingly. (IFRC 2012: 14; my emphasis)

Here, I would like to focus the analysis specifically on the role of statistics in the report. As made apparent in the first excerpt, despite recognising the difficulty of answering the question 'what is forced migration?', the report goes on to provide very specific numbers and identify a global population that fits within the category. While the *term* forced migrant remains contested throughout the report, there is no similar questioning of the ability to *measure* it. This is not to say that the term 'forced migration' needs a better or more precise definition in order to ensure more accurate measuring. Instead, my point is to indicate that forced migration is paradoxically still quantified, mapped, and measured. An elusive concept with increasingly blurry boundaries is at once made concrete through the construction of a population *vis-à-vis* statistics.

What might be the effects of this movement—of obscuring and dismissing the ambiguity of the term with numbers and images, and of creating a concrete population of forced migrants? Looking closely at the numbers and the ways in which the concept is quantified, an implicit geography emerges. The statistics allow for a mapping of forced migrants by indicating how the highest numbers can be located in Africa, South America, Asia and the Middle East. These regions are specifically pointed out and their forced migrants are quantified, while no such measurements are provided for North America, Australia and New Zealand, or Western Europe. Within the report's humanitarian framework of forced migration, providing statistics in these regions is irrelevant, as they are not considered targets of humanitarian interventions. This geography is also reinforced by a focus on particular drivers in the statistics; it is claimed that 'conflict and violence account for 60 per cent of forced migrants' (IFRC 2012: 15).

Although the *World Disasters Report* might be dismissed as an extreme example of how the concept of forced migration is imbued with a humanitarian logic, it is telling that such a prominent humanitarian agency would take note of forced migration as a serious issue. The humanitarian logic and its resulting geographic quality underlying forced migration are not solely confined to reports from organisations such as the IFRC. Such trends are similarly reflected in The *Oxford Handbook of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies,* where chapters on North America, Western Europe and Australia discuss these regions almost exclusively in terms of their roles as recipients of individuals in flight (Bank 2014; Martin 2014; McNevin 2014). Articles that appear in *Forced Migration Review*, a major publication from the Refugee Studies Centre at Oxford, tend to make a similar use of statistics in order to mark a specific population of forced migrants.[4]

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[4] See for example the introduction of *Forced Migration Review*'s special issue on preventing forced migration and displacement, written by Valerie Amos, then the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator. Amos states: 'The figures speak for themselves. As of December 2011, more than 26 million people were internally displaced, forced from their homes by armed conflict and insecurity, while millions more had sought refuge abroad. In addition, an estimated 15 million people were displaced by natural disasters in 2011 alone' (Amos 2012: 4). In claiming that 'the figures speak for themselves' the reader is called upon to use shared assumptions about forced migration in order to interpret these figures: assumptions about *where* displacement happens, to *whom* it happens, and *how* it happens.

There are several anticipated counter-assertions to the argument that has been woven throughout this section; perhaps the most legitimate assertion is that there exists a geographical quality to forced migration *because* the majority of displacement is caused by conflict and therefore happens in the developing world. In other words, some might say that the statistics are simply a reflection of reality. But this assertion ignores that numbers are never neutral. As Chimni has argued regarding the counting of IDPs, 'the act of counting can never be a value free exercise. Information turns into knowledge and social categories to engender legal norms for behaviour' (Chimni 2009: 18).

A more critical approach can help uncover the potential productive power of these numbers and their underlying assumptions. Speaking of forced migration in terms of a set population through statistics obscures the ways in which normative valuations are made in the very construction of that category. The population appears natural. This claim is not new: a similar critique was made in Brubaker's (2005) call to re-conceptualise diasporas and Malkki's (1995) concerns over the refugee label. Turton (2003) has already voiced how forced migration is a constructed object of knowledge. Despite recognising the term 'forced migration' as a construct, the humanitarian logic remains intact—there is a continued reliance on numbers as if it pertains to a clearly defined population.

Foucault's lectures *Security, Territory, Populations* are helpful for critically considering the construction of an easily delineated population of forced migrants. In these lectures, Foucault demonstrates how populations as a new means of governance are historically contingent: sovereign authority shifted from viewing the individuals as the site of intervention to recognising populations as entities with their own qualities and characteristics. The most salient conclusion from Foucault's discussion of populations is the recognition that populations are not a naturally occurring phenomenon, but are objects of knowledge that allow for regulation and intervention through the very practices (such as quantification) that make populations known.

Forced migrants, once constructed as a defined population, can be protected, assisted, and governed accordingly. As Chimni states, 'the knowledge of a subject, it is worth reiterating, is always crucial to its regulation; in the absence of requisite knowledge it is difficult to shape an appropriate legal and political response' (Chimni 2009: 15). In producing knowledge through the creation of a defined population—a population that is embedded with assumptions about how, when and where forced migration happens—we allow for particular interventions (namely humanitarian interventions) to be made possible for *particular* people in *particular* areas of the world. In other words, by locating a population of forced migrants in 'fragile' areas of the world, attention is drawn to specific drivers of forced migration (namely conflict) and interventions (namely humanitarian responses). These in turn become reinforced as *the* imaginable issues and desired responses.

