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**Determinants of IDP Voice —
Four Cases from Sierra Leone and Afghanistan**

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

APC	All People's Congress
CDC	Community Development Council
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
INGO	International Non-governmental Organization
NaCSA	National Commission for Social Action (successor of the NCRRR)
NCRRR	National Commission for Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
SLPP	Sierra Leone People's Party
UN	United Nations
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

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ABSTRACT

Using an interview-based case study methodology, this paper investigates how four groups of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Afghanistan and Sierra Leone engage in existing frameworks of local governance with the aim of influencing political processes. In accordance with IDPs' priorities to ensure individual and communal recovery and the (re)creation of sustainable livelihoods, security of land tenure and employment creation receive particular attention. The paper proposes two main causal factors of political leverage (voice): It hypothesizes that voice depends on IDPs' proximity to urban centers and on the concrete channels and means they employ to interact with policymakers, with "modern" channels and means expected to outperform more "traditional" approaches. The paper finds that only one group can directly influence policies that concern them, and that in this case the proximity to loci of political and economic decision-making is clearly advantageous. However, the other three cases demonstrate that location appears to be more of an enabling yet insufficient factor. Furthermore, mere reliance on externally modernized governance structures does not necessarily increase IDPs' voice, and greater political leverage seems to depend ultimately on how versatile their representatives are in terms of engaging with both governmental and societal institutions around specific issues and well-defined demands. Nonetheless, the thrust of national policies to "reruralize" urbanized IDPs appears ambivalent, and strategies that support national policy cohesion while simultaneously amplifying marginalized groups' voice and strengthening accountability in local governance structures should therefore be of significant concern to International Non-governmental Organizations (INGOs) working in a post-war context.

Determinants of IDP Voice —
Four Cases from Sierra Leone and Afghanistan[1]

Daniel Esser[2]

I. WHY VOICE MATTERS – INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

Social and economic reintegration of internally displaced persons (IDPs) into society is usually regarded a critical success factor in any post-war development strategy, and it was also the general starting point of this enquiry. Aiming at scrutinizing ways to substantiate this contention, the initial research proposal outlined an approach to measure the extent to which peace initiatives focusing on conflict transformation make an effective contribution to achieving peace and reconciliation. While new, the approach also proved to have two caveats. The first concern was a methodological one: How can one know that "peace" has been achieved? In other words, how should one measure "peace"? Of course, interviews and surveys could have been methodological options, yet

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those would need to be designed very cautiously to avoid shaping the scope of responses in a way that would artificially enlarge the propensity of linking specific conflict transformation initiatives directly to the overall "peace objective". This, then, was the second problem: how to prove causation if the target cannot be operationalized.

As the present research subsequently unfolded, it did not attempt to shy away from advancing a methodological framework to inform the abovementioned investigation. The decisive reason why the focus of this study ultimately shifted was, quite frankly, the degree of politicization observed during the field research periods. On the "modal map" of this researcher, the task of reintegration had morphed from a mainly technical issue to one that appeared to be both object and driver of local politics. The extent to which those affected could actually influence their own fate thus became a central concern, and is a question on which this study is now trying to shed some light.

In a spatial context, two idealized approaches to reintegration come to mind when thinking about IDP reintegration. First, the target population can be encouraged through economic means and assistance in social matters to rejoin their old community or one designated to absorb them. This will require political negotiation as much as logistical support. Conversely, reintegration can occur generically in accordance with individual preferences for places that seem to offer economic and social opportunities. Urban areas seem to nurture these expectations, and post conflict settlement patterns thus accelerate further the growth of cities and provincial centers if a lack of opportunities in rural areas prevails. As one practitioner puts it for the case of Sierra Leone, "inadequate resettlement packages, combined with a chronic lack of shelter and basic services in areas of return, have caused many resettlers to drift back to urban areas."[3]

Yet in both approaches, negotiation with resident communities around key issues such as land ownership, income generation and social recognition—either by intermediaries working on behalf of IDP groups or directly by IDPs themselves—will be necessary to enable reintegration. Here, the leverage of IDP voice, i.e., the extent to which they influence this process of negotiation to their benefit, can be expected to depend on specific factors. Understanding these factors better will help in assisting these groups more effectively and thus improve existing programs to reintegrate IDPs into war-torn societies—locally and at the national level.

Therefore, this study seeks to clarify the determinants of voice of IDP groups in reintegration. It asks three simple questions: First, what are the decisive factors for political clout of IDPs in decision-making processes at the local level? Second, how do these factors link to the location of communities in question? Third, what role can international agencies play in the process of reintegrating IDPs in accordance with their preferences but, on the other hand, without exacerbating existing problems deriving from population movements and resulting bottlenecks in infrastructure and fragile social networks?[4]

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[3] McGoldrick 2003: 32.
[4] The aim of this study is not to judge the validity of claims made by the IDPs, but to clarify their position within a given power structure and on the actions they choose to pursue to make their case.

The methodology applied here is straightforward. Four experiences from Afghanistan and Sierra Leone will be compared qualitatively with one another to arrive at a better understanding of what conditions political leverage in these cases.[5] The particular focus is set on communities in transit, which means that target populations have not yet arrived at the desired place of reintegration. Another aim of this study is, within the limits of an admittedly small sample, to represent the diversity of situations that IDPs find themselves in regarding "spatial institutionalization" (i.e., whether they are settling in a camp or not), social cohesion (i.e., whether they are a community or just individuals grouped together), and location (i.e., whether they are settling in urban, peri-urban, or rural settings). The data used here have been derived from open-ended interviews with both elected and traditional representatives of the communities themselves, local decision-makers, and senior staff of international organizations. Those conducted in Sierra Leone were almost exclusively in English and tape-recorded with the consent of informants, coupled with an assurance of anonymity. In Afghanistan, daily debriefings were conducted to ensure accuracy of translation. In addition to one-on-one interviews, informally constituted focus groups were used in *Shayda-i*, *Grafton*, and during the meeting with the amputees' association in Freetown.

The underlying theoretical approach is informed by Fanthorpe's (2001) application and advancement of Mamdani's (1996) central hypothesis of his "Citizen and Subject",[6] in which the former shows how traditional governance structures in combination with landlessness and exclusion from the taxation nexus leave large parts of the Sierra Leonean population voiceless and without politico-economic leverage. A similar situation can be found in Afghanistan, which—in spite of evident differences in cultural customs and local traditions—shares some key parameters with the West African country, such as the historical prevalence of an urban-rural divide that perpetuated the formation of two distinct lifeworlds in the recent past: One city-bound and both culturally and tribally heterogeneous, the other one rural and homogenous. Consequently, an enquiry into IDPs voice and causes of voicelessness aiming at testing such theory must come forward with a hypothesis that links voicelessness with both historico-traditional factors and incentive structures of the contemporary political economy. One can achieve this by proposing the causation of (1) location of IDP communities (not urban/ urban) and (2) reliance on/ supersedence of traditional channels of power impact significantly on the extent of voice and suggesting that (hypothesis 1) the closer the community is located to the center (defined by political authority and scarcity of land) and (hypothesis 2) the more IDP actors succeed in moving beyond traditional channels and means of representation, the 'louder' their voices get.

