Parallel session C1
Urban Landscapes of Displacement
Monday 11 November, 14.00 – 15.30
IAS Room 20

Chair: **Dr Jonathan Rock Rokem**, Lecturer in Human Geography, University of Kent
Discussant: **Dr Tatiana Thieme**, Associate Professor, UCL Geography

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Forced Displacement, Urbanization, and the Dark Side of Informality: A View from Lebanon
Prof. Mona Harb, Professor of Urban Studies and Politics, American University of Beirut
Mona Fawaz, Associate Professor in Urban Studies and Planning, American University of Beirut

Since 2011, Lebanon has been hosting more than one million Syrian refugees forcefully displaced by the war in Syria, the majority living in cities and towns (80%), while 20% reside in tented settlements. Even though its impacts on the built environment have been dismal, the 'refugees' crisis' has not been investigated as an *urban* crisis. This paper seeks to remedy this gap by investigating urban service provision at the city scale, interrogating how forced displacement has affected modes of urban governance.

Based on the study of two cities (Halba and Zahleh), we show that the hybridity and fragmentation that differentiates modes of urban governance in cities, and renders service provision unequal and inefficient (Verdeil et al. 2009), are further exacerbated by the refugees crisis. In Halba, the city grew exponentially with the influx of Syrians who dwelled along its northern route. Known for its poor public electricity grid, energy provision in the city is dominated by a network of private generator providers. With the increase in (Syrian) population, the more dominant players knew they had to reshuffle the territorial distribution of their authority to extract more resources. The more powerful excluded the small-timers and consolidated their reach, increasing their wealth, at the expense of electricity costs and service quality, and furthering air pollution. In Zahleh, the mayor pushed Syrians away into the fertile valley, where dozens of tented settlements were established, grew and spread out. Our study of sanitation services revealed hybrid systems of provision, combining formal and informal modes of governance, engaging various stakeholders, whereby service efficiency and quality are highly unequal and rather poor, while the lack of oversight of the digging of wastewater pits has led to heavy pollution of the water table.

Both city tales reveal an extreme informalisation of urban service provision and of modes of urban governance, with acute service inequality and inefficiency, and detrimental environmental impacts, where strongmen dominate and abuse dwellers. The paper

accordingly argues that ill-regulated, criminalised and monetised forced displacement is yielding hybrid processes of urbanisation, which further the dark side of informality.

Departure cities: On hyper-mobile urbanism and mobilisation of people 'on the move'
Dr Irit Katz, Lecturer, School of Architecture, The University of Sheffield

This paper draws on critical urban and migration theories to trace the impact of the fortification of borders on the production of new urban spaces and subjectivities of people 'on the move' and those who support them. The paper invokes the concept of 'departure cities' as urban constellations created by the efforts of global, state and regional powers to control and regulate migration, and by the forces opposing them, turning cities into life-sustaining nodes and contested jumping-off points along the global routes and the increasingly fractured journeys of irregular migration. Within this setting, it analyses particular urban environments – public spaces, squats, and makeshift encampments – used and created by and for irregular migrants trying to cross the tightening internal European borders and depart from cities such as Athens, Belgrade, Rome and Calais in their attempts to move from the south-east to the north-west. Departure cities, the paper argues, form fluctuating realities of hyper-mobile and often makeshift urban areas existing on the continuum between exclusionary spaces of control, abandonment and xenophobic reactions, and between environments of precarious provision and care formed by alternative gestures of solidarity and new urban alliances of radical hospitality. While these spaces are often created 'under the radar' for the sake of successful continuation of journeys, they may also be politicised spaces of performative protest, demanding both safe movement and a dignified stay of those on the move. The proliferation of departure cities worldwide illuminates the differential '(inter)national (b)order of things' when transnational movement is a right for some while being negated for others. These dynamics highlight the need for new urban theories which better integrate conditions of irregular human mobility and flickering forms of insurgent urban identities and spaces to reveal how power mechanisms and the resistance to them create new forms of urban existence.