While reflecting on the statistics and geography of forced migration the anthropologist S. Lochlann Jain's reflection on cancer statistics becomes strangely appropriate. In an ethnography of cancer in the United States, Jain discusses how statistics give cancer the possibility of affecting everyone and anyone; Jain states, 'the stats…at once describe and mask description. A single number implies both anyone (who could be the one with cancer) and everyone (in a culture and biology of cancer)' (Jain 2013: 40). Similarly, the statistics on forced migrants also describe and mask; they create a population that could at once be *almost* anyone and everyone—anyone can be the statistic, as long as they fit within assumptions about where and to whom forced migration happens, assumptions that are shaped by an overarching humanitarian logic. In other words, although the numbers exist, they do not (and in order to work, cannot) correspond with physical bodies. Instead the statistics

serve as a call to action and enable a response for the masses living within the geography of forced migration.

A humanitarian lexicon

Moving on from understanding how a population and geography of forced migrants is constructed, this section discusses the lexicon used to talk about this population of forced migrants. This lexicon is characterised by phrases such as 'existential threats', 'suffering', 'flight', 'emergency', and the illusory 'citizen-state bond'. These phrases and words are continuously repeated so as to form a particular narrative of forced migration. In this section I will examine this lexicon and consider some of the effects that it might have in placing particular forms of displacement on the margins.

The Oxford Handbook of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies offers a comprehensive introduction to how academics in the field are conceptualising forced migration and utilising a particular humanitarian-based vocabulary. The introductory chapter begins with the inquiry 'who is a refugee and how can forced migrant be defined?' After introducing the relevant debates surrounding the term 'forced migration', the authors make the following statement:

> Despite these contests and caveats…*in practice, most researchers can nonetheless readily identify work that belongs to the field of refugee and forced migration studies.* Most clearly, such research can be broadly considered to cover the study of those who have been identified by the international community as asylum seekers, refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), developmentally induced displaced persons, or trafficked persons, as well as those whose claim to such labels may have been denied *but who have been forced to move against their will as a result of persecution, conflict, or insecurity.* (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh *et al.* 2014: 4; my emphasis)

The suggestion that the subjects of Forced Migration Studies can be readily identified further reinforces the point that there is at least a general consensus about what constitutes forced migration. What is readily identifiable as 'forced migration' is easily determined by looking at the vocabulary provided: forced migration is linked to the primarily humanitarian terms of 'persecution', 'conflict', and 'insecurity'. Searching through other academic texts that set out to define forced migration makes evident a common lexicon. In his book on forced migration and global politics, for instance, Betts considers forced migrants to be those who share 'existential threats' to their lives, which has caused them to seek protection elsewhere:

> What these categories of people have had in common is that, as a result of an existential threat, they have faced significant constraints in their ability to remain within their home communities. They have consequently been compelled to seek access to rights and entitlements, or 'protection', outside their home community. (Betts 2009: 1)

In essence, these definitions point to how the forms of displacement that can be readily identified as belonging to the field of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies fall along humanitarian lines: those who are displaced and fit within an 'imaginary of emergency' (Calhoun 2010: 31) and are valued within the 'politics of life' (Fassin 2012) that humanitarianism represents.

It is also common for scholars to talk about forced migration in reference to a 'breakdown' of the 'citizen-state bond' or those 'falling outside the citizen-state relationship' (e.g. Betts 2013: 1; Haddad 2008: 3; Shacknove 1985: 275). It is said that, once the bond between the state and citizen is broken, damaged, severed, etc., an individual often seeks protection elsewhere. Consider the following statement from Betts' book *Survival Migration*: 'States are primarily responsible for ensuring the human rights of their own citizens. Sometimes, though, the assumed relationship

between state and citizen breaks down and states are unable or unwilling to provide the rights of their citizens' (Betts 2013: 1). This conceptualisation of a breakdown of a citizen-state bond[5] necessarily excludes displacement as it happens in states where the existence of a 'citizen-state relationship' is taken for granted. However, as will be discussed in the next chapter, displacement can occur even under the progressive banner of 'urban regeneration', which, on its surface, has a veneer of reinforcing a positive state relationship with its disadvantaged citizens.

