**Policy Research on the Resolution of Post-Disaster Displacement:
Reflections from Haiti and the Philippines**

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Abstract
Researching the resolution of post-disaster displacement raises a range of under-examined challenges. This article contributes to the literature on research methods and forced migration by analysing experiences conducting two policy research projects that employed a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods to explore the pursuit of 'durable solutions' to post-disaster displacement in Haiti and the Philippines. Many scholars are highly critical of how policy concepts and categories have sometimes unthinkingly shaped research on displacement, but the views of policy researchers and researcher-practitioners are under-represented in this conversation. This article seeks to advance discussions on the relationship between research, policy and practice in the field of forced migration by reflecting on efforts to undertake thoughtful policy research on durable solutions while making the very notion of durable solutions and tools such as the *IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons* central objects of investigation. In particular it explores four key issues: the structure of policy research partnerships; implications of different approaches to conceptualizing displacement and durable solutions; the challenge of understanding displacement and durable solutions in relation to broader and pre-disaster politics, conditions and concerns; and the timing of studies on durable solutions.

Introduction
By the end of 2015, there were more people uprooted by violence than at any time since World War II. Yet every year natural disasters are accompanied by even higher levels of forced migration than armed conflict, with an estimated 32.4 million people displaced in disaster contexts in 2012 alone (IDMC 2013). Although displacement is a prominent challenge in most major post-disaster situations, forced migration and humanitarian studies have focused primarily on displacement caused by conflict, owing perhaps to the common assumption that disasters are 'easier' and 'less political' than conflicts (Orchard 2015, Barnett and Webber 2010: 40, Weiss and Korn 2006: 71).[1] Scholarship on disasters from the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami to Hurricane Katrina, and the broader disaster studies literature, challenge this assumption by demonstrating how post-disaster displacement and settlement are highly contentious processes marked by the politics of poverty and inequality (Hyndman 2011, Hannigan 2012, Hartmann 2006, Boano 2009, Fan 2012, Zetter and Boano 2010).

The vast majority of those uprooted in disaster contexts remain within their own countries, and these internally displaced persons (IDPs) take the lead in working to resolve their own displacement. However, the policies and practices of governments, international

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[1] This focus on conflict is evident in the balance of articles in leading publications such as the *Journal of Refugee Studies*, despite its mandate to cover all forms of displacement.

organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can significantly enhance or undercut their efforts (Boano 2009). Effectively supporting the resolution of post-disaster displacement requires a solid evidence base, but research on this challenge remains relatively nascent. The lack of detailed research on 'durable solutions' to post-disaster displacement is striking as this issue is widely recognized as a critical element of human rights protection, and a key development and governance challenge in post-conflict and post-disaster environments alike (Christensen and Harild 2009, Zetter 2014). Accordingly, the Brookings Institution, an independent policy research organization, and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), an inter-governmental organization extensively involved in responding to post-disaster internal displacement situations worldwide, collaborated on two mixed-method studies on this issue. The first explored the ongoing, fraught process of attempting to resolve the mass displacement generated by the 2010 earthquake in Haiti (blinded citation 2014), while the second investigated durable solutions for IDPs uprooted by Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines (blinded citation 2015). Both studies engaged with the 2010 *Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons*, an influential tool that promotes a rights-based approach to supporting the resolution of internal displacement.

As scholars and researcher-practitioners involved in these studies, we found that these projects raised particular challenges under-examined in the growing body of work on research with displaced populations.[2] By reflecting on our experiences, we aim in this article to contribute to the evolving literature on research methods and forced migration, and help inform future efforts to investigate the resolution of post-disaster displacement. While many scholars are highly critical of the ways in which policy concepts and categories have sometimes unthinkingly shaped research on displacement (Bakewell 2008, Scalettaris 2007, Jacobsen and Landau 2003, Malkki: 1995; Lindley: 2013), the views of policy researchers and researcher-practitioners are under-represented in this conversation. Many researchers – including ourselves – strive to meet the 'dual imperative' of ensuring their research is both intellectually rigorous and practically relevant (Turton 1996: 96). By reflecting on efforts to undertake thoughtful policy research on durable solutions while making the very notion of durable solutions a central object of investigation, we hope this article helps to advance discussions on the relationship between research, policy and practice in the field of forced migration (Scalettaris 2007: 36). By forced migration 'policy research,' we mean studies that explicitly address and make recommendations regarding the questions and challenges facing governments, international organizations and NGOs working with displacement-affected communities. This does not necessarily entail making these actors' perspectives and activities the sole focus of attention. Rather, the studies we undertook in Haiti and the Philippines, and discuss in this article, concentrated on the experiences, views and strategies of households in disaster-affected communities, and their relationship to local, national and international interventions.

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[2] This literature explores issues from ethics and power imbalances (Clark-Kazak 2009, Hugman et al 2011b, Lammers 2007, Leaning 2001), informed consent (Hugman et al 2011a, Mackenzie et al 2007), sampling and survey design (Bloch 1999, 2007, Misago and Landau 2013, Singh and Clark 2013, Vearey 2013), profiling (Jacobsen and Furst Nichols 2011) and participatory approaches (Ellis et al 2007, Doná 2007) to the engagement of young people (Clark-Kazak 2009, Block et al 2012, Chatty 2007, Chatty et al 2005), and the dynamics of research partnerships (Landau 2012, Polzer 2013, Hynie et al 2014). However, it focuses primary on conflict contexts, and with the exception of literature on resettlement (Ellis et al 2007, Hyndman and Walton-Roberts 2000, McMichael et al 2015, Beiser 2006, Gifford et al 2007) it rarely engages with the particular challenges associated with researching efforts to resolve displacement. It also concentrates on refugees rather than IDPs.