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[5] The studies are part of a larger comparative research project on the topic of urban politics and urban development in least developed post-war countries.

[6] Mamdani's proposition is that the traditional form of governance in Africa by indigenous chiefs and "customary law" in combination with a colonial rule based on "decentralized despotism" reduced the opportunities for citizen participation in post-colonial state structures. His book has been criticized more on methodological grounds for its basis of comparison (Mamdani derives his hypothesis from an analysis of East and South Africa even though the two regions had largely different experiences in being ruled by a non-indigenous elite) but less so for its main argument.

Before we look at the four case studies, it also appears necessary to propose a decision-making framework for the different players involved in reintegrating IDP communities in both countries in order to be able to interpret their actions within the context of their incentives and objectives. Indeed, one might expect that interests in this question seem to differ substantially. National authorities will prefer and propagate the return to original communities now "sufficiently safe to allow for the return of displaced people in safety and dignity"[7] in order to ease pressure on urban land markets and to halt urban growth and its overstretching effect on urban infrastructure. International Non-governmental Organizations (INGOs) and agencies of the United Nations, on the contrary, could be seen as working towards balancing preferences of beneficiaries with existing policy frameworks in line with government priorities. Finally, the so-called "beneficiaries" of reintegration programs will probably focus on avoiding homelessness, landlessness, and livelihood deprivation and try to safeguard economic and social opportunities to ensure that they will not end up in complete isolation.

Conflicts of interest might thus overshadow the cooperation required between IDP communities, assisting agencies, and the government. This is, to be sure, not likely to be true in all IDP cases, nor does it constitute a necessary condition for the validity of our claim that political voice of IDPs depends on specific factors. Nonetheless, such conflicts both illustrate the political environment in which reintegration needs to take place and exemplify the importance of political leverage for IDPs if they want to make their case. The following sections will illustrate in more detail the situation of the four IDP groups investigated in the course of this study: *Kotale Khair-Khana* in Kabul and *Shayda-i* Refugee Camp in Herat Province (Afghanistan), and *Grafton* IDP Camp in the Western Area District and *Murray Town* Amputees' Camp in Freetown (Sierra Leone).

II. AFGHANISTAN

While the majority of Afghanistan's population still lives in rural areas, the country has seen a rapid increase in the number of urban dwellers since 2001. The Afghan government and international agencies have estimated that well over 25 percent of the populace is now living in towns and cities.[8] Whereas the return of refugees and internally displaced people had almost stopped by mid-2005, the process of urbanization continued. Indeed, projected annual changes in "percentage urban" (1.98-2.34 per cent for Afghanistan) are above regional averages (1.16-1.42 per cent for Asia).[9] This development is attributed to two persistent trends: self-generated growth (urban natural increase)[10] and net in-migration fuelled by economic scarcity, unemployment and environmental hazards (mainly droughts) in rural areas.[11] Thus, "recognition of [this] continuing urbanization and the resulting pressure on existing urban systems has to be at the center of any viable national reconstruction strategy."[12] Yet the question remains how

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[7] National Commission for Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (NCRRR) 2001: 4.
[8] Government of Afghanistan 2004: Urban Technical Annex.
[9] UNDESA 2004: 26, 103.
[10] I.e., urban births exceeding urban deaths.
[11] I.e., rural in-migration exceeding urban out-migration.
[12] Beall et al. 2005: 18.

this phenomenon is being addressed in a way to ensure that urban concentration does not exacerbate the social and economic fragmentation within urban boundaries, particularly in the eighteen districts of Kabul (as of mid-2005), the country's fast-growing capital, that have experienced heavy inflows of IDPs.

A. *Kotale Khair-Khana* – Living in a "Non-Community"

One of these gravely affected neighborhoods is *Kotale Khair-Khana*, located in District 17 in the south west of the city. The tribally diverse settlement started to grow in 2001 after the ousting of the Taliban by coalition forces and the arrival of internally displaced rural families. Its hillsides are still partially mined. A severe shortage of public services is due to both the location and the prevailing reliance of the municipality on an outdated master plan for the city of Kabul, which dates back to 1980 when the Russian army had invaded the country and implemented a rigid planning framework. As in many diverse urban communities, direct neighbors barely know each other and, while there is no open hostility, the degree of household cooperation is limited to on the spot transactions and occasional exchanges of information. A mother of five who had arrived three months prior said, "No one else supports us. We came here recently and every family is new to us so we are not in touch regularly. We haven't come together with others." At the same time, intra-family ties are usually strong and extend to clan members in rural areas. Until recently, local commanders were allocating pieces of land that they had encroached upon during the armed conflict for cash payments to those who were in the position to pay. A male household head illustrated the juxtaposed impact of physical destruction, lack of employment opportunities and migration, saying:

> We are originally from the *Guldara* part of *Shamali* [50 kms from the capital] and have been living here for almost two years. When we came back from Pakistan, where we had been staying for four years during the Taliban era, we found our home and lands and gardens in our village destroyed. Nothing remained. We came back to Afghanistan because we did not have any good income in Pakistan. […] A lot of people in Pakistan told us there would be work in Kabul, now that there was peace in our country. Yet I haven't seen any work opportunities here, so I had to open this shop, next to our house. We have built this house after receiving permission from the local commander.

The problem of rising living expenses is equally pertinent among IDPs. A father of five:

> We are originally from *Shamali*, but we have been living here for almost three years now. We had been in Iran before for six years, where I was working as a day laborer. With the peace in our country we decided to come back to Afghanistan. We wanted to go to our own place in *Shamali* but it was all destroyed. Therefore we decided to rent a house here in *Khair-Khana*. Now we are living here, but the rent is rising steadily.

Some families had built their own house first and then paid local strongmen in order to be able to stay. A 50-year old mother living in *Kotale Khair-Khana* whose son is an officer in the Afghan army reported: "This is our own house; we built it last winter [of 2003-04].

