Living on the margins: The socio-spatial representation of urban internally displaced persons in Ethiopia

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Key words: IDPs, urban, marginality, stigma, segregation, territory

Acknowledgements

The authors are grateful to all the participants for genuinely providing information. We would also like to thank the anonymous reviewers for their invaluable comments on earlier versions of this article. This study was part of a collaboration between Ghent University and Jimma University. It was funded by Network for Advancement of Sustainable Capacity in Education and Research in Ethiopia – NASCERE. The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Abstract

In cities in the Global South, internally displaced persons (IDPs) often end up in marginalized places created by uneven processes of urbanization. While they experience similar disadvantages to the urban poor living in these places, they face additional vulnerabilities related to their displacement. Building on insights from urban studies and forced migration studies, this article argues that a multi-dimensional understanding of urban marginality is a useful analytical lens to analyze the conditions of urban IDPs. Based on a multi-sited ethnographic research in Kersa and Sululta IDP settlements of Ethiopia, this study reveals how IDPs experience similar spatial, social, and symbolic marginality in different urban contexts. The findings show the relational manifestation of segregation, social distance, and stigmatization that impede IDPs' access to urban space and services. Our study also highlights how these dimensions of marginality interact and reproduce a further layer of marginality. This study suggests the need for inclusive urban governance, in which IDPs contribute to and benefit from urbanization as citizens.

Introduction

The majority of the world's internally displaced persons (IDPs)—people who have been forced to flee their place of residence, but remain within the territory of their country—currently live in urban areas (Huang and Graham, 2019). Evidence shows that most urban IDPs live outside a camp system and inhabit marginal urban areas, joining a large group of the urban poor (Earle et al., 2020). In this paper, the term 'IDPs' is used to render these people

visible within the urban context and to highlight their vulnerabilities and need for protection specific to their displacement.

Urban scholarship has widely applied the lens of urban marginality to analyze the disadvantages faced by the urban poor and new settlers in accessing the city's space and resources (Lata, 2020; Uitermark, 2014). This spatial perspective on urban marginality has importantly contributed to explaining processes of inequality by highlighting the consequences of residential segregation into disadvantaged neighborhoods (Desmond and Shollenberger, 2015; Unceta et al., 2020). However, we argue that a spatial dimension of marginality, emphasizing the containment of the urban poor, is incomplete with regard to understanding the additional disadvantages that IDPs face due to their displacement. Studies on displacement showed how displaced persons experience processes of othering and exclusion that hamper their integration into urban areas revealing social and symbolic marginality (Daley, 2013). Moreover, in the case of planned resettlement of IDPs to urban areas, the locations where IDPs can settle are clearly chosen and demarcated. Research has shown how IDPs have been relocated by governments into marginal and contested urban places with persistent land claims and competition among different actors (Bakonyi et al., 2019; Hammar, 2017). This implies that the intersection between displacement and the spatial characteristics of urban IDPs' settlements produces an additional layer of marginality that urgently needs further exploration.

Inspired by urban ethnographic studies that have called for a multidimensional and relational understanding of urban marginality (Aceska et al., 2019; Staudacher, 2019), the current study highlights ethnographic research in two Ethiopian urban IDP settlements, exploring how displacement and urban bordering practices create complex layers of IDPs' marginality. The term 'relational' here refers to the contextual understanding of how people (IDPs and long-term residents), places and practices are related and reproduce marginality. Beyond the spatial properties of physical distance and segregation, this study analyzes how the characteristics of urban settlements interact with social dimensions and with symbolic representation, which denotes the "image" of IDPs and their settlement in the wider urban context. By intersecting insights from urban studies and forced migration studies, and analyzing the multidimensional (spatial, social and symbolic) aspects of urban marginality of IDPs, we contribute to the growing body of literature on the contextual understanding of urban marginality, as well as to the study of IDPs' integration into cities on different scales.

Together, this furthers our knowledge about the dynamics of marginality in urban areas affected by displacement in the Global South.

In what follows, we first discuss the evolving understanding of urban marginality from a spatial perspective to a socio-spatial approach, and the relevance of the latter for the situation of urban IDPs. We then introduce our research sites by describing the government-led resettlement of ethnic Oromo IDPs into the Sululta and Kersa urban settlements. After presenting the multi-sited fieldwork in these settlements, we analyze IDPs' experiences of the interaction between spatial, social, and symbolic marginality, and how this compellingly materialized in the case of housing and tenure insecurity. In conclusion, the paper suggests the need for inclusive urban practice embracing IDPs as urban citizens.

Urban Marginality: Unpacking the predicaments of urban IDPs

The concept of urban marginality has a long tradition of analyzing inequalities and poverty (Caldeira, 2009; Wacquant, 2008). It represents the imbalance of power engendering the social, political, symbolic and economic exclusion of people from the city system, bringing about stigma (Aceska et al., 2019; Gibbons, 2017). This conceptualization of urban marginality is frequently defined by two analytical dimensions: social and spatial. Social marginality involves injustice and exclusion related to ethnicity, gender, religion, culture, and social hierarchy, whereas spatial marginality involves exclusion related to location, distance, and segregation (Gatzweiler and Baumüller, 2014). These dimensions constantly interact and influence one another (Baumann and Yacobi, 2021). Central to these forms of marginality is power asymmetry, in which specific groups of people, such as IDPs, experience disadvantages (Aru et al., 2017; Gibbons, 2017).

