In search of the Invisible People: Revisiting the Concept of "Internally Displaced Persons" in light of an Ethiopian Case study

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Abstract

Internal displacement has become one of the most pressing humanitarian crises today, with the Global South being especially affected. Despite this, internally displaced persons (IDPs) remain underrepresented in humanitarian policy and academia. While attention for IDPs is increasing, the extent to whether the label actually embraces all circumstances of internal displacement can be questioned. We argue for a revision of contextualisation and conceptualisation of IDPs. Hence, drawing on a survey of literature and concrete examples from Ethiopia, the article revisits the concept of IDPs with the central aim of broadening its understanding. By tracing its emergence, evolution and underlying assumptions, the findings shows that the IDP label dominantly refers to displaced people in refugee-like situations. As a result, a large number of IDPs, such as those who are forcedly resettled and left unintegrated, are rendered invisible. Concretizing processes of displacement within the Ethiopian case further illustrates the impacts of narrow conceptualizations and consequently, advances insights in possible drivers and types of IDPs. This illustrates the need for the scholarship to go beyond policy labels and adopt a contextualized understanding of IDPs while also contributing towards improving research and governance on the subject of IDPs

1. INTRODUCTION

At the end of 2020, more than 82 million persons were displaced, the highest figure ever recorded by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).[1] The number of newly displaced people is on the rise due to the escalation of conflict and human rights violations across different parts of the world. The unprecedented number of forcedly displaced people is a

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[1] This figure is a combination of different types of refugees and internally displaced persons. The report reveals a four percent rise as compared to the 2019. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2020*, UNHCR, 2020, available at: https://www.unhcr.org/afr/statistics/unhcrstats/60b638e37/global-trends-forced-displacement-2020.html (last visited 20 June. 2021)

combination of new displacements and the lack of durable solutions for past displacements[2]. Most of the countries with the highest number of displaced people are in the Global South with the Sub-Saharan region being home to the largest proportion of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs).[3] This article is concerned with displaced persons who do not cross national borders - the IDPs.

Globally, there are twice as many IDPs as refugees, and the gap between the estimates for the two groups has been drastically increasing since the mid-1990s[4]. Despite this, internal displacement has long been side-lined and remained less visible in global (humanitarian) policy compared to refugee and cross-border migratory flows, mainly due to geo-political reasons.[5] The differential treatment between refugees and IDPs can be traced back to the introduction of the 1951 Geneva Convention that gave birth to an international refugee regime: a set of norms, rules, and principles to regulate a state's response or action towards refugee protection.[6] While being a crucial step in defining the refugee status and attaching rights to it, the refugee regime has also defended the uniqueness of refugees. The label of "refugee" has long been used as a generic representation of forced migrants; although, in judicial terms it only includes those who cross an international border because they lose protection from the government of their home country and thus accord a legal status.[7]

Based on this statist approach, internally displaced persons who do not cross a national frontier or a sovereign territory, but are still forced to move, do not qualify for the same status and

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[2] Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC), *GRID 2021: Internal displacement in a changing climate*, Geneva, IDMC,2021, available at: https://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2021/downloads/IDMC_ GRID21_ Final_HQ.pdf?v=2 (last visited 10 Sept. 2021).

[3] S. O. Abidde, *The Challenges of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons in Africa*, Cham: Springer Nature, 2021.

[4] Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), *Global Report on Internal Displacement*, Geneva, Switzerland. May. 2017, available at: https://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2017/pdfs/2017-GRID.pdf (last visited 21 Nov.2020).

[5] IDPs may have been invisible to UN agencies and refugee studies but visible to the host people and governments. Invisibility is therefore fundamentally relational; its impacts depend on the power relations and interests connecting those who see and those who are to be seen (or not) see. T. Polzer & L. Hammond, "Invisible displacement", *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 21(4), 2008, 417–431; Internal displacement is understood as a 'local problem' that could be handled by respective governments. This perception prevails despite the fact that internal displacement contributes to mass influx of refugees, see S. O. Abidde, The Challenges of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, xiii.

[6] A. Betts, "The refugee regime complex", *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 29(1),2010, 12–37.

[7] R. Zetter, R, "More Labels, Fewer Refugees: Remaking the Refugee Label in an Era of Globalization", *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 20(2), 2007, 172-191. For the debate on the position of the refugee law and justifications for excluding IDPs IDPs see J. C. Hathaway, "Forced Migration Studies : Could We Agree Just to 'Date'?, *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 20(3), 2007, 349–369.

protection[8]. Like many refugees, IDPs continue to live in appalling conditions without any viable solution to their plight. Evidence show that IDPs are subjected to multiple deprivations such as a lack of basic necessities including food, shelter, and the right to health.[9]

In many contexts, data on IDPs are produced by international partners to inform humanitarian decision making while only a few governments are willing and able to effectively profile IDPs at national level.[10] As states often manipulate data and deny access to the displaced population, getting contextualized evidence regarding the needs, vulnerabilities, and aspiration of IDPs remains challenging. This politicization IDP data also hampers efforts to realize durable solutions.[11] Moreover, forced migration studies have traditionally disproportionately investigated refugees, and even more so, those based in the Global North.[12] This makes the paucity of internal displacement research critical in the Global South.[13]

It is clear that academic attention to IDPs has been growing since the emergence of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement[14] with the major focus areas of academia being on the development, domestication and implementation of protection and assistance frameworks.[15] The

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[8] J. Mcadam, "The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement : 20 Years On", *International Journal of Refugee Law*, 30(2), 2018, 187–190; D. J. Cantor, & , J. O. Apollo, "Internal Displacement, Internal Migration, and Refugee Flows: Connecting the Dots", *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 39(4), 2020, 647–664.

[9] P. Orchard, *Protecting the Internally Displaced: Rhetoric and Reality*, New York, Routledge, 2019; IDPs often lack the protections they need during emergency and long-term stages of displacement. This is exacerbated by little attention given IDPs plight, funding, and resources; Ferris E & S. Miller, *Institutional Architecture: Does the International System Support Solutions to Internal Displacement ?* UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement, August 2020; regarding the health outcomes and mortality among IDPs see D, Cantor. et al, 'Understanding the health needs of IDPs: a scoping review', *Journal of Migration and Health*, 4(October), 2021,1-8.

[10] N. Ferrera & C. Demottaz, "The Transformative Potential of Data in Internal Displacement Situations: Submission of input to the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement by the Joint IDP Profiling Service (JIPS)", (May), 2020; N. K. Baal, L. Kivelä & M. Weihmayer "Improving IDP data to help implement the Guiding Principles", *Forced Migration Review*, (59), 2018, 21–23.

[11] For more on the politics of data and its implications see G. Cardona-Fox, "The Politics of IDP Data: Improving the Use of IDP Data and Evidence', Refugee Survey Quarterly, 39(4), 2020, 620-633; *Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, Global Report on Internal Displacement*, IDMC, 2017,7

[12] The argument is that public policy and power (mainly of the 'North'), dominated the knowledge production and shaped it in such a way that it reinforces the containment strategy to cope with the arrival of refugee from south to north for more see B. S. Chimni, "The Birth of a 'Discipline': From Refugee to Forced Migration Studies", *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 22(1), 2009, 11–29.

[13] Recent working papers published on Internal Displacement Research Program clearly show the limited academic engagement on internal displacement issues in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Middle East. Evidences are available at: https://rli.sas.ac.uk/resources/working-paper-series/internal-displacement-research-programme-working-papers, (last visited, 12 Feb. 2021)

[14] The development of the normative frameworks popularizes the issue of internal displacement and draws attention of Sates to IDPs. R. Adeola & P.Orchard, "The role of law and policy in fostering responsibility and accountability of governments towards internally displaced persons", *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 39(4), 2020, 412–424.

[15] For more on IDP scholarship see D. J. Cantor & A. Woolley, *Internal Displacement and Responses at the Global Level: A Review of the Scholarship*, IDRP, Working Paper. No. 1. 2020.

Guiding Principles embodies that states have the primary responsibility of protecting and assisting IDPs. A lack of political will and capacity of states however, affect the breadth of the definition as well as practices to address the needs of IDPs[16]. More importantly, in some contexts, states are the main actors in internal displacement and may ignore people displaced due to their policies.[17] This shows that, in addition to devising frameworks, consistently rethinking whom the concept embraces is essential. Yet, in spite of the diversity of circumstances underlying internal displacement these days, debates on who is internally displaced, accounting for different ways in which coercion arises in different contexts and the consequences of states' practices in addressing displacement, is clearly missing.