We begin by introducing the relevant concepts and frameworks at stake in our studies, and displacement dynamics in Haiti and the Philippines, before explaining our methods. We then reflect on four key issues raised in these projects: (i) the structure of our research partnership; (ii) research implications of different approaches to conceptualizing displacement and durable solutions; (iii) the challenge of understanding displacement and durable solutions in relation to broader and pre-disaster conditions and concerns; and (iv) the timing of studies on durable solutions. We suggest that although policy research on the resolution of post-disaster displacement inevitably faces methodological challenges and limitations, devoting critical attention to the power dynamics at play in research partnerships, the concepts underpinning policy research projects (particularly displacement and durable solutions themselves), and the relationship between displacement and evolving socio-economic dynamics, can attend to some of the critiques of policy research in forced migration studies. Owing to limited space, other significant issues, including recruitment, consent, expectation management and results communication, are not addressed in detail.[3]

Key concepts and frameworks

Following the 1998 Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, our studies considered IDPs as those who

> have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or *natural or human-made disasters*, and who have not crossed an internally recognized state border' (italics added).

As we discuss below, this broad conceptualization of internal displacement, while internationally accepted and normatively well-founded, raised ambiguities in the cases we examined, in which the vast majority of the affected population had to leave their homes, whether temporarily or for longer periods.

The other main normative framework informing both studies was the 2010 Inter-Agency Standing Committee Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons (IASC Framework) (IASC 2010). The IASC Framework builds on the Guiding Principles, and was developed under the leadership of the Representative of the UN Secretary-General on the Human Rights of IDPs. It articulates rights-based principles, processes and criteria intended to guide the sustainable resolution of displacement, including after disasters. According to the Framework, durable solutions are achieved when IDPs 'no longer have any specific assistance and protection needs that are linked to their displacement and can enjoy their human rights without discrimination on account of their displacement.' The Framework identifies three potential avenues to resolving internal displacement: return and reintegration in places of origin; local integration in areas where IDPs sought shelter; and settlement elsewhere in the country (sometimes referred to as resettlement or relocation) (IASC 2010: 5).

The Framework stresses that IDPs have the right to make informed, voluntary choices concerning durable solutions, and to be equitably and actively involved in planning processes, recognizing the need to consider the rights and concerns of non-displaced community members as well (IASC 2010: 15-24). The Framework articulates four criteria to help determine the extent to which durable solutions have been achieved, indicating that IDPs who have secured a durable solution will be able to equitably enjoy:
- Long-term safety, security and freedom of movement;

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[3] For discussion of some of these issues, see for example Clark-Kazak 2013.

- An adequate standard of living, including at a minimum access to adequate food, water, housing, health care and basic education;
- Access to employment and livelihoods; [and]
- Access to effective mechanisms that restore their housing, land and property or provide them with compensation. (IASC 2010: A-4)

Depending on the context, durable solutions may also require that IDPs are able to enjoy access to documentation; voluntary family reunification; equitable participation in public affairs; and effective remedies for abuses related to displacement (IASC 2010: A-4).

We used quantitative and qualitative tools, including household surveys, focus groups and key informant interviews, to probe the extent to which these criteria, and the Framework's provisions on process, were achieved in Haiti and the Philippines. To be sure, 'durable solutions' is itself a constructed, critiqued, concept (Hammond 1999, Long 2014, blinded citation) – an issue we discuss in further detail below. While the notion of durable solutions and the IASC Framework may clearly be policy artefacts from researchers' perspectives, many policymakers and practitioners who participated in the studies saw the IASC Framework as a conceptually complex 'academic' document. Academics, particularly legal scholars, certainly played central roles in the development of the international frameworks surrounding internal displacement and durable solutions, suggesting a need to rethink assumptions about a 'bright line' between policies and scholarly outputs, and the distinction between research based on academic versus policy constructs. While scholars have legitimately critiqued how reliance on policy categories can 'obscure and render invisible some population groups,' critical exploration of the durable solutions process can help bring into focus individuals whose predicaments are closely intertwined with forced migration and efforts to resolve displacement, but who are often neglected, such as residents of informal urban settlements (Bakewell 2008: 433).

Disasters and displacement in Haiti and the Philippines

Typhoon Haiyan and Haiti's 2010 earthquake both resulted in massive displacement, captured worldwide attention, and sparked an outpouring of humanitarian aid.[4] However, these disasters unfolded in strikingly different socio-economic contexts, with diverse consequences in terms of forced migration.

When the earthquake struck, Haiti was already the poorest country in the western hemisphere. Indeed, the scale of the crisis was inextricable from Haiti's longstanding development problems. The Port-au-Prince metropolitan area saw the destruction of 105,000 houses and severe damage to another 188,000 units, compounding a pre-existing 300,000-unit shortage. In combination with dire need to access relief and humanitarians' broad reliance on camp-based distribution systems, this fuelled a displacement crisis which, at its apex, saw 1.5 million IDPs living in 1,555 camps. Approximately 630,000 IDPs sheltered with host families, but in Haiti displacement became popularly equated with residency in camps (blinded citation 2014). Over time, a central aim of the national and international response became 'ending' the displacement crisis by closing camps, including through the implementation of 'rental subsidy cash grant' systems through which all residents of particular camps received a fixed cash contribution towards the cost of renting a new residence. After this distribution, the camp would be closed. Arguably, this model gradually became a 'one-size-fits-all' approach, and continues to be applied to facilitate camp closures. However, it has done little to address the range of other

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[4] For more detailed discussion of the background and response to these disasters, see for example Schuller 2016 and Humanitarian Practice Network (HPN) 2015.

concerns magnified by displacement and the post-disaster economy, particularly livelihood issues, and is at odds with the preferences of many Haitians living in areas populated as camps in 2010, but which could potentially be integrated into surrounding neighbourhoods (Amnesty 2013). Faced with the impossibility of establishing decent homes and livelihoods within Port-au-Prince, thousands of families have moved to rapidly developing, informal peri-urban settlements.

