Migration and Development

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rmad20

‘The phone means everything.’ Mobile phones, livelihoods and social capital among Syrian refugees in informal tented settlements in Lebanon

Markus Balázs Göransson , Lotta Hultin & Magnus Mähring

To cite this article: Markus Balázs Göransson , Lotta Hultin & Magnus Mähring (2020) ‘The phone means everything.’ Mobile phones, livelihoods and social capital among Syrian refugees in informal tented settlements in Lebanon, Migration and Development, 9:3, 331-351, DOI: 10.1080/21632324.2020.1746029

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/21632324.2020.1746029

Published online: 14 Apr 2020.

MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT
2020, VOL. 9, NO. 3, 331–351
https://doi.org/10.1080/21632324.2020.1746029

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

ARTICLE

'The phone means everything.' Mobile phones, livelihoods and social capital among Syrian refugees in informal tented settlements in Lebanon

Markus Balázs Göransson[a], Lotta Hultin[a] and Magnus Mähring[b]

[a]House of Innovation, Stockholm School of Economics, Stockholm, Sweden; [b]Stockholm School of Economics, House of Innovation and Swedish Center for Digital Innovation, Stockholm, Sweden

ABSTRACT

This study explores the role of mobile phones in livelihood creation among Syrian refugees in informal tented settlements in Akkar Governorate and the Bekaa Valley in Lebanon. Drawing on forty-five interviews with Syrian refugees and ten interviews with aid workers, the study highlights the importance of mobile phones in reviving, maintaining and leveraging social capital for the purpose of securing livelihoods in a context of precarity and restricted movement. We find that mobile phones offer important means for reviving social networks in exile, managing supportive relationships that have been established in Lebanon and liaising with employers. As such, they constitute important tools for coping with a context shaped by legal exclusion, restricted movement, police harassment, decentralised aid provision and a geographical dispersal of support networks, even as they remain a costly investment with uncertain returns.

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received 7 February 2020
Accepted 18 March 2020

KEYWORDS
Mobile phones; social capital; livelihoods; Syrian refugees; Lebanon

Introduction

When Abu Khodor fled from Syria to Lebanon in 2013, he knew no one in his new country, so he moved into an expensive rental flat in the northern city of Tripoli and took a job in construction. It was a hard job for Abu Khodor, who was a former schoolteacher in his fifties, but there was little he could do. He was new in Lebanon and was still finding his way. 'I was lost', he said in an interview in 2017. 'I didn't know where my friends and family were.'[1]

Abu Khodor said a turning point came when he purchased a smartphone some time into his stay, a type of phone that was becoming widespread among Syrian refugees in Lebanon at the time. He used the phone to create an account for himself on Facebook and then used the account to reconnect with family and friends with whom he had been out of contact since leaving Syria. In this way, the phone gave him a means to stay in touch with people he cared about. But it also provided him with a number of other important hands-on benefits. One of the people with whom Abu Khodor reconnected by phone was a former neighbour from Homs, who had also taken refuge in Lebanon and had settled in

CONTACT Markus Balázs Göransson markus.goransson@fhs.se House of Innovation, Stockholm School of Economics, Stockholm, Sweden

Markus Balázs Göransson is currently affiliated with the Swedish Defence University in Stockholm.

an informal refugee camp about one hour's drive to the north of Tripoli. The two men started chatting with each other on WhatsApp and in one conversation the former neighbour told Abu Khodor there was a free tent in his camp, where rent was unusually low thanks to the support of a local benefactor. He also told him there was an opportunity to work as a teacher in a school that had been established for Syrian refugee children near the camp and encouraged Abu Khodor to move to the camp. Abu Khodor agreed. He left Tripoli and moved to the north, thereby improving his job situation and lowering his living costs.

The link between mobile phones and social capital has been well-researched in Western and other economically advanced contexts (Fran, 2017; Mengwei & Leung, 2014; Park et al., 2012; Sheer & Rice, 2017). In Western-type settings, there have been studies about the effects of mobile phones on social isolation (Chan, 2013; Cho, 2015; Hampton et al., 2011, Park & Lee, 2012), social networking (Angster et al., 2010; Pierce, 2009; Xie, 2014), transnational communication between migrants and families and friends in sender countries (Cuban, 2018) and political engagement (Ingrams, 2015; Kobayashi et al., 2006). Research has highlighted the importance of phones for accessing information and forging new connections online (Hampton et al., 2011; Ingrams, 2015; Park & Lee, 2012). Some of the technological affordances of smartphones, including their capacity for free-of-charge instant messaging, have been linked to social capital. As one study found, instant messaging programmes such as WhatsApp and Viber may 'build bridging or bonding social capital, that is, different resources embedded in different kinds of social relationships' (Sheer & Rice, 2017, p. 91).

In comparison to studies in industrial and post-industrial contexts, there has been very little scholarly attention to the effects of mobile phones on social capital among people in protracted displacement. This is in spite of the fact that mobile phones, including internet-enabled smartphones, have spread rapidly among displaced people in many parts of the world and that social capital has been identified as one of the few assets that refugees may be able to grow in exile (Uzelac et al, 2018a; 2018b). A 2016 study by the UNHCR and Accenture found that 71% of world refugee households own a mobile phone, 39% of them a smartphone[2] (UNHCR, 2016). Meanwhile, the potential for further increasing mobile phone use among refugees appears considerable. The 2016 UNHCR/Accenture study found that 93% of all refugees, including many who do not own a mobile phone, live in areas covered by either 2G or 3G mobile networks, suggesting that there is room to further expand connectivity among refugees (UNHCR, 2016).

Studying this increased connectivity is important, because several of the problems faced by refugees appear to be linked to their social, economic and geographical exclusion (Cf. Agier, 2008; Banki & Lang, 2008; Chatty & Mansour, 2011; Durieux, 2009; Iverson, 2016; Smith, 2004). Migration scholar Karen Jacobsen has noted that 'refugees often are blocked from or otherwise unable to access the set of resources available to the local community, such as land, (legal) employment, housing and so on' (K. Jacobsen, 2002, p. 99). If refugees face hurdles to integration even under favourable circumstances, their isolation is frequently made worse through deliberate government policy. Some governments that host refugees actively try to separate refugees from host communities in order to limit their interaction and facilitate the provision of aid to the refugees (K. Jacobsen, 2002; Bakewell, 2014, p. 128). Such separation may be carried out by physically moving refugees to camps (a strategy

referred to as 'encampment' or 'warehousing') or by introducing legal and physical restrictions on refugees' movement. In hindering refugees from interacting with the host population, measures of this kind limit refugees' access to economic opportunities and increase their social and economic vulnerability (Smith, 2004).

Studies on other socially and economically marginalised groups have demonstrated that mobile phones may increase connectivity among them in ways that benefit livelihoods (Cf. Donner, 2009; Pourmehdi & Al Shahrani, 2019; Wyche & Steinfield, 2016). Research on developing country contexts suggests that mobile phones may facilitate the marketing of peasant crops and increase the virtual and physical mobility of poor people (Baird & Hartter, 2017; Duncombe, 2014; Martin & Abbott, 2011; Porter, 2012; Sife et al., 2017; Tanle & Machistey Abane, 2018). Research has shown that Central Asian migrant workers in Russia use mobile phones to smooth the functioning of informal labour markets and organise themselves into virtual and physical communities (Urinboyev, 2017; Cf., 2016). Similarly, poor Jamaicans have been shown to rely on their phone lists in times of need, using them as virtual social safety nets (Horst, 2006; Horst & Miller, 2006). In these and other places, mobile phones help individuals to maintain, invest in and leverage social networks for livelihood purposes.

Many such studies on mobile phone use in marginalised groups emphasise that social networks are essential for building livelihoods, since social connections may give access to resources and provide opportunities for mutual support. Indeed, one useful optic for exploring how social networks affect livelihoods may be derived from the literature on social capital (Lin & Erickson, 2008; Lin, 2001a; Lin, 2001b; N. Lin, 2000; Cf. Wijers, 2013), which explores how social relationships affect economic welfare and social status. The present study is couched within this literature. It draws on the sociologist Nan Lin's relational and instrumentalist conceptualisation of social capital as an asset that may be leveraged for the purpose of individual gain (Lin & Erickson, 2008; Lin, 2001a; Lin, 2001b; N. Lin, 2000).