Similar to the label of a refugee, 'internally displaced persons' is also a label – it is a politically and socially constructed category established to deal with specific people in a specific political context.[18] Formed as a convenient shorthand of bureaucracy, the 'IDP' as a policy label seems to be invariant over time regardless of time and scale in which it is used[19]. We argue that the IDP label is often not critically questioned, and that its underlying assumptions and unintended consequences are not addressed.[20] The limited academic engagement with IDP issues is partly reflected on the lack of an up-to-date and context sensitive framework to conceptualise the situation of internal displacement across different settings leaving numerous displaced persons ignored in forced migration studies.[21] We suggest the scholarship needs to better contextualise the

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[16] R. Adeola & P.Orchard, "The role of law and policy in fostering responsibility and accountability of governments towards internally displaced persons", 423.

[17] N. Schrepfer, "Addressing Internal Displacement through National Laws and Policies : A Plea for a Promising Means of Protection", *International Journal of Refugee Law*, 24(4), 2010, 667–691;

[18] Labels are formed and transformed to manage the globalized process of migration. Bureaucratic labels, instead of portraying the complex reality of migration patterns, present 'convenient images' to achieve the objective of the prevailing political discourse. Like the refugee label, IDPs are identified and designated as people of concern to humanitarian actors in such a way that they fit into an overarching political agenda. By prescribing an institutional identity, labels thus delink the subjects from their actual experiences and contextual needs. See R. Zetter, "More Labels , Fewer Refugees : Remaking the Refugee Label in an Era of Globalization", 188; R. Zetter, "Labelling Refugees : Forming and Transforming a Bureaucratic Identity", *Journal of Refugee studies*, 4(1), 1991, 39–62.

[19] O. Bakewell, "Research beyond the categories: The importance of policy irrelevant research into forced migration", *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 21(4), 2008, 432-453.

[20] The IDP label was developed within a particular and increasingly restrictive policy context and has come to embody concrete relationships of power and influence the way we categorize vulnerable groups, think about them and act on their behalf see C. Brun, *Research guide on internal displacement*, Trondheim, NTNU Research Group on Forced Migration,2005, available at: http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.502.7973& rep=rep1&type=pdf (last visited, Jan. 2021)

[21] Regardless of the some improvements in IDP data since the endorsement of the Guiding Principles, significant conceptual, methodological, and operational challenges remain. These challenges underlying IDP research are further shaped by the political interest of national governments and international actors. G. Cardona-Fox, "The Politics of IDP Data: Improving the Use of IDP Data and Evidence', *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 39(4), 2020, 620–633.

situation of displacement and explain from the specific vantage point than tacitly reinforcing policies that standardise displacement experiences.

With the main aim of deepening the understanding of internal displacement, this article critically appraises conceptual issues pertaining to the IDP label and its use in policymaking and academia. Based on an extensive literature review, we first trace the emergence and evolution of the construct of the IDP label and of internal displacement as an international concern. This allows us to understand the historical antecedents that contribute to the emergence and internationalisation of the internal displacement issue. It also enables us to understand that the use of the IDP label transcends the political context in which it was created, without any modification to what it represents. Moreover, it shows that the label has never been free from limitations.

Second, we examine the underlying assumptions embedded in the authoritative understanding of IDPs. This allows us to highlight that although the label is presented as non-exhaustive in the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, it presents a skewed focus on the diversity of IDPs and the dynamics of internal displacement, in practice. In other words, the usage of the label in policymaking and academia disfavours certain typologies of IDPs who as such, remain invisible in the corresponding discourses.

Third, we concretise the gaps in appraising the diverse and silent categories of IDPs within the Ethiopian case. Ethiopia is taken as an exemplar because it hosts one of the highest IDP population globally[22] and is home to a diverse range of displaced persons lying beyond the dominant understanding on the subject. Although specific cases discussed in this article may not necessary represent the dynamics of internal displacement in different contexts, providing concrete insights into unrecognised IDPs within the specific Ethiopian context, allows us to illustrate the consequence of using narrow conceptualisation on the understanding of IDPs. Contextualising the concept of IDPs adds another type of displacement (because of othering) that is generally missing in the literature on forced migration. In conclusion, this article calls for further research on the internal displacement phenomenon comprising the adoption of a more substantive approach, instead of clinging to rigid policy labels.

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[22] Ethiopia is among the countries with the highest protracted displacement and unabated new displacements United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2020*, 6.

2. INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT AS AN INTERNATIONAL CONCERN

In contrast to the situation of refugees that attracted policy attention and started to be recognised as a concern to the international community after the end of the Second World War, internal displacement did not feature in global agenda until the last decade of the twentieth century[23]. This new attention for IDPs coincided with shifts in the configuration of international relations mainly among global superpowers and their allies that subsequently, directly shaped the focus of the international refugee regime[24]. Ensuing the end of the Cold War, the priorities of the international humanitarian regime moved from refugee reception to refugee containment; with formerly refugee-receiving countries to blocking refugees from arriving in their sovereign territories by means of entry restrictions[25]. As a result, the number of refugees significantly reduced, while the number of IDPs increased rapidly, particularly in developing countries[26]. As the geo-political struggles between the global superpowers began to wane, internal animosities related to community fragmentation and reorientation of identity came to the forefront[27]. Warfare largely turned internal, as secessionist movements and counter insurgency under abusive systems in multi-ethnic countries, such as Ethiopia, were intensified. This was followed by large-scale ethnic cleansing, and the consequent displacement of people began to catch the attention of humanitarian actors. [28]

Cognizant of gaps in states' presumption and implementation of sovereignty, human rights movements urged to reframe "sovereignty as a responsibility," which not only limits states from treating their population with impunity but also makes them responsible for protecting them

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[23] The choice not to consider IDPs in an international refugee regime was not because the problem did not exist. There are political explanations. See P. Orchard, "The contested origins of internal displacement", *International Journal of Refugee Law*, 28(2), 2016, 210–233; J. C. Hathaway, "Forced Migration Studies : Could We Agree Just to 'Date '? 358

[24] With the end of the Cold war period, geo-political struggles between superpowers (United Sates and Soviet Union) began to wane and this subsequently swept the motive to accept refugees see T.G. Weiss & D.A. Korn, *Internal Displacement: Conceptualization and its Consequences, London, Routledge,2006.; R. Cohen & F.M. Deng, Masses in Flight: The Global Crisis of Internal Displacement, Washington, DC, Brookings University Press, 1998.*

[25] Such as carrier sanctions, visa requirements, a designation of safe country of origin and safe third country and limiting work possibilities for those who manage to arrive see C. Phuong. *The International Protection of Internally Displaced Persons*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004

[26] T.G. Weiss & D.A. Korn, *Internal Displacement: Conceptualization and its Consequences*, 1; F. M. Deng, "International Response To Internal Displacement: A Revolution In The Making", *Human Rights Brief,* 11, 2004.

[27] S. Castles, "Understanding global migration: A social transformation perspective", *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 36(10), 2010, 1565–1586.

[28] For detail on the evolution of internal displacement issues see R. Cohen & F.M. Deng, *Masses in Flight: The Global Crisis of Internal Displacement*, Washington, DC, Brookings University Press, 1998

against any human rights violation[29]. This positive obligation on the part of states was widely acknowledged among humanitarian actors, and later set the foundations for the emergence of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement in 1998, a normative framework that is concerned with the protection and assistance of IDPs. Hence, the internationalisation of the internal displacement issue is attributed to a cumulative effect of changes in international relations, the upsurge in the IDP population and the plight of IDPs.[30]

Though the phenomenon of internal displacement is as old as human history, there was no official definition of the term IDPs until the late 1980s.[31] The concept of internally displaced persons has long been used interchangeably with terminologies such as "internal refugees," "internal migrants," or "internal exiles"[32]. However, none of these expressions substantively capture the situation of persons who forcedly move within their country. The term 'internal refugee' had been widely used to represent the displaced population that falls beyond the Refugee Convention and UNHCR's mandate. Using the legal expression 'refugee' to refer to forced movement of people within a sovereign country blurs the distinction between refugees and other displaced persons.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, international organisations designated forced migrants other than refugees as 'displaced persons' (DPs). While the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) was principally responsible in assisting DPs in the post-war period, it did not clearly define the target groups.[33] In other words, the phrase 'displaced persons' was used just to extend assistances in situations where other displaced populations than refugees were in need or where only assisting refugees was not feasible. The first refugee organization within the UN, the International Refugee Organization (IRO) directly engaged with

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[29] Since 1990, the IDP situation has been internationalized as a part of broader shift in the way states understand sovereignty and the state's relationship with its own citizens. The shift from negative to positive interpretation of sovereignty paves the way for the recognition of people who face human right violation in their own country: P. Orchard, "Protection of internally displaced persons: soft law as a norm-generating mechanism", *Review of International Studies*, 36(2), 2010, 281–303; R. Cohen, "The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement : An Innovation in International Standard Setting", *Global Governance*, 10, 2004, 459–480.