Four years later, we found that almost 75% of those uprooted in the earthquake continued to identify themselves as displaced, despite residing outside camps. Echoing related findings in disaster studies, the research concluded that those who were displaced typically faced greater economic disadvantages, including poor access to land and housing, *before* the earthquake struck, in comparison to those not displaced. These pre-existing hardships likely explain why displaced people reported greater exposure to eroded overall living conditions (61% of displaced compared to 39% of non-displaced households); inability to provide for basic needs (67% of displaced compared to 43% of non-displaced households); deteriorating housing conditions (16.7% of displaced compared to 8% of non-displaced households); and feelings of insecurity (19.8% of displaced compared to 13.9% of non-displaced households) (blinded citation 2014). Although IDPs did not generally encounter discrimination on the basis of their displacement per se, the socio-economic effects of displacement often compounded the daily 'humiliations,' as our participants expressed it, already endured by deeply impoverished Haitians. In short, camp closures have not translated into 'durable solutions' in the sense of the IASC Framework – an admittedly high bar in a country where the majority do not enjoy even basic humanitarian standards (blinded citation 2014).

In contrast, our second study examined a lower middle-income state in which a comparatively robust, decentralized government drew on nuanced legal frameworks and disaster management systems to respond to a super typhoon that wracked a massive swath of rural and urban communities. Known locally as Yolanda, in November 2013 Typhoon Haiyan caused more than 7,000 deaths, damaged or destroyed 1.1 million homes, and displaced over four million people, primarily in the Eastern Visayas (Region VIII). The Philippines regularly grapples with displacement following natural disasters, and also faces conflict-related displacement situations. Although Haiyan's scale was unprecedented, these experiences informed the national and international response. Even if their homes were ruined, the vast majority returned promptly to the places where they lived before the typhoon and began reconstruction. Within a year and a half, all tent cities were closed, and almost half of those sheltered in temporary 'bunkhouses' had returned or received relocation assistance. Despite rapid returns, durable solutions in the sense of the IASC Framework have proved more elusive. Thousands remain in limbo as they lived in coastal areas initially labelled 'no build zones' after Haiyan. While 'no build zones' have in theory been replaced by context-specific risk assessment policies, these have been applied inconsistently, if at all. In practice, many have been unable to return, or to access assistance initially denied to them on the basis of their residency in the no build zones. The large-scale relocation process envisioned for 205,000 families from hazardous areas is already endangered by lacklustre consultation and community engagement, and inadequate access to viable livelihoods (blinded citation 2015).

As in Haiti, the challenges posed by displacement are intertwined with the broader post-disaster political economy and longstanding patterns of marginalization. Region VIII is amongst the Philippines' poorest areas; in this context, the losses Haiyan entailed continue to reverberate, especially for poor families who were displaced. A year and a half after Haiyan, only 16.3% of displaced households felt that life had returned to 'normal' compared to 21.5% of non-displaced

households. Those who had been uprooted were significantly more likely to struggle to provide for their basic needs, and less likely enjoy access to affordable housing (20.1% of displaced compared to 33.4% of non-displaced households), or to benefit from adequate housing (50.8% of displaced compared to 63.8% of non-displaced households). They were also more likely to feel insecure in their current places of residence (20% of displaced compared to 7.8% of non-displaced households) (blinded citation 2015). In sum, despite marked contrasts, both cases yielded insights into persistent barriers to the resolution of post-disaster displacement, and the complexities of using qualitative and quantitative methods to deepen understanding of this issue.

Analysing obstacles and avenues to durable solutions: Overview of quantitative and qualitative methods used

Both studies aimed to identify obstacles to durable solutions, and to develop recommendations for addressing outstanding challenges. This entailed exploring the relationship between pre- and post-disaster socio-economic dynamics and experiences of forced migration, as well as how displacement and durable solutions are understood by different actors, including affected community members. Given these objectives, a mixed-method approach was applied, which we explain below in order to provide a foundation for the ensuring discussion of the practical, methodological and conceptual issues encountered in undertaking this work.

Quantitative elements

The quantitative centrepiece of each study was a household survey designed to probe the relationship between socioeconomic circumstances (pre- and post- disaster) and experiences of displacement. Data were collected from households that were and were not displaced, enabling investigation of the association between displacement and households' socioeconomic conditions, and the extent to which the IASC Framework criteria and process principles had been achieved.[5] The questionnaires were drafted in English, but administered in the main local language (Creole or Waray).[6] The questionnaires were field tested, refined, re-tested and administered by trained survey teams over a five to six week period.

The survey in Haiti involved a random, one-stage cluster sample of 2,576 households in heavily earthquake-affected neighbourhoods. Given our interest in durable solutions for households who did not or were no longer living in camps, the sample excluded camps. Instead, the sample was identified using a geo-referenced list of all buildings (formal and informal) in metropolitan Port-au-Prince created by IOM and the Haitian National Institute of Statistics through the 2012-2013 'Census of Affected Populations and Neighbourhoods' program. The sampling universe was composed of census blocks (*sections d'énumeration*, or SDE) in which more than 25% of buildings were destroyed. This sample was suitable as it allowed the capture of data from a diverse range of households significantly affected by the earthquake. The SDEs were divided into units of approximately 100 buildings, from which a random sample of 20 units was extracted. Every household in each selected residential unit was invited to participate, with

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[5] We use the term 'displaced households' to refer to those who indicated that they had to leave their homes due to the disaster, recognizing that some may no longer self-identify as displaced.

[6] Local research team members with experience working in the disaster response efforts took the lead in the translation process, with particular attention devoted to clear communication around concepts (such as displacement itself) with particular technical connotations in the IASC Framework and other international standards, but with varying meanings or no obvious equivalents in the local languages. In the Philippines, responses were recorded on tablets programmed in English; in Haiti, responses were recorded on paper questionnaires in Creole and transcribed into English when the database was constructed.

an individual adult completing the questionnaire on the household's behalf.[7] If an adult was not available, a survey team returned later to complete the questionnaire. There was a 1.96% refusal rate (blinded citation 2014: 8-10).

The sampling design was significantly more complex in the Typhoon Haiyan study owing to the disaster's broader geographic scale and variable impacts in different areas. The survey used a two-stage complex design to collect representative statistical data on the affected population. The 59 Region VIII municipalities situated within 50 kilometres of the storm track were included in the sampling frame, corresponding to 1,864 barangays (smallest unit of governance in the Philippines) with a total population of 1,904,318 (405,174 families). In light of our focus on communities significantly affected by Haiyan, we excluded 11 municipalities in which there was less than 25% damage, and five municipalities in which a subsequent storm, Typhoon Hagupit (Ruby) caused more than 1% damage. The final sampling frame thus consisted of 43 municipalities (1,511 barangays), corresponding to a reference population of 1,586,457 individuals in 343,389 households (after weighting, the sample was representative of 336,851 households).

Barangays were the primary sampling units (PSU); buildings were the secondary sampling units. PSUs were stratified on the basis of: (i) location (inland or coastal); (ii) poverty level (following the three classes used by the Philippines government); and (iii) three levels of Haiyan-related damage. Combining these factors created 18 strata; all barangays were assigned a random number and slotted into the appropriate strata, which were nested in each municipality.[8] In each strata for every municipality, we selected the barangay with the lowest randomly assigned number; in the main population centres we selected three barangays per strata. Fifty buildings were systematically sampled in each selected barangay, with every building in each sampled barangay having an equal chance of being selected. Every household in the sampled building was invited to participate, with an individual adult completing the questionnaire on the household's behalf. Survey teams returned if an adult was not available. The refusal rate was 0.6 percent. This strategy enabled us to capture variegated experiences of households from different socioeconomic and geographic contexts.

Qualitative elements

Qualitative methods were used to achieve more in-depth insight into the perspectives of key national and international actors, and displacement-affected community members. Our qualitative research preceded the quantitative work, and informed questionnaire development and subsequent data interpretation.

We conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with national and municipal officials, donors, and local and foreign staff working with international organizations and NGOs, completing 34 key informant interviews in English in the Philippines and 25 interviews in English and French in Port-au-Prince. In Haiti we also convened two focus group discussions

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[7] We recognize that limiting participation in the survey to adults introduced a degree of age bias to the data collected. By welcoming any adult member of the household to complete the questionnaire on behalf of the household, we attempted to limit the more pronounced gender biases that could have been introduced by explicitly asking for the "head of household" to participate.

[8] We relied on municipal-level data on poverty rates, following the government's classifications. In the selected municipalities, poverty rates run from 9.8% to 53.6% of the population. The three categories corresponded to communities in which 9.8–24.3%, 24.4–38.9%, and 39.0–53.6% live in poverty. We used municipal-level damage assessment data, and grouped municipalities into three damage classes: 27–51.3%, 51.3–75.7%, and 75.7–100% damage.

with the local and foreign staff of NGOs and international organizations. We used purposive sampling to identify key informants well placed to provide a range of perspectives on durable solutions, including humanitarians and 'development' actors employing disaster risk reduction and urban planning approaches.

The studies were additionally informed by site visits and focus group with affected community members. The focus groups played a particularly important role in enabling us to interpret and more deeply probe the quantitative data collected through the household surveys. In some instances, perspectives expressed in focus groups were affirmed in the household surveys as broadly shared concerns facing the disaster-affected populations. In other cases, the focus groups raised context-specific challenges that were not necessarily systematically captured in the household survey due for example to the exclusion of camps and bunkhouses from our samples. In Port-au-Prince, we conducted seven focus groups with IDPs in informal settlements and camps, as well as with evicted individuals, and non-displaced community members. We completed 13 focus groups in Tacloban, Guiuan and rural communities, involving residents of bunkhouses, transitional and 'permanent' relocation sites, as well as individuals living in self-repaired homes in their original areas (including in the 'no-build zone'). Participants were identified through purposive sampling, with efforts made to ensure diversity in the types and location of communities visited, and the forms and sources of assistance received (some focus groups involved communities receiving virtually no aid). Local research team members facilitated the discussions in Creole or Waray, flexibly following a guide with questions on pre- and post-earthquake conditions, community concerns and recovery strategies. Each focus group involved 12-15 participants, and lasted approximately 1.5 hours. (See below on gender and focus group composition.) Qualitative data were coded according to themes raised in the IASC Framework, as well as through a grounded coding process.

Challenges raised in researching post-disaster durable solutions: Reflections

These studies were amongst the first to use mixed methods to systematically analyse durable solutions to post-disaster displacement. They therefore raised a wide range of fresh questions and challenges on issues from process and concept framing, to data analysis and timing.

Laying the foundation for a policy research partnership

Research partnerships, particularly in development and humanitarian studies, are often difficult to navigate, especially when the individuals and institutions involved have varying professional and disciplinary backgrounds, interests and incentives (blinded citation 2008, Boswell 2012). This research partnership presented significant benefits for each institution involved as it paired the Brookings-LSE Project on Internal Displacement – an independent policy research team with extensive experience analysing and supporting the development of normative frameworks on internal displacement – with IOM, an agency with considerable operational experience, field contacts and the capacity to implement large surveys in complex post-disaster environments. Given IOM's involvement in both disaster responses, partnering with an independent research organization such as Brookings brought credibility and fresh perspectives to the research. The research teams also included independent experts unaffiliated with either institution. Team members were all involved in their individual capacities – that is, the reports reflected our own views rather than institutional positions. The team members were all personally and professionally concerned to see strengthened, rights-based responses to

potentially unmet concerns facing displacement-affected communities in Haiti and the Philippines, and yet in embarking on these studies it was also clear that our personal and institutional positioning could potentially lead us to draw different conclusions from the same data.[9] The partners therefore had an interest in ensuring that plans were developed in advance to handle any potentially divergent interpretations. Accordingly, the organizations agreed in advance to processes for managing differences in data interpretation, preserving each partner's independence by explicitly acknowledging unresolved differences in the reports. In the end, we never had to draw on these measures as we came to unified conclusions on the findings and means of expressing them. Even so, in the context of policy research partnerships created to explore contested and sensitive subjects such as the resolution of post-disaster displacement, the up-front articulation of these provisions was an important factor that contributed to the successful completion of credible studies.

Conceptualizing displacement and durable solutions

How concepts are framed has major implications for any social scientific investigation (Goertz 2006). Engaging policy-related categories and concepts, such as IDPs and durable solutions, does not sidestep the need for critical conceptual reflection; indeed, while the rights-based conceptions of IDPs and durable solutions laid out in the Guiding Principles and IASC Framework served as touchstones for both studies, we nonetheless had to navigate complex questions about the interpretation and operationalization of these concepts in multi-method research designs.

In conceptualizing displacement and durable solutions for the purpose of survey design, particularly in urban settings characterized by high levels of mobility, the notions of displacement and IDPs may be intertwined with groups such as squatters, homeless persons, and others living in situations of informality and precariousness. Further, in many contexts, recurrent disasters (especially in combination with tenure insecurity and impoverishment) result in cycles of displacement, which must be taken into account when reflecting on forced migration in relation to a particular disaster. Bearing these factors in mind, these studies were implemented in contexts in which the majority of the disaster-affected population fit the description of an IDP in the Guiding Principles in that they fled their homes at least temporarily; smaller but still major proportions of the population lost their homes, and found themselves in more protracted displacement. In both studies, the questions we asked to divide participants into 'displaced' and 'non-displaced' groups for the purposes of statistical comparison focused, as per the Guiding Principles, on whether members of the household experienced displacement as a result of the disaster, for short or longer periods. Even with this very broad approach, we saw significant differences on a range of factors between households that were and were not displaced. Adopting a narrower approach to identifying displaced households – for example, counting as 'displaced' only those families that were away from their former places of residence for at least three months

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[9] More specifically in terms of the team members' backgrounds and positions in relation to the studies, the first author of this article was a Fellow with the Brookings Institution and is a professor of political science and development studies at McGill University in Montreal. The second author is a doctoral candidate at Kings College London and has worked in displacement situations with agencies including IOM. The third author is a data specialist with IOM, and worked extensively in Haiti with IOM and Unicef. The fourth author is Professor of Sociology at Mindanao State University – General Santos City in the Philippines. The last author is a lawyer and has worked extensively in disaster response with IOM, including in Haiti and the Philippines. The Haiti research team also included a member who previously worked on humanitarian relief in Haiti but was at the time of the study working with UN OCHA in West Africa.

– may have yielded even more significant differences between the comparison groups. Prolonged residency in a displacement site (such as a camp or bunkhouse) may potentially be correlated with increased barriers to durable solutions in terms of the criteria identified in the IASC Framework. However, we did not want to assume this, and therefore adopted the broad conceptualization of displacement described above, and included in the survey a series of questions intended to probe families' post-disaster movement patterns, with the aim of enabling more detailed analyses of how post-disaster socio-economic circumstances were related to, for example, extended periods spent in camps or with host families. Yet the survey teams found that it was often difficult for participants to precisely map out their post-disaster movements beyond their initial displacement. While further questionnaire refinements may have helped overcome this difficulty, it may be an inherent challenge in undertaking this type of research, reflective of the complex coping strategies employed by many families, which saw households dividing up, regrouping, and moving frequently depending on the opportunities and constraints encountered.

In both Haiti and the Philippines, the rights-based approach we took to conceptualizing durable solutions did not necessarily fit neatly with how these notions were understood locally, by policymakers, practitioners and survivors. For instance, the IASC Framework identifies three durable solutions – voluntary return, local integration and (re)settlement – which are tacitly assumed to represent distinct choices. However, this conceptualization did not mesh with the practices of many displaced households who pursue multiple durable solutions, sometimes simultaneously. Some family members may, for instance, reside primarily in relocation sites while the main breadwinners 'return' during the week to informally reconstructed shelters in their areas of origin, where they are better able to access livelihoods. We also observed dramatic variations in notions of what 'return' entails. While the IASC Framework (2010: 5) defines return as 'sustainable reintegration at the place of origin' this does not necessarily translate into a precise geographic location in societies characterized by high degrees of mobility and tenure insecurity. In Haiti, some practitioners conceptualized return as leaving camps to resume residency in neighbourhoods, whether or not IDPs were able to re-establish themselves in the areas where they lived prior to the earthquake. This reflected an often problematic tendency, reflected in some policy frameworks and research, to conceptualize return as the inherently preferable solution to displacement, and to equate it with the restoration of the *status quo ante*, despite the fact that these are the very conditions that increase exposure to displacement. Diverse understandings of durable solutions and related ideas such as return shaped how participants interpreted and responded to interview and survey questions, and therefore required continued critical engagement with the concepts at the heart of both studies.[10]

The careful conduct of research may in and of itself have an advocacy function (Scheper-Hughes 1995). By using rights-based conceptions of internal displacement and durable solutions, we had the opportunity to challenge assumptions about displacement being confined to particular areas such as camps, and the preferability of certain 'solutions' such as return or relocation. Yet we also found it critical to explore the potentially limited traction of international concepts and norms, and the ways in which they may be infused with unanticipated meaning in local contexts. For example, amongst many policymakers, practitioners and affected community members in the Philippines, durable solutions were equated primarily with access to permanent shelter, particularly in the form of a concrete house. Yet focus group conversations with Haiyan survivors also demonstrated the strong resonance of the idea, central to the IASC Framework,

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[10] The term 'durable solutions' was not used in the questionnaires, although it was explored in stakeholder interviews.

that restoring livelihoods is equally essential to resolving displacement, and fundamental to dignity and self-worth. Survivors also expressed conceptions of recovery and displacement resolution that went far beyond the IASC Framework's inter-sectoral approach. For instance, in a focus group with bunkhouse residents displaced from coastal areas awaiting relocation to new communities on higher ground, one woman shared that when the storm surge hit her family, she lost her six year old daughter, and could not find her body to bury in accordance with local customs. After a month, the child appeared in a dream and explained where her body was hidden. On waking, the mother recovered and buried her daughter – an undertaking that was, perhaps much more so than resettling on higher ground, an essential step in her recovery. Such mystical experiences are often pivotal to how survivors experience and cope with massive losses, trauma and dispossessions, but are alien to the technical and quasi-legalistic ways in which displacement, recovery and durable solutions are framed in international standards, underscoring the need for studies informed by these tools to be aware of the potential significance of phenomena that fall outside their frames.

Exploring displacement and durable solutions in relation to broader and pre-disaster conditions and concerns

The IASC Framework's conceptualization of durable solutions as having been achieved when IDPs 'no longer have any specific assistance and protection needs that are linked to their displacement and can enjoy their human rights without discrimination on account of their displacement' entails understanding pre-disaster conditions, and how IDPs' predicaments relate to those facing non-displaced populations. From the perspective of producing research that may inform policy and practice in support of durable solutions, placing the pursuit of durable solutions in the context of broader socio-economic dynamics and challenges (including the evolution of gender roles and urbanization) is particularly relevant as the resolution of displacement is a long-term process involving not only humanitarians but also diverse development actors and processes. While 'humanitarian' and 'development' are clearly not discrete categories, some of the broad differences in outlook and approach between these communities of practice have important implications for policy research on durable solutions. For example, humanitarians tend to emphasize identifying and responding to *individual* rights and vulnerabilities. In contrast, development actors are often primarily concerned with more macro-level, regional or national indicators of perceived progress, such as increased gross domestic product, or overall growth in access to key services such as housing, health care and education. Drawing attention to displacement and durable solutions as development concerns is a recurrent and presently prominent goal of institutions such as UNHCR and the World Bank, but this requires being able to successfully demonstrate that displacement is meaningfully correlated with gains and losses in the achievement of development goals (Zetter 2014, Harild, Christensen and Zetter 2015). For many development agencies, particularly development banks, statistical analysis based on large-N quantitative data is, for better or for worse, typically seen as the most compelling evidence of such links.

Our research designs probed the major human rights and socio-economic concerns raised in the IASC Framework criteria, and therefore positioned us to analyse the relationship between post-disaster displacement and the attainment of development objectives related to housing, employment and livelihoods, and access to services in Haiti and the Philippines. In both studies, our quantitative work allowed us only to identify correlation rather than causation in the relationship between experiences of displacement and pre- and post-disaster socio-economic

conditions. Qualitative methods, particularly interviews and focus group discussions were essential to identify potential explanations for the observed correlations. The inclusion of *non-displaced* community members as survey and focus group participants was critical to exploring the significance of post-disaster displacement for the broader community, and how support for durable solutions may be calibrated to avoid generating inappropriate disparities and backstop communities' own strategies to resolve displacement and withstand future shocks.

Particularly in Haiti, our analysis of the relationship between displacement and development issues was limited by the lack of detailed pre-disaster baseline data. Lack of reliable baseline data on pre-disaster conditions is a common limitation in many post-disaster contexts; in such cases, self-reports from displacement-affected community members represent one of the only ways to assess the extent to which and ways in which conditions have changed. In both surveys we asked participants for their perspectives on how their living conditions and access to particular goods and services such as adequate and affordable housing had changed, if at all, since the disasters. Self-reported assessments of past conditions have their limitations; for example, participants may misreport or idealize their pre-disaster living conditions, particularly if they are struggling with trauma, depression, or other mental health conditions, or if they believe that they may be disadvantaged by recognizing certain aspects of their pre- or post-disaster living situation.

While it is important to be aware of the possible limitations of self-report approaches, these should not be exaggerated – particularly as suspicions surrounding self-reports of declining living conditions may be a foil for ingrained prejudice against poorer populations who are often particularly likely to be forced from their homes in natural disasters, owing to factors such as residency in insecurely constructed shelters in low-lying or otherwise ecologically fragile areas. We observed this dynamic in Haiti, where some policymakers and practitioners were sceptical that displacement may have entailed marked losses for already impoverished earthquake survivors. Rather than considering the diverse forms, levels, and experiences of poverty within Port-au-Prince, and the ways in which losses associated with displacement may compound or complicate longstanding socio-economic challenges, some key informants suggested that IDPs' self-reported declines in living conditions were more likely reflective of IDPs' desire to position themselves as a group of 'privileged poor' with special entitlements to assistance.

Generally speaking, survivors are of course best positioned to report on the evolving circumstances facing their own households. In both Haiti and the Philippines, our focus group discussions with non-displaced community members suggested that, as many expressed it, 'everyone suffers' in a major disaster; displaced neighbours often face particular challenges, but many displaced and non-displaced participants alike felt these should be addressed through holistic, community-based efforts. Further, self-reports on pre- and post-disaster conditions and access to reconstruction support can put the scope and household-level impacts of national and international assistance efforts in context. As Bakewell (2008: 433) notes, 'notions of policy' and policy-relevant research 'tend to focus on formal organizations and their interactions with people.' And yet in both studies, significant proportions of the surveyed populations reported that they received no assistance. While many participants valued and sought to increase their access to recovery assistance, self-help and community-based recovery strategies were the predominant approaches to overcome losses associated with the disaster, including displacement. In our study of Typhoon Haiyan, combining quantitative and qualitative data on affected community members' perceptions of fairness in the distribution of aid and the shortcomings of the recovery effort also enabled us to contextualize the view, often expressed by international

staff, that Haiyan survivors were the 'happiest beneficiaries' they had encountered – a perception that could potentially efface the considerable obstacles and concerns facing typhoon victims, especially those still living in bunkhouses or in far-flung relocation sites. To be sure, many survivors were deeply grateful for the help they received, but as the triangulation of our qualitative and self-report data on declining living conditions underscored, expressions of gratitude were often a way of preserving dignity by upholding cultural expectations surrounding politeness, rather than affirmations that the aid actually met their needs and expectations.

Gender, generation and studying durable solutions: Durable solutions to displacement ae conditioned by socially constructed gender roles and ideas about appropriate behaviour for individuals of different ages; comprehensive analyses must be cognisant of the varying significance of these constructs. Calls for the collection of sex and age-disaggregated data on forced migration are widespread, but even when such data are collected, focused analyses of the ways in which gender and age roles differentially shape efforts to resolve post-disaster displacement remain rare. Accordingly, in our study of Typhoon Haiyan, we sought to more concertedly integrate systematic gender analysis, and examination of the ways in which individuals of different ages differentially experienced displacement and the search for solutions. In order to enable this analysis, we varied the focus group composition so that some groups involved all men, all women, or both men and women. (In Haiti, all the focus groups involved a mix of men and women.) Each focus group involved individuals of a range of different ages, from young men and women to senior citizens, although it proved difficult to recruit older persons.[11] We coded and comparatively analysed the data in terms of differential experiences of access to different durable solutions criteria, with equitable opportunities to pursue livelihoods, and the pressures arising from compounding productive and reproductive responsibilities emerging as central concerns. One limitation of our approach to deepening the gender analysis in our Typhoon Haiyan study pertained to the composition of the research team: all the focus groups were facilitated by female researchers, which likely influenced the direction and tone of the conversations.

Studying durable solutions in societies 'on the move': Typhoon Haiyan and in particular the 2010 earthquake struck societies already characterized by high levels of mobility, particularly from rural to urban environments. In the study on displacement in Haiti, we focused primarily on dynamics at the metropolitan level, while in our study of Typhoon Haiyan, the decision to conduct the survey and focus groups in urban, peri-urban and rural communities allowed us to disaggregate some of our findings in light of the geographic context, and to explore how variations and movements between these environments shaped prospects for durable solutions. This approach brought into focus some of the ways in which efforts to resolve displacement are intertwined with and often sit uneasily alongside ongoing modernization processes, manifested in phenomena including large-scale urbanization. For example, we spoke with many family members who, before Haiyan, were living in low-lying urban areas devastated by the storm. Many of these families had previously lived in more rural communities, but moved to the city in order to access livelihoods. After Haiyan, many were encouraged or compelled to relocate to peri-urban or even rural sites where they anticipated that they would struggle with the same

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[11] Owing to limited time and resources, we did not conduct focus groups with children on their perspectives and involvement in efforts to resolve displacement. This would however be a rich area for future research.

concerns (e.g. lack of access to livelihoods and markets) that drove them to urban coastal areas in the first place, setting the stage for ongoing cycles of at best semi-voluntary internal migrations.

Mobility is deployed as a coping strategy not only between rural and urban communities, but also *within* cities and neighbourhoods. While this was not within the scope of our original studies, the quantitative data collected in both countries could be used to comparatively analyse dynamics within particular neighbourhoods, barangays or communes. Further developing such local-level comparative analyses would be helpful in terms of understanding how durable solutions dynamics change in different neighbourhoods, recognizing that access to services is decisively shaped by local conditions and power dynamics.

As aforementioned, the Port-au-Prince survey included a series of questions on participant households' displacement history, with a view to being able to better understand how the conditions facing displacement-affected households evolved over time, and in relation to the multiple movements they may have undertaken after the earthquake. Despite refinement after field testing, these questions proved difficult for participants to answer, likely because of the highly mobile nature of the local population both before and after the earthquake. Many Haitian families move frequently, under conditions characterized by varying degrees of compulsion (e.g. to seek out livelihood opportunities, due to tenure insecurity/evictions and the unaffordability of rents, etc.), and the ways in which families experience and explain these movements do not necessarily track neatly onto the categories and concepts that structure international frameworks on displacement and durable solutions (e.g. displaced/non-displaced, voluntary/forced). Participants may also simply have been reticent to provide detailed information on their movement patterns, particularly given governmental and international actors' desire to restrict strategies such as families dividing themselves between different camps in order to increase access to assistance. Further questionnaire refinement and surveyor training may respond to some of these shortcomings in future studies conducted in similar circumstances. However, this challenge points more broadly to the importance of undertaking qualitative research to understand the complexity of movement patterns, and the potential dissonance between international and local categories and concepts.

Timing issues

Studying durable solutions is methodologically and conceptually complex in part because while the resolution of displacement is a long-term endeavour, it is also highly conditioned by decisions such as the construction of camps that are taken by humanitarian actors in the emergency stage; longstanding socio-economic dynamics around, for example, land tenure and livelihoods; and the evolving strategies of displacement-affected community members. When, then, is it most beneficial to investigate the search for durable solutions? Our research in the Philippines was completed a year and a half after Typhoon Haiyan; in contrast, we finished our study in Haiti four years after the earthquake. These different timeframes presented unique opportunities and constraints in terms of understanding the durable solutions process. As we saw in both cases, the number of months or years that have elapsed since a particular disaster does not necessarily correlate with progress towards durable solutions. This will be shaped by a wide range of factors including survivors' social networks and capital; the nature of local, national and international responses; and the scale of the disaster and the losses it entailed.

Ideally, longitudinal approaches could be applied to the study of durable solutions to better understand how different actors' strategies and the socio-economic conditions influencing durable solutions change over time. While we did not have the opportunity to conduct

longitudinal work in these cases, longitudinal studies would be especially useful to explore how displacement caused by a particular disaster morphs into different forms or experiences of forced migration, as uprooted survivors may subsequently be exposed to evictions, forced relocations, and other movements linked to new disasters, conflicts, and economic factors. Such long-term approaches may help to refute overly simplistic, binary conceptions of displacement as either a crisis or a problem that has been solved, and instead bring into focus the ways in which the pursuit of durable solutions coexists alongside continued patterns of mobility, evolving assessments of risk and approaches to risk management, and changes in the local political economy. Conducting longitudinal studies (especially those that aim to engage the same households in longer-term survey research) presents pronounced challenges in states emerging from major disasters characterized by high levels of forced migration, owing in particular to limited research infrastructure and the difficulty of retaining study participants. However, locally configured approaches may help to alleviate some of these difficulties, and insights gleaned from longitudinal work with forced migrants in Northern states may be applied to tackle these concerns.

The timing of durable solutions research also has significant implications in terms of opportunities to influence the policy process. For example, undertaking the Haiti study four years after the disaster was a valuable chance to explore how the initial crisis response shaped medium-term efforts to support durable solutions, and the practical significance of these efforts for uprooted Haitians and their neighbours. Yet by the time the study was conducted, opportunities to shift thinking on durable solutions and promote more nuanced approaches to interventions such as rental subsidy cash grants were more limited. For example, one senior UN official indicated that four years after the earthquake, addressing durable solutions was 'just plumbing' – in other words, implementing policy decisions already made by colleagues serving in earlier stages of the response. In this sense, conducting the study earlier on could have been helpful, although significant opportunities remain to deepen understanding of the concept of durable solutions, as understood in the IASC Framework and by community members themselves, and to advance recommendations identified through the study. In crafting the studies' recommendations, we were struck by the difficulty of identifying 'operationalizable' suggestions on durable solutions, especially given varying levels of institutional buy-in, and different degrees of willingness to question pre-conceived notions of what is realistic in light of prevailing institutional structures, and the possibility of shifting these structures. Achieving durable solutions is not a matter of 'quick fixes'; rather, many of our recommendations pertained to what should be done differently in future disaster responses, and to broad, structural changes needed to better respond to this challenge. In this sense the durable solutions policy research process itself may perhaps be best understood as a long-term process of engagement and reflection, with a view to encouraging more nuanced policy and practice.

Despite the difficulties associated with changing mind sets and the impossibility of turning back the clock on early decisions that definitively shaped durable solutions prospects, we endeavoured to disseminate our findings and recommendations to local, national and international actors.[12] These efforts have resulted in the uptake of some of the studies' findings by some key advocacy actors, and some very modest progress in the implementation of the

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[12] In relation to traditional policy actors, these efforts included the dissemination of the studies electronically and in hard copy (in English and French), alongside a series of blog posts and infographics. Public presentations involving government representatives, key international organizations, local groups and donors were made in Port-au-Prince, Manila (with participants joining from Region VIII), Geneva, Brussels and Washington, DC.

study's recommendations, although much more remains to be done on this front. In studying and advocating for durable solutions in the later stages of large-scale, post-disaster displacement situations, we found it particularly important to be aware of the kinds of opportunities that may open up as registered IDP populations decline, and magnify IDPs' own calls for flexible, rather than 'one-size-fits-all' approaches to supporting durable solutions.

Conclusion

In this article, we have attempted to show how, through mixed-methods approaches, policy research can endeavour to respond to some of the well-founded concerns raised in past discussions of forced migration research methods, and navigate some of the particular challenges associated with investigating the under-examined issue of resolving post-disaster displacement. While research on post-disaster durable solutions raises a host of complex methodological concerns, we have stressed the value of carefully structured research partnerships; the need to critically interrogate the concepts of displacement and durable solutions themselves; and the importance of situating disaster-induced displacement and barriers to durable solutions within broader analyses of pre- and post-disaster power relations and political economies, recognizing the '"normality" within [IDPs'] situation' instead of automatically 'privileging their position as forced migrants as the primary explanatory factor' (Bakewell 2008: 432). Additionally, we have highlighted some of the opportunities and challenges, including from an advocacy perspective, that follow from the timing of studies on durable solutions, emphasizing the need for more longitudinal work. Every research partnership is of course shaped by the specific characteristics and commitments of the individuals and organisations involved. However, we hope that raising these concerns and encouraging others involved in forced migration policy research to consider them carefully may strengthen future research partnerships in the field.

Turton and Bakewell suggest that the 'role of academic research should be to reflect critically on the taken-for-granted assumptions of policy makers rather than simply confirming or legitimizing them: to make them visible and open to inspection' (Bakewell 2008: 437-8, Turton 2005). Thoughtful, rigorous studies undertaken in the context of carefully developed policy research partnerships that engage directly with policy constructs such as internal displacement and durable solutions can similarly help to address this goal, and meet some of the important challenges presented by critics of the ways in which policy categories have too often been unquestioningly accepted as the base-line for investigations of forced migration. In upcoming decades, displacement associated with disasters linked to the effects of climate change is expected to become an increasingly prominent concern. If researchers, including those working with operational and policy-focused organizations, are to maximize their contributions to increased understanding of the theoretical and practical questions surrounding durable solutions to post-disaster displacement, many complex methodological challenges must be explored (Warner 2011). This is as yet a nascent conversation, but one that we hope these reflections will help to further stimulate.

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