The study uses Lin's work to explore the nexus of livelihoods, social capital and mobile phones among Syrian refugees in Lebanon, one of the largest populations of displaced people worldwide. Syrian refugees in Lebanon face considerable legal restrictions on their employment, their access to services and their movement, which hinder their access to livelihoods. As many as 69% of the Syrians who were registered with the UNHCR in 2018 lived beneath the national poverty line (UNHCR, et al, 2018, p. 1), while 58% lived in 'extreme poverty' in 2017 (UNHCR, UNICEF & World Food Programme, 2017, p. 12). Amidst this precarity, many refugees use mobile phones in their daily lives, with some 86% of all refugee households in Lebanon reported to own a mobile phone, in many cases ones with internet capability (UNHCR, UNICEF & World Food Programme, 2017, p. 18, 95). In other words, refugees who face reduced physical mobility and great economic vulnerability are also highly connected digitally.

The present article considers how Syrian refugees in Lebanon use mobile phones to revive, maintain and leverage social capital in a context of semi-legality and reduced mobility. It identifies three types of social networks that Syrian refugees maintain with the help of their phones: 1) networks that have been 'imported' to Lebanon from Syria through the large-scale migration of Syrian refugees to Lebanon; 2) support networks that have been established in Lebanon; and 3) professional networks that have been established in Lebanon.

The article is divided into six sections. The first section describes our methodology and use of interviews and observations in informal refugee settlements in Lebanon. The second section considers the concepts of livelihoods and social capital as they are employed in our research. The third section offers an overview of the legal and livelihood situation of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, while the fourth section sets out our empirical findings. The fifth section discusses those findings with reference to Nan Lin's concept of social capital. A final section sums up our conclusions.

Method

Our article is based on forty-five interviews with Syrian refugees in the Akkar and Bekaa Governorates in northern and eastern Lebanon and ten interviews with aid professionals in the Akkar and Bekaa Governorates and the cities of Beirut and Tripoli. A number of the interviews were conducted with groups of refugees, bringing the total number of respondents to 70 individuals. The interviews were conducted during two trips in May and August-September 2017 that lasted a total of 40 days. All of the interviews have been anonymised.

The Syrians who were interviewed were so-called informal tented settlers. This term refers to refugees who live in temporary tent-like structures typically in rural areas or on the outskirts of towns and cities in Lebanon. In most cases, the structures are grouped into small settlements or 'camps' with shared facilities including water and sanitation. The UNHCR has identified informal tented settlers as an especially vulnerable group on account of their poor housing conditions (UNHCR, UNICEF & World Food Programme, 2017, p. 14). Moreover, many of the settlements are geographically isolated owing to the fact that they tend to be set up in remote places with lower land rent.

We chose to focus on rural informal tented settlers in order to explore problems of geographical isolation. In particular, we were interested in how informal tented settlers used mobile phones to manage isolation in efforts to access work, services and other sources of livelihoods in contexts of limited mobility. It is important to note that the isolation experienced by informal tented settlers was due not only to the physical distance between Syrian camps and surrounding Lebanese communities but also to the fact that the camps were frequently cut off from nearby localities by army patrols, army check-points and policing.

During our time in Lebanon, we visited ten informal tented settlements: four in Akkar Governorate and six in Bekaa Governorate. Most of the interviews (36) were conducted in Akkar, where we spent the bulk of our time. Thanks to helpful contacts and the hospitality of respondents, we were able to spend a long period of time in the four settlements in Akkar, where we spoke informally with people, played with children, shared in drink and meals and joined in other activities when we did not conduct interviews.

We worked with three interpreters, two in Akkar and one in Bekaa. The interpretation was necessary as none of us researchers spoke Arabic; yet it also facilitated contacts with respondents and helped us to navigate new social contexts. In Akkar, both interpreters were known to the Syrian communities that we visited, which opened doors and helped us to build trust with our respondents. In Bekaa, our interpreter did not have similar connections. Here, we collaborated with a local aid worker who frequently visited the camps and who introduced us to relevant people and facilitated interviews.

The interviews were based on a questionnaire prepared in advance and were usually held in the homes of respondents where other people (including family members, neighbours and aid workers) were present in many cases. On a number of occasions, interviews were conducted with groups of people in formats that resembled focus group discussions. Most such occasions generated lively discussions that yielded valuable data and insights. With the exception of one interview with an individual who declined to be recorded, all interviews were recorded, translated and transcribed verbatim.

Several respondents shared screenshots of their phones or copies of text feeds from WhatsApp conversations. Such first-hand data from mobile phones, although sparse and selected by the respondents, provided insights into how text-based communication was conducted over the phone.

Theory

Livelihoods and social capital

Livelihoods is a staple term in development studies and has been used also in migration and refugee research. It refers to the means whereby people secure their conditions of life, i.e. housing, clothing, food, medicine and other resources that are needed to sustain life. It is often contrasted with the more narrowly defined concept of *subsistence*, which focuses on core economic activities, such as farming or wage labour (Cf. Allison & Ellis, 2001, p. 380; Ellis, 2000a, p. xii). In distinction to *subsistence, livelihoods* recognises that poor households command a range of tangible and intangible resources and engage in a 'diverse portfolio' of activities, including seasonal migration and diversification, to survive (Hofman, 2017; Ellis, 2000a, p. 3; Ellis, 2000b; Rakodi, 1999). With this broader focus the term encourages researchers to consider the social relationships and exchanges that support efforts of households to secure their material resources. Development researchers have noted that poor households often rely on a raft of social connections to ensure their survival, engaging in cooperation and exchange to spread risks and access necessary resources.

Focusing on social connections, development researchers have explored the link between social capital and livelihoods. Studies have been undertaken on the importance of social capital for linking rural producers to urban actors (Bebbington, 1997); connecting rural communities to financial, human and natural capital; helping urban tradesmen adapt to socio-economic and political change (Lyons & Snoxell, 2005a; Lyons & Snoxell, 2005b); supporting community mobilisation in response to environmental challenges and large-scale resource extraction (Nath, Inoue & Pretty, 2010; Bebbington et al., 2008); facilitating job search (Pavličková & Dayanandan, 2015) and leveraging economic opportunities provided by return migrants (Scarnato, 2019), among other issues (Cf. Grootaert & van Bastelar, 2002). Some development research has considered the ways in which social capital combines with other forms of capital, including cultural and economic capital, to promote livelihoods (Cleaver, 2005; Light & Dana, 2013; S. Turner, 2007).

In comparison to development researchers, researchers of protracted displacement have given less attention to issues of social capital. Nevertheless, there are a few exceptions. One is Sebnem Koser Akcapar who has studied social capital among Iranian refugees in Turkey, which she sees as dynamically intertwined with macro variables

such as Turkish and European immigration policies and micro variables such as migrants' religion, ethnicity and gender (2010). Another one is Karen Jacobsen who has observed that many refugees in protracted displacement have access to transnational networks of family members, friends and other relations who have relocated to other countries and may provide access to new resources, including information, finances and opportunities for travel (K. Jacobsen, 2012; cf. Lindley, 2007; Kamel Doraï, 2003).

A third researcher who has studied social capital in protracted displacement is Alice Boateng. She has employed World Bank researcher Michael Woolcock's tripartite division of social capital into *bonding, bridging* and *linking social capital* in a study of the livelihood practices of Liberian women refugees in Ghana (Boateng, 2010, 2009). Under Woolcock's taxonomy, *bonding social capital* refers to links between members of a community; *bridging social capital* refers to ties between members of a community and individuals outside of the community; and *linking social capital* refers to ties between members of a community and individuals outside of it who command an entirely different socio-economic standing (Szreter & Woolcock, 2004; Woolcock, 2001). Boateng concludes that many of the Liberian women refugees in Ghana possessed large amounts of *bonding social capital* but small amounts of *bridging* and *linking social capital*. According to Boateng, this reinforced the refugees' isolation and limited their ability to access sources of livelihoods outside of their communities.