[30] F.M. Deng, "Frontiers of Sovereignty: A Framework of Protection, Assistance and Development for the Internally Displaced", *Leiden Journal of International Law*, 8(2), 1995, 249-286

[31] Definition is essential for identifying the populations of concern and their particular needs, compiling data, and framing laws to address displacement E. Mooney, "The Concept of Internal Displacement and the case for Internally Displaced Persons as a category of concern", *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 24 (3), 2005, 9–26

[32] Labelling IDPs as 'internal refugees' has further implication on protection and assistance with those in refugee like situations more recognized than 'others'. For more on these terminologies see J. Crisp, "Forced displacement in Africa : dimensions, difficulties, and policy directions", *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 29(3), 2010, 1-27; P. Orchard, "The contested origins of internal displacement", 2-5.

[33] The successor of UNRRA, the International Refugee Organization (IRO) did define refugees and DPs in its Constitution P. Orchard, *Protecting the Internally Displaced: Rhetoric and Reality*, New York, Routledge, 2019.

displacement crises particularly in Europe.[34] Between 1970s and 90s, the concept DPs was thus mainly used in the context of emergency relief rather than with the intention to define and protect displaced population.[35] Overall, an inconsistent and confusing use of terminologies indirectly referring to IDPs continued until the UN acknowledged the humanitarian crises related to internal displacement across the globe and backed the mandate to identify and protect IDPs.

In this regard, the appointment of the Representative of UN Secretary General on internally displaced persons was a landmark for the efforts to conceptualise and protect IDPs across the globe. The Analytical Report compiled by the Representative of Secretary-General defines IDPs as "persons who have been forced to flee their homes suddenly or unexpectedly in large numbers; as a result of armed conflict, internal strife, systematic violations of human rights or natural or man-made disasters; and who are within the territory of their own country".[36] Regardless of the its instrumental role in conceptualising IDPs, the 1992 definition was short-lived and attracted major criticism concerning to quantitative ("large numbers") and temporal ("suddenly and unexpectedly") expressions it used.[37] In response to these limitations, the UN modified the definition in 1998 and defined IDPs as:

> Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border.

The issue of internal displacement falls within states' jurisdiction because humanitarian actors perceive IPDs as within the reach of their government, just the same as non-displaced citizens. In this sense, being an IDP is simply a "descriptive" condition, denoting the factual circumstance of persons forced to move within a boundary of their own country, rather than being a legal status[38].

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[34] *Ibid,* The Constitution defined the loose term 'DPs' as persons who had been deported for racial, religious or political reasons and who were compelled to undertake forced labour. Constitution of the International Refugee Organization*, International Refugee Organization (IRO), 18 UNTS 3, 15 Dec, 1946 (entry into force: 20 Aug.1948).

[35] C. Phuong. *The International Protection of Internally Displaced Persons*, 2004, 14.

[36] United Nations Commission on Human Rights, *Analytical Report of the Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons,* UN Doc. E/CN.4/1992/23 (14 February 1992), para. 17.

[37] IDPs do not necessarily flee home in large numbers, nor do all IDPs leave their home suddenly. Large-scale instances of displacement in Myanmar (Burma), Ethiopia, and Iraq were not entirely spontaneous. see E. Mooney, "The Concept of Internal Displacement and the case for Internally Displaced Persons as a category of concern", 11.

[38] W Kälin, Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement: Annotations (rev edn, American Society of International Law and Brookings–Bern Project on Internal Displacement 2008) (Annotations). However, regional conventions such

Regardless of their status in humanitarian policy, IDPs and refugees flee home largely for similar reasons and mostly face similar circumstances[39]. Analytically, the construct of IDPs is broader than that of refugees, as in addition to those displaced due to persecution, it includes people uprooted by natural and human-made disasters[40]. This means IDPs move both in the context of conflicts and in times of 'peace'.[41]

The phrase "in particular" in the UN definition above implies that a range of other circumstances could trigger internal displacement and hence a non-exhaustiveness of the typologies of IDPs[42]. Literature on the taxonomies of IDPs in terms of contexts as well as causations are thus indispensable to broaden our understanding[43]. In what follows, we discuss the limitations of the existing understanding of IDPs in policy when it comes to capturing their diversity. Besides, the section below sheds light on the place of scholarship in ascertaining IDPs that are left out of the policy realm.

2. IDPs BEYOND POLICY LABELS

As mentioned earlier, the most widely used definition of an IDP is the one offered by the Guiding Principles on internal displacement. Nonetheless, limitations persist with regard to the extent to which the definition practically involves all people displaced within their country.[44] The Guiding Principles are derived from international human rights law, humanitarian law, and refugee law, rather than being a set of new and self-contained legal norms.[45] Notwithstanding the progress made since the recognition of IDPs internationally, conflict and persecution tend to be considered as the

as Kampala Convention attempt to create a legal definition of the IDP concept though only few countries domesticated it nationally. For more see A. Abebe, *Inter-State Dialogue on Internal Displacement: Lessons from Regional Platforms in Africa*, Research Briefing Paper, UNSG High Level Panel on Internal Displacement No. 1, 2020.

[39] The difference between IDPs and refuges is substantive or is a matter of political importance see O. Bakewell, "Research beyond the categories: The importance of policy irrelevant research into forced migration", *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 21(4), 2008, 432–453; Dewind, J. (2007). Response to Hathaway. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 20(3), 381–385; G. Scalettaris, "The Refugee studies and the International Refugee Regime: a reflection on a Desirable Separation", *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 26(3), 2007, 36–50.

[40] M. T. Maru, "The Kampla Convention and its contribution in filling the Protection Gap in International Law", *Journal of Internal Displacement*, 1(1), 2011, 91–130; R. Muggah "The invisible displaced: A unified conceptualization of population displacement in Brazil", *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 28(2), 2015, 222–237

[41] C. Phuong. *The International Protection of Internally Displaced Persons*, 2004,42.

[42] R., Adeola & P. Orchard, "The role of law and policy in fostering responsibility and accountability of governments towards internally displaced persons", *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 39(4), 2020, 412–424.

[43] G. Cardona-Fox, "The Politics of IDP Data", 625.

[44] Questions of who should be covered by the category, whether it is a useful one and the consequences of applying it in humanitarian interventions are widely debated. see C. Brun, "Research guide on internal displacement",2

[45] The purpose of the Guiding Principles was to restate the relevant international human rights law and international humanitarian law principles applicable to IDPs. P. Orchard, "Protection of internally displaced persons: soft law as a norm-generating mechanism", *Review of International Studies*, 36(2), 2010, 281–303.

prominent reasons for internal displacement even where other drivers trigger a huge extent of displacement.

Although internal displacement triggered by (natural) disasters is mentioned in the definition, not all types of disaster-induced displacement receives the same attention. It was not until 2008 that IDMC, the key agency that collects data on IDPs, started generating data related to such displacement. Although some notable advances have been taken, it remains the case that the focus is dominantly on those displaced by sudden onset disasters (e.g. flooding) the impacts of which are immediate and relatively easy to determine.[46] As the extent to which effects of slow onset disasters (e.g. drought due to climate change) 'coerce' people to move is not clear[47], it makes complex to monitor the occurrence of this type of displacement, and this is often put forward as the main reason for the incompleteness of IDP data and research.[48]

Humanitarian policy and actors tend to extend the IDP label to 'environmentally-displaced persons' only when governments' responses are reported to discriminate or neglect certain groups based on political or ethnic grounds or when human rights violations are confirmed[49]. While the UNHCR's role in environmentally induced displacement is growing, it recognises and extends support only when these IDPs are found in the same settings as the IDPs triggered by conflict and if the government hosting them seeks support.[50] Yet, the UNHCR does not collect and include data on the IDPs due to disaster in its annual displacement report.[51] This position of UNHCR on disaster-induced displacement influenced the focus of the Nansen Initiative launched in 2012. Like the UNHCR that primarily targets people who flee persecution and cross international borders, the

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[46] R. Cohen & M. Bradley, "Disasters and Displacement : Gaps in Protection", *Journal of International Humanitarian Legal Studies*, 1(1), 2010, 95–142.

[47] J. McAdam, *Climate Change and Displacement : Multidisciplinary Perspectives*. Oxford: Hart Publishing Ltd,2010; S. Castles, *Environmental change and forced migration : making sense of the debate*). Geneva, UNCHR, New Issues in Refugee Research, Research Paper No. 70, Oct. 2002.