Building on the urban sociological approach of the Chicago School, spatial marginality has been extensively studied in terms of the effects of peripheralization, segregation, and ghettoization for marginalized urban residents (Lancione, 2016; Slater, 2013). Many studies have shown how residential segregation engenders income inequality, unemployment, and poor housing (Logan, 2012; Pais, 2017). Much of this literature on territorialization of marginality focuses on racial minorities and economic migrants in the Global North, and has increasingly been challenged for obscuring the social and political forces contributing to marginality (Sisson, 2021; Slater, 2013), while these factors are of particular relevance to understand the situation of displaced persons. Wacquant's (2008) work on *Urban Outcasts*

importantly introduced the idea of territorial stigmatization as a key manifestation of urban marginality, referring to the processes by which spatial containment, disconnection, and material disadvantages are justified and exacerbated through stigma. Nevertheless, subsequent scholarship on stigmatization has also been criticized for obfuscating urban practices that marginalize disadvantaged people (Sisson, 2021). Aceska and colleagues (2019) argue that urban studies largely assume an isomorphism between space and identity, or tend to equate spatial marginality with social marginality. However, the relationship between social and spatial dimensions is complex, as they can interact and create further disadvantages (see also Staudacher, 2019).

Further, a growing strand of urban scholarship builds on the work of Wacquant and highlights the production of stigma—negative representations and stereotypes—perpetuating and justifying exclusion, for instance, through infrastructural neglect and poor housing (Baumann and Yacobi, 2021; Sisson, 2021). We argue that these insights are crucial to analyze how cities reproduce IDPs' marginality, though this subject has attracted little scholarly attention in urban studies or forced migration studies.

Some forced migration studies adopted the spatial marginality approach to explain the disadvantages related to education, income, and well-being of IDPs in Georgian cities (Gogishvili and Harris-Brandts, 2019; Kabachnik et al., 2014). These results are also mirrored across case studies in Africa, where the containment of IDPs on outskirts of cities exacerbates precariousness (Daley, 2013; Kibreab, 2007). While these studies offer important analytical insights into the influence of physical distance and segregation on the access to resources, they largely detach IDPs from the urban system in which they live, thereby creating a similar blind spot to the one criticized above. We argue that in the case of internal displacement, symbolic marginality is an important extension to the analysis of urban marginality. It induces another form of exclusion that is often produced by urban authorities, by reinforcing differences and borders between IDPs and other residents (Aedo, 2019). This dimension of marginality shows resemblances to how governments reinforce the marginality of refugees by positioning refugee camps as distant and legitimate "others" of the city (Darling, 2017). Case studies of refugees in Cairo (Grabska, 2006), Kenya (Pavanello et al., 2010) and the African Great Lakes Region (Daley, 2013; Kihato and Landau, 2017) have shown how cities reinforce symbolic marginality of refugees by restricting their rights and perpetuating precarity. This marginalization of refugees is largely related to legality and citizenship and

therefore not entirely similar to the situation of IDPs. Accordingly, how the stigmatization of IDPs and the spatial elements of the new urban places to which they have been relocated interact and produce further layers of marginality for them has not been sufficiently explored.

Recent ethnographic studies have suggested a relational and subjective approach to urban marginality, and have demonstrated how even in the geographical center of a city, dwellers experience marginality due to stigma and exclusionary practices (Aceska et al., 2019; Aedo, 2019; Staudacher, 2019). Building further on this, our study focuses on how IDPs who are relocated into urban settlements experience marginality related to their displacement and urban bordering practices. In doing so, we expand the urban marginality lens by examining spatial marginality (physical distance and segregation), social marginality (relations with other urban residents and the city), and symbolic marginality (stigma).

The Oromo-Somali conflict: Displacement and urban IDP resettlement in Ethiopia

Ethiopia has the highest number of IDPs in the world. According to the IDMC (2022), more than five million people were internally displaced at the end of 2021. While the country has a long history of internal displacement due to interrelated social, economic, and political factors, ethnic and border related tensions have become the main triggers for displacement, following the introduction of an ethnic-based federal structure (Regasa and Lietaert, 2022). This ethnic arrangement of governance has created an additional layer of "citizenship" at the local administrative level, leading to the exclusion of "others" in the claimed homeland (Mengie, 2015; Taye, 2017). Oromo and Somali ethnic groups make up the ethno-national regional states of Oromia and Somali, respectively. These regions share a 1400 km long boundary, where a large number of pastoralists live. Historically, relations between the two ethnic groups have been characterized by territorial competition that has often led to conflict over resources (Hussein, 2017). However, the inter-ethnic violence in 2017 was devastating, resulting in the displacement of more than a million people from both sides, including urban residents and pastoralists (OCHA and NDRMC, 2018). The majority of ethnic Oromo residents, the focus of our study, were displaced from the cities of Jigjiga, Kebri Beyah, and Togochale.

As Ethiopia has no clear institutional arrangement to protect and assist IDPs, the government initiated an emergency system to respond to the displacement. The Oromia regional government established hundreds of collective centers to accommodate most of the IDPs, while assisting others to join family and relatives until the announcement of a

"solution"(OCHA and NDRM, 2018). IDPs stayed in these collective centers waiting for a solution for between eight months and two years. Eventually, the majority of the pastoralists and agro-pastoralists were returned to their place of origin, while IDPs from the urban areas mentioned above were not returned due to their own preferences, as well as purported security concerns. Consequently, the Oromia regional government mobilized resources under an initiative termed "Citizen for Citizen" and assigned more than 41,000 IDP households to 12 selected intermediary cities based on a quota system. These urban areas are Sululta, Gelan Kersa, Shashemane, Bishoftu, Batu, Laga Tafo, Modjo, Gelan, Sebeta, Adama, Dukem, and Burayu (Easton-Calabria, 2020) (see Figure 1**)**. Most of these cities are in an increasingly urbanizing zone surrounding Addis Ababa (henceforth, Addis) (Terfa et al., 2020).

INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE

Figure 1: Displacement places, transits, and settlement sites

Based on the recommendation of the regional government, these urban municipalities set up committees to rapidly establish new settlements and accommodate IDPs. Each committee also mobilized resources from the local community, diaspora, and companies, and built houses and provided basic materials (Easton-calabria, 2020). For almost all the urban settlements, the urban administrations either repurposed "unoccupied lands," such as pasture, or claimed land from investors who had not effectively developed it. These IDP settlements were observed to form additional villages, commonly referred to as "IDP neighborhoods" in public discourse. Each has its own *Koree*, representatives who intermediate between the IDPs and municipalities regarding settlement management and IDPs' affairs. The regional government provided a one-off amount of monetary support to all IDPs after the relocation and promised to create employment opportunities within six months of settlement. Despite the regional government claiming the completion of relocating IDPs from collective centers to these aforementioned cities as a "solution," little is known about how IDPs experience the settlements and the urban context in which they have found themselves.

Methodology

This study started by observing many of the urban settlements mentioned above to identify peculiarities and similarities between them in terms of the location, housing, and

demography of IDPs. Two settlements—Gelan Kersa (hereafter, Kersa) and Sululta—were subsequently selected, because both received a large number of IDPs yet differ in their relative location to the respective cities and entail different socio-economic opportunities and constraints. Hence, this selection allowed us to analyze how IDPs who fled the same cause, experience marginality in different urban areas.

Kersa is a village about 22 km from the center of Addis and located on its outskirts, in Akaki sub-city. The residents of Kersa are predominantly ethnic Oromo farmers, who are scattered across several villages with farmland in-between. This area has been the main expansion zone of Addis, and has been used for industries and housing projects. Thousands of condominium houses built for long-term residents evicted many farmers, which prompted protests across Oromia (Meth et al., 2022). More than 1854 IDP households from Somali region were relocated in this contested area of Kersa, where farmers, city residents, and the city were and still are competing for land. Nonetheless, it was not until 2021 that the existence of these IDPs in Kersa was reported (IOM, 2021). These IDPs consist of former civil servants, NGO employees, merchants, and skilled laborers.

The second study site, Sululta, is 25 km North of Addis. It is one of the towns experiencing rapid urbanization related to population increase, as well as the establishment of companies in fields such as water bottling and floriculture (Terfa et al., 2020). The residents are predominantly dairy farmers and thus land beyond the settlements and industry is used for pasture. The town received 521 IDP households and relocated them on pasture. The majority of these IDPs used to be laborers and cross-border traders in the Somali region. Most of the IDPs—both in Kersa and Sululta—were Muslims, whereas the local residents of the respective urban areas were Christians, although both the IDPs and local residents of Kersa and Sululta are predominantly ethnic Oromo and thus speak Afan Oromo. However, Kersa is part of Addis City, where the working language is Amharic.

Data collection

The fieldwork was conducted in Kersa and Sululta IDP settlements by the first author, from September 2020 to August 2021. The ethnographic research sought to explore how IDPs make sense of their settlement and the urban context in which they are situated. This requires "being there," as well as intensive observation and consistent interaction with people (Ocejo, 2013). In both settlements, we therefore conducted multi-modal ethnographic research (Aru

et al., 2017), collecting data based on (1) the observation of people, settlement, and practices going in these settlements, and (2) informal exchanges and interviews with IDPs, other urban residents, and key stakeholders. We also enhanced the richness of the data by interpreting pictures and songs as discussed below.

The Ethiopian and Oromo background of the researcher facilitated the understanding of the spatial and social context influencing the living conditions of people in the selected urban centers. Nonetheless, initial assumptions regarding the importance of this knowledge and the absence of any cultural barrier in conducting the fieldwork were challenged due to a strong feeling of resentment among IDPs related to the lack of assistance after relocation. As in many parts of Africa (see Thomson et al., 2013), the government securitized IDP settlements with intensive policing. Initially, the researcher's presence thus created suspicion, and IDPs gossiped about him being a *basaastuu—s*omeone spying for the government about the thoughts of IDPs. This reveals the power relationship between the subaltern and authorities (Clark-Kazak, 2021). Frequent discussions with key gatekeepers, mainly *maanguddoo*— elders or traditional leaders[1]—and IDP representatives, addressed the misconception regarding the researcher's role. The frequent visits and informal interactions with IDPs were also key strategies to communicate the academic purpose of the study and develop trust.

This was followed by unstructured observation of the two IDP settlements, focusing on the following key elements: locations, housing conditions, infrastructures, and everyday practices. Many pictures were taken of key infrastructures, housing, and shops. Then key places where IDPs and non-displaced persons frequently interact were determined. These included outdoor coffee drinking places, district offices, small restaurants, barbershops, and most importantly verandas where groups of men IDPs regularly chew *Jimaa* (khat[2]). In these places, the researcher engaged with IDPs and discussed selected pictures to obtain some insights into how they relate to social, spatial, and symbolic margins in the new settlements. Interpretations of pictures such as crowded water points and makeshift shops revealed infrastructural exclusion and segregation, which were later included in interview guide.

[1] Traditional leaders are influential actors in conflict resolution and the preservation of peace and security.

[2] A plant cultivated in Middle East and Africa the fresh leaf of which is chewed as for stimulating effect.

During several encounters, it appeared that particular Oromo songs held a special meaning in both settlements, such as*, Do I exist?* (Abebe, 2020) and *Oromo is denied access to 'Finfinnee'* (the name of Addis among the Oromo). Listening together to these songs that entail messages of alienation of the Oromo from the city captures an interesting socio-spatial marginality. Therefore, discussing the pictures and listening to songs were helpful entry points to engage with initial contacts and other IDPs and start a conversation. Field notes taken from these initial encounters and exchanges further helped the researcher to recruit interviewees.