In spite of the widespread use of mobile phones by people in protracted displacement (UNHCR, 2016), including Syrian refugees in the Middle East (Wall et al., 2019, 2017; Smets, 2019; Talhouk et al., 2016), we have found no studies that explore the importance of mobile phones in relation to social capital among refugees in protracted displacement.

Nan Lin's understanding of social capital

In considering the nexus of livelihoods, social capital and mobile phones among Syrian refugees in Lebanon, our article draws on Nan Lin's relational conceptualisation of social capital, particularly his understanding of social capital as 'investment and use of embedded resources in social relations for expected returns' (N. Lin, 2000, p. 786). Lin contends that social capital, like economic capital, emerges when assets – i.e. social connections – are used to achieve returns (Lin, 2001a, p. 3; Lin, 2001b, p. 3; N. Lin, 2000). In other words, Lin stresses the instrumentality of social capital for achieving outcomes (N. Lin, 2000, p. 786). An important aspect of Lin's theory is that it locates social capital at the level of distinct (individual) actors rather than a collective. This sets it apart from those strands of the social capital literature that understand social capital as a shared resource embodied in collective features such as social trust and norms of cooperativeness (Cf. Putnam, 1993, 2000). Lin accepts that collective features can support social capital but insists that they must be treated as conceptually distinct from the idea of social capital itself (Lin & Erickson, 2008, p. 2; N. Lin, 2000, p. 785–6). This implies also a distinction between social networks and social capital. If social networks are webs of relationships, social capital derives from the abilities of individuals to access and/or mobilise resources through engagement with those relationships.

Lin's conceptualisation of social capital is pertinent for understanding how Syrian refugees use mobile phones to access sources of livelihoods in Lebanon. In our study, it enabled an examination of how refugees engage with social networks for expected

returns, while it also helped us to draw a distinction between the various social connections maintained by refugees and refugees' ability to convert those connections into material resources.

The context

Because of its geographical proximity to and close ties with Syria, Lebanon has been one of the main destinations for Syrians fleeing their country's civil war. Over 900 000 Syrian refugees were registered with the UNHCR in Lebanon at the end of 2019 (https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria/location/71), while a further 600 000 refugees were estimated to be living there without registration (Jaafar et al., 2019, p. 1). This makes Lebanon the single largest per capita recipient of refugees in the world (UNHCR, 2019). In a country whose pre-crisis population was just 4.5 million, the figures indicate the scale of the demographic pressure that is bearing on this small Mediterranean country with its own poverty and history of sectarian conflict.

Lebanon was long applauded by the international community for its open-door policy towards Syrian refugees (Loveless, 2013). Until 2014, Syrians were able to travel freely to and work in Lebanon under a 1993 bilateral agreement for Economic and Social Cooperation and Coordination between Syria and Lebanon (Janmyr, 2016, p. 65). Consequently, Syrians entered Lebanon relatively unhindered and a large number of them took refuge in different parts of the country, most of them in Akkar in the northern border area, the Bekaa Valley near Lebanon's eastern border and the region around the capital Beirut.

But as the refugee numbers grew, the fists of the Lebanese government tightened. In October 2014, at a time when one million Syrians were reported to be living in Lebanon, the Lebanese government announced that it would curb new Syrian entries (Wolfe, 2014). Over the following months, highly cumbersome requirements were introduced on Syrians wishing to enter the country and on Syrian refugees in Lebanon wanting to renew their residency permits (Janmyr, 2016, p. 65–70). Syrians who lacked a valid residency permit risked harassment and arrest by Lebanese security personnel. Meanwhile, the government curtailed Syrians' right to work and maintained a controversial 200 USD fee that was levied every six months on all foreign citizens who wanted to renew their residency in Lebanon, including Syrians (Human Rights Watch, 2017a). One of the government's most far-reaching actions was its instruction to the UNHCR to discontinue all new registrations of Syrian arrivals in May 2015 (Janmyr, 2016, p. 64). This deprived many Syrians who arrived after this date of the limited protection that was provided by UNHCR registration.

Over time, the Lebanese government has changed some of its policies. In February 2017, the General Directorate of General Security (GDGS), Lebanon's main security agency and a prominent actor in the refugee response, declared that it would waive the 200 USD fee for the renewal of residency permits (Human Rights Watch, 2017a). Yet, such measures did not always lead to changes in practice. Reports indicate that legal loopholes and bureaucratic foot-dragging routinely prevented refugees from renewing their legal status in Lebanon even after the GDGS' declaration (Human Rights Watch, 2017b). A UNHCR report published in early 2018 found that 73% of Syrian refugees in Lebanon still lacked legal residency (UNHCR, UNICEF, World Food Programme & Inter-Agency Coordination Lebanon, 2018, p. 25).

In contrast to its neighbours Turkey and Jordan, Lebanon has declined to establish formal camps for Syrian refugees. This is a noteworthy policy that has been linked to Lebanese economic and security concerns and a desire to prevent Syrians from permanently settling in Lebanon (Cf. L. Turner, 2015). It has received endorsement from the international aid community, including the UNHCR, whose regional refugee coordinator called it the 'best way' and the 'most humane' approach to the refugee crisis, as it may encourage the settlement of refugees in and near host communities and promote closer connections and exchange between refugees and resident Lebanese (Fleming-Farrell, 2013). But if the non-encampment policy resembles the UNHCR's 'Policy on Alternatives to Camps' (UNHCR, 2014), which advocates for the settlement of refugees in or near local communities, it has not led to the freedom of movement or local integration of refugees that some migration researchers have hoped for (Cf. Hovil, 2007; Bakewell, 2014, pp. 132–3). Many refugees reside in close proximity to Lebanese citizens yet lead lives shot through with legal and physical barriers, as will be shown below.

There are only weak signs that the situation for Syrians in Lebanon is improving. There has been a slight upward trend in socio-economic indicators since 2017 but the overall plight of the Syrians is still worse than it was seven years ago (UNHCR, UNICEF, World Food Programme & Inter-Agency Coordination Lebanon, 2018). Compared to in 2013, refugees are today less food secure, more indebted and less likely to be employed. As many as 69% of the Syrians who were registered with the UNHCR in 2018 lived beneath the national poverty line (down from 76% in 2017) (UNHCR, UNICEF, World Food Programme & Inter-Agency Coordination Lebanon, 2018, p. 1). 58% of those who were registered in 2017 lived in 'extreme poverty' (UNHCR, UNICEF & World Food Programme, 2017, p. 12). Nearly all Syrian refugee households (9 out of 10 in 2017 and 2018) borrow money to cover expenses (UNHCR, UNICEF, World Food Programme & Inter-Agency Coordination Lebanon, 2018, p. 90). Refugees are also at greater risk of disease, malnutrition and premature death, while as many as 32% of Syrian children age 6–14 and 77% of children age 15–17 are out of school (UNHCR, UNICEF, World Food Programme & Inter-Agency Coordination Lebanon, 2018, p. 3).

Part of this situation may be explained by the demographic pressures and the economic slow-down that has taken place in Lebanon in the wake of the Syrian civil war. Yet the formal restrictions that have been introduced by the Lebanese government on Syrian refugees also undercut their livelihoods and increase their vulnerability. The effects of the restrictions were felt sharply by one of our respondents from Aleppo, who said:

> I can't leave [the camp], if I could, I would've just gone, but I can't leave. I swear you can say it's a prison … our routine life is just as you see it, you feel like we are imprisoned alone, away from people, away from everything. I only wish from God Almighty to relieve us maybe, solve all these problem and make things easier. (Abu Khaled, Akkar)

In this context of isolation, we identified three types of social relationships that refugees drew on for support: 1) social connections established in Syria before the flight to Lebanon; 2) social connections established in Lebanon, and 3) professional connections established in Lebanon. As the following section shows, mobile phones played an important role in helping refugees to engage with these three types of relationships. Respondents also forged new connections online with their phones; however, we found

little evidence that such connections, which were typically established with strangers on social media sites, provided access to sources of livelihoods.