[48] Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC), *Internal displacement in a changing climate*, Geneva, Norwegian Refugee Council, 2021, available at: https://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2021/ (last visited 28 Jul. 2021).

[49] R. Cohen & M. Bradley, "Disasters and Displacement : Gaps in Protection",103.

[50] However, most of the governments are not willing to disclose the problem of internal displacement to mitigate unwanted international attention. E. Rasmusson, "Improving IDP Data: Prerequisite for More Effective Protection", *Forced Migration Review, 26, 2006, 16–17.*

[51] UNHCR adds its global number of refugees to IDMC's conflict stock figure to arrive at a global displacement figure that is often cited by media and policymakers. Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), *Disaster Displacement: A global review*, 2008-2018, Geneva, May 2019, available at: https://www.internaldisplacement.org/sites/default/files/publications/ documents/201905-disaster-displacement-global-review-2008-2018.pdf (last visited, Jun. 2021); UNHCR, *Policy on UNHCR's engagement in situations of internal displacement*, Geneva, 18 September 2019, available at: https://www.refworld.org/docid/5d83364a4.html (last visited, 24 Jul. 2021).

initiative is aimed at addressing cross border displacement induced by disaster,[52] excluding again those who remain with in their countries of origin.

Despite the reluctance of policymakers to recognise environmentally induced internal displacements, climate change remains the main driver of internal displacement in the Global South.[53] In areas with low institutional capacity, droughts not only displace people, it also aggravate competition and conflicts over scarce resources, thus acting as driver for further displacement.[54] However, academic engagement with the climate change displacement nexus is only now emerging and has had little impact so far on established policies that mainly reflect the position of the Global North relatively less affected by slow-onset disasters.[55]

Returning to the Guiding Principles, IDPs are also people who flee home, to avoid the impacts of violence and disaster. Nonetheless, the obstinacy to require the element of 'coercion' in defining displacement overshadows the agency of the displaced to escape the imagined and actual threats. Evidences reveal that people may move before the actual forced displacement in circumstances where the threats are perceived to be unavoidable.[56] In the context of drought induced displacement, the people may "accept" a planned (but forced) relocation, under what is often termed as "compulsory voluntarism", to lessen the imagined consequences.[57] Similarly, in contexts where conflicts and violence have become common, non-titular groups feel insecure and might decide to move out of the territory of 'others' before mutual suspicion and labelling develop into actual violence. These people are invisible in the existing IDP scholarship because they are

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[52] F.Gemenne & , P. Brücker, "From the guiding principles on internal displacement to the nansen initiative: What the governance of environmental migration can learn from the governance of internal displacement", *International Journal of Refugee Law*, 2015, 27(2), pp. 245–263, 245-263.

[53] R. Adeola, *Climate Change , Internal Displacement and the Kampala Convention*. Johannesburg, South African Institute of International Affairs, Policy briefing, May. 2020.

[54] For more on the interaction between climate change and other structural factors and their cumulative effect on human mobility see R. Black et al, "The effect of environmental change on human migration", *Global Environmental Change*, 21, 2011, 3–11.

[55] The definition of climate change induced displacement is influenced by a power dynamics between the Global North and South see D. J. Cantor, "Environment, Human Mobility and International Law: a New Approach in the Americas", *Chicago Journal of International Law*, 21(2),2020, 263-322

[56] Displacement also involve the psychological dimensions associated with force (such as fear or hopelessness) as much as direct or indirect political, economic, social, cultural or environmental factors which compel people to flee, what they would not otherwise have willingly chosen to do. How people respond to enforcement in its various forms is, of course, an expression of their own agency For more see A. Hammar, *Displacement economies in Africa Paradoxes of crisis and creativity*, London, The Nordic African Institute,2014.

[57] Y. Gebre, "Contextual Determination of Migration: The Ethiopian Resettlement in Light of Conceptual Constructs", *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 15(3),2002 265–282.

conceived as voluntary migrants.[58] On top, reports are also in favour of mass movement following conflict and thus tend to underrepresent localised and small-scale displacement triggered by inter-communal violence.[59]

An equally important factor that leaves a large number of displaced persons ignored is a lack of clarity as to when the displacement ceases to exist[60]. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) highlights IDPs' right to a durable solution; a situation in which IDPs no longer have any specific needs for protection and assistance linked to their displacement and where such persons can enjoy their human rights without any discrimination resulting from their displacement[61]. Though voluntary and safe return, voluntary local integration, and in-country resettlement are suggested to be the principal options that IDPs can choose, practically these solutions are unrealistic particularly in nations that are unable and unwilling to take the responsibility of protecting IDPs[62]. Although, IASC frame the three durable solutions as equal in weight the humanitarian community and governments affected by the crisis of internal displacement tend to uphold "return" as the most preferred solution to the plight of IDPs.[63] Evidence in Africa clearly shows that governments prioritise return as a durable solution to conflict-induced displacements based on the assumption that conflict driven displacements are transitory and can be handled once the violence ends.[64] However, returnee IDPs may continue to experience vulnerabilities and struggle to achieve any durable solution even after return. In the absence of political solutions to the cause of flight and without the involvement of key actors including States, IDPs and the non-

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[58] L. Hammond, "Strategies of Invisibilisation : How Ethiopia's Resettlement Programme Hides the Poorest of the Poor", *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 21(4),2008, 517–536; Y. Gebre, "Contextual Determination of Migration: The Ethiopian Resettlement in Light of Conceptual Constructs", *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 15(3),2002 265–28.

[59] IDMC, *Global Report on Internal Displacement, Geveva,* Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, Available at: https://www.internal-displacement.org/publications/2019-global-report-on-internal-displacement (last visited Apr.2021).

[60] G. Cardona-Fox, " The Politics of IDP Data", 625; R., Adeola & P. Orchard, "The role of law and policy in fostering responsibility and accountability of governments towards internally displaced persons",413.

[61] IASC, *IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons*, Washington DC, Brookings–Bern Project on Internal Displacement, 2010, available at https://www.unhcr.org/50f94cd49.pdf (last visited 20 Jan.2021)

[62] J. McAdam, "The Guiding Principles on internal displacement: 20 years on", *International Journal of Refugee* Law, 2018, 187–190.

[63] M. Lundgren, "Place matters: return intentions among forcibly displaced young Georgians from Abkhazia living in Tbilisi and Zugdidi", *Caucasus Survey*, 4(2), 2016, 129–148.

[64] A. Macdonald and H. Porter, "The Politics of Return: Understanding Trajectories of Displacement and the Complex Dynamics of 'Return' in Central and East Africa", *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 33(4), 2020, 639–662. .

displaced, return may not be a durable solution as security, legal, property rights issues could trigger violence and further waves of displacement.[65]

IDPs may be returned to their area of residence, not necessarily their original "home," making such people just "in-between IDPs" In countries such as Ethiopia, Iraq and Nigeria, a large number of IDPs were returned to areas of origin regardless of the security concern and absence of any conducive environment for IDPs to resume their livelihood activities. This increases the likelihood of further displacement.[66]This reveals that a simplistic appreciation of return among governments and humanitarian actors risks assuming displacement as a temporary deviation while in reality, it is a prolonged process of loss for most of the displaced[67]. Unreachability of desired solutions also means that people can be locked in a protracted situation of displacement while often remaining misconceived as physical repatriation is considered as an end in itself. [68]

Moreover, the plight of those who live beyond camps or in host communities— such as urban IDPs— are mostly either ignored or misconceived, as they are considered to be locally integrated[69]. Nonetheless, in most of the cases, they are left unintegrated. Some might be displaced-in-place or involuntarily immobilised and remain in their 'original' place though they experience the same level of violence that forces others into displacement.[70]

The above review shows that the existing representation of IDPs leaves a large number of IDPs invisible. While the label could theoretically comprise all people forced to move within a national boundary, in practice, it favours IDPs recognised by the international humanitarian regime due to

[65] M. Bradley, "Durable solutions and the right of return for IDPs: Evolving interpretations", *International Journal of Refugee Law*, 30(2), 2018,. 218–242.

[66] IDMC, *Global Report on Internal Displacement*, 2019. For more on the predicaments of regaining home and its implication on cycles of displacement see A. Macdonald and H. Porter, "The Politics of Return: Understanding Trajectories of Displacement and the Complex Dynamics of 'Return' in Central and East Africa",639-662.