In addition to contacts directly established by the researcher, two research assistants supported the recruitment of IDPs based on specific displacement place, age, and livelihood strategies. In-depth interviews were conducted with 30 IDPs: 12 from Sululta and 18 from Kersa. The participants included 21 men and 9 women, the majority of whom were from Jigjiga and Togochale. The interviews dealt with their experiences in urban settlements, focusing on location and social relations, as well as access to basic urban services, housing, and employment. The initial topics were consistently expanded to collect in-depth information. In addition to the interviews with IDPs, civil servants from district offices and from the Disaster Risk Management and Social Affairs Bureaus (Sululta: n=2; and Kersa: n=2) were interviewed to increase understanding about the resettlement of IDPs, place selection, and city-IDP relations. All the interviews with the IDPs were conducted in Afan Oromo, the first language of the IDPs and the researcher, although an interview with one civil servant in Kersa was in Amharic. In order to maintain confidentiality, no references to actual names were made throughout the data collection and analysis.

Data analysis

All the interviews were transcribed and translated into English. In a first step of the analysis, a conventional content analysis (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005) was conducted with Nvivo 11 to code and condense the data based on the general themes of the interviews: location, access to resources, relation of IDPs with other urban residents and the city officials, and the support system after relocation. In a next step, key analytical indicators of urban marginality—distance, segregation, exclusion, stigma, and representation—were applied to the data to refine IDPs' experiences of marginality related to their planned urban settlements and displacement conditions. This was subsequently ordered into the three key dimensions of marginality: (1) physical, (2) social, and (3) symbolic. In the following part, we discuss each

dimension and their interaction, and finally (4) present the case of housing conditions as a striking example of how these processes interact.

"We are alone": Physical distance and residential segregation

Physical distance and segregation are the major indicators of spatial marginality producing disadvantages for urban IDPs, as they bring about infrastructural exclusion. When asked for their opinion about being in urban areas, in almost all conversations and interviews, participants applauded the government-led relocation to an urban space because they were urban residents. As most of them were traders in the Somali region, they expected the government to relocate them in mainstream urban neighborhoods so that they would be able to resume their business and catch-up with urban living conditions. Nonetheless, many of them said that where they ended up did not meet their expectations. In both Kersa and Sululta, IDPs experienced being at the margin of the urban contexts due to physical distance and the segregation of their neighborhood, something that had different manifestations.

As mentioned earlier, IDPs in Kersa were relocated in a relatively new district on the outskirts of Addis, where farmers inhabit scattered villages. The IDP settlement or village formed a new neighborhood separated from these existing villages by vast areas of farmland. This physical distance from the center and the isolation from the neighboring villagers, whom the IDPs often called *warra biyyaa* (the natives), created a sense of "being alone." Being detached from the local residents within the urban territory meant that IDPs frequently defined their location as "rural within the city" and this was something that reinforced their identity as IDPs in the city. One 47-year-old merchant from Jigjiga described this physical distance and the experience of segregation:

> I do not feel that I am in the city. Our neighborhood is far from Addis and looks like a village in the countryside, as we are surrounded by farmland. I have no farmland; I cannot buy it either. I thought the government would relocate us to a neighborhood close to the other residents. Look, we have some shops in the settlement but the sellers and the customers are the same people—IDPs. This does not normally happen in a city. This tells you where we are in the city (Kr, Male, 47).

This quote illustrates not only the physical distance from the city, but also the isolation of the settlements where IDPs engage in a homogenous milieu of social practices on the fringe of the city. This spatial marginalization of IDPs in cities has also been widely reported in other countries affected by displacement, as a practice to reinforce containment and prevent integration (Gogishvili and Harris-Brandts, 2019; Kibreab, 2007), or to use Darling's (2017)

expression, to “manage marginality.” While interpreting a picture of Kersa settlement, a khat merchant used the metaphorical expression: “Addis has pushed us away,” to refer to how the segregated settlement denied IDPs’ access to the city and pushed them to the spatial margin of the territory. One former cross-border merchant further illustrated the relationship between distance and segregation when he said, “If I had just a veranda in the city [Addis] I would at least sell bottled water and change my circumstances. In this rural Kersa, I cannot do anything.” Hence, this strongly hints at a mismatch between place and the socio-economic status of these IDPs, who lived in a collective center for two years, and were then brought to Kersa: “There are lecturers, engineers, daily laborers and civil servants in this settlement [Kersa], which is reserved for IDPs.” (Kr, Male, 67)

Spatial marginality is further manifested through infrastructural exclusion in the new settlement. This involves underinvestment and disconnection from basic urban services, thereby shaping the relationship of marginalized residents with the urban system. When asked about their access to basic urban services, IDPs often expressed their settlement as “underinvested” and a “forgotten urban place.” This illustrates the incompatibility between the conceived spaces built by the urban planners and the lived space of displaced persons in the urban landscape (Gogishvili and Harris-brandts, 2019). Water shortages and the lack of reliable healthcare facilities were frequently mentioned, revealing the infrastructural disadvantages. IDPs relied on water tanks that had to be filled by trucks bringing water from the city center. It was common to observe long queue of crowds with buckets when the trucks brought water, including during the COVID-19 pandemic. Urban authorities attributed the lack of water to the detachment and distance of the neighborhood from the water main and the related high cost for pipeline construction. Moreover, Kersa had no healthcare facilities and thus IDPs and other residents had to visit health centers and hospitals, which were located about 6 km away from the settlement on average. This lack of a healthcare infrastructure was complicated by the high cost of transportation, as described by a nurse IDP: “We [IDPs] spend more money on transport than medication, particularly in the case of emergency.” Moreover, due to the absence of a nearby market, grinding mill, and secondary school, travelling appeared to be a daily activity for IDPs and involved a considerably high daily expense, keeping in mind that IDPs had no regular income. This showcases how IDPs experience marginality, by depending on the city and its distant infrastructure. Thus, urban

marginality is manifested not only through exclusion, but also through the subordination of disadvantaged people to the city (Hammar, 2017; Uitermark, 2014).