Findings

Restoring elements of social networks

Many of our respondents saw the social networks they had maintained in Syria fracture as friends and family fled the war to other countries, including Lebanon. Yet, using their mobile phones, respondents were able to resuscitate parts of those social networks in Lebanon.

Numerous respondents said they did not own a smartphone when they first arrived in Lebanon but purchased one later in order to reconnect with families in Syria and elsewhere. Ali, a former textile worker from Aleppo, bought a Samsung Galaxy Pocket smartphone six months after his arrival in Lebanon in 2011 because, as he said, 'I had to. I had a sister in Syria, and my relatives were all in Syria, so I had to' (Ali, Bekaa). Selma, who lived with her four children and her ailing mother in a tent in the Bekaa Valley, similarly bought a phone so that she could keep in touch with her brother in Syria. Selma's sick mother, who was present at our interview, explained: 'She bought it to speak to her brother … he lost his leg. We should speak to him' (Em Khodor, Bekaa).

If the first priority was to reconnect with family members, phones were soon used to communicate with others as well. After reconnecting with his family, Ali used his phone to find 'most of the people I couldn't communicate with before on Facebook and communicated with them' (Ali, Bekaa). Marwan from Hama resumed contact with family and friends inside and outside of Lebanon by phone (Marwan, Bekaa). Ali, Marwan and other respondents showed us their phone books and Facebook friends' lists that had connections to friends, family members and other acquaintances.

Respondents described a number of strategies they had used to retrieve phone numbers. One was snowballing whereby refugees asked their contacts for the phone numbers of others they knew. Another was to collect phone numbers at well-attended events such as weddings. A third strategy was to use Facebook's search function to locate people.

Reconnecting digitally with relatives and friends was for some respondents the first step to reuniting with them in person. After using phones to locate relatives who had also fled to Lebanon, several respondents chose to move nearer to them. Em Mohammed had lived in the north of the Bekaa Valley after first arriving in Lebanon but had then moved to a camp further south to be with her daughter and son-in-law who were living there. After fleeing to Lebanon, Abu Khaled from Aleppo had found his brother in Akkar with the help of his phone and then moved there to reunite with him.

Many of our respondents lived in the same settlements as siblings, cousins, uncles and other relations. In some cases, they had all fled together from Syria, but in others they had become separated from each other during the flight and had reconnected only after reaching Lebanon. While there was rivalry between some people in settlements, living close to trusted individuals could provide respondents with social, economic and emotional benefits. We visited settlements where people lent each other money in times of need, minded each other's children when they worked, helped each other with repairs on

tents, supported each other during sickness, lent each other kitchen equipment, worked together to build shared structures in their camps, set up shared WI-FI routers and provided contacts to trusted medical professionals and other service providers. In one camp, the residents, who came from the same neighbourhood in a town in Syria, had joined together to build a mosque and a wedding hall and had pooled money to purchase a number of WI-FI routers that furnished the camp with internet access. Mobile phones were key to reviving these social collectives that had been dispersed through the war.

Furthermore, mobile phones helped respondents to inform themselves about the availability of paid work, affordable housing and social and medical services in areas to which they considered moving. Abu Ali, an artisan from Aleppo, learned of opportunities for work and cheap housing in Akkar over the phone. He had previously lived in the Bekaa, but had, he said, been exploited there as an agricultural labourer and cheated of part of his wages. When his brother-in-law in Akkar told him by phone that there was a vacant tent in his settlement and an opportunity to work in agriculture in the area, Abu Ali chose to move there with his family. In another case, Khadija was living in Arsal when violent clashes erupted between government forces and Islamists in the town in 2015. She knew from an uncle in Akkar that there was a free tent in his camp and a chance to work in a nearby school. After speaking to her uncle on the phone, she left Arsal with her children and moved to his camp.

In other words, social networks that had once been geographically concentrated in Syria became dispersed as a result of the war. The spread of phones and free-of-charge communication tools permitted Syrian refugees to restore elements of fractured networks. This revived parts of their social connectivity and helped them to move closer to people who could offer them various support.

Forging, maintaining and leveraging new social connections

Beyond helping respondents to restore elements of old social networks, mobile phones helped them to establish, maintain and leverage new connections in Lebanon. They did so in part by enabling individuals to retain, share and use the phone numbers of individuals who were in positions to provide certain services. This was important in a context where refugees could leave their camps only with difficulty, enabling them to maintain and engage with elements of social support networks from their tents.

Health workers, taxi drivers, foreign volunteers, aid workers, grocery suppliers and Lebanese neighbours were all considered valued contacts. In some cases, refugees had met them in person; in others, they had received their phone numbers from neighbours, relatives or friends. One family in the Bekaa had been given a phone number to a health clinic by a family that had used to live in their camp. When their grandfather fell ill, they phoned the clinic to arrange an appointment. In another case, Khaled, a 25-year old man in Akkar, looked for a skilled professional who could circumcise his infant son. His neighbours recommended a Lebanese physician who, according to Khaled, performed the operation well (Khaled, Akkar).

Because phones enabled refugees to connect with potentially helpful individuals without leaving their camps, respondents could organise numerous aspects of their lives without risking arrest. When the wife of Amjad, a 30-year old man from Homs, was

due to give birth, Amjad arranged the logistics of her delivery over the phone: he notified the hospital in advance and kept a taxi on call, all from the relative security of his camp.

Others used phones to react quickly in emergencies. Having the phone numbers of people who could lend swift assistance formed a rudimentary safety net that could be activated with the help of a phone. This is illustrated by the following episode involving a respondent in Akkar:

One day Aida from Homs experienced an intense pain in her chest. She borrowed a neighbour's phone and called her husband at his work. He hurried home and phoned a taxi driver who drove Aida to a hospital where she underwent emergency surgery on her gland. As Aida said: 'Taxis do not commonly drive by this area. My husband is the one who arranged that. He called and ordered this private transport, a Lebanese guy, who came with his car and drove me.' (Aida, Akkar).

Availing of no organised social and medical support systems, refugees in tented settlements needed to maintain their own safety nets. The phone was an indispensable tool for doing this.

The importance of phones for accessing support was especially evident in the context of refugee aid. Many respondents had the phone numbers of aid workers who visited their camps, while aid workers who were interviewed said they regularly received informal requests for information and assistance from refugees on WhatsApp (sometimes they received those requests during interviews we held with them). As one aid worker remarked during an interview in Beirut: 'Refugees use WhatsApp to communicate with us and to communicate with others.' (Michael, Beirut).

Of course, a connection did not guarantee support in a context where needs overwhelmed supply. In some cases, a personal relationship to an aid organisation, and perhaps also digital communication prowess, could help to tip the balance. This may partly explain the different responses that two households whose homes were both destroyed during a storm received when they sought support. In the first case, Hasan and his wife failed to receive any assistance from the rescue services when they phoned them after their tent collapsed. Hasan said in an interview: 'That's with every storm, we called the rescue services just to come and save the children, because the water reached a level like this [he shows with his hand]. They didn't come, they just said do you think you are the only ones here?' (Hasan, Akkar). In the second case, Ahmad, a teacher from Homs, photographed the damage that the storm had wrought to his tent and sent the photographs to an NGO where he had previously volunteered. He knew many of the staff in the NGO and hoped they would help. After some time, the NGO sent him a shipment of bricks and wood that he could use to reinforce his tent.

The phone employed as a catalogue of potentially helpful contacts was not dissimilar to the way in which phone-based social support systems were used in Jamaica, as observed by Horst and Miller (Horst, 2006; Horst & Miller, 2006). In Lebanon, to a degree, this reflected the dispersed and decentralised nature of the support systems that were available to most Syrians. In a context where myriad actors provided aid and services, many refugee households relied on their own informal contacts to access support.