[67] Return is not just a reversal of displacement. Many returnees, therefore, move on or become displaced again return into dangerous conditions due to a lack of alternatives, either without assistance or because supported return and attempts to push people to return begin prematurely. R. Vollmer, *Agency and livelihood-making in protracted displacement*, Bonn International Centre for Conversion, Working Paper, 2019.

[68] A. Macdonald and H. Porter, "The Politics of Return: Understanding Trajectories of Displacement and the Complex Dynamics of 'Return' in Central and East Africa",655.

[69] For more on out of camp and urban IDPs see A. Cotroneo, " Specificities and challenges of responding to internal displacement in urban settings", *International Review of the Red Cross*, 99(1), 2017, 283–318; A. Davies, *IDPs in Host Families and Host Communities : Assistance for hosting arrangements*. Geneva, UNHCR, April 2012; F. O. Olanrewaju, A. et al, "Insurgency and the Invisible Displaced Population in Nigeria: A Situational Analysis", *SAGE Open, 9(2), 2019,1-9.*

[70] S. C. Lubkemann, "Involuntary Immobility : On a Theoretical Invisibility in Forced Migration Studies", *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 21(4), 2008, 454–475.

political and historical reasons. This skewed focus in attention means that several categories of IDPs remain excluded.

The section below concretizes the gaps in appraising the diverse and lesser-known categories of IDPs in existing literature, as presented in the preceding section, by highlighting the Ethiopian case. Such contextualisation is not only important to broaden the understanding of internal displacement, but it also allows us to illustrate the consequences of narrow conceptualisation on the overall understanding of IDPs.

As previously stated, Ethiopia is an ideal context to investigate IDPs and their diversity. Although there is no national framework of classification, the typologies of IDPs in Ethiopia involve deportees (E.g. Tigray people from Eritrea following the Ethio-Eritrean war) who were unable to return to their place of origin, drought-affected populations, demobilised soldiers, victims of civil wars, and forcedly resettled people. [71]

Apart from the major derivers acknowledged in policy and forced migration studies, the Ethiopian case shows how the politics of "othering" and politically motivated relocation have also displaced millions, yet their conditions are not well known. Under the policy of ethnic federalism, non-titular groups are always on the move regardless of the existence of actual conflict due to ingrained exoticisation. Though the Guiding Principle (Principle 6) and Kampala Convention (Article 4) recognise and prohibit any kind of arbitrary displacement, forced resettlement programs that displaced a huge number of people has not been defined as internal displacement in Ethiopia as they were implemented government policy tools justified by public interest. The following sections discuss these two important categories of IDPs that remain invisible in IDP literature.

3. INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT IN ETHIOPIA: THE SCENE

Ethiopia has a lengthy history of forced migration due to longstanding social, economic, and political problems in the country[72] and has become one of the countries with the highest IDP population worldwide. Key among the drivers of displacement are environmental disasters, armed

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[71] For more on the historical background of internal displacement and types of IDPs in Ethiopia, see M. T. Maru, *Causes, Dynamics, and Consequences of Internal Displacement in Ethiopia*, Division Global Issues, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP),German Institute for International and Security Affairs, working paper, 2017.

[72] *Ibid*,13.

violence, and the expansion of development infrastructure[73]. Ethiopia also has a record of controversial, large-scale forced population resettlements.[74]

Among the drivers of internal displacements, the eminent one in Ethiopia is political violence. The country has undergone repressive governance systems that treated people with impunity to ensure allegiance to authoritarianism.[75] Modern Ethiopian history reveals that imperial governments' interest in the centralisation of state power together with popular resistance to such governance systems have resulted in large-scale population displacement.[76] The Socialist government that came to power following the 1974 bloody revolution was no different, and possibly even more brutal. Harsh counterinsurgency that targeted ethno-nationalist movements and civilians contributed to forced domestic and international migration.[77] Subsequent policies that diverted resources away from the agricultural sector to build a strong military base caused agricultural production failure and the tragic famine in 1984 that forced millions to flee home.[78]

Towards the end of the Cold War, Ethiopia embarked on federalism under the Ethiopian People's Democratic Revolutionary Front (EPRDF). In 1994, the country ratified a Constitution that restructured a configuration of the government, resulting in the formation of nine semi-autonomous and self-governing regional states, organised along ethnic lines, and two city administrations.[79] This formulation of ethnic based federalism is argued to cause "othering," ethnic

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[73] W. K. Djigsa, "The Protection of Internally Displaced Persons in Ethiopia : Leave No One Behind", *Journal of Internal Displacement*, 9(1), 2019, 36–50:

[74] Three successive Ethiopian governments have implemented resettlement schemes that transferred a huge number of people, mostly from the northern part of the country to the southern and southwestern regions. The major source of controversy are the purpose, recruitment, voluntariness, and place of resettlement. The relocation was designated as 'emergency' in a vast body of displacement studies in Ethiopia. B. Kassa, "Resettlement of Peasants in Ethiopia", *Journal of Rural Development*, 27(4), 2004, 223–253; S. Gizaw, "Resettlement Revisited: The Post-Resettlement Assessment in Biftu Jalala Resettlement Site", *EJBE*, 3(1), 2013, 22–57.

[75] The use of violence as political means reached new heights since 1974 and these remained as modes of operation. Abbink, "The Ethiopian Revolution after 40 Years (1974-2014): Plan B in Progress ?", *The Journal of Developing Societies*, 31(3), 2015, 333–357.

[76] For more on political environment and displacement inducing factors see L. Aalen, *Ethnic federalism in a dominant party state: The Ethiopian experience 1991-2000*, Chr. Michelsen Institute Development Studies and Human Rights. Bergen, Michelsen Institute. CMI Report, 2002.

[77] J. Abbink, "The Ethiopian Revolution after 40 Years (1974-2014): Plan B in Progress ?", 335.

[78] One of the methods the Ethiopian army used to execute power was the forced relocation and resettlement of people living in rural areas. Resettlement programmes by the Ethiopian governments have also resulted in large internal migration flows. S. Fransen & K. Kuschminder, *Migration in Ethiopia: History Current Trends and Future Prospects,* Migration and Development Country Profiles, Paper Series, 2009.

[79] Article 47 (1) of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Constitution. Though the federal units are organized based on ethnicity, the Constitution mentions neither ethnicity nor ethnic federalism. It uses 'nation, nationalities and peoples' instead. The Sidama ethnic group conducted a referendum for a separate regional state and voted for self-determination in 2019. As a result, Sidama has become a regional state since 2020. Following the recent political

conflict, and internal displacement.[80] In what follows, the article elaborates on how the policies of ethnic federalism, politics of othering, and forced resettlement caused displacement in Ethiopia. The latter two have never been conceptualised as internal displacement in policy or academia.

3.1. Ethnic federalism and internal displacement

The major reason for Ethiopia's transition to federalism was ending the longstanding centralisation of state power, thereby redressing ethnic subjugation by decentralising power among autonomous, ethnic-based, federal sub-units.[81] However, many contend that this new arrangement is unable to manage ethnic tensions as expected for two reasons: first, there are the difficulties in accommodating diverse local interests, and second, the practical issues concerning the designation of the federal system.[82] Ethiopian ethnic federalism upholds the distinctiveness of ethnic groups (referred to as nations, nationalities and peoples in the Constitution) and their right to self-rule in their homeland. This essence has frequently been observed to breed what is referred to as "autonomy conflict": tensions among ethnic groups over central power, self-determination, resources, identity, and representation in the federal government.[83]

According to the Ethiopian Human Rights Council, most of the nationwide ethnic-based conflicts since the 1990s have triggered massive internal displacement. The ethnic division introduced under the rule of EPRDF has created grievances, animosities, and fierce competition among the federal subunits. The major criticism of the EPRDF federal system is its asymmetric attribute that creates the core and peripheral regional states in terms of controlling federal power

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transition in the country, quests for self-determination are increasing particularly in the most diverse SNNPR. This could further increase the number of regional states in the country.

[80] A. Kefale, *Federalism and Ethnic Conflict in Ethiopia*. (Edited by M. Burgess and J. Loughlin). London and New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group,2013.

[81] S. Yusuf, *What is driving Ethiopia's ethnic conflicts?*, Institute for security studies, Addis Ababa, East Africa Report, Nov. 2019; D. A. Tsegaye, "Failure And Discontents Of Ethnic Based Federalism In Ethiopia", *Research Journal of Social Science and Management,* 7(12),2018, 69–82.