In Sululta, however, IDPs experienced physical distance and segregation differently. Many IDPs stated that they experienced "being alone," despite their settlement being situated within the existing neighborhoods. This subjective understanding of physical distance shows how spatial marginality takes distinct forms and meanings in different urban contexts (Aceska et al., 2019). Physical characteristics, such as being surrounded by the pastures of the urban dwellers and rivers crossing the town, were frequently used to demarcate the settlement in relation to the town and other neighborhoods. Specifically, being isolated between two rivers appeared to define the segregation. A 67-year-old community leader explained:

> We [IDPs] are excluded between two rivers. These rivers not only demarcate our settlement from the locals, but they also affect us alone. During the rainy season, flooding inundates our settlement and destroys our houses. We have lost three children due to flooding (Sl, Male, 67).

This expression was repeated when a widowed woman interpreted a song (*Do I exist*?) that she was listening to, "We [IDPs] are pushed towards the swampy land of the town." While Sululta is a small town in terms of settlement territory, these expressions unveil how IDPs still experience distance and relative segregation, highlighting what Kühn (2017) frame as the contextuality of peripheries.

Interestingly, the town administration had constructed a bridge to connect the IDP settlement to the main road and other existing urban neighborhoods. However, during the rainy season the river overflows and hinders children, people with disabilities, and elderly IDPs. Hence, the swampy nature of the land coupled with flooding creates a geographical barrier to accessing urban services, mainly during the rainy season. A tailor and IDP representative complained, "An ambulance could not enter our neighborhood and rescue a pregnant woman during the rainy season because the track is difficult. We are in the same vicinity as existing neighborhoods but with different facilities." Unlike the case of Kersa, physical proximity allowed IDPs to frequently have contact with other urban residents in their everyday life, such as a market, water points, and khat shops. Moreover, the availability of an affordable horse cart and *Bajaj* transportation was enunciated to ease mobility and access to key urban services.

By contrast, subjective infrastructural exclusion was noted during informal conversations and interpretation of settlement pictures. One elderly IDP expressed the subjective distance using a proverb, *nuti dhiyoo fagoo taane*, meaning "we are close but far people." This man used the metaphorical expression to highlight, for instance, how the lack of proper latrines in the settlement affected the IDPs. He further elaborated how IDPs, particularly women, had to search for unsafe pits beyond the settlement. A woman with walking disability underscored this when she said, "This side of the river is exclusively ours [IDPs] and neglected." These expressions denote how people and places may be hidden or distanced in the urban landscape, regardless of the physical distance or disconnection from the perceived center. This clearly shows the subjective distance and segregation that urban residents may experience due to underinvestment or abandonment of neighborhoods (Aedo, 2019; Sisson, 2021).

"The natives do not want us": Social relations of IDPs with other residents and the city

Beyond spatial marginality, which could also affect the non-displaced urban poor, IDPs experience further marginality related to their displacement conditions that constitute social marginality: an imbalance of power in social relations. When asked about their relationship with other urban residents, IDPs in both Kersa and Sululta underscored the persistence of social distance, which was manifested through poor social interaction with other urban residents. Expressions such as "we are still far," "we do not know each other," and "they [local residents] do not need our ties as such" were frequently used to summarize the social distance, with the last expression being mentioned in almost all interviews. This social distance was partly attributed to the segregation of IDPs and the physical distance discussed in the previous section, confirming that the physical distance of urban settlements brings about social distance (Qian, 2019). An IDP representative woman in Kersa explained this: "As we are separated from the existing villages, the local farmers rarely come to our neighborhood. I do not go to their village either. I know only a few local residents. I met them at the district." A man from Sululta confirmed this social distance, but in a different way:

> The local residents are also Oromo but they do not interact with us. They are conservative. For instance, some women often fetch water from our water points, but they do not even greet us. So, our neighborhood is not far but their [the natives'] heart is (Sl, Male, 54).

Social marginality, like spatial marginality, occurs not only through exclusion from social relations, but also through subordinating IDPs. Many female participants illustrated this mainly through the prejudice they perceived at the district office when obtaining urban services. Jalane, a mother of 16 in Sululta, had to visit a municipality to buy sugar and oil supplied by a government cooperative mainly for the urban poor. She was happy to be able to obtain these items at lower price than in the market, but reported being discriminated against by both the other urban residents and the officials. She said, "When I queue up to buy oil, the local women often glare at me and queue in front of me. The storekeepers also serve the locals and tell us to come another day because we are IDPs." Another woman from Kersa felt similar discrimination, "Local residents can easily identify us [IDPs] by our style of dress and they disrespect us at the district office and taxi station." This highlights the social denigration that IDPs experience in their everyday lives.

The language barrier is another key element engendering social distance between urban IDPs, service providers, and urban residents. Many participants in Kersa, who almost entirely depend on the city center for urban services, reported facing a language barrier and related marginality in using transportation and health services. Taxi drivers were observed to harass and discriminate against IDPs who were not fluent in Amharic. This often led to quarrels when the taxi drivers tried to deceive IDPs into paying a higher fare than the standard tariff. Moreover, sometimes the drivers did not come to a complete stop to let IDPs get in at terminals. As one IDP said, "the drivers do not want to even see us." A similar form of distancing was reported regarding health services. For instance, a daily laborer who had accompanied his sick wife to different clinics in the city said, "I speak little Amharic. The nurses often did not listen to my [poor] Amharic." Strikingly, the situation in Sululta exposed the fact that being from the same ethnic group and speaking Afan Oromo was not a guarantee of strong social interactions. For instance, IDPs reported distancing during conversations. One 54-year-old community leader said, "We [IDPs] speak with a *Harerghe* Oromo accent, with a high tone and our specific [colloquial] terms. Local residents feel offended during conversations. Nothing is wrong with our talk but the residents do not want us." The participants also explained what they call the "conservativeness" of the local residents in extending contacts to IDPs at the district and market.