Finding and maintaining work

Respondents also used phones to contact potential and actual employers from the relative safety of their camps. One man from Raqqa had a list of contacts whom he regularly phoned to ask about vacancies: 'I call people and ask if they have work. I speak to them on WhatsApp … the *shawish*,[3] the owner of the camp, people from the camp, Hussam [an aid worker who visits the camp]. I talk to them on WhatsApp' (Mouhanad, Bekaa). In many cases, the work fixers were Syrian. One respondent found work through a friend in Beirut ('One day I called my friend in Beirut and he told me he had work for me', Hussam, Akkar). Khaled in Akkar said he had struck up a friendship with a Syrian man when he had first arrived in Lebanon. The man had lived in Lebanon for some time and helped Khaled to find work and accommodation:

> Yes [he told me] by phone, and after a while I saw him and came with him [to the town where he had moved] because I didn't know the way. I worked with him for a week or so, not even in my work domain. I worked as a porter carrying cement and sand bags up the buildings for about a week, then I rented my own home. (Khaled, Akkar)

Some employers had the phone numbers of respondents and contacted them if they had work. The Syrian man who had found work through friends in Beirut said he sometimes received phone calls from people with offers of work (Hussam, Akkar). A woman from Hama said her husband sometimes received phone calls from business owners who asked him to work: 'If someone has work, they call him. They tell him if you can work come.' (Thurayya, Akkar). Another respondent had borrowed money from his employer to pay for his family's medical expenses when they had suffered food poisoning. Later his employer called him when he had work so that the respondent could earn money to pay back the loan: 'Every time he [the employer] gets work, he calls me to come and work and I work so I can pay off my debt' (Abu Khader, Bekaa).

In this way, job hunting was a two-way street where respondents approached employers and employers leveraged their networks to find labourers for their businesses. Employers did not always call prospective workers directly. Sometimes, they approached the *shawish* of a camp to ask him to supply workers or they visited camps in person. But the phone was one important channel for doing this. Moreover, it helped individuals to bypass the *shawish*, who in many camps was suspected of privileging his or her own networks when distributing access to employment.

Many respondents who worked, particularly those with temporary or casual work, interacted with their employers over the phone. Phones helped them to manage a situation where they did not know in advance whether there was work for them on a given day. As Ali, the former textile worker from Aleppo, said, 'eighty percent' of his communications on his phone concerned his work in a foundry in the Bekaa (Ali, Bekaa). His manager called him to inform him of 'any changes at work, like if they request something at work, and I'm at home, he calls me to inform me, like today there is not any work. Take the day off' (Ali, Bekaa). Similarly, Em-Mohammed in the Bekaa, whose daughter worked in an agricultural field, said her daughter sometimes received calls from her manager who told her 'that there isn't any work or he wants her to come in late' (Em-Mohammed, Bekaa). In another case, a business owner in Akkar gave his Syrian worker

a phone so that he could contact him to let him know when there was work for him (Khitam, Akkar).

If the phone helped refugees to navigate a context where work was unpredictable and short-term, it also increased their flexibility in face of sudden impediments to their ability to reach the workplace. Unexpected patrols and temporary military checkpoints sometimes barred the way to the workplace, forcing respondents to attempt an alternative route or to turn back. With their phones, Syrians could inform their employers if they were unable to come to work or were delayed. They could also arrange with employers to be picked up and driven through checkpoints and past patrols to the work place. One respondent said her husband arranged with his superior over the phone when and where he would fetch him by car so that he could drive him past the military forces (Aida, Akkar). In these ways, the phone helped refugees to organise their movements around the restrictions that had been placed on their movement and work.

Female refugees were less likely than men to be stopped by Lebanese security personnel. However, many women were tied to their camps by household and child-minding duties and only around 16% of working-age Syrian women were estimated to be part of the labour force in Lebanon in 2018 (UNHCR, UNICEF, World Food Programme & Inter-Agency Coordination Lebanon, 2018, p. 105). Many mothers who were interviewed who worked were able to do so because relatives, neighbours and in one case the husband's other wife stepped in and minded their children. Phones smoothed this process as working women could stay in touch with their families and respond in case of emergencies. One woman who worked in an agricultural field in the Bekaa sometimes asked her neighbour to look after her children when she was at work (Aliya, Bekaa). If she ran late on her way home, she called her neighbour to ask her to stay with her children longer.

When Syrian refugees faced legal obstacles to working in Lebanon, mobile phones helped them to leverage informal networks for the purpose of finding and maintaining work. While there are multiple avenues for finding work, including personal visits to businesses, canvassing by employers in camps and referrals by *shawishes* and other contact persons, the mobile phone offered them one means to find work in a situation of restricted mobility without relying on go-betweens. A number of respondents and their relatives had been arrested while looking for work outside of their camps. Mobile phones allowed refugees to look for work without venturing outside of their settlements.

Discussion

Nan Lin offers a useful framework for exploring how mobile phones support the social capital of Syrian tented settlers in Lebanon. As mentioned earlier, Lin conceives of social capital in instrumentalist terms as the 'investment and use of embedded resources in social relations for expected returns' (2000, p. 786). This encourages us to distinguish between social relations that can be expected to be productive in themselves and relations that require further investment to yield returns (e.g. commercial relations). In the first category of relations are neighbours and relatives who may offer short-term interest-free loans and help with child-minding. In the second category are taxi drivers and medical professionals who charge for their services. Lin's definition draws a line between productive and unproductive social networks. This distinction is neatly

illustrated by the case of the two men who sought assistance after a storm destroyed their homes but reaped different results. Both were connected to people capable of lending support but only one had a well-founded expectation to secure their support due to his strong personal ties to them.

Mobile phones permitted Syrian refugees in Lebanon to build, maintain and leverage social connections. While not all of those connections fit Lin's definition of social capital (paid professionals are excluded, as are aid workers who do not lend assistance), others do. The latter include relatives, friends and others who provided access to housing, paid work and social support in settlements. It is difficult to overstate the importance of such connections in Lebanon, where there are no formal refugee camps for Syrians and little emergency refugee housing and Syrians are left largely to their own devices when attempting to secure livelihoods and maintain support systems. Friends and family who had also fled to Lebanon, as well as contacts who had lived in Lebanon since before the Syrian Civil War, were the most important elements of those networks.

Phones were crucial for restoring connections with people who had fled from Syria to Lebanon and leveraging those connections in a context of dispersal. Purchasing a smartphone was a turning point for Abu Khodor, who used the phone to reactivate part of his social network, yielding him an opportunity to find better work and accommodation. Abu Ali similarly used his phone to leverage the social capital that was embedded in his relationship with his brother-in-law so that he could leave exploitation in the Bekaa Valley for better work in Akkar. Meanwhile, phones allowed Syrians to capitalise on new relationships that they established in Lebanon. This was the case with respondents who contacted aid workers for assistance and others who got in touch with potential employers with inquiries for work.

Phones also widened respondents' information networks. Several respondents became privy to livelihood opportunities during everyday exchange with friends and family. Making use of the relatively low cost of using WhatsApp in Lebanon, many respondents engaged in frequent and mundane exchange with others. This everydayness of communications was important. Not only did it likely reinforce and sustain relationships, resembling the type of social capital investment strategies that Bourdieu understands as actions that turn 'contingent relations' into 'social relationships that are directly usable in the short or long term' (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 249). They also constituted patterns of regularised exchange that at times introduced individuals to new and valuable information. Abu Khodor became privy to an opportunity to improve his working situation when an old friend from Syria who was living a short drive from Abu Khodor's camp told him on WhatsApp that he would soon relocate to Europe. The friend was working as a principal in a foreign-sponsored school for Syrian children and asked Abu Khodor, who was a teacher, if he wanted to take over his position. Abu Khodor agreed and thereby climbed another rung on the professional ladder (Abu Khodor, Akkar).