[82] Interlocutors largely claim the latent effects of ethnic based federalism in terms creating unfair competition and cultivating animosities. Z. Berhane & S. Tefera,"Does Federalism Reduce Ethnic Conflict ? Evidence from the Ethiopian Experience", *Ethiopian Journal of the Social Sciences and Humanities*, 14(1), 2018, 105-131; L. T. Mengie, "Ethnic Federalism and Conflict in Ethiopia: What Lessons Can Other Jurisdictions Draw?, *African Journal of International and Comparative Law*, 23(3), 2015, 462–475.

[83] Ethiopia is consisted of more than 80 ethnic groups (nation, nationalities and people) that are organized in to ten regional states. Each regional state involves some ethno-linguistic minorities. The Southern Nation, Nationalities and Peoples region is the most diverse. Regardless of the absence of a clear official administrative boundary between them, regions (federal units) have geographical boundary they claim to be their territory or homeland. Article 39 of FDRE Constitution guarantees every nations, nationalities, and peoples to administer themselves and exercise control on their homeland. The Constitution further grants nation, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia the rights of self-determination up to secession A. Kefale, Federalism and Ethnic Conflict in Ethiopia,5.

and resources. As a result, ethnic groups are rivals with one another.[84] The lack of formal demarcations among regional states also created a dilemma of autonomy, often leading to contentions over land, water resources, and administrative boundaries.[85] The longstanding boundary conflicts and displacement along the borders that the Oromia region shares with the Somali, Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples' (SNNPR), and Benshangul-Gumuz regional state are some concrete examples.[86] Over the past few years, the Oromia and the Somali regions have become the most affected by internal displacement triggered by interregional boundary disputes.

Localised conflicts and intra-regional displacement have been recorded in Benishangul-Gumuz (between the Berta and Gumuz tribes), Gambella (between the Anwak and Nuer), Somali regional state (between different pastoralist clans), and Amhara (between the Qimant minority and the dominant Amhara), with ethnic entrepreneurs violently spearheading movements for self-determination.[87] Accordingly, under the identity-based federalism of Ethiopia, internal displacement is mainly caused due to ethnic groups fighting for the respective "divided sovereignty" of their homeland, even when it is at the expense of national identity or citizenship.[88]

The recent Tigray War is an illustration of the changing dynamics of displacement triggered by the policy of ethnic federalism. While the rule of TPLF ended in 2018 after intense anti-government protests, the ethnic-based federalism it established, continues to trigger internal displacement across the country. The 'new' government undertook political reform that dissolved and expanded the EPRDF coalition to include other ethnic groups and created a new political party. The TPLF opposed the 'reform' based on the assumption that it would threaten and undermine the order that has historically permitted small Tigrayan ethnic group to wield power disproportionate to its population. TPLF also holds the view that the new system is against the federal system created in 1991 and that it reduces the political influence of Tigrayans.[89] Consequently, the TPLF conducted a regional election defying the direction from the central government. This

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[84] A. Taye, "Ethnic federalism and conflict in Ethiopia*", African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, 17(2), 2017, 41–66.

[85] J. Abbink, "Ethnicity and Conflict Generation in Ethiopia: Some Problems and Prospects of Ethno-Regional Federalism", *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 24(3), 2006, 389–413.

[86] A. Taye, "Ethnic federalism and conflict in Ethiopia", 50.

[87] S. Yusuf, What is driving Ethiopia's ethnic conflicts?, 6.

[88] L. T. Mengie, "Ethnic Federalism and Conflict in Ethiopia: What Lessons Can Other Jurisdictions Draw ", 473.

[89] J. Abbink, *The Atlantic Community mistake on Ethiopia: counter-productive statements and data-poor policy of the EU and the USA on the Tigray conflict,* Leiden, African Studies Centre Leiden University, Working Paper 150 / 2021, March,2021.

unprecedented decision coupled with the alleged TPPLF's offensive attack on the National Defence Force led to a military confrontation between the ethno-nationalist forces and the national defence force, the major driver of new internal displacement and related humanitarian crises in Ethiopia in 2021.[90]

3.2.   Politics of Othering and the 'silent' internal displacement

While the Guiding Principles recognise people who move to avoid anticipated risks of armed violence, the situation of this category of displaced persons hasn't been taken into account in Ethiopia. Not only are people moving due to ethnic conflicts but are also fleeing home due to the politics of 'othering'. While empowering the native ethnic group over their supposed homeland, one latent consequence of ethnic federalism, is that it alienates and marginalises people who found themselves in a territory of the natives as "second class citizens".[91]

Hence, the politics of othering creates a different form of displacement that is not taken into account in IDP literature. The displacement of the "outsiders'' largely takes a form of ex-ante proactive measures to escape violence that might follow negative stereotyping. These groups of 'forced migrants' should be of relevance to academia as it allows to investigate the invisible precursors of displacement and for policymakers, as it will inform governance aiming to mitigate such displacement.

The "insider-outsider" labelling seems to have largely affected the ethnic Amhara, who for political and historical reasons can be found in almost all the regional states.[92] The Amhara—who were the majority of the soldiers during the modern Ethiopian Empire expansion, from the northern to the southern and southwestern parts of the country—were thought to occupy areas incorporated under the rule of King Menelik II, who was himself originally from Amhara. Since 1991, with the coming to power of the EPRDF, the Amhara have become "insider-outsiders" to the people who

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[90] Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), *Internal displacement in a changing climate, Geneva,* Norwegian Refugee Council,2021, available at: *https://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2021/* (last visited 28 Jul. 2021).

[91] The empowering and disempowering effects of, and the simmering tensions within, the centralized ethno federal system. S. Yusuf, What is driving Ethiopia's ethnic conflicts?,1.; Settlers in the Benishangul Gumuz regional state, for instance, lived close to half a century, over a thousand-kilo meters away from their vicinity without crossing the international border. But they still did not have full-fledged rights to possess the land, administer their matters, and enjoy fundamental rights just because they are not 'native' to the region see K.A. Amare, "One country–two citizenships: the status of settlers in Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State (BGRS) of Ethiopia", *African Identities*, (August), 2020, 1–8.

[92] L. T. Mengie, "Ethnic Federalism and Conflict in Ethiopia: What Lessons Can Other Jurisdictions Draw"?, 468.

are the *de facto* citizens of their regional states.[93] They have been displaced countrywide because "outsiders" are supposed to move away and rule over "their" homeland.

Under ethnic federalism, the standardisation of "indigenous" and "others" has emanated from the notion of autochthony; or literally, "sons of the soil".[94] Many argue that the politics of othering has arisen from a systematic and divisive narrative orchestrated by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) to rule over the "divided others". For instance, the TPLF labelled the Amhara people as a symbol of their allegedly oppressive rulers. As a result, with the growing ethno-nationalistic mobilisation under the EPRDF, the Amhara were required to leave for their "homeland"[95]. Consequently, they were displaced from the Western Arsi, Wellega, West Shoa, Arbagugu, and Jimma districts (in the Oromia region), Gurraferda (in the SNNPR), and Benishangul-Gumuz because they were "others"[96]. Anecdotal and media evidence reveals that Tigrayan people, who are purported to support the TPLF, have been compelled to leave the most parts of Ethiopia due to intimidation and discrimination.

Others are not only displaced, but also immobilised. A large majority of the non-titular groups or those who have found themselves outside their supposed homeland seem to have remained the "displaced-in-place" for two interacting reasons. First, resettled people have no place to return to, as they left their home some decades ago due to circumstances such as environmental degradation. Their property was also allocated to elites left behind soon after their departure.[97] Second, under the rule of the EPRDF, the regional governments where these displaced people are situated sometimes restrict the movement of outsiders to maintain an amicable relationship with other federal sub-units, or to affirm the FDRE Constitution (Art. 32) that grants every citizen the right

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[93] Ibid,469.
[94] A. Taye, "Ethnic federalism and conflict in Ethiopia",64; K.A. Amare, "One country–two citizenships: the status of settlers in Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State (BGRS) of Ethiopia', *African Identities*, 2020, 1–9.
[95] Whenever suspicion grows natives often use their regional constitutional rights and threaten settlers to leave the region and to go back to their original vicinity that they have abandoned nearly half a century ago J. Abbink, "Ethnicity and Conflict Generation in Ethiopia: Some Problems and Prospects of Ethno-Regional Federalism",399; K.A. Amare Kenaw, "One country–two citizenships: the status of settlers in Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State (BGRS) of Ethiopia" *African Identities*, 2020, 1–8.
[96] Ibid, 408-409; Y. G. Adimassu, *Federalism Vis a Vis the Right to Freedom of Movement and Residence: Critical Analysis of the Law and the Practice in Ethiopian Perspective*, Hanburg: Anchor Academic Publishing.2015.
[97] T. T. Wako, *State Obligation for the Protections of the rights of IDPs : In Case of Oromo People displaced from Ethiopian Somali region State*, Addis Ababa University, School of Law, Addis Ababa.Thesis.2019.

of free movement and choice of residence anywhere in the country. As a result, though they face violence, "outsiders" may be forcedly immobilised. [98]

The cases presented above illustrate that otherness does not necessarily end up in violent displacement—the most visible type—under two scenarios. First, people may flee before otherness develops into violence to avoid displacement. Second, others remain displaced-in-place due to a lack of alternatives. Therefore, internal displacement is not an aberration, as it is frequently presented in the existing literature. Instead, it is a process of loss and an outcome of a set of interacting series of actions that develop over time, during which people remain displaced.[99]

3.3.   Forced resettlement as internal displacement

As discussed in section one, displacement does not necessarily take place suddenly. In some cases, it is part of the strategies used by states to realise certain political goals. Though it is a neglected subject in the displacement discourse, forced resettlement—where a government forcefully transfers a particular part of the population from their original residence to a new setting and livelihood—is a typical manifestation of internal displacement.[100] The Guiding Principles prohibits forced relocation of people.