Forced migration's lexicon is informed at least in part by the desires of academics themselves. Phrased another way, the humanitarian logic in the forced migration discourse is reflected in the very desire of refugee scholars to relieve suffering (Gibney 2013). Displacement-related research frequently cites Turton's argument, 'there is no justification for studying, and attempting to understand, the causes of human suffering if the purpose of one's study is not, ultimately, to find ways of relieving and preventing that suffering' (Turton 2003: 16) or Jacobsen and Landau's assertion that there be a ' "dual imperative" to promote academic knowledge and undertake ethical action' (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh *et al.* 2014; Jacobsen and Landau 2003). Even if this desire is not explicitly stated, it often lies beneath the surface, embedded in claims about 'policy relevance'. Gibney has pointed out that this desire determines who is deemed worthy of being recognized under the domain of forced migration:

> This emphasis on forced migration as a kind of injustice or misfortune suffered by vulnerable people has a profound influence on the groups that forced migration scholars choose to study: the victims of persecution (refugees), war (IDPs), or environmental catastrophe (the putative 'environmental refugee'). *Those practices of displacement that thus become excluded from study are those that do not fit these implicit normative criteria.* (Gibney 2013: 122; my emphasis)

For Gibney, this relates to forced migration's role not only as a descriptive rubric, but also as a normative label that implies moral valuations to determine 'who counts'. Gibney does not, however, name this desire as humanitarian. I see it as humanitarian precisely because it is informed by an unequal language of suffering—it is an ethos of care that focuses first on flight, suffering bodies, and existential threats. This is not to say that such a desire to relieve suffering is misplaced. Rather it is to say that the role of this desire needs to be recognised, as it certainly affects how scholars conceptualise forced migration and determine which processes of displacement are worthy of academic analysis, and which are not.

The terrain of forced migration

Until this point I have sought to illustrate the dominant, although not exclusive, humanitarian logic that underpins discourses on forced migration. This humanitarian logic helps to determine the 'geography' of forced migration, or where and to whom forced migration is perceived as happening. The questions then becomes: What implications does a humanitarian logic—embodied and given life in the assumptions, statistics, mapping, vocabularies, and desires—of forced migration hold? How does a humanitarian logic position the margins of the forced migration concept?

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[5] The citizen-state bond is problematic for other reasons. First, a 'citizen-state' relationship might not even have existed in the first place: individuals may exist *in spite of* rather than *because of* the state. Second, there is no singular 'citizen-state relationship': as various ethnographic data have shown, there is a plurality of ways in which individuals interact with and conceive of their relationship with the state, as new forms of claiming citizenship develop alongside shifting forms of governmentality. See for example Petryna's (2002) discussion of biological citizenship and Biehl's (2007) discussion of patient citizenship.

A humanitarian logic defines the terrain of forced migration not only as a geographical terrain, but also as a conceptual one. As previously stated, it leads us to focus attention on particular 'types' of displacement, especially the 'types' of displacement that are assumed to occur in the global South. A humanitarian logic reinforces the hierarchical ordering of the existing typologies of displacement—placing some at the centre and others at the periphery. I will wait until the concluding chapter to argue why this ordering of attention brought by a humanitarian logic deserves to be rethought. For now, I would like to discuss in more detail what has already been suggested: that this humanitarian logic tends to de-emphasise displacement as it often occurs in the West, in 'non-emergency' situations (e.g. as a result of urban revitalisation).

One of the effects of a humanitarian lexicon is that particular 'drivers' of forced migration are placed at the centre of scholarship (i.e. conflict) while others are positioned at the margins (i.e. development). A list of the most prominent drivers of forced migration include: persecution, torture and other serious human rights violations; armed conflict; political instability, weak governance and state repression; indiscriminate violence; natural hazards and disasters; man-made environmental crises; and climate and environmental change (IFRC 2012: 19-21). Even when displacement from development is discussed, it is often discussed in terms of 'man-made environmental disasters', which provides it with a tone of emergency. Consider the following quote from the *World Disasters Report's* chapter on displacement and development: 'While there is a well-developed international humanitarian system to respond to people displaced by conflict and disasters, millions of people are displaced every year for other reasons including large-scale development projects' (IFRC 2012: 145). This quote implies that the humanitarian apparatus has been developed to address displacement from conflicts and other 'clear' humanitarian emergencies such as natural disasters.[6] Displacement that results from development projects thus comes most prominently to focus when the development can be classified as a 'man-made disaster'. The drivers also hint at the kinds of responses required to address forced migration. As an issue of primarily humanitarian concern, it is difficult to imagine any of these 'drivers' existing in wealthy Western states to create a population of forced migrants.