Phones were especially useful for navigating the aid setting. In a context characterized by a plethora of aid actors, a decentralised system of aid provision and a pattern of informal interaction between aid workers and Syrian refugees, phones helped refugees to maintain connections with aid workers, access information and communicate needs. In much the same way that phones helped refugees to maintain and leverage professional relationships amidst restrictions on their movement, they allowed them to access opportunities for aid from the relative security of their camps. It made phones a crucial tool for

tapping into aid networks and aid provision, leveraging relationships in the hope of securing material benefits.

Of course, smartphones also had important limitations. Firstly, they represented an investment with uncertain returns, as purchasing a phone and maintaining an active line was economically burdensome in Lebanon, where, in 2017, the UNHCR found that Syrian refugee households spent at least 23 USD on their mobile phones each month (UNHCR, UNICEF & World Food Programme, 2017, p. 104). What is more, Lebanon's duopolic telecom companies, Alfa and Touch, require users to top up mobile phones monthly on penalty of losing their numbers. At the time of research, topping up a phone cost a minimum of 9 USD for Alfa and 11 USD for Touch. Thus, using a mobile phone required a considerable investment and represents a tangible example of Bourdieu's point that social capital is contingent on economic capital (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 250), while it did not necessarily lead to improved livelihoods.

Syrians use various cost-cutting strategies to lower their expenditures for their phones. Those strategies include using WhatsApp rather than the costlier Lebanese mobile phone network for communication, pooling the cost of WI-FI routers with neighbours and using affordable Syrian simcards near the border where the Syrian network is accessible. But even so, owning a smartphone is economically burdensome for many Syrians, its surest benefit consisting in the fact that it enables refugees to communicate with people they know.

Secondly, it is difficult to disentangle social capital from power relations. A Syrian man in the Bekaa borrowed money from a Lebanese patron he knew to pay for the medical bills of his sick children (Abu Marwan, Bekaa). In doing so, he was in part leveraging his social capital but its price was debt and possibly servitude. Similarly, a Syrian shopkeeper in Akkar used her phone to plan and coordinate deliveries with her Lebanese supplier to ensure she was able to meet the demands of her customers (Fatma, Akkar). The relationship was based on trust and mutually beneficial to a degree. Yet it was her supplier who set the prices while she was unable to change supplier on account of the debt she owed to him. Furthermore, if mobile phones help refugees to leverage their social capital to find paid work, they also enable employers to maintain flexible staffing practices and give them access to a larger pool of potential labourers that may drive down wages. Certainly, smartphones do little to expand the resources, such as work and housing, that are available to Syrian refugees in Lebanon. Indeed, they may increase not only access to, but also competition for, those resources.

Lastly, while smartphones helped respondents to bridge distances and circumvent Lebanese security forces, their utility was circumscribed by the fact that refugees needed to organise their lives – i.e. where they worked, where they sought medical aid, where they purchased their food, where they got their aid and where they sent their children to school – within geographical confines. Geographically extended social networks provided only limited assistance to refugees in organising their day-to-day existence. One woman from Homs was asked why she did not use her phone to look for medical specialists for herself and her children. She answered: 'I want to go to clinics that are near here, so I don't ask people who are far from here. But in an emergency maybe I would ask' (Khadija, Akkar).

Conclusion

The situation that Syrian informal tented settlers find themselves in in Lebanon shares important commonalities with other contexts of protracted displacement (K. Jacobsen, 2002, 2012). Like numerous other states that host refugees, Lebanon limits Syrians' freedom of movement, access to services and rights on the labour market. Through legal interventions, heavy policing and military checkpoints, Syrian refugees are practically separated from Lebanese citizens. They enjoy few rights, little labour market access and little freedom of movement. While many informal tented settlers reside in proximity to Lebanese communities, they remain cut off from them in important ways.

At the same time, the Lebanese context has important particularities. The absence of formal refugee camps in combination with Lebanon's wider social structure has several implications for Syrian refugees. Firstly, Syrian refugees are required to navigate a context characterised by decentralised aid provision and a preponderance of private systems and informal networks for resource allocation when attempting to secure their livelihoods. In coping with this context, many respondents relied on their own social networks and demonstrated the importance of geographical mobility as they relocated towards jobs, affordable housing and trusted individuals, often with the help of their phones.

Mobile phones offered Syrian informal tented settlers in Lebanon a means for reviving, maintaining and leveraging social connections in this context. This was particularly evident in the case of social relations that had been established in Syria but had been disrupted by the civil war. Using their mobile phones to revive some of these connections, refugees restored elements of their social capital, giving them potential access to a variety of resources. Respondents also used their phones to manage and leverage new connections forged in Lebanon (e.g. with aid workers, medical specialists and neighbours), which, managed from the relative security of their settlements, provided them with elements of a makeshift social security net and a degree of support in a situation of profound precarity. Lastly, mobile phones facilitated contacts between respondents and employers, widening refugees' access to work amidst restrictions on their freedom of movement and labour rights. Although mobile phones remained a costly investment with uncertain returns that did little to address the structural precarity in which Syrian refugees languished, they constituted a tool for coping with dispersed social networks, restrictions on movement and curtailments of labour and residency rights. As such, they granted refugees a degree of agency in a context of poverty and exclusion.

Notes

1. Interview with Abu Khodor in Akkar, 4 September 2017. Abu Khodor is not his real name. No Syrian refugee has been mentioned by their real name in this article.
2. A smartphone is defined here as an internet-connected mobile phone capable of downloading and running a wide range of software applications, or 'apps'.
3. A *shawish* is a refugee who is appointed by the landowner to act as coordinator for the camp and liaises with the landowner and other external actors on behalf of the camp.

Acknowledgements

We want to extend our profound gratitude to the Jan Wallander and Tom Hedelius Foundation, the Torsten Söderberg Foundation and the Marianne and Marcus Wallenberg Foundation for funding our research; Layan El-Khatib, Rami Sabbagh and Aboodi Salamih for interpreting and facilitating for us during our research in Lebanon; and Amjad Almonajed, Rania Jabri, Seba Elewy, Mouhanad Almonajed, Bayan Taleb and Layan El-Khatib for their help with translating and transcribing the interviews. Our most heartfelt thanks go to the many Syrians, who despite the hardship and suffering of their lives, took the time to speak to us, always treating us with kindness.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Funding

This work was supported by financial grants from the Jan Wallander and Tom Hedelius Foundation, the Torsten Söderberg Foundation and the Marianne and Marcus Wallenberg Foundation.

Notes on contributors

Markus Balázs Göransson is an assistant professor in War Studies at the Swedish Defence University. In 2017-8, he was a postdoctoral researcher at the Stockholm School of Economics. He has a PhD in International Politics from Aberystwyth University. His research focuses on conflict and post-conflict settings and often employs interview-based methods.

Lotta Hultin is a postdoctoral researcher at the House of Innovation, Stockholm School of Economics. She defended her PhD dissertation "Go With the Flow: Post-humanist Accounts of how Matter Matters in Organizational Change" at the Stockholm School of Economics in 2017. Her research focuses on the sociomateriality of technological change.

Magnus Mähring, Ph.D., is Erling Persson Professor of Entrepreneurship and Digital Innovation at the Stockholm School of Economics (SSE) and Chair of the SSE House of Innovation. His research focuses digital innovation, particularly in relation to organizational decision-making, transformation processes and work practices.

References

Agier, M. (2008). *On the margins of the world: The Refugee experience today*. Polity Press.

Allison, E. H., & Ellis, F. (2001). The livelihoods approach and management of small-scale fisheries. *Marine Policy*, *25*(5), 377–388. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0308-597X(01)00023-9

Angster, A., Frank, M., & Lester, D. (2010). An exploratory study of students' use of cell phones, texting and social networking sites. *Psychological Reports*, *107*(2), 402–404. https://doi.org/10.2466/17.PR0.107.5.402-404

Baird, T. D., & Hartter, J. (2017). Livelihood diversification, mobile phones and information diversity in Northern Tanzania. *Land Use Policy*, *67*, 460–471. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2017.05.031

Bakewell, O. (2014). Encampment and self-settlement. In E. Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, G. Loescher, K. Long, & N. Sigona (Eds.), *The oxford handbook of refugee and forced migration studies* (pp. 127–138). Oxford University Press.