Forced resettlement is distinguished from "environmentally induced displacement," where people flee home as a response to actual and imagined threats of environmental disasters. Forced resettlement is a planned course of action that involves population selection, movement, and control as a means toward achieving development policies such as environmental rehabilitation or agricultural development.[101] Several case studies illustrate that although they involve ecological

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[98] For instance, in addition to old and renewed border-related tensions that have caused millions of displaced persons, a significant proportion of the Oromo were reported to have been forcedly immobilized, with the police force blocking outmigration from the Somali region.

[99] While it could add an important dimension to displacement research, forced immobility where people are cut off all available alternatives has so far not received much attention in research on protracted displacement. For more on forced immobility see R. Vollmer, Agency and livelihood-making in protracted displacement,30; See S. C. Lubkemann, "Involuntary Immobility : On a Theoretical Invisibility in Forced Migration Studies", *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 21(4), 2008, 454–475.

[100] Forced relocation obviously involves a situation of coerced movement and it should be included in any definition of internally displaced persons. If it is the government itself, which forcibly relocates some selected populations, these populations, are by definition not protected by their government. See C. Phuong. *The International Protection of Internally Displaced Persons*, UK, Cambridge University Press, 2004; R. Muggah, " The invisible displaced: A unified conceptualization of population displacement in Brazil", *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 28(2),2015, 222–237

[101] See G.Tashi,, & M. Foggin, "Resettlement as development and progress? Eight years on: review of emerging social and development impacts of an 'ecological resettlement' project in Tibet autonomous region, China", *Nomadic Peoples*, 16(1), 2012, 134–151.

variables, most forced resettlements are tools for development policy or political strategy, and are thus, not responses to environmental challenges per se.[102]

Planned resettlements have been implemented in Ethiopia where a blend of environmental, political, and economic motives underpins mass population transfers.[103] Forced resettlements are largely imposed, and the choice to remain in place is often denied. The discussion in Section one reveals that these are the core elements of the IDP definition. Therefore, forcibly resettled people are equally IDPs. Studies show that minorities are largely vulnerable to forced resettlement. [104]

3.4.   Forced relocation: the permanent impermanence in Ethiopia

Ethiopia embarked on planned resettlement after 1960 as a strategy to mitigate and respond to recurring drought and famine. The country went through six severe famines between 1970 to1980 that were largely attributed to poor governance.[105] Regardless of the existence of other cross cutting issues, empirical evidence and the bulk of humanitarian reports concur that negligence and politically motivated bias on the part of the military government were the major causes of famine catastrophe and involuntary resettlement. The government invoked an emergency resettlement to reduce the drastic impact of famine where people were relocated primarily from the northern, central, and eastern highland areas of the country to the southern, and south-western lowland areas. Successive governments justified this by the availability of arable —yet untested—land and a relatively low population density [106]

The emergency resettlement scheme relocated more than two million people, based on controversial parameters of recruitment and quota-based relocation[107], with people largely enticed into resettlement that Hammond frames as 'strategy of invisiblisation'.[108] It was heavily criticised

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[102] R. Black, *Environmental refugees: myth or reality?* Geneva, UNCHR, New Issues in Refugee Research, Research Paper No. 34, Mar. 2001;

[103] Ibid

[104] Minority groups are especially vulnerable to forced relocation by authoritarian regimes. L. Hammond, "Strategies of Invisibilisation : How Ethiopia' s Resettlement Programme Hides the Poorest of the Poor"; C. Phuong. The International Protection of Internally Displaced Persons,2004,32.

[105] M. T. Maru, *Causes, Dynamics, and Consequences of Internal Displacement in Ethiopia*,14.

[106] Regardless of the existence of other compelling issues, empirical evidence and the bulk of humanitarian reports concur that negligence and politically motivated bias on the part of the military government were the major causes of famine catastrophe and involuntary resettlement. For the famine and involuntary resettlement in Ethiopia. See L. Binet, *Famine and Forced Relocations in Ethiopia, 1984–1986*, Paris, Médecins Sans Frontières International Movement, Case study series.Nov.2013.

[107] For the underlying assumptions and negative consequences of forced relocation. See D. Rahmato, *Resettlement in Ethiopia : The Tragedy of Population Relocation in the 1980s*. Addis Ababa, Forum for Social Studies, Discussion Paper, No.11, Jun.2003.

[108] L. Hammond, "Strategies of Invisibilisation : How Ethiopia 's Resettlement Program Hides the Poorest of the Poor", *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 21(4), 2008, 517–536.

for involuntariness and the induced complicity of the displaced, which made the displaced people invisible and voiceless. [109]It was an inter-ethnic/inter-regional settlement, in which people from the Amhara and Tigre ethnic groups were moved over a long distance and resettled in areas demarcated, after the 1994 Constitution, under the Oromia (the largest destination), Benishangul-Gumuz, and Gambella regional states.[110] Being an arbitrary and coercive movement, thousands of starving people died on their way to the resettlement sites. [111]

The Military Government (locally referred to as *Derg*) not only prioritised the anniversary of Marxist ideology over famine during the 1980s, but also diverted a portion of aid, mobilised across the globe to combat the famine and to carry out a selective forced population transfer of a group of people designated as rebel forces.[112] Many argue that the emergency resettlement was undertaken as a punitive measure to control the minority dissidents in the northern part of the country. Forced relocation was allegedly backed by the dual political goals of depopulating the mass base of insurgent groups in the north, and dismantling the ethnic homogeneity of the south.[113] Though these issues of negligence and implementing resettlement as punitive measures are key parameters to define internal displacement situation under the international normative framework (the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement), academia seems to overlook millions who experienced the same in Ethiopia.[114]

As in other contexts, resettlement studies in Ethiopia have instead focused on examining the successes and failures of the planned population relocation and thus disregarded reconstructing the coercive movement phenomenon as a form of internal displacement warranting further

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[109] The EPRDF Government also implemented a resettlement in 2003 under a banner of Voluntary Resettlement Program while it was practically like the involuntary resettlement programme of the mid-1980s. The only difference may be is that the 1980s was inter-ethnic while the latter one was intra-ethnic resettlement. Though the interethnic/regional resettlement was conducted mainly to avoid ethnic conflict as in the case of previous resettlement experiences, it couldn't successfully surmount the problem due to the intra-ethnic tensions and other differences Ibid, 523.

[110] A massive program of population relocation resulted in changes in the geographic pattern of population growth. J. Comenetz & C. Caviedes, "Climate variability, political crises, and historical population displacements in Ethiopia", *Environmental Hazards*, 4(4), 2002, 113–127.

[111] D. Rahmato, *Resettlement in Ethiopia : The Tragedy of Population Relocation in the 1980s*, 20-23.

[112] L. Binet, Famine and Forced Relocations in Ethiopia, 8.

[113] G. Yintiso, "Differential reestablishment of voluntary and involuntary migrants: the case of Metekel settlers in Ethiopia", *African Study Monographs*, 23(1), 2003, 31–46.