While 'development-induced displacement' is already at the margins of this humanitarian conceptualisation of forced migration, even *further* at the margins is 'urban displacement' in developed countries. Urban displacement in the West is thus in a position of double marginality partly as a result of development-induced displacement's Southern gaze. This gaze is revealed in the introduction in the book *Development Beyond Conflict*:

> While media coverage of humanitarian responses is fairly extensive, there is far less awareness of population displacement and the responses to it, occurring and largely remaining within the developing and fast industrializing world, but which is not a direct consequence of armed conflict. Such displacement, often misleadingly termed 'non-conflict displacement', is largely beyond the remit of the UN-led humanitarian reform process and its agencies except in those circumstances where streams of displacement, both conflict and non-conflict, intersect. (McDowell and Morrell 2010: 1)

A focus on developing countries in development-induced displacement literature is equally revealed in the dearth of analysis conducted on similar processes as they happen in wealthy, developed states. Searching through influential journals such as *Journal of Refugee Studies* or *Refugee Studies Quarterly* reveals almost no literature on 'urban displacement', 'development-induced displacement', or general displacement in countries that are classified as 'high-income' or

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[6] This does not imply, however, that most of what the humanitarian apparatus does is respond to emergencies. Often there is ambiguity over what constitutes an emergency (see Redfield 2010).

'developed'. When development-induced displacement is discussed in developed countries it only appears momentarily as exceptional cases within the sub-category of urban displacement. This is not to say that displacement in strong liberal-democratic states is always ignored. In Oliver-Smith's (2009) edited book on development and dispossession, Koenig looks at urban relocation and resettlement as it happens all over the world, arguing that it represents a violation of rights. Koenig goes as far as claiming that an attitude of wanting to clear cities of the poor 'is not unique to the developing world' (Koenig 2009: 122). Gentrification in Washington, D.C. is revealed to be a particularly discrete process of displacement as it displaces communities in a piecemeal manner, as houses and apartment buildings are transformed into wealthy accommodation one at a time. Yet, such processes of displacement remain only occasionally mentioned—and even when mentioned are only used as examples to demonstrate that displacement can indeed happen in the developed world.

Conclusion

A careful textual analysis of academic papers and policy reports in this chapter has demonstrated how—despite recognising the nebulous nature of the concept of forced migration and the difficulties in distinguishing it from voluntary migration—the boundaries of forced migration are continuously marked as self-evident. Producing a defined population of forced migrants through a humanitarian logic is exemplified in the use of statistics, emphasis on particular drivers of forced migration, and a lexicon of existential threats, suffering, and survival. Implicit evaluations are constantly made to determine who counts as a forced migrant, and who does not: in deciding where to focus research and on which 'types' of forced migration deserve to be studied. The boundaries of forced migration as a 'category' representing a 'population' in the world are thus continuously constructed in each utterance and etching of the term.

The next chapter returns to the case of urban development and displacement in East London. I demonstrate how the very discourses used to talk about urban regeneration often make it difficult to imagine displacement as a possible consequence. It thus becomes particularly important for scholars of Forced Migration to ensure that attention is paid to such forms of displacement that remain most hidden from view.

4 A new urban frontier: discourses of urban regeneration in East London

When the docks [in East London] were closed it was a big shock to this area, the land became derelict. In the 80s, when London needed more jobs, we grew east to Canary Wharf. London had similar plans for Stratford 15 years ago, but they were stalled…it needed public and private investment. We saw that the Olympics were a chance to get that investment. How do you get people to believe that the next stage of regeneration would be different? *Having the Olympic Games gives the best way to become inspired, to grab the opportunity in the Olympic spirit* […] Because of the way Canary Wharf was done, people started thinking about how to do regeneration differently—to get people to take ownership. The Olympic games seemed to be a different way of doing it [urban regeneration]. (Dr Paul Brickell, interview with author, May 2015; my emphasis)

For Dr Paul Brickell, the Executive Director of Regeneration and Community Partnerships for the LLDC, the Olympics are an important moment in the history of East London. The Games provided the impetus for local communities, the mayor's office, and the national government to unite under the Olympic spirit and finally revitalise some of the last remaining working class

London neighbourhoods. This chapter draws on interviews with LLDC employees and five months of observations at LLDC board meetings to analyse this narrative of regeneration emerging in relation to the Olympic Games. I begin by tracing the discourse of urban regeneration in East London put forward by the national government and local entities, and end by engaging the East London case with literature on gentrification[7] as well as with theories on the construction of space[8] in order to open a discussion of what 'counts' as displacement and forced migration.

Although some scholars of forced migration have written about the intersection of urban renewal, gentrification, and displacement in developed Western countries (e.g. Koenig 2009; Robinson 2003), such processes remain at the margins of what constitutes forced migration. I draw less on development-induced displacement literature, which tends to focus on large-scale development projects (e.g. Cernea 1995) primarily in countries of the global South, and rely on humanitarian (e.g. McDowell and Morrell 2010) or utilitarian discourses. Perhaps the most relevant theories related to urban space and displacement derive from the field of urban geography, whose scholars have looked in-depth at gentrification and what has been termed 'gentrification-induced displacement' since the 1960s (Lees 2012; Wyly *et al.* 2010). Urban geography provides a strong foundation for future work from which forced migration scholars can begin to consider the inter-linkages between urban revitalisation, development, and displacement as it is happening throughout the world.