Banki, S., & Lang, H. (2008). Protracted displacement on the thai-burmese border: The interrelated search for durable solutions. In H. Adelman (Ed.), *Protracted displacement in Asia: No place to call home* (pp. 67–69). Routledge.

Bebbington, A. (1997). Social capital and rural intensification: Local organizations and islands of sustainability in the rural Andes. *The Geographical Journal*, *163*(2), 189–197. https://doi.org/10.2307/3060182

Bebbington, A., Humphreys Bebbington, D., Bury, J., Lingan, J., Muñoz, J. P., & Scurrah, M. (2008). Mining and social movements: Struggles over livelihood and rural territorial development in the Andes. *World Development*, *36*(12), 2888–2905. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2007.11.016

Boateng, A. (2009). A mixed methods analysis of social capital of Liberian refugee women in Ghana. *Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*, *36*(3), 59–88.

Boateng, A. (2010). Survival voices: Social capital and the well-being of Liberian refugee women in Ghana. *Journal of Immigrant and Refugee Studies*, *8*(4), 386–408. https://doi.org/10.1080/15562948.2010.522465

Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. G. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education* (pp. 241–258). Greenwood Press.

Chan, M. (2013). Mobile phones and the good life: Examining the relationship among mobile use, social capital and subjective well-being. *New Media & Society*, *17*(1), 96–113. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444813516836

Chatty, D., & Mansour, N. (2011). Unlocking protracted displacement: An Iraqi case study. *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, *30*(4), 59–64. https://doi.org/10.1093/rsq/hdr012

Cho, J. (2015). Roles of smartphone app use in improving social capital and reducing social isolation. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, *18*(6), 350–355. https://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2014.0657

Cleaver, F. (2005). The inequality of social capital and the reproduction of chronic poverty. *World Development*, *33*(6), 893–906. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2004.09.015

Cuban, S. (2018). A stratified analysis of the ICT-based communicative practices and networks of migrant women. *Migration and Development*, *7*(1), 124–141. https://doi.org/10.1080/21632324.2016.1217614

Donner, J. (2009). Blurring livelihoods and lives: The social uses of mobile phones and socioeconomic development. *Innovations: Technology, Governance, Globalization*, *4*(1), 91–101. https://doi.org/10.1162/itgg.2009.4.1.91

Duncombe, R. A. (2014). Understanding the impact of mobile phones on livelihoods in developing countries. *Development Policy Review*, *32*(5), 567–588. https://doi.org/10.1111/dpr.2014.32.issue-5

Durieux, J.-F. (2009). A regime at a loss? *Forced Migration Review*, *33*, 60–61.

Ellis, F. (2000a). *Rural livelihoods and diversity in developing countries*. Oxford University Press.

Ellis, F. (2000b). The determinants of rural livelihood diversification in developing countries. *Journal of Agricultural Economics*, *51*(2), 289–302. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1477-9552.2000.tb01229.x

Fleming-Farrell, N. (2013, March 28). *Non-camp approach is best, costs less: UNHCR*. The Daily Star. http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Local-News/2013/Mar-28/211714-non-camp-approach-is-bestcosts-less-unhcr.ashx

Fran, M. (2017). Rethinking network capital: Hospitality work and parallel trading among Chinese students in Melbourne. *Mobilities*, *12*(6), 890–907. https://doi.org/10.1080/17450101.2016.1268460

Grootaert, C., & van Bastelar, T. (2002). *The role of social capital in development: An empirical assessment*. Cambridge University Press.

Hampton, K. N., Sessions, L. F., & Her, E. J. (2011). Core networks, social isolation, and new media. *Information, Communication & Society*, *14*(1), 130–155. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2010.513417

Hofman, I. (2017). Soft budgets and elastic debt: Farm liabilities in the agrarian political economy of post-Soviet Tajikistan. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, *45*(7) 1–21.

Horst, H. A. (2006). The blessings and burdens of communication: Cell phones in Jamaican transnational social fields. *Global Networks. A Journal of Transnational Affairs*, *6*(2), 143–159. https://doi.org/10.1111/glob.2006.6.issue-2

Horst, H. A., & Miller, D. (2006). *The cell phone. An anthropology of communication*. Bergman Publishers.
Hovil, L. (2007). Self-settled refugees in Uganda: An alternative approach to displacement? *Journal of Refugee Policy*, *20*(4), 599–620. https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fem035
Human Rights Watch. (2017a, February 14). *Lebanon: New refugee policy a step forward*. https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/02/14/lebanon-new-refugee-policy-step-forward
Human Rights Watch. (2017b, March 14). *The gaps in lebanon's new refugee policy*. https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/03/14/gaps-lebanons-new-refugee-policy
Ingrams, A. (2015). Mobile phones, smartphones, and the transformation of civic behavior through mobile information and connectivity. *Government Information Quarterly*, *32*(4), 506–515. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.giq.2015.07.007
Iverson, E. L. (2016). Permanently waiting: The Kenyan state and the refugee protection regime. In N. Stokes-DuPass & R. Fruja (Eds.), *Citizenship, belonging, and nation-states in the twenty-first century* (pp. 221–246). Palgrave Macmillan.
Jaafar, H., Ahmad, F., Holtmeier, L., & King-Okumu, C. (2019). Refugees, water balance and water stress: Lessons learned from Lebanon. *Ambio*.
Jacobsen, K. (2002). Livelihoods in conflict: The Pursuit of livelihoods by refugees and the impact on the Human security of host communities. *International Migration*, *40*(5), 95–123.
Jacobsen, K. (2012). The economic security of refugees: Social capital, remittances and humanitarian assistance. In K. R. Khory (Ed.), *Global migration* (pp. 65–85). Palgrave Macmillan.
Janmyr, M. (2016). Precarity in exile: The legal status of Syrian refugees in Lebanon. *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, *35*(4), 58–78. https://doi.org/10.1093/rsq/hdw016
Kamel Doraï, M. (2003). Palestinian emigration from Lebanon to northern Europe: Refugees, networks and transnational practices. *Refuge*, *21*(2), 23–31.
Kobayashi, T., Ikeda, K., & Miyata, K. (2006). Social capital online: Collective use of the Internet and reciprocity as lubricants of democracy. *Information, Communications & Society*, *9*(5), 582–611. https://doi.org/10.1080/13691180600965575
Koser Akcapar, S. (2010). Re-thinking migrants' networks and social capital: A case study of Iranians in Turkey. *International Migration*, *48*(2), 161–196. https://doi.org/10.1111/imig.2010.48.issue-2
Light, I., & Dana, L.-P. (2013). Boundaries of social capital in entrepreneurship. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, *37*(3), 603–624. https://doi.org/10.1111/etap.2013.37.issue-3
Lin, N. (2000). Inequality in social capital. *Contemporary Sociology*, *29*(6), 785–795. https://doi.org/10.2307/2654086
Lin, N. (2001a). Building a network theory of social capital. In N. Lin, K. Cook, & R. S. Burt (Eds.), *Social capital. Theory and research* (pp. 3–30). Routledge.
Lin, N. (2001b). *Social capital. A theory of social structure and action*. Cambridge University Press.
Lin, N., & Erickson, B. H. (2008). Theory, measurement, and the research enterprise on social capital. In N. Lin & B. H. Erickson (Eds.), *Social capital: An international research program* (pp. 1–25). Oxford University Press.
Lindley, A. (2007,August). *Protracted displacement and remittances: The view from Eastleigh, Nairobi. New issues in refugee research*. (UNHCR Research Paper No. 143). UNHCR.
Loveless, J. (2013). Crisis in Lebanon: Camps for Syrian refugees? *Forced Migration Review*, *43*, 66–68.
Lyons, M., & Snoxell, S. (2005a). Creating urban social capital: Some evidence from informal traders in Nairobi. *Urban Studies*, *42*(7), 1077–1097. https://doi.org/10.1080/00420980500120865
Lyons, M., & Snoxell, S. (2005b). Sustainable urban livelihoods and marketable social capital: Crisis and strategy in petty trade. *Urban Studies*, *42*(8), 1301–1320. https://doi.org/10.1080/00420980500150631
Martin, B. L., & Abbott, E. (2011). Mobile phones and rural livelihoods: Diffusion, uses and perceived impacts among farmers in rural Uganda. *Information Technologies & International Development Journal*, *7*(4), 17–34.
Mengwei, B., & Leung, L. (2014). Linking loneliness, shyness, smartphone addiction symptoms, and patterns of smartphone use to social capital. *Social Science Computer Review*, *33*(1), 61–79.