However, we don't have the title deeds for the land. Recently it was just distributed by the government to one of the commanders who then sold it to those newly arrived." Indeed, no formal tenure system is in place, and residents do not have any legally enforceable title deeds. A municipal employee stated in August 2004:

> If you want to obtain a title deed for a piece of land that you legally possess, what you have to do is pay at least US$3,000. Then you might get a duplicate if you are lucky. 17,000 documents still have to be entered into the computer system, so there is plenty of opportunity for additional incomes. Yet corruption cannot not be crushed because the government is so weak. You need a lot of co-ordination to do something against it. The wars have destroyed our political and social cohesion.[13]

An additional challenge that is endemic in this neighborhood is an extremely high degree of corruption on the part of <u>local</u> officials ("*wakil*"=neighborhood representative). Residents had repeatedly been offered connections to the rudimentary electricity and water network. Yet after making cash payments to local officials, the vast majority never saw any benefit. One adolescent male respondent reported: "The *wakil* is responsible for this area. He recently collected money from most of the houses saying he would try to bring us electricity, but so far we have not seen anything happening except having some cables in some of the streets, for some of the houses." Rudimentary service provision only takes place through semi-legal market supply, often run by commanders becoming local entrepreneurs. In *Kotale Khair-Khana* water had become a commodity and its purchase absorbs a large proportion of the incomes of low-income households. Privately owned tankers currently provide it, with residents paying around 60 Afghanis per drum. According to one shopkeeper:

> The water tanker comes every four days. They aren't from the government; rich people own them. Most of them are from the Panj'sher. You can see some modern houses around here [points toward some large construction sites and a recently finished two-story building nearby]; these are the houses of the people who own the water tankers. They earn 1500 Afs per day and per tanker.

However, the lack of *de facto* legally enforceable political accountability mechanisms results in residents relying solely on the goodwill of local commanders to "enjoy" political "representation" and physical protection. A male resident explained:

> There is no one who can tell us anything and we can not tell them anything, because we know that everyone living here is poor and they cannot do anything about each other, except the powerful people who can do any thing they want to. […] So far no one has helped us. We also don't have any relatives living in other foreign countries.

The existing system of local representation through a male community member (the *wakil*), usually appointed indefinitely by the municipality (many *wakils* have been in place for a decade or longer), is largely ineffective and clearly biased towards wealthier

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[13] cf. ibid: 38-42.

and more established families. Although a number of *wakils* did seek benefits on behalf of their communities, others did not. Moreover, many residents did not perceive them to be legitimate representatives, either because they made no visible effort on behalf of their communities or because their interventions had little impact. Critics were often younger men or women. A mother of four illustrated how neglect on the part of male elders is not simply benign but prevents collective action on the part of women wanting to help themselves:

> Once all neighbors got together to go to the municipality because we had no water and no electricity, but the *wakil* did not support us. […] We also don't have any proper sanitation system and our toilets are in bad condition. Yet, because the *wakil* said we wouldn't achieve anything by talking to the municipality we did not go. The problem is, we can only turn to our *wakil* or to our elders to help us, but nothing is happening.

More generally then, the case of *Kotale Khair-Khana* in Kabul's district 17 epitomizes the process of commercialization of informal settlements and the development of an urban cash economy that flourishes in the absence of law and order. Struggling to satisfy immediate needs, residents and in particular IDPs undergo a process of subjectification by local strongmen, ultimately leaving them without enforceable rights. In light of a massive budget constraint, the national government has taken first steps to increase efforts to raise taxes locally through municipalities. But the key question is whether residents are able and, in fact, willing to pay local fees if this does not come in exchange for enforceable ownership and the immediate provision of reliable services.

B. *Shayda-i* Refugee Camp – Caught Between a Rock and a Hard Place

Contrary to massive shortfalls in service provision in the country's capital, the main Afghan border city with Iran and Turkmenistan, Herat, has witnessed heavy investment in infrastructure and service provision financed through locally raised (and kept) custom dues. However, some districts have been largely left to decay, and education, health and water services are still inadequate in these areas. In addition, the city also has a robust number of returning refugees still pouring in, especially during winter, and a significant degree of labor migration to cope with. Moreover, tense local–central power relations and severely restricted freedom of expression have characterized Herat's past, and remain potential areas of conflict to be resolved. A similarity with Kabul, however, is the limited access to land and ownership. The former Head of a UN agency in Herat reported:

> There is the issue of allocation of land for returnees, which we encourage.[14] All the allocation of land was frozen by the Afghan government. They say, 'they will all come back and we won't be able to cope.' However, while more than 50% of returnees say they have no land, our monitoring says it is much less. It is perhaps that they hope they will get land for us or that they don't know if they will get their land back. Nonetheless, there is a problem of land, for sure. The military

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[14] She later confirmed that the same was true for IDPs who had decided to resettle spontaneously in Herat; the interview was conducted in late July 2004.

takes it over. Another major problem is when the government confiscates land and redistributes, or the municipality is selling land to increase the salaries of employees with the proceeds. People who have been on the land for 40 years are kicked out. Battles between factions have led to the confiscation of land, also under the Taliban, and this is made worse because there are no documents.

A case that illustrates this situation and shows how people can get caught in an accelerating process of becoming powerless as a result of struggles between local commanders and provincial authorities, and the limited remits of international agencies is the *Shayda-i* Refugee Camp in Herat Province, approximately 30 minutes driving time east of the city and right next to a main highway.[15] The camp is inhabited by approximately 600 *Kuchi* nomads originally from the Gulran district about 80 kilometers from Herat city. A cattle-rearing people, they lost access to their rural livelihoods through drought. They also lost most of their own animals as well as rural employment opportunities and in 1998 moved by choice to Iran. There the Iranian government confiscated their surviving animals but the men easily found work as laborers. They were not war refugees and in fact expressed some support for the Taliban. However, they had to return to Afghanistan in 2001 as war-affected returnees and therefore settled in *Shayda-i*. They had been staying there for about three years but in mid-2004 the camp was officially closed. Initially providing assistance to the unserviced area, three INGOs then stopped their activity in agreement with the provincial government, continuously urging the latter to assume responsibility for the remaining families.