It is important to make a quick note about the term 'gentrification' before continuing. I remain cautious of applying such a label to the processes currently underway in East London, as doing so potentially brings to bear a set of unknown assumptions. The processes illustrated in this chapter—while perhaps falling under a rubric of gentrification—represents more than the 'reshaping of urban space by more affluent newcomers who displace lower income predecessors' (Mumm 2008: 16); urban regeneration in East London also represents the active reshaping of primarily low-income boroughs by a powerful administrative entity, overseen by Mayor Boris Johnson himself. Yet, while using the term gentrification might lead to unwarranted generalisations, it provides a way to draw on past research that is necessary for such a preliminary analysis. In order to avoid generalisations, it is important to not simply assume that global processes of neo-liberalisation and gentrification are at play in this specific context, and recognise that each process of urban regeneration occurs within a specific historical and geographical context (Harris 2008; Lees 2012; Lees 2000).

A new urban frontier

Despite the emerging displacement of poor and working-class residents of East London boroughs, the discourses being put forward by city government render such displacement invisible. A discourse of a special and exceptional 'Olympic moment' has become embedded in LLDC's policies, as well as in the language of LLDC employees. Many of LLDC's policies and brochures begin by referring back to the pre-Olympic vision. Several brochures, for instance, state the following:

> In London's candidate file to host the 2012 games…the city promised that: 'By staging the games in this part of the city, the most enduring legacy of the Olympics will be the regeneration of an entire community for the direct benefit of everyone who lives there'. (LLDC 2012a; for other examples see LLDC 2012b; 2012c; 2012d)

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[7] See: Atkinson and Bridge 2005; Glass *et al.* 1960; Harris 2008; Herzfeld 2010; Jacobs 1996; Lees 2012; Lees 2000; Peck 2005; Smith 2002; Smith 1996; Wyly *et al.* 2010.

[8] See: Davidson 2009; Harvey 1973; Harvey 2003; Harvey 2008; Heidegger 2008; Lefebvre 1991.

In conversations with members of the LLDC, a similar narrative emerges in which the 2012 London Olympics is seen as a unique opportunity that East London's residents are eager to seize. For the employees I interviewed, the Olympics—as a special unifying and celebratory moment—has become imagined as way for local working-class residents to realise their own potential and 'change the narrative for themselves' (interview with Dr Paul Brickell, 14 May 2015). A striking example of this discourse occurred when, at the end of our interview, Dr Brickell invoked the imagery of the Greek god Caerus—protector of the Olympic stadium and personification of opportunity and good luck—to illustrate the pressing need for local communities and the city to 'grab hold' of the Olympics as an opportunity:

> Changing the narrative, that is the Olympic thing. The Olympic god Caerus is very fitting. He is the god of opportunity…he is bald except for one piece of long hair worn as a forelock. When he comes towards you, you need to grab a hold of this hair so that he doesn't escape. The same is true now: If you see an opportunity coming, you need to grab a hold of it. The games were a shining moment, and…now we needed to grab it.

Dr Brickell's words point to a sense of urgency. The time for regeneration is *now*—and the urgency provides the project with a moral impetus. In this narrative of 'opportunity' and 'regeneration', a narrative in which the goal becomes providing homes for local communities and ensuring that they can achieve high-skilled jobs, it becomes almost impossible to think of how displacement could occur. Herzfeld aptly argues that such positive discursive narratives serve as a 'rhetorical strategy that disguises the brutality of […] eviction' (Herzfeld 2010: 260). The ways in which gentrification policies make use of an overwhelmingly positive discourse (who, after all, would deny the good of more jobs and 'affordable' housing?) is also nicely illustrated in Lees' discussion of 'fast' and 'creative' gentrification. Lees argues that 'gentrification is sold to us as something that is creative, it is about urban "renaissance", the rebirth of the central city. *Creative neoliberalism is a feel-good term that is hard to argue against*' (Lees 2012: 160; my emphasis).

Drawing on the work of Smith (1996; 2002), I argue that positive discourses not only obscure damaging effects such as eviction, but are in fact what allow these effects to come into being, as they create East London as a new 'frontier' of urban economic growth. In this discourse, East London is framed as having previously been placed on the 'fringes' of the city, and is now in need of being re-incorporated. The frontier image is made most apparent in LLDC's publication titled 'Stitching the Fringe' in which regenerating East London is portrayed as a pressing social issue. The publication's cover even depicts a black and white photo of decaying council housing, and an opening letter from Mayor Boris Johnson attests to how the area has struggled through 'decades on the margins'. Mayor Johnson writes:

> […] the heart of east London, [has] become one of the great city's most physically fragmented, environmentally compromised and socially deprived districts. The Games have reversed that […]. These fringe neighbourhoods cannot feel like they are on the edge, looking across at something new. Instead they must be a central part of the transformation, sharing their rich and intricate heritage and, in return, being nurtured by the epic events and investments on their doorstep. (LLDC 2013: 4)

The perception of East London as the last 'frontier for economic growth was made explicitly evident in the following quote from an interview with members of LLDC's Real Estate Team:

'Linking the Queen Elizabeth Park to the rest of East London acknowledges a shift from west to east in the city. The mayor recognised that [economic] growth is going to happen in the east. This is part of a wider strategy'.