Nath, T. K., Inoue, M., & Pretty, J. (2010). Formation and function of social capital for forest resource management and the improved livelihoods of indigenous people in bangladesh. *Journal of Rural and Community Development*, *5*(3), 104–122.

Park, K.-G., Han, S., & Lee Kaid, L. (2012). Does social networking service usage mediate the association between smartphone usage and social capital? *New Media & Society*, *15*(7), 1077–1093. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444812465927

Park, N., & Lee, H. (2012). Social implications of smartphone use: Korean college students' smartphone use and psychological well-being. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, *15*(9), 491–497. https://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2011.0580

Pavličková, A., & Dayanandan, A. (2015). Social networks and emigration in Slovakia. *Migration and Development*, *4*(2), 220–231. https://doi.org/10.1080/21632324.2014.976942

Pierce, T. (2009). Social anxiety and technology: Face-to-face communication versus technological communication among teens. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *25*(6), 1367–1372. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2009.06.003

Porter, G. (2012). Mobile phones, livelihoods and the poor in sub-Saharan Africa: Review and prospect. *Geography Compass*, *6*(5), 241–259. https://doi.org/10.1111/geco.2012.6.issue-5

Pourmehdi, M., & Al Shahrani, H. (2019). The role of social media and network capital in assisting migrants in search of a less precarious existence in Saudi Arabia. *Migration and Development*.

Putnam, R. D. (1993). The prosperous community. *The American Prospect*, *4*(13), 35–42.

Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*. Simon & Schuster.

Rakodi, C. (1999). A capital assets framework for analysing household livelihood strategies: Implications for policy. *Development Policy Review*, *17*(3), 315–342. https://doi.org/10.1111/dpr.1999.17.issue-3

Scarnato, J. M. (2019). Deportation meets development: A case study of return migration in Guatemala. *Migration and Development*, *8*(2), 192–206. https://doi.org/10.1080/21632324.2018.1500004

Sheer, V. C., & Rice, R. (2017). Mobile instant messaging use and social capital: Direct and indirect associations with employee outcomes. *Information & Management*, *54*(1), 90–102. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.im.2016.04.001

Sife, A. S., Kiondo, E., & Lyimo-Macha, J. G. (2017). Contribution of mobile phones to rural livelihoods and poverty reduction in Morogoro Region, Tanzania. *The Electronic Journal of Information Systems in Developing Countries*, *42*(1), 1–15. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1681-4835.2010.tb00299.x

Smets, K. (2019). Media and immobility: The affective and symbolic immobility of forced migrants. *European Journal of Communication*, *34*(6), 650-660. doi:10.1177/0267323119886167

Smith, M. (2004). *Warehousing refugees: a denial of rights, a waste of humanity*. World Refugee Survey. Washington: US Committee for Refugees. Retrieved November 16, 2019, from https://refugees.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Warehousing-Refugees-Campaign-Materials.pdf

Szreter, S., & Woolcock, M. (2004). Health by association? Social capital, social theory, and the political economy of public health. *International Journal of Epidemiology*, *33*(4), 650–667. https://doi.org/10.1093/ije/dyh013

Talhouk, R., Mesmar, S., Thieme, A., Balaam, M., Olivier, P., Akik, C., & Ghattas, H. (2016). Syrian refugees and digital health in Lebanon: Opportunities for improving antenatal health. *CHI '16: Proceedings of the 2016 CHI conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems* (pp. 331–342).

Tanle, A., & Machistey Abane, A. (2018). Mobile phone use and livelihoods: Qualitative evidence from some rural and urban areas in Ghana. *GeoJournal*, *83*(3), 465–475. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10708-017-9780-0

Turner, L. (2015). Explaining the (non-)encampment of Syrian refugees: security, class and the labour market in Lebanon and Jordan. *Mediterranean Politics*, *20*(3), 386–404. https://doi.org/10.1080/13629395.2015.1078125

Turner, S. (2007). Small-scale enterprise livelihoods and social capital in eastern Indonesia: Ethnic embeddedness and exclusion. *The Professional Geographer*, *59*(4), 407–420. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9272.2007.00631.x

UNHCR. (2014, February). *Policy on alternatives to camps*. https://www.unhcr.org/protection/statelessness/5422b8f09/unhcr-policy-alternatives-camps.html
UNHCR. (2016). *Connecting refugees*. How internet and mobile connectivity can improve refugee well-being and transform humanitarian action. Retrieved November 16, 2019, from https://www.unhcr.org/5770d43c4
UNHCR. (2019). *UNHCR Lebanon at a glance*. https://www.unhcr.org/lb/at-a-glance
UNHCR, UNICEF & World Food Programme. (2017, December). *VASyR 2017*. Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon.
UNHCR, UNICEF, World Food Programme & Inter-Agency Coordination Lebanon. (2018, December). *VASyR 2018*. Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon.
Urinboyev, R. (2016). Migration and transnational informality in post-Soviet societies: Ethnographic study of *po rukam* ('handshake') experiences of Uzbek migrant workers in Moscow. In A.-L. Heusala & K. Aitamurto (Eds.), *Migrant workers in Russia. Global challenges of the shadow economy in societal transformation* (pp. 70–93). Routledge.
Urinboyev, R. (2017). Establishing an 'Uzbek mahalla' via smartphones and social media: Everyday transnational lives of Uzbek labor migrants in Russia. In M. Laruelle (Ed.), *Constructing the Uzbek state: Narratives of post-Soviet years* (pp. 119–150). Lexington Books.
Uzelac, A, Meester, J, Göransson, M, & van den Berg, W. (2018a). The importance of social capital in protracted displacement. *Forced Migration Review*, *57*, 28–30.
Uzelac, A., Meester, J., van den Berg, W., & Göransson, M. (2018b, July). The untapped resource: Protecting and leveraging refugee social capital in protracted displacement. (CRU Policy Brief). The Clingendael Institute.
Wall, M., Otis Campbell, M., & Janbek, D. (2019). Refugees, information precarity, and social inclusion: The precarious communication practices of Syrians fleeing war. In J. Retis & R. Tsagarousianou (Eds.), *The handbook of diaspora, media, and culture* (pp. 503–514). Wiley Blackwell.
Wall, M., Otis Campbell, M., & Janbek, D. (2017). Syrian refugees and information precarity. *New Media & Society*, *19*(2), 240–254. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444815591967
Websites. Retrieved November 16, 2019, from https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria/location/71
Wijers, G. D. M. (2013). Immigrant communities as resources for emancipation: A comparison of bounded solidarity in two Cambodian communities. *Migration and Development*, *2*(1), 74–92. https://doi.org/10.1080/21632324.2013.773154
Wolfe, L. (2014, November 13). *Trapped in Syria*. Foreign Policy.
Woolcock, M. (2001). Microenterprise and social capital: A framework for theory, research, and policy. *The Journal of Socio-Economics*, *30*(2), 193–198. https://doi.org/10.1016/S1053-5357(00)00106-2
Wyche, S., & Steinfield, C. (2016). Why don't farmers use cell phones to access market prices? Technology affordances and barriers to market information services adoption in rural Kenya. *Information Technology for Development*, *22*(2), 320–333. https://doi.org/10.1080/02681102.2015.1048184
Xie, W. (2014). Social network site use, mobile personal talk and social capital among teenagers. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *41*, 228–235. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2014.09.042