Trying to capitalize on its location and its alleged ownership by ex-commanders, the authorities soon began putting pressure on the Kuchis to leave the camp. Of course, return to their places of origin was not a possibility for this nomadic community, which has no land or home to which they could return. As representatives of the community, the elders from the *shura* petitioned the Ministry of Repatriation in writing and the then Governor of Herat, Ismail Khan, paid for them to travel to Kabul to put their case before President Karzai. The President, they claimed, told them they could stay. However, a commander claiming to be "in charge of the area", who was said to be linked to Ismail Khan, refused them permission and has engaged with them only by force. At the same time, the majority of the land has subsequently been given to government employees and soldiers, as one of the former governor's projects to reward loyalty and strengthen his political clout. The *kuchis*, however, still believe they are entitled to a proportion of the land but are neither clear about the size and boundaries nor the legality of the documents they hold in this regard. In the meantime, as one of the elders explained: "They keep coming. There was a bulldozer destroying houses around here. We are from Herat. Those who are from other provinces, they can go to their houses, but we have nowhere else to go—but they say to us 'you must go because the land belongs to the commanders'."

To be sure, this is a deprived rather than a destitute community, and their insecurity points to vulnerability rather than absolute poverty. The men work as porters in Herat's central bazaar and the children attend the local school. The source of its vulnerability cannot fully be explained by pointing toward their dire living conditions; rather, it is an

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[15] The case study is taken from Beall et al. 2005: 40.

amalgam of a lack of sufficient knowledge of appropriate strategies in the absence of institutionalized leverage. One of the women put their case unequivocally: "We don't want anything. We can solve all our problems ourselves. But we have nowhere to go and we want to stay here. This is what we want from the government: we want to live here."

III. SIERRA LEONE

Keeping up with the regional trend, Sierra Leone is urbanizing at a constant pace. While only 21.4% of the population lived in cities in 1975, already 37.3% of the overall population were city-dwellers in 2001. For the year 2015, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) expects almost half of Sierra Leoneans to live in cities (46.7%).[16] Freetown is clearly the largest urban agglomeration, with an estimated population of roughly one million, a fifth of the Sierra Leonean population.[17] Indeed, intra-urban and rural-urban divides were major trigger factors for the outbreak of the Sierra Leonean civil war in 1991.[18] Analysts of this West African calamity agree that the city of Freetown with its significant concentration of economic and political power was not only the locus of repeated fighting, but also the space of tension and social contestation that ultimately fuelled the violence that destroyed over 3,000 villages and towns and left hundreds of thousands of citizens dead, injured, or mutilated.[19] As a direct result of armed hostilities in the Western Area and surrounding districts, people flocked into the capital rather than leaving it.[20]

The magnitude of internal displacement directly affecting Freetown is not fully clear. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) reported in mid-2003 that the Western Area district, in which the capital is located, hosted

> over 37,000 formally registered IDPs and returnees in addition to many other non-registered displaced who have sought refugee in Freetown over the past ten years. Resettlement in Freetown and the Western Area was formally undertaken in April and June 2001 when around 17,500 received resettlement assistance. […] Reconciliation and confidence building measures will be of particular importance in the Western Area during the coming year.[21]

In addition, it seems fair to expect 10,000-20,000 "unofficial" IDPs to reside mainly in Freetown and its outskirts.[22] In addition to poor public services—one respondent called Freetown to "dirtiest city in West Africa—the spatial concentration has also led to an oversupply of skills in petty production and a clear dominance of informal sector employment, estimated in 2003 to account for 70% of total employment.[23]

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[16] UNDP 2003. The World Bank (2004) cites the same percentages for urban population and urbanization.
[17] The population is estimated based on UNDP's (2003) Human Development Indicators for Sierra Leone, here: estimated population in 2001 (4.6 million) and estimated annual growth rate (2.4%). The World Bank (2004) works with a slightly higher figure, i.e. 5.2 million in 2002, but a lower annual growth rate (2.1%).
[18] Fanthorpe 2001 makes this argument convincingly. See also Reno (1995).
[19] cf. Richards 1996: 5-60; UN 2002: 7.
[20] IDP Project 2003: 42-44.
[21] UNOCHA 2003: 2-3.
[22] IDP Project 2003: 40.
[23] ibid: 64-65.

Homelessness due to destruction during the war and disputes over housing and land ownership are problems particularly prevalent in the capital,[24] and urban land is therefore as contentious an issue in Sierra Leone as in Afghanistan. For historical reasons, legally enforceable land ownership is only possible in the Freetown area. Customary ownership in the rest of the country depends on paramount chiefs' allocation and recognition, which already poses problems during peace time but proved disastrous for those uprooted during the war who are now trying to go back to their communities. More than half of the paramount chiefs have been replaced or killed, which means that it is extremely difficult for returnees to claim "ownership". In addition, some senior government officials continue to question the validity of the problem by pointing to land ownership by diamond mining companies, which are present mostly in the far east of the country where they hold significant allotments. A representative of the ministry in charge of national economic development made the following, rather interesting statement: "Who says it is not possible to acquire land outside the Western Area? Of course it is possible. Take the example of the mining companies. They were given a lot of land, and they have never complained!" This position reinforced the perception that the problem was caused mainly by the immobility and unwillingness of IDP communities and not by structural and political shortcomings: "I know that many of the IDPs who have settled here in and around Freetown want land. But what we need in this area is investment. They need to claim their land in the provinces!"

Faced with dramatic growth of large cities in general and Freetown in particular, the pattern of movement preferred by the government is "out of the city, back up-country". An INGO program officer explained: "Even though a lot of people have now been repatriated by [*name of INGO*] and go back to their villages, there is still a large number of people left in the city who have nowhere to go, and who therefore stay in Freetown. This creates a lot of hardship both financially and in terms of living conditions." Indeed, IDPs in Freetown proper have experienced significant attention by the national government to the extent that many of them have been resettled farther away from the city to sites in the Western Area district, the province in which the capital is located. Incidents of resistance by camp residents, occurring primarily in two sites, *Grafton* IDP Camp in the urban periphery and *Murray Town* Amputees' Camp in the Freetown proper, are not much publicized. In their recent statement for international agencies on its progress on IDP reintegration the government instead focuses on its achievement in relocation saying, "all camps including the National Workshop camp and the Clay Factory Camp have been closed except for the Murray Town and Grafton Camps."[25]

The UN has been supporting this strategy of re-ruralization, stating in 2004 that [t]he committee for the resettlement of Amputees and War-wounded (including National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA), UNOCHA, the United National High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Civil Affairs Section of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) have begun discussions that will hopefully lead to the resettlement of the remaining caseload

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[24] UNOCHA 2003: 3; IDP Project 2003: 39-41, 72.
[25] Government of Sierra Leone 2004: 22.

of War-Wounded at the *Grafton* Camp and Amputees at the *Murray Town* Camp"[26], thus following up on its statement in 2003 in which it had admitted that

> [i]n Freetown, the process of camp consolidation and camp closure has been a little more complicated. Waterloo and Grafton camp areas have been designated as settlement areas for the homeless of Freetown. These are to be provided with basic services through the Government structures and will provide a medium term solution to homelessness in Freetown until more durable solutions are established in the form of accessible low cost housing.[27]

The problem with this "accessible low cost housing" argument is that many of those who have been living in urban or peri-urban areas for the past five years or longer much prefer staying in close proximity to what they perceive as a more attractive and reliable market for both their labor and occasional produce. In the following sections we will therefore look more closely at this resistance in order to be able to understand how the residents react to what they consider an unfair policy, and how they try to achieve a more favorable response.