[114] Victims of environmental disasters are IDPs and are of concern to the international community, because (authoritarian) governments either neglect certain populations for political or ethnic reasons, or divert aid away from assisting the displaced. R. Cohen, "Developing an International System for Internally Displaced Persons", *International Studies Perspectives*, 7(2), 2006, 87–101.

investigation and policy attention.[115] As discussed above, though it is labelled as 'resettlement', the Military Government set off internal displacement as people were neither primarily consulted on their movement, nor were told about the destination beforehand. Moreover, while the people moved permanently or live in the area of resettlement as permanent residents, they are not yet entitled to full-fledged 'local citizenship' -- they remain permanent 'others' or permanent IDPs.[116] In other words, people were not only arbitrarily displaced for an indefinite period, but were also left unintegrated. This has remained the major reason for uncertainty and impermanence among the settlers.[117]

The unending displacement across Amhara and Benishangul-Gumuz can be explained by the lack of proper integration of the resettled people. One of the emergency resettlement sites was Metekel, which was part of the Amhara region until 1994. Ensuing the ratification of the 1994 Constitution, Metekel was demarcated under the Benishagul-Gumuz region, with its tens of thousands of Amhara people relocated (in eighty-eight camps) under the emergency resettlement.[118] Over recent decades, as in many other regions, the notion of self-determination acclaimed by ethnic federalism seems to have empowered the Gumuz to exercise control over the settlers, who are labeled as "the highlanders", based on their origin. These people are treated with suspicion and are subjected to repeated displacement.

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[115] The 1980s and 2000s resettlements in the Western lowlands, mainly in Benishangul and Oromia regions, are extensively studied. See D. Rahmato, *Resettlement in Ethiopia : The Tragedy of Population Relocation in the 1980s*. Addis Ababa, Forum for Social Studies, Discussion Paper, No.11, Jun.2003; A. Pankhurst & F. Piguet Francois, eds. *Moving People in Ethiopia: Development, Displacement, and the State*. Oxford: James Currey, 2009. The subject of interest in most of the case studies has been the outcomes of state-led resettlement programs the lowland areas instead of the resettlement itself. Several contributors use the Impoverishment Risks and Reconstruction (IRR) framework developed by Michael Cernea to evaluate the impact of resettlement on people's lives, Y. Gebre,"Resettlement and the Unnoticed Losers : Impoverishment Disasters among the Gumz in Ethiopia", *Human Organization*, 62(1), 2003, 50–61. Resettlement programmes have consistently been undertaken with minimal participation from those who are to be moved, the host community and with inadequate planning. See L. Hammond, "Moving People in Ethiopia: Development, Displacement, and the State. Edited by A. Pankhurst & F. Piguet", *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 23(3), 2010, 398–400; K.A. Amare Kenaw, "One country–two citizenships: the status of settlers in Benishangul-Gumuz Regional Sates (BGRS) of Ethiopia", *African Identities*, 2020, 1–8.

[116] Settlers have permanently lived in the area close to half a century and those who are born and raised there only know the area as their only home. K.A. Amare, "One country–two citizenships: the status of settlers in Benishangul-Gumuz Regional Sates (BGRS) of Ethiopia", *African Identities*, 2020, 1–8.

[117] Negative consequences of a lacking proper integration related to mass resettlement transcend the pioneer generation, impoverish the second generation, and often lead to cyclical and multiple instances of displacement. See F. Piguet & D. Lemessa, Review of Voluntary Migration and Resettlement Programs up to the end of 2001', in A. Pankhurst, & F. Piguet, (eds) *People, Space and the State: Migration, Resettlement*, *and Displacement in Ethiopia*, Addis Ababa, ESSSWA, 2004.

[118] K.A. Amare, "One country–two citizenships: the status of settlers in Benishangul-Gumuz Regional Sates (BGRS) of Ethiopia",2.

More complex is that a durable solution for these people seems less reachable, as the resettled and their subsequent generations cannot return to their original place of residence due to the implicit attribute of permanency in the resettlement policy.[119] Accordingly, settlers were given the choice neither to return nor to be fully integrated in the resettlement sites. As a result, forcibly resettled people have remained powerless and immobile IDPs who have been grappling with "permanent impermanence". In the Metekel Zone, recurrent localized tensions between the people who were forcedly settled half a century ago and those who consider themselves as 'native' Gumuz cause several cycles of displacement and return. This illustrates how unaddressed displacement instigate further instances of displacement.

4. CONCLUSION

This article revisits the construct of IDPs in existing literature. The findings show that the dominant understanding of IDPs is heavily influenced by the refugee law that tends to favour IDPs in a refugee-like situation or those who experience persecution; meaning those people who would be considered refugees if they crossed an international border. Such a standardisation appears to gloss over certain typologies of IDPs, such as, first, those displaced due to environmental factors (specifically slow-onset disasters) unless human rights violations are reported; second people who were displaced by government policies, and third, people who move due to the politics of othering. IDPs can also be those who 'return' or ceased to be displaced irrespective of their conditions after return or the location they return to and urban IDPs who are not locally integrated. States may consider internal displacement as a temporary shock and put in place ad hoc systems while people find themselves in a situation of protracted displacement.[120] Drawing on the Ethiopian case studies and the detailed illustration of the development of politics of othering and forced relocation, we have demonstrated that people can still be IDPs without the existence of an actual conflict. The difference is their visibility.[121]

The invisibility of displaced people showcases a power relationship between those who have power to see and to be seen. In Ethiopia, people flee their place of usual residence due to the

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[119] The regime prepared permanent settlements and moved them over a thousand kilometers away from home to the other side of the country. Despite promises, however, the Derg was making going back home to become impossibly difficult. Ibid,3.

[120] G. Cardona-Fox, "The Politics of IDP Data", 625

[121] see T. Polzer & L. Hammond, "Invisible displacement", *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 21(4), 2008, 417–431; D. J. Cantor & A. Woolley, Internal Displacement and Responses at the Global Level: A Review of the Scholarship,16

politics of othering or exoticisation under the policy of ethnic federalism but are rendered invisible[122] because the force (othering) that pushes them out of their place of residence is not as well acknowledged as the recognised drivers (e.g ethnic conflict). This category of displaced persons is missed from the national statistics, not because of its magnitude but because of the government and other actors averting the gaze from such a process of displacement. Besides we argue that defining displacement as an outcome rather than a process is also a major factor for underestimating displacement due to the politics of othering.

People can be displaced (even by the government that is supposed to protect them) and remain unintegrated. Ethiopia has a long history of population transfer under in the name of resettlement. Practically, relocation processes were largely determined by the government and were forced. In the absence of clear durable solutions, these people will remain in a state of limbo for an indefinite period and unintegrated. This situation creates other categories of IDPs. So, instead of taking the IDP label that excludes a huge number of displaced persons for granted, it is important to scrutinize the label itself by taking into account the diversity in terms of timeframe, location, and the cause of displacement.[123] The findings also show that in-depth contextualisation can still bring other forms of displacement to the fore. We argue that while putting in place a legal framework might help promote the rights of IDPs, it would still exclude certain categories of IDPs.

The overall findings show that the invisibility of certain types of IDPs is the result of power relations and interests in knowledge production. The IDP scholarship largely reinforces policy labels rather than making the label itself a subject of scrutiny.[124] The boundary between academia and policy is fuzzy and that labels created in political realm are easily transposed into academia. Power shapes the knowledge production and dissemination in favour of the 'conventional' categories of IDPs.[125] One reason for excluding IDPs in general and specific categories as discussed in this article could be to reduce the target population of policy in providing protection. Moreover, states, particularly those who haven't endorsed the normative framework, seem to politicize the internal displacement issue and underestimate internal displacement data. In view

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[122] Invisibility of forced migrants inherently involves power: the power to decide who receives resources, who has the legitimacy to make their voices heard, or who can be harmed or ignored without consequences. The process through which this power is wielded is itself rarely explicit—indeed, its influence lies in its being taken for granted
[123] G. Cardona-Fox, "The Politics of IDP Data", 625.
[124] G. Scalettaris, "The Refugee studies and the International Refugee Regime: a reflection on a Desirable Separation", *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 26(3), 2007, 36–50.
[125] O. Bakewell, "Research beyond the categories: The importance of policy irrelevant research into forced migration", 433.

of this, the social science realm faces a dual imperative: the need for academic soundness on the one hand and policy relevance on the other.[126] Notwithstanding the persisting debates among scholars, the transition of academia from refugee studies to forced migration studies is believed to pave the way to adopt a broader approach in defining and responding to the diverse needs of displaced persons. The re-orientation of forced migration studies also makes the lived experience of displaced persons its subject and considers diverse migration processes and motivations rather than standardising IDPs experiences.[127] However, given the dynamic nature of the internal displacement issue, the academic engagement with internal displacement is currently far too limited. Therefore, there is a need for social scientific studies that go beyond labels and focus on people and their experience in the context of displacement.

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[126] G. Scalettaris, "The Refugee studies and the International Refugee Regime: a reflection on a Desirable Separation",5.

[127] However, there is a continuing debate on the transition and focus of the two E. Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, K.L. Gil Loescher, & N. Sigona, *The Oxford Handbook of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press,2014.