Urban IDPs also expressed their social marginality related to religious practices in Kersa. As mentioned earlier, the majority of IDPs were Muslim, while the residents around

the settlement were mostly Christians. IDPs had larger family sizes than other residents, something that authorities and residents attributed to "religion prohibiting the use of contraception." Many IDPs further exemplified disadvantages related to religion with a lack of places for worship. Consequently, Muslim IDPs had built a "temporary Mosque." A religious leader said, "We had been using an IDP house for prayer. Following the outbreak of COVID-19, we constructed a temporary Mosque based on the suggestion of the authorities. We are supposed to demolish it after the pandemic" (Kr, Male, 54). A lack of burial places added to this "injustice," meaning that Muslims relied on places beyond the district where followers of the same religion had secured a suitable site. Even the Orthodox IDPs had to pay a lot of money to conduct burial services at a nearby church. IDPs were observed to complain about the burial place, as this was something they often used to illustrate their social marginality in new settlements.

The urban municipalities seldom involved IDPs in public meetings on urban affairs. Participants often said, "The municipality does not consider us" or "We are invisible," to illustrate what Aedo (2019) terms as social denegation. A widowed woman stated, "The municipality may call us to a meeting just to achieve the planned number of attendees and for reporting purposes. There has not been any meeting targeting integration.'' This reveals the relegation that hampers IDPs belonging to the new urban areas. The social marginality discussed above is further entwined with the symbolic representation of IDPs.

"The Somali": Symbolic representation of urban IDPs and stigmatization

Urban IDPs experience further marginality that is produced by labeling and stigmatization attached to their urban neighborhoods and displacement condition. Stigmatization involves a power imbalance, in which authorities and other residents control people considered problematic to the city. This process reproduces the material and social disadvantages of IDPs who find themselves in new urban settings. The newly established IDP neighborhoods of Kersa and Sululta, where IDPs exclusively reside, have been labeled "unique places" by city residents and local authorities. IDPs were often called "*the Somali*," linked to their place of displacement, a label that pushes IDPs away from the urban relocation places. A woman representative in Kersa stated,

> We have lived here for three years. But still, residents and authorities call us the *Somali* and our settlement, *Somali Sefer* [Somali neighborhood]. We are Oromo, not

> Somali. If I were Somali, I would not be displaced from the Somali region. They [authorities and residents] are telling us that we are outsiders (Kr, Female, 36).

In many African countries, IDPs are stigmatized as it is feared they will change the demographic composition and thus the political power balance of contested urban areas (Daley, 2013). Many IDPs argued that the label *Somali* was deliberately used by local and city authorities alike to control IDPs as "others" and to hamper self-integration. Interviews with key informants from Addis city and Kersa village confirmed this, when they referred to IDPs as "difficult-to-manage people." IDPs' previous illicit economic activities, such as smuggling and irregular trade across the Ethiopia-Somalia border, were often referred to by government officials to justify the stigmatization. One government official claimed, "They are largely smugglers. They may not live with other urban residents in harmony." This indicates how stigma is used as a form of social control, to contain and abandon marginalized residents (Uitermark, 2014). Many interviews and observations revealed that Kersa farmers and service providers, such as drivers and district officials, reinforced the stigma attached to IDPs, which perpetuated the social marginality discussed above. This shows the constellation of actors producing the social stigma that renders particular people and places as symbolically marginalized (Thieme et al., 2017).

Territorial stigmatization and the struggles of people against such stigma engenders further marginality, in which residents are considered to upset established urban norms (Sisson, 2021; Wacquant et al., 2014). The participants were not only segregated, but also disparaged as "undeserving" outsiders residing in a contested area in Kersa from which farmers had already been dispossessed. In response to denigration, IDPs often collectively protested to "defend their neighborhood." For instance, a group of IDPs were observed to resist a politician who was taking a photograph of the Kersa settlement. When asked for the reason, the IDPs highlighted that the city residents and interest groups problematized their settlement as "politically challenging for the city." This and related practices of resistance rendered IDPs "violent people" and their settlement "dangerous" in the city media, something that justified the symbolic distance in their everyday struggles. A lack of official visits to the neighborhood and defamation as "normless" at meetings strengthened IDPs feeling of neglect. As such, stigmatization creates demoralization and encourages residents to disassociate themselves from neighbors (see also Aedo, 2019).

Intensive policing and aggressive controlling tactics in selected urban places signal territorial stigmatization or symbolic marginality. Neighborhoods of the "*Somali*" were intensively policed in the name of what officials claimed to be mitigating violence. The characterization of IDPs as supporters of insurgent groups and opposition political parties further intensified the surveillance in both settlements. A government official from Sululta said, "Initially, they [the IDPs] appeared obedient, but gradually turned violent. They undermine the ruling party and regulations of the town. They rather support the Oromo Liberation Front." This is similar to the case of IDPs in Bosaso, Somalia, who were accused of harboring Al-Shabaab (Bakonyi et al., 2019). Informal conversations with other officials and residents confirmed the same form of labeling. In Kersa, denigrating IDPs as "unlawful," with the associated surveillance, was heightened after they had renamed their neighborhood in honor of the late singer and civil rights activist, *Hachalu*, who supported IDPs and advocated urgent attention should be paid to their plight.