A. *Grafton* IDP Camp – So Close But Not Quite Theirs Yet

The *Grafton* IDP Camp is located 10 kilometers outside Freetown in the Grafton area, which is approximately 40 minutes driving time away from the city center and home to 25,000 people. Grafton forms part of the Western Area District; its recently (May 2004) elected councilor is therefore not part of the Freetown City Council but of a rural district council. The camp's population peaked in 2001 at approximately 16,000 residents, a figure that has now diminished to fewer than 8,000 residents. Exact figures were not available, neither from local chiefs nor from the government. An estimated number of 4,000 residents were homeless Freetowners from the eastern part of the city who had lost all their property during the operation "No Living Thing" in early January 1999 when rebel forces invaded two thirds of the capital, looting houses, killing hundreds, and burning much of what was left. *Grafton* thus has a reservoir function for urban IDPs.

As early as 2002, the National Commission for Social Action, a government post-war development institution stated: "The sites of the former [*Grafton*] camp […] will be handed over to their rightful owners and restored to their former use. In fact some of the sites like the Parade Grounds and Trade Center, which were formerly used as recreational grounds will now be used for that again." In one of the conversations during the field visit, a local government employee confirmed this focus on economic arguments to justify the closure of the camp: "Business cannot grow here because of the occupation. The residents need to understand." Another official seconded this view, arguing:

> Most of the areas where these people lived before, in this city [Freetown], are all [owned] by the government. The government sought improvement [economic development]. This is why the government could not allow the people to settle

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[26] UNOCHA 2004.
[27] UNOCHA 2003: 3.

there, and instead moved them here. To develop the place! […] These places [in Grafton] were owned by different people: different business partners and factories. So when the war in the country was going on, they went, but when the war was over, they came back. This is why the government cannot allow people to just settle there; they had to move them out to allow the people to reestablish their business and to develop the country. […] People who are trying to bring development to the country, private businesses [*agitated*] – they want to assist the country, but if the people continue to occupy their property, there will be no development! As a result, they had to move the people to develop the place.

Hence the relocation of residents is a declared objective, and residents' continuing demands to formalize tenure is met with indifference. One of the paramount chiefs emphasized, "we are looking up to the President and the Minister of Land to assist us with land so as to develop ourselves … for the creation of small businesses. We do not own any land. All this land here in Grafton belongs to the government." And he goes on:

> The Minister of Land is the only person who can help us, but he doesn't talk to us. […] The government comes here regularly and threatens to evict us. They say we should go back to our communities. But this *is* our community! […] As citizens we have the right to stay here. We came here because of the war and not voluntarily. I want to make my own contribution to development, but the government needs to give us this land.

In light of this position it is understandable why the local council interviewed expressed a strong desire to receive <u>legal</u> assistance rather than food or cash for work opportunities. Yet waiting for outside help is not their only option. Asked to illustrate how they were fighting for their alleged right to stay and to obtain secure tenure, they explained: "We have to fight through the councilor. We can only depend on him to advocate in our behalf. He has to force the government to give us this land. He is the middleman between the government and us." However, they also reported that the local councilor who runs under the banner of the APC [All People's Congress] had been facing fierce resistance by SLPP-aligned[28] vested interests, both locally at the site and in the council sessions. The focus group was therefore urged to assess the effectiveness that they attributed to the strategy of using local political channels. Their response was rather daunting:

> We do not believe that the councilor is going to help us much. He will keep talking to the people in the institutions, but what we really need is someone else to support him. Only then he can push our case. […] The only person who […] will be able to step in for us is the Minister of Land. He is the only person that we can expect to get support from. […] We have explained our problem to him, and he said he would look at it, but since then, nothing. Since last year nothing has happened; it is almost a year now. […] [Our] councilor is also trying to find other people to back him up. […] He is a young man, but many people thought that he could represent our community well. […] Before the local government election, there were some people who claimed that they were in charge of this area, very

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[28] Sierra Leone People's Party; currently in government through a landslide victory in 2002.

power-conscious people. Now that our man has been elected, they are trying to bring him down. They are trying to sabotage him. They say things that he did not do, to destroy his image. [Some of them] had not been given symbols by political parties [i.e. had not been endorsed] even though they have been around for a long time. This is why they are now gathering people and trying to hamper the work of the councilor by spreading negative information. They go to the [Freetown] city council and try to connect with powerful people to bring him down, to force him out of office.

One of the female attendants of the focus group meeting also explained that a large INGO had built houses in this area as part of an emergency shelter project, and the people who were trying to instigate against the councilor had been put in charge of identifying the beneficiaries. They were given cards to distribute among the poor ("ownership cards") but instead chose to sell them to individual community members:

> Some people here are APC. Others are SLPP. Before the council [election in 2004], the SLPP people were running it, but now with the APC councilor, the SLPP is angry. They say [to the people], 'if you support this councilor, we will not support you.' But during that time when the SLPP was in charge, they did nothing for the people, and nothing for the youths. They are not interested in the needs of the poor people. This is why they got challenged and lost. […] And now they are fighting the councilor because they try to regain control. They are trying to get '*we yone*' [lit. 'we are one', 'ours' = 'their share'] back. [Our councilor] does not have any connections with the mayor or the members of the council.

This political problematique, however, enjoyed very limited attention by representatives of government entities interviewed for this study. Asked whether there was any concern about local power struggles possibly preventing reintegration and local development in the Western Area district, one of the civil servants concerned replied, "I do not think this is a problem in general. I think that people are making it a problem themselves. […] The reason why people vote for him [the councilor] is because they love him. They chose him because he is capable of doing the work. […] Even though the APC is currently the party that is not in power nationally, it owns the councilor. And because they are in power here, they choose the leader."

At the end of the focus group meeting, the chief was invited to lay out the arguments that he would use to make their case vis-à-vis the authorities if he had a chance to enter in a negotiation process. He replied,

> We know everything is very political, but we have to talk to each other to develop the country. I would go to the authorities and address them like a father. I would say 'I am a citizen. As a citizen, I think I have the right to be here. I did not come here by myself – the war forced me here. Now that the war is over, I cannot go anywhere else. You should allow me to make a contribution to rebuild our country here.' For the past two years now, you have not been giving us any food or any other supplies. So I would go *as a child goes to the father*, to beg them to let us stay here.