Repeated references to 'centres' and 'margins', 'peripheries' and 'hearts', raises a key question: how might imagining East London as a margin—as a symbolic fringe or frontier in need of subsumption—allow for particular policies, private opportunities, and government strategies to emerge? In his work on gentrification in New York City, Smith draws attention to how 'the social meaning of gentrification' is created precisely through the mobilisation of a 'frontier myth'—a myth which allows for the differentiation between 'already developed spaces' and the creation of 'hostile landscapes' in need of regeneration (Smith 1996: xvi). The effect of a frontier imaginary, Smith contends, is:

'neither merely decorative nor innocent…but carries considerable ideological weight. Insofar as gentrification infects working-class communities, displaces poor households, and converts whole neighbourhoods into bourgeois enclaves, the frontier ideology rationalises social differentiation and exclusion as natural, inevitable.' (Smith 1996: 17)

This sense of naturalness and inevitability of reincorporating the city's fringes is central to the success of urban regeneration policies; just as humanitarian discourses gloss over inequalities, so do positive words of regeneration. The very term gentrification itself hints at something positive: it implies the creation of spaces for the *gentry*—civilised, respectable people that observe the quaint bourgeois values which are societally held as essential.

The general difficulty of discerning displacement within the positive discourses of urban gentrification might necessitate a rethinking of the relationship between displacement and conceptualisations of space. In current forced migration literature, recognising the occurrence of displacement is, in essence, a question of counting bodies as they move between distant locations (i.e. between countries, from rural to urban areas within countries, etc.). The following section briefly summarises debates in urban geography and theories of space that bring to light different ways of understanding the construction of space. Taking note of these different theories of space might be helpful if forced migration scholars are to begin considering processes of displacement as they happen in places like East London. I highlight conceptualisations of displacement that require going beyond abstract, 'Cartesian'[9] understandings of space to be attentive to the ways in which spaces are socially lived, experienced, and politically transformed.

The politics and lived experiences of space

Academic attention to gentrification and its relation to displacement first emerged in a 1960s study of the demographic changes taking place in particular working-class London neighbourhoods. Glass *et al.* coined the term 'gentrification' and illustrated the term as follows: 'One by one, many of the working class quarters of London have been invaded by the middle classes—upper and lower […] Once this process of "gentrification" starts in a district, it goes on rapidly until all or most of the original working class occupiers are displaced, and the whole social character of the district is changed' (Glass *et al.* 1960: xviii). At this period of time, Glass was talking about neighbourhoods that in the past half-century have become some of the most familiar centres of wealth and prosperity in London—Islington, North Kensington, and parts of Notting Hill.

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[9] Cartesian space refers to a purely physical conception and representation of space (i.e. mapping physical bodies to coordinate representations) that is devoid of lived experience. Whether physical notions of space can ever actually be devoid of lived experience remains highly contested.

Since Glass *et al.* first coined the term gentrification, urban geographers have studied processes of displacement and gentrification in New York, London, Paris, and other cities in the developed world, and more recently in the developing world (e.g. Atkinson and Bridge 2005; Harris 2008; He 2007). These studies on urban cities in the developing world have demonstrated how gentrification policies flow transnationally between cities. Regardless of where gentrification is being studied, however, there are two general ways in which the issue of displacement is approached. On one hand, some scholars view gentrification as a positive process that can be beneficial, rather than necessarily harmful, to 'local' residents and is thus in need of harnessing (e.g. Freeman 2005; Freeman and Braconi 2004; McKinnish *et al.* 2008; Vigdor 2002). These scholars sometimes use neighbourhood-level statistics of in- and out-migration to 'prove' that physical displacement does not necessarily result from gentrification. By contrast, other scholars take a more critical approach to gentrification and displacement. Some, most notably Smith (1996; 2002), have elaborated a 'revanchist' theory in which gentrification is viewed as a capitalist, neo-liberal process that almost always dispossesses a city's marginalised residents. While seemingly divergent, both approaches have been recently criticised for generalising processes of gentrification between cities and failing to recognise how gentrification, dispossession and displacement occur in particular *spaces* that are socially experienced (e.g. Davidson 2009). Both approaches tend to use Cartesian, abstract understandings of space in their discussions of displacement. Stated differently, urban geographers (as well as forced migration scholars)—no matter what their approach—often rely on a particular understanding of displacement that privileges the physical movement of bodies rather than experiences of dislocation wrought by the transformation of spaces themselves.