Similar to the situation in Kersa, IDPs in Sululta were commonly labeled as the *Somali*, despite sharing the same ethnic background as other residents. This is in line with Brun's (2010) study in Sri Lanka, highlighting the othering of northern Muslims in Puttalam despite sharing an ethnic identity with non-IDPs. The participants were observed to consistently reprimand the "natives" for designating their settlement as a "Somali neighborhood," which many participants considered derogatory and outrageous. This highlights active contestation or symbolic resistance to territorial stigmatization (Sisson, 2021). One 41-year-old polygamous man said, "Calling us the Somali, they [other residents and officials] are telling us we are out of place. This is an affront to us." Stigmatization of the IDP neighborhood was evident when other residents and officials linked the settlement to drug use and as a place where deviant people hide themselves. A khat merchant man confirmed this:

> We [IDPs] chew khat. This is just like other urban residents drinking alcohol. Some local youth also chew with us, on my veranda. Yet, the residents and officials call our neighborhoods and workplaces drug places and risky. I often tell them it is simply a stereotype (Sl, Male, 38).

Among the town officials, IDPs were generally regarded as "outsiders" who expanded the use of drugs such as cannabis and khat, and thus were easy targets for accusations of misconduct and for stigmatization. A community leader further explained the stigma attached to their place:

> Officials and other residents often report to me that we [IDPs'] and other thieves steal metals and hide themselves in our neighborhood. I know the majority of us collect discarded materials to generate income. I also know that we are impoverished by displacement, but we are not thieves. Thieves could be anywhere in the town, not only in our neighborhood (SL, Male, 67).

This case illustrates how marginalized urban settings are perceived as "nests" of deviant people who threaten the established norms of the city. This distancing further hampers IDPs' struggle to present themselves as insiders in the urban context.

Urban IDPs not only experience infrastructural exclusion, as discussed earlier, but also stigma related to their territorial struggles, such as the occupation of urban lands. As their settlement (for example, segregated between rivers) was unsuitable for business, many IDPs in Sululta occupied what they called "abandoned land" or vacant lots alongside the main road, and built shack shops. This is an illustration of what Sisson (2021) terms as alternative practices of the urban poor. While IDPs claimed this occupation as being a means to cope with economic marginalization, officials considered it as informal expansion. A 33-year-old man who led the occupation explained:

> I had repeatedly asked the municipality to allocate a workplace, but they [officials] were not willing. We then repurposed a dumpsite and built some makeshift shops where we sell coffee, khat, and food. We collectively built the [shops] at night. I do understand my shop is an unauthorized, but I have nowhere else to do business. Alternatively, the town should provide us with workplaces (Sl, Male, 33) .

This reveals how displaced persons lack legitimate places in urban areas and use clandestine landfill sites to realize social and material emplacement (Aedo, 2019). Discarded metals and other materials were used to build the shops where women IDPs prepare "affordable" food, such as samosas and beans for IDPs and other poor. These makeshift shops were sites of confrontation between the occupants (IDPs) and the authorities, as the latter designated the infrastructures as "*seer-ala"* (illegal) shops, which according to the authorities emerged unchecked and upset urban land regulation. Urban departments such as road safety and the electric service were observed to frequently warn IDPs against the "informal occupation." While authorities acknowledged the tenacity of turning inhospitable places into business space by assembling discarded objects, they condemned what they denoted as the "invasion of vacant lots." The police had already demolished some of these shops in the name of unauthorized occupation. Accordingly, the stigma attached to spaces occupied by vulnerable people legitimizes and reproduces symbolic marginality.

Poor housing and insecure tenure

Lastly, we focus on the housing situation of the participants, as this appeared to be a striking example of marginality in which the interplay between its multiple dimensions produces an additional layer of precarity. As mentioned earlier, IDPs were given private accommodation in both Kersa and Sululta. However, the type and size of the housing in these settlements were different, and this was certainly influenced by the capacity of the municipalities. When asked about their housing conditions, IDPs accentuated poor quality, insecurity of tenure, and stigma, revealing the interconnected dimensions of marginality discussed in the preceding sections.

The housing conditions of marginalized residents involve a site of contestation and stigma in urban areas. Being built horizontally and connected, the three-roomed cement houses of IDPs in the segregated Kersa settlement can easily be differentiated from the high-rise condominiums built for the long-term residents. This housing structure was often noted by local officials, farmers, and residents of the city center alike as a "wastage of precious urban land," as it occupied a vast amount of land, similar to the case of urban IDPs in the Bosaso IDP settlement in Somalia (Bakonyi et al., 2019). Many participants contended that this was a stereotypical and derogatory connotation, related to their housing and belonging to the city. One woman further noted, "The local officials and residents often call us opportunistic [but] undeserving people. I often note this enviousness in taxis." These expressions showcase the interrelation of the social and symbolic marginality of forced migrants in the urban landscape. According to IDPs, the designation "opportunistic" obfuscated the poor quality of the houses and of the land on which they were built. As some blocks were built on backfilled land and with poor foundations, houses were observed to be cracking within only three years of construction, which IDPs attributed it to the "apathy of the government and contractors." By contrast, authorities contended that the houses were complete, and accused IDPs of monotonous moaning and reproaching. Despite these accusations rendering them "inaudible," IDPs referred to their houses as "unfinished." These was mainly the case for IDPs whose houses were at the farthest end of the settlement, frequently referred to as "the hidden blocks," which were neither cemented nor connected to the electricity supply. While IDPs filed complaints several times, the city authorities claimed the completion of the housing project and stated that "it is enough for IDPs." One man

complained, “I often feel guilty to report the unfinished state of my house, because officials consider it as seeking luxury.”

INSERT Figure2a.

Fig 2a. Housing structure, Kersa settlement

INSERT fig2b.