B. *Murray Town* Amputees' Camp – Capitalizing on the Zoo?

The Amputees' Camp in the Murray Town neighborhood in Freetown is a well-known site due to its prominent location close to one of the city's main traffic axes but even more so because of the activism of its remaining inhabitants. Mutilated by ravaging rebel forces in the provinces that sent them to the capital as living symbols of an out-of-control insurgency movement, the camp developed after the initial site, the National Stadium where many them had stayed previously, was attacked by invading rebel forces in 1999.

In December 2004, only 230 amputees were left, living in makeshift shelter and tin roofed houses, a tiny fraction of the almost 5,000 residents in 2001. Based on survey results and a participatory process led by the NRC, NaCSA and UNHCR and also involving Cause Canada and Médecins Sans Frontières, 420 resident families had recently been involved in a comprehensive "housing and resettlement" scheme initiated in 2000 during which beneficiaries were assisted in relocating to more than twenty different sites all over the country.[29] One of the initiators explained:

> So, why did we build houses? It was because we did a survey on the camp in 2000. The finding of our study was that 90% wanted shelter. No other organization in the camp would even think of providing shelter. And this is why we decided to go ahead. The next challenge was to select the beneficiaries, because there were too many there. This is why we worked with the committee. We selected criteria, and then we selected the beneficiaries according to these criteria. This is how we ended up with 200 amputees and 200 war wounded. Later, the government moved the war wounded to the *Grafton* camp. But then we made the decision to also include severely wounded people because some of them were actually worse off than the amputees.

Recognizing the need for a sustainable solution, the NRC decided to engage in a lengthy land titling negotiation process with paramount chiefs and ultimately managed to secure tenure for all families participating in the scheme. The representative recalls the rationale:

> [The beneficiaries] had all indicated that they had land, but in the end only one person could come up with the paper proving ownership. This is why we had to find other ways to do it. But at the same time, we all wanted them to be able to choose where they want to live. Based on that, we started negotiating for land. We made a deal with local communities, we said, we will provide the houses but you will have to provide the land. […] Land ownership here is so difficult. In Freetown, you can purchase it, but upcountry you can't. You have to negotiate with the paramount chiefs, that was a problem. In other places, the government owns the land. That was the case with the first 60 houses that we wanted to build here near Freetown; this was discussed in Parliament. We had to start negotiations with each paramount chief of all the districts that the amputees had indicated they wanted to move to. […] It is the paramount chief, he can say, 'yes you can live

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[29] cf. Schanke 2004: 60.

here'. So we could have done that. But then we would have left our beneficiaries without any leverage. This is why we took the long process of trying to legally acquire land for them. […] There will be titling, which is, in a sense, a revolution in land ownership in Sierra Leone. There is a very prominent Sierra Leonean lawyer working on the high case, his name is [*name*]. We also wanted to prevent that they simply sell their houses, or that someone else forces them to move.

The 230 amputees who had stayed in the camp were also targeted and offered both housing and food assistance shortly after the first scheme, but they ultimately declined to clear the site whose 'camp status' was removed in late 2004.[30] Anecdotally, the sign reading "Amputees' Camp" right next to the entrance is still there, and the residents leave no doubt that they are ready to protect it, forcefully if necessary. The chairman of the association, a double amputee and "very smart and political figure" according to one civil society leader, explains that some of the amputees "decided to go to the provinces and to talk to the people [fellow amputees] who cannot come. […] And now we try to see how more can be done, because we have brothers in Kenema, Bo, Kailahun, Makeni, so we continue to lobby, to lobby the international community, to talk to donor agencies, to talk to people who have funds, to make sure that our brothers and sisters in the provinces who have not yet benefited from the shelter facility that we have already got *will* benefit."

To further their interests, the amputees founded their own association and elected a committee, which holds weekly meetings, and they use radio and newspaper articles to keep their fate on the public agenda. One INGO employee lamented:

> Everything was planned. NaCSA was about to manage the process, UNHCR was supposed to provide the transport, they should receive packages, but then they complained to the civil affairs human rights office in UNAMSIL, and then UNAMSIL said, 'okay, we do not want to have any public outcry,' and this is why the camp is still there. In my view, it should not be there any longer.

Indeed, the situation remained in deadlock when the enquiry for this study took place. Handicap International was [and continues] running the National Rehabilitation Center on site but this was not exclusively for use by the amputees. A senior staff member of one of the key INGOs problematized its role, saying that there were some residents

> who have not been registered by any organization, so they have nowhere to go on and they simply stay in the camp. I have been here for a year and a half now, and I have been listening to claims that the camp will be empty within the next six months. […] We must stop supporting this camp. The problem that we have is that the National [Rehabilitation] Center has been placed in the camp. And there is still a mix between the camp and the center. It had simply become the center: the place of the center. So far, they did not cut the water, but nobody is managing the latrines anymore. So as of today, there is no direct support from the NGOs [Non-governmental Organizations] any more. The conditions are not good, but

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[30] Representatives of two INGOs involved in the relocation process claimed that new residents had recently moved in and that some residents were using the site for temporary shelter during the week, a strategy that they subsumed under "labor migration".

they are probably still better than in the provinces. […] This is where the double story comes in: on the one hand, people feel guilty and sorry when they see these people, which is understandable, but on the other hand, the amputees are part of a story that people are trying to forget. They would like to turn the page and not put up with these people anymore. This is why the government would like the people to leave the camp.

The amputees maintain that they had not been made the promise that they would be included in a pension system and free basic schooling for their children. Collective action in the form of lobbying and resistance could only be upheld if they remained concentrated physically. They also complained bitterly that their case had been used to draw attention to the quagmire in Sierra Leone and to acquire foreign assistance monies, yet ultimately most of the money did not benefit them at all, and the largest part of it ended up in government pockets. One of them demanded, "[s]upport has to go directly to us, not through the government. The ministers, they are building houses for millions and millions of Leones [national currency], on the hillsides. In Signal Hill [a neighborhood overlooking the city and the bay], this is a new Freetown. They should set up factories for the youths, but for their self-interest they are just building a house, and then they go to Mecca and drive around in vehicles, while the rest are going to suffer."