Thus far this paper has similarly employed such a Cartesian notion of physical displacement in the East London case study, made evident in my emphasis on eviction statistics and housing data. This conceptualisation of displacement is certainly informed by how researchers and policymakers approach forced migration, an approach that is likely also underpinned by a humanitarian logic. The physical displacement of suffering bodies, after all, is one of the primary markers of humanitarian emergencies. Yet how might an emphasis on the obvious physical dislocation of bodies obscure experiences of displacement in contexts of urban gentrification? Although no definitive answers to this question can be reached presently, I would like to briefly raise the possibility of utilising other theories of spaces.

Heidegger (2008), Lefebvre (1991), and Harvey (1973; 2003) are helpful for reconceptualising Cartesian understandings of space as it relates to displacement from 'urban renewal' and gentrification. These scholars, in their different approaches—Heidegger's philosophical reflections on the act of dwelling versus Lefebvre's and Harvey's theorisations of the city through Marxism—draw our attention to the limitations of understanding displacement solely in terms of physical dislocation. In the seminal work *Building, Dwelling, Thinking,* Heidegger points to how 'being is an intimately spatialised process' (Davidson 2009; Malpas 2007) as made apparent through the act of *dwelling*. The act of dwelling, Heidegger argues, involves both shaping and begin shaped by external spaces. In other words, dwelling is an essential aspect of existing that involves transforming space into embodied experiences of place.

While Heidegger's reflections are central to understanding place as an embodied experience, he has been critiqued for lacking a consideration of the political economy in which place is shaped (Davidson 2009; Zizek 2006). Davidson argues that Lefebvre's understanding of how urban space is shaped by un-equalising market forces takes a 'required step' beyond Heidegger's philosophical concepts (Davidson 2009: 227). When thinking of space as a *lived experience* in Heideggerian terms, displacement can be thought of not only in terms of physical dislocation, but also

experiential dislocation. Connecting Lefebvre (1991) to Heidegger, this experiential dislocation can also be seen as inherently political; for Lefebvre, the transformation of space occurs within a capitalist context in which certain individuals are able to determine their own and others' spaces, while others are not. Similarly recognising how the city serves as a site for capitalist power relations to be played out, Harvey argues that struggles over space in the city is not only a matter of 'a right of access to what the property speculators and state planners define' but a matter of who is able (and unable) to determine how spaces are shaped (Harvey 2003: 941).

In light of this conceptualisation of space as embodied and political, I would like to highlight Davidson's interesting discussion on the dangers of considering displacement solely in terms of Cartesian space. Davidson states:

> Put simply, it is impossible to draw the conclusion of displacement purely from the identification movement of people between locations […] People can be displaced—unable to (re)construct place—without spatial dislocation, just as much as they can with spatial dislocation. Conversely, people can be spatially dislocated without losing place if they did not engage in these practices before. (Davidson 2009: 228)

Recognising the limitations of speaking about the effects of gentrification solely in terms of *physical* displacement calls for a reconceptualisation of the way scholars argue for 'rights'. I again find Davidson helpful in thinking of ways in which we can create a new language of rights as it relates to displacement from gentrification. In his elaboration of Hartman's (1984) conceptualisation of 'the right to stay put' Davidson argues:

> In this sense, the conception of displacement as out-migration becomes inadequate and the preservation of space as a political goal holds no guarantee of protecting place. Here then, Hartman's (1984) call for the 'right to stay put' requires extension. *It must also encompass the right to (make) place; 'the right to dwell'.* Gentrification literature, in dealing with questions of displacement, not only deals more with the space/place tensions, but also with resulting questions of social justice (in *whose* image can the city be remade?). (Davidson 2009: 231)

Davidson's argument for the 'right to make place' and the 'right to dwell' pushes us beyond responding to displacement as solely a problem of moving through physical space. Instead, scholars can perhaps begin to adopt a more radical approach that considers who has the right to make space, and who can determine where particular individuals are allowed to 'dwell' in Heidegger's sense. Such a 'right to dwell' is unfortunately made irrelevant when the issue of forced migration is framed primarily in terms of a humanitarian logic—a logic in which the focus remains on the physical dislocations of bodies and resulting humanitarian and geopolitical concerns.

Conclusion

In sum, urban regeneration initiatives in East London are continuously linked to a positive narrative of an 'Olympic moment' and desire to provide London's 'fringe' communities with the legacy of economic opportunity and housing. A sense of urgency, and perhaps even one of injustice, is fostered when painting the east London boroughs as spaces on the margins. One can tangibly feel the *need* to regenerate and incorporate East London when reading LLDC brochures. It becomes very difficult to imagine how displacement might fit into this progressive, liberalising project. Indeed, sometimes 'displacement' in terms of physical dislocation is even difficult to observe as low-income families might move under the radar to other areas of the city, or simply be pushed into lower quality housing within the same neighbourhood. Individuals might not even move at all, but rather remain in place while the character of the community transforms around them.

As has been extensively demonstrated in previous chapters, the humanitarian ethos of 'emergency', 'flight', 'failed citizen-state bond', and suffering bodies fails to capture displacement as it happens in East London. The inability of a humanitarian ethos to capture displacement in East London relates to the inability of casting poor East Londoners as subjects of humanitarian care—their positioning within a wealthy nation-state, and outside the imagined (physical and conceptual) geography of forced migration prevents them from being viewed as such. The second half of this chapter, however, has also showed how reconceptualising space might be necessary in order to, as it were, redraw the geography of forced migration. Thinking of displacement in terms of power and space, rather than in terms of dislocated suffering bodies, brings attention to how displacement happens in situations such as East London.

5 Conclusion: inverting the gaze

Reflecting on the term 'forced migration', Turton (2006) argues that displacement raises questions about the assumed equality of citizens before the state; those who are displaced ultimately do not 'enjoy equal access to rights' whether they are refugees or forcibly resettled for development projects (De Wet 2006: 6). An unequal positioning of citizens before the state can be observed in East London: the ability of some to access housing, ensure livelihoods, and build social networks is placed as less important than the need to accumulate capital and allow others to access new centres for economic growth. The power relations determining who has the right to shape space, however, likely run deeper than this. If scholars of Forced Migration Studies are concerned about displacement as an injustice and manifestation of deeper inequalities then surely the case of East London is important. Returning to the overarching question of the paper: why, then, is it difficult to imagine such forms of displacement as forced migration?

This paper has argued that the central answer to this question lies in the very logic that binds forced migration together. Through tracing the history of forced migration and drawing on policy and academic texts, I have attempted to illustrate that this logic is primarily humanitarian. Recognising this humanitarian logic brings to light how forced migration is embedded with assumptions about where, how, and to whom displacement happens. The concept 'forced migration' is primarily used to refer to individuals in exceptional circumstances, facing existential threats to life in a pre-defined geography.

Now that this logic has been laid bare, and its limits tested through the case of East London, it is possible to critically consider the effects of forced migration as a normative concept. As long as the category persists, it will continue to imply a differentiation between those who count as forced migrants and those who do not. If scholars are to continue to assert the category's utility, it becomes particularly imperative to ensure that the concept does not work to reinforce inequalities and power differentials by allowing for those who fit within a humanitarian logic to become the subjects of interventions while leaving wealthy states outside a scrutinising gaze. The following questions become imperative: How might we reconceptualise forced migration to counteract these implications? And how can we shift away from assumptions about where and to whom displacement occurs—assumptions that are embedded in particular power relations—to truly consider displacement in all its forms?

These are all questions for future scholars in the field of Forced Migration Studies to address, although I will offer some initial reflections here. Ticktin's (2011) work on immigration and the

politics of humanitarianism in France is helpful for thinking through this question. After illustrating how a humanitarian 'illness clause' in France only allows particular undocumented immigrants to gain residency via their suffering bodies (bodies that are always racialised and gendered), Ticktin argues that there is a need to shift away from categories underpinned by an exclusionary ethics. For Ticktin, it is imperative to not simply recognise 'individuals deemed "exceptional", but to instead *not* [make] exceptions when it comes to questions of inequality, suffering and violence' (Ticktin 2011: 223). Similarly—in illustrating how a humanitarian logic does not allow for a consideration of displacement in powerful Western countries—my claim has not been to simply call for a redrawing of forced migration's borders. Doing so would only work to reinforce and expand the boundaries of the current humanitarian framework, and this would be to miss the point.

Instead, my central contention is that this humanitarian framework is inherently limiting and unequal as it reinforces hierarchies of displacement along lines of power. While I cannot fully claim any solution, I can say that the case of displacement in East London should, at the very least, call for a consideration of how scholars can 'invert the gaze'—to not only look at forced migration as it happens 'out there' in the global South, but also within the centres of power from which they often write. Imagining what 'inverting the gaze' might look like is not an easy task. Forced migration is so steeped in assumptions about where displacement happens and to whom it happens that challenging these limits might at first seem impossible or even undesirable. But inverting the gaze is precisely what will allow for an honest questioning of power relations— between those who decide policies related to forced migration and those who are affected by them, as well as between those who study and those who are studied. Alternative understandings of space, and the resulting rights these alternative visions inspire (such as the 'right to dwell' or the 'right to make space'), for instance, might be helpful. Scholars of Forced Migration should ask how they can be part of an unconventional dialogue rather than engaging primarily in scholarship that reinforces the status quo by locating displacement as primarily elsewhere. Indeed, displacement and dispossession can even be located in the centres of the most powerful cities.

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