Fig2b. Housing structure, Sululta settlement

The row housing structure did not leave space for private use such as gardening and social purposes (see Figure 2a). IDPs were also unable to construct fences, revealing the constricting space designed by urban planners. While some IDPs, such as civil servants (for example, lecturers) and merchants, aspired to expand and improve their houses, the limited space allocated to them was a challenge. This further shows how the space is conceived by bureaucrats in order to exclude marginalized residents’ need for housing spaces (Lata, 2020). Police regularly controlled any housing and fence extensions, which were considered “illegal.” The marginal position of IDPs in controlling housing spaces was further complicated by insecure tenure. As they had not been issued *Qabiyyee manaa* (housing entitlement), participants were uncertain about their sustainable residence in Kersa. This was stated by a 34-year-old daily laborer: “I do not consider this house mine without the housing title. Addis has evicted many poor in this area; it needs more land than poor people.” A teacher confirmed this insecurity, stating: “The former Mayor said our houses were temporary. So, the city may not issue a title.” These quotes illustrate how the city denies the housing rights to the urban poor, rendering their status uncertain.

In Sululta, IDPs rarely used the concept of “house,” and rather called it a makeshift shack, or *Qorqoorroo,* signifying the corrugated iron sheet used for construction (see Figure 2b). This is rarely used for walling by other residents, given the cold weather in Sululta. All the houses were one-roomed without any partitions for a kitchen and bedroom; IDPs made partitions out of plastic and fabric, yet their shelter lacked thick walls. Thin walls did not protect the privacy of each household, and thus the private accommodation was not truly “private.” For many IDPs, it was difficult to discuss *iccitii* (secrets), as was clearly apparent during interviews, when discussions in the next room disturbed the conversations. Moreover, IDPs cook and sleep in the same room regardless of the family size. A mother of 16 described this huge challenge, “My large family live in a single room. As it was made from corrugated sheet, it is freezing at night and scorching during the [sunny] daytime. All of us sleep here; it

looks like a collective center." Another woman said, "Our *qorqoorroo* is like a barn. Everyone can distinguish us as poor." Elderly people mentioned serious health problems (for example, paralysis) related to poor housing and cold weather. The poor housing conditions and related effects illustrate how infrastructural neglect advances or justifies the exclusion of those deemed not to be full urban citizens (Baumann and Yacobi, 2021).

IDPs in Sululta had plots of land larger than those in Kersa, and this allowed them to practice gardening and raising livestock such as sheep. Nonetheless, similar to Kersa, the IDPs had no ownership rights. According to officials, there was further no intention to ensure ownership rights. One official said, "We [officials] are not sure about whether IDPs will live here sustainably or leave. If we entitled them, they would sell the house and leave. We do not evict them, but if they leave, we use the land for other development purposes." Some of the houses of IDPs who had left Sululta due to poverty were immediately allocated to other non-IDP residents, revealing the precarious status of urban IDPs. Overall, the analysis of housing conditions shows how IDPs experience symbolic, social, and spatial inequality related to their displacement and the urban system.

Conclusion

This multi-sited ethnographic study of urban IDPs in Kersa and Sululta highlights how IDPs who have been relocated into planned settlements experience urban marginality. While the analytical lens of urban marginality has been widely used in urban studies, it has not been extended to the study of urban IDPs, who are often excluded in urban areas due to displacement status and the uneven process of urbanization. Urban marginality offers key conceptual tools to analyze the interrelated social, symbolic, and social marginality of urban IDPs (Aceska et al., 2019). By exploring the experiences of IDPs who had left their home due to violence but had ended up in a different socio-spatial context, our paper has demonstrated the relationality and subjectivity of urban marginality.

This study reveals that IDPs experience similar forms of urban marginality in different settlements. The marginality of IDPs is shaped by imbalances of power and bordering in urban areas that engender the physical, social, and symbolic distance of the IDPs relative to long-term residents and the urban system. While IDPs in Kersa settlement experienced spatial marginality due to physical distance and segregation, IDPs in Sululta reported similar experiences of exclusion related to subjective local bordering (for example, the rivers),

revealing the contextuality of spatial marginality. This territorial marginality further reinforces social marginality by limiting contacts, and reproducing the infrastructural exclusion and thus subordination of IDPs. Our study exposes that spatial and social marginality are entwined with the symbolic representation of IDPs and their settlement as "threats" to the city system. Accordingly, the spatial, social, and symbolic forms of urban exclusion create a layer of marginality, as illustrated in the case of the poor housing and insecure tenure of IDPs.

The findings show the interaction of two factors in reproducing the urban marginality of IDPs: displacement and urbanization. This confirms the many cases of urban refugees in Sub-Saharan Africa, where governments segregate refugees and IDPs to mitigate competition for meager urban resources and prevent long-term integration (Bakonyi et al., 2019; Crisp et al., 2012; Kibreab, 2007). Studies in Georgia also show how the government excludes IDPs from central city districts with higher land values and concentrations of capital (Gogishvili and Harris-brandts, 2019). By extending the literature focusing on segregation and spatial marginality, this study divulges how IDPs experience marginality not only through disconnection from the urban system, but also in relation to it, which we argue is marginalization by subordination. Moreover, our multi-sited fieldwork has revealed the multidimensional disadvantages faced by IDPs in different urban contexts and scales including in a geographical center of a city. Beyond exploring the ways in which the social and the spatial exclusion are articulated in different contexts (Aceska et al., 2019; Staudacher, 2019), we have shown their interaction and entanglement with the symbolic representation of IDPs in the urban body politic, creating a complex system of urban marginality. While IDPs resist these forms of marginalization, this further engenders stigma that the city uses to justify exclusion and control. By applying an analytical lens in urban studies to forced migration, this study highlights the entwined forms of marginality created by the urban system and displacement.

We argue that marginality not only affects the IDPs, but also the city, by discouraging investment in stigmatized areas. Thus, we suggest the need for inclusive urban governance that recognizes IDPs as urban citizens. IDPs can change their own circumstances and contribute to the urban development processes. Therefore, studies that further our understanding of the agency of urban IDPs and their alternative practices to cope with urban marginality are needed.

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