This injustice, the group said, was epitomized in the perceived imbalance between the attention paid to perpetrators through demobilization, disarmament and reintegration programs (DDR) on the one hand and their direct victims, namely war wounded and amputees, on the other: "The kids of rebels go to school; ours don't. There is a justice argument here!" Moreover, disillusion over the scope and timing of payoffs provisioned in the indemnification process commonly known as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) hampered further their faith in large-scale schemes and reinforced their preference for a targeted, more specific response. The following comments were made during one of the focus group meetings:

> No doubt we want our amputated brothers and sisters who live in the provinces to stay in the provinces. But we have to lobby for them here in Freetown because otherwise, they will never see any further assistance. […] Shelter is not everything. You build a house for someone like us, and then what? We cannot work on the land because we have no hands or feet. All we can fight for is that our children receive education, and we get a pension so we don't have to beg. […] Husbands ran away and left the women with the children. How can they feed them? They need food, and they need to go to school. […] Until we know the condition of reparation we will not allow anyone to close this camp. If they succeed in closing the camp, they will succeed in closing our case. […] As long as we have the camp, we have a voice. […] When after January 1999 the government came back into power, they said they would sign Lomé, the peace accord, and then they said, 'Wait until after the [2002 presidential] election,' and we waited. We participated in the election, we voted. And then they said we should participate in the TRC and we refused to participate, because they ignored us, they were not listening to us, but eventually they convinced us with the help of people from South Africa, they begged us, talked, talked, talked, so we finally

collaborated with them. But after we had examined it, we realized that it was not meaningful to us. […] Not even school fees would be given to our children for grades one to six, even though the charges are low. But they would not support us, even though they had made a broadcast on the radio.

On the other side of the—largely uncoordinated—front, the national government, several UN agencies and all INGOs previously involved in the scheme were pushing for closure. They argued that the site needed to be developed through private investment and that no funds for a pension system could be made available. Two INGO respondents also considered the mere *inclusion* of the amputees in the TRC a major step forward. Finally, more patience was urged. As one development worker underlined:

> Even though the government has many faces, it is not entirely true what they say. The government does engage with them, and it has also always worked closely with us. They should be more patient. The government has always emphasized that it cannot dash out things; that it needs a policy. But the amputees' association does not want to live with that; they don't think it's enough. […] We strongly suggested to the current residents that they go back to their villages, and hopefully they will be included in some assistance program. But for political reasons they want to be there in the camp. They do not *want* to be resettled.

Yet it seems that reintegration, in this case, depends on much more than just settling the land dispute and providing a medium-term perspective linked closely to the national reconciliation strategy. Overcoming stigmatization and restoring respect lie at the heart of the matter as well. As one INGO employee said:

> Some of them are very stigmatized. Some people think the amputees' thing has something to do with witchcraft. The drama group [formed in 2003 as assistance project] helped them being treated with respect. They themselves wanted to show the people that they are still human beings. Maybe they cannot do farming any longer, but they can be resource persons in your community. This is why I think the reason why the program was so successful does not only derive from our work but is also due to the initiative of the amputees themselves.

This initiative remains sturdy, and the small group of amputees who are still living on the site lack no determination. The chairman asserts, "We have just been abandoned by the government, which is why I continue going to the newspapers, go to the radio, to tell them that we are here, we are still alive. This is another cause that we are going to fight, for our children. We cannot reverse our fate, but for our children we fight. […] Articles have been published in the newspapers, and I am featured on the radio, in discussions, to address the government as well as the international community." And he adds: "We have been marketed. We are a zoo where you can find different types of animals. Do you know, a zoo! They got what they wanted, and now they have no interest in us."

IV. BACK TO THE ENTRY QUESTIONS – VOICE REVISED

Before any suggestions can be made regarding how to address the four situations outlined above, we will first have to focus on analyzing the similarities and differences between cases in order to later on propose some answers to the three entry questions. Clearly, the only group investigated in this study that has not only a stake but also a say in their fate is the amputee community in *Murray Town*. The residents of *Kotale Khair-Khana* lack the institutional linkage necessary to enter into a negotiation process with local authorities to push their demands. The *Kuchis* of *Shayda-i* are even worse off because their current location has attracted the attention (and desire) of local strongmen, a situation that jeopardizes their immediate future not only in terms of their domicile but also regarding their fragile livelihoods as day laborers in the nearby city. Finally, the inhabitants of *Grafton* Camp, while included in a formal system of local governance, were facing the same threat and saw limited chances of achieving their objectives.

Which factors seem to cause this divergence? The second part of our second hypothesis appears to carry some validity: the more IDP actors succeed in moving beyond traditional channels and means of representation, the 'louder' their voice gets: the amputees' association actively engaged and worked with the language and strategy of their policy environment by using those channels that guaranteed public attention and were effective in securing a place at the negotiation table. However, it seems that the assumption of 'traditionality' as a constraining factor, while potentially true, cannot imply that more modern modes of governance automatically lead to more and more effective inclusion. Residents of both *Kotale Khair-Khana* and *Grafton Camp* are formally part of a local governance structure that does not built on traditional notions of authority. Rather, the limiting factor appears to be that the system itself is affected by procedural inefficiencies such as corruption in the former case, and a lack of political organization in the latter.

It has also become clear that secure tenure of land and opportunities for sustainable incomes indeed rank high among the IDP groups investigated. Whereas both their location and the extent to which they were able to influence discourse and policies to their advantage differed, all four cases demonstrated the existence of two policy dilemmata affecting the preference for land ownership. One is caused by the colinearity of density-induced land prices with perceived income opportunities for marginal groups that put in conflict the desire of IDPs for urban proximity, and the interest of authorities for higher revenues. The other dilemma, already sketched in the beginning and particularly relevant for assistance and development organizations, is constituted by the trade-off between the perceived need to support national development policies that usually (and certainly so in the two countries) push towards 're-ruralization' of uprooted groups in order to decelerate urban growth, and respecting IDPs' self-determination through 'voting with their feet' (fig1).
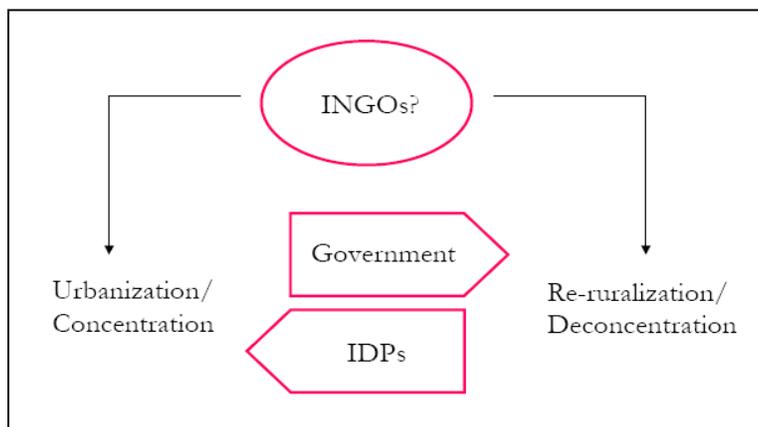
Fig. 1:

Support dilemma: Policy coherence versus self-determination

With regard to the first part of our first hypothesis, this enquiry only confirmed that greater access to urban policy infrastructures (including radio stations and newspapers as well as national policymakers and international agenda-setters by way of close physical proximity) <u>can</u> increase the audibility of marginal groups (*Murray Town*) but that this effect is not sufficient to ensure that their voices will be heard and their demands responded to (*Kotale Khair-Khana*). At the same time however, none of the cases provided any hint of a significant voice when the affected group was far from the urban center. Hence, distance from the geographical center of policymaking is more likely to be a disadvantage than an advantage—which is not a very contentious claim.[31] The following figure (fig2) summarizes the aforementioned relationships.
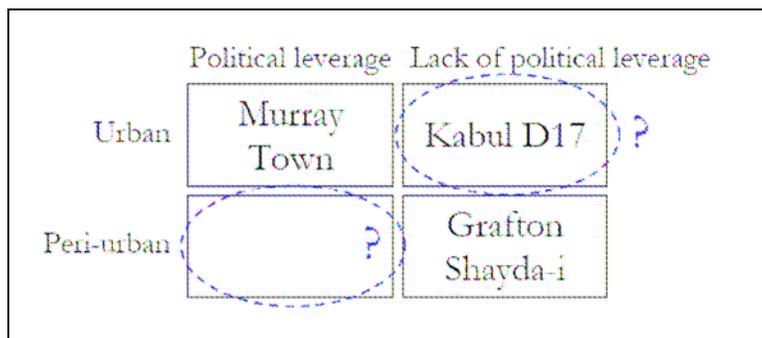

Fig. 2:

Location as a necessary but insufficient condition for voice

Finally, and apart from qualifying both parts of our entry hypotheses to the extent that (a) the downsides of traditional governance structures can only be overcome by a revised system that allows for <u>effective</u> inclusion, and that (b) location is more likely to be a necessary but not sufficient condition, we have to expand our answer to include "issue

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[31] Identifying cases that illustrate agency by geographically non-central communities would obviously falsify this contention and are therefore of great interest in the context of potential follow-up investigations. The proximity hypothesis also bears the potential for quantification and statistical analysis similar to enquiries into the possible correlation between succession and location of separatist movements, but this will require a separate study.

exclusivity" as a potential explanator of voice. Whereas in *Grafton* the sheer number of residents could well prevent any actions aimed at forced removal, this cannot have been the case for the small group in *Murray Town*. Rather, it seems that the "zoo effect" lamented so vigorously by the camp's inhabitants also has a positive facet, namely to generate sufficient popularity not only for the government to acquire financial assistance in the past, but also for the victims to engrain their case in the minds (and agendas) of both compatriots and foreign aid workers.

The remaining third question aimed at clarifying the role(s) that international agencies can and should play in the process of reintegrating IDPs in accordance with their preferences but without running counter to national recuperation, often defined and developed jointly with significant foreign assistance. Clearly, this tug of war can only be overcome through broadening the scope for negotiation with and cooperation among those involved. Even though the situation in *Murray Town* remained politically explosive at the time of the study, the participatory framework used by NRC and its partners—which explicitly recognized the political nature of its objectives and the deriving need for a long-term approach—has not been discredited. Rights-based approaches have much to offer in this respect as long as they contribute to a better understanding among beneficiaries not only of legitimacy but also the spectrum of realistic options.

More specific recommendations for organizations working in the four different locations may be summarized as follows: A priority for INGOs involved in reintegration programs in Kabul is to ensure security of tenure through land titling. Indeed, it appears not necessary or even possible to think about engaging with informal land markets until a formal titling process, whose pre-war fragments are currently under review, has taken place. In order to foster local accountability, more resources are needed at the local level. Local mobilisation and collective action in Afghanistan were the main goals of the UN-Habitat funded Community Development Councils (CDCs) first established in Mazar in 1995. For the process set in place by the CDCs to succeed, however, sustained funding is necessary—after the latter had been withdrawn, many of the initially successful CDCs started to degenerate into training institutions without any political aim.

The situation in Herat Province demands an urgent recognition of the state of limbo in which the some of its residents find themselves. Rather than joining the ranks of those who seem to wish that "as nomads" they simply move on, acknowledgment of recent impacts on their way of life and their livelihood must stand at the beginning of concrete steps to advise them on their rights and help them prioritize their needs in order to enable them to become partners in the negotiation of a tolerable solution. The same approach deems central in Grafton where the current political framework is too weak to allow local representatives to bargain for and contribute to a mutually acceptable outcome. Next steps to solve the state of affairs in *Murray Town* camp would probably have to include a symbolic yet formal recognition of the amputees' situation and status by the government to demonstrate that the aim is "not to destroy their story", as one INGO employee put it. Trust is puny in the current political environment, and any successful approach will therefore rely on concrete actions to address this condition.

More generally then, the policy conundrum is how to tie up an IDP focus (reintegration), development focus (sustainable livelihoods) and governance focus (accountability and inclusion) to a cohesive and sustainable assistance strategy. Herein, INGOs must not ignore the persistent <u>appeal</u> of urban spaces to IDPs as places of opportunity, particularly to youths and, as a consequence, consider linking IDP assistance more tightly with both rural *and* urban development measures. In both countries this will require a focus on employment creation to complement short-term skill development projects in both villages *and* cities, thus antagonizing pressure for commercialization of development policies. One of the first explicit mentions of an urban component for addressing IDP reintegration in Sierra Leone is made in UNHCR's Global Appeal 2004 for West Africa, in which the agency posits that it plans to "step up efforts to help urban refugees and address the difficulties of local integration in poverty stricken environments. A dual-track strategy will be undertaken to support local structures seeking to help refugees attain self-sufficiency, while at the same time seeking partnerships with international development agencies to draw up long-term plans."[32]

This is clearly an encouraging step as long as it does not unintentionally support forced relocation, instead putting the victims' preferences in the center of policymakers' attention and enabling a more balanced approach to reintegration. While four cases can only open a small window to the conditions for effective empowerment of marginal communities, the brief vista provided by this study seems to reinforce contemporary claims that reintegration of IDPs needs to be driven locally but supported nationally through a set of targeted development measures including a comprehensive review of the inclusivity and accountability of existing arenas of local governance.

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[32] UNHCR 2004